

The London School of Economics and Political Science

***‘Loyalty More Personal and Fervent’: Australasian
Imperial Identities, 1892-1902***

LIAM CONNELL

A thesis submitted to the Department of International History of
the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy, March, 2023

DECLARATION

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

I consider the work submitted to be a complete thesis fit for examination.

I authorise that, if a degree is awarded, an electronic copy of my thesis will be deposited in LSE Theses Online (in accordance with the published deposit agreement) held by the British Library of Political and Economic Science and that, except as provided for in regulation 61 it will be made available for public reference.

I authorise the School to supply a copy of the abstract of my thesis for inclusion in any published list of theses offered for higher degrees in British universities or in any supplement thereto, or for consultation in any central file of abstracts of such theses.

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Quotation from it is permitted, provided that full acknowledgement is made. In accordance with the Regulations, I have deposited an electronic copy of it in LSE Theses Online held by the British Library of Political and Economic Science and have granted permission for my thesis to be made available for public reference. Otherwise, this thesis may not be reproduced without my prior written consent.

Some of this work (a few hundred words) originated in my MSc Thesis, 'A New and Better Britain: Australia's Foreign and Immigration Policies and their divide with Britain, 1901-1907' completed at the LSE in 2014.

I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.

I declare that my thesis consists of 106, 305 words.

ABSTRACT

Britain's Australasian colonies entered the 1890s a disparate group; by 1902 six of them had federated and the last was embarking on apparently quixotic schemes to expand the British empire in the Pacific.

In popular history this is a story of emerging national identities; much of the academic scholarship disputes this and can accept that these societies were neither wholly nationalistic yet nor simply British. Both assume that the British Empire was centred upon London, and that therefore any political, cultural or economic move away from that government's orthodoxy was if not opposition at least a divergence from the Empire itself.

The thesis investigates how Victorians, New Zealanders, Queenslanders and the rest saw themselves within the Empire, but also how they defined that Empire. They were not subjects; nor was theirs' simply a 'Britannic' nationalism shared by elites across the self-governing colonies. Rather these were self-confident societies that saw themselves not as the furthest reaches of an Empire, but as the truest defenders of British values.

This thesis fuses cultural and political history to show that by 1902 and the formation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Australasia had developed not just a distinct set of imperial identities, but an imperial ethos. This is shown through close study of several major Imperial engagements with the wider world in this period: the rise of Japan, the geopolitics of Empire in the south-west Pacific, the South African War, and finally the formalisation of the White Australia policy. By setting colonial responses next to the writings of the leaders of the British government, it becomes apparent that the common language of Empire conceals very different ideas about that empire's strategic interests and civilisational values.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This has not been an easy journey. Luckily, I never travelled alone.

First and foremost, Antony Best has been a model scholar and the finest of supervisors. He always had faith in my work, but more than anything else was kind to a student who was so often a nervous mess. It has been a genuine pleasure to study under him.

The London School of Economics generously funded my research; I could not possibly have spent five years in the archives without its support. The International History Department has, time and again, come through for me in a pinch. Nayna Bhatti had a solution for every problem of university bureaucracy or student regulations that came up over five years of study. Piers Ludlow got me started, and his successor Tanya Harmer held the PhD cohorts together when lockdown sent them scattering. Joanna Lewis's advice helped me to understand my own project. Paul Keenan has been a friend and a mentor since my days as a Masters student. My fellow PhD students Javiera Soto, Isami Sawai and Seung Mo Kang have been friends, colleagues and companions.

Michelle Gideon and Anne Li helped me unpick my way out of a pit of mental health issues, and I will be eternally grateful for that.

This doctorate is the latest stage in a long journey of studying history and delighting in its telling. A few of the key teachers along the way were Geoffrey Rice and Chris Jones at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, Robin Mills and Tim Hochstrasser at the LSE and Kirsten McKenzie at the University of Sydney. Before them, I was lucky enough to have three high school teachers who truly wanted me to think: Alvin Andrew, Hamish Faulls and Brett Clark.

Rosie Read stepped in when lockdown left me on the other side of the world from all my worldly possessions.

Most importantly, I could not have got here without the support of two vast Irish-New Zealand clans. I love them all, but I wish to thank Colleen, who taught me that words mattered, and Sean and Erin, who showed me they could be cut. Above all, I would have broken under the strain were it not for the love, good advice and support of my parents Brin and Simone, and Bridie, my sister and the best of friends.

Also - Boss. If you want to survive the stress of lockdown, have a border collie.

For JPK, who got to London first,

and for Selwyn Callis, who showed me Aotearoa has a history.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CPD: Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates

CRL: Cadbury Research Library

NAA: National Archives of Australia

NLA: National Library of Australia

NZH: *New Zealand Herald*

NZPD: New Zealand Parliamentary Debates

NZT: *New Zealand Tablet*

ODT: *Otago Daily Times*

TNA: The National Archives, Kew

PROV: Public Records Office Victoria

QPD: Queensland Parliamentary Debates

QSA: Queensland State Archives

SMH: *Sydney Morning Herald*

VPD: Victorian Parliamentary Debates

WAPD: Western Australian Parliamentary Debates

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
Introduction	9
Chapter One: Australasia and the Paranoid 1880s	43
Chapter Two: Imperial Ideologies in Australasia	87
Chapter Three: The Pacific - Periphery, or new frontier?	133
Chapter Four: The South African War	184
Chapter Five: Australasia, Japan, and the Natal Formula	228
Chapter Six: Federation as a response to Empire	271
Conclusion: Thinking Imperially	326
Bibliography	335

At present the loyalty of the people of the Empire who live remote from the British Isles is probably more personal and more fervent than that of the British Islander and this inevitable enchantment lent by distance is likely to continue, unless shattered as it was in America by the wilful hostilities and blunders of the powers now revered, a consummation which under modern Constitutional government seems very improbable.

*Alfred Deakin, 1900*¹

¹ Alfred Deakin, *The Federal Story*, (Melbourne, 1944) p.113.

Introduction

i. The Empire, and its imagined enemies

In 1907, the Premiers of Britain's self-governing colonies met in London at a Colonial Conference. Intended as a public display of imperial loyalism, rather the conference minutes reveal grave differences between how Britain and the Dominions understood the nature of the Empire and the threats that other powers posed to its security. The confusion over these issues can be seen in the contributions made by the delegation from Australia, whose leader, Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, combined a deep enthusiasm for imperial reform with a strange naivete about that empire's actual capabilities.¹

There was one particular area in which the Australian Prime Minister was disappointed in Imperial policy. When the Conference came to discuss 'British Interests in the Pacific' on May 9, Deakin accused the Colonial Office of decades of incompetence in the defence of its interests. He said Britain did not even understand what those interests were. If it were not for the actions of Australia and New Zealand, he claimed, 'there would not be an island today in the Pacific under the British flag. Whatever losses there are in the Pacific... have been due to neglect here. [London.]' British politicians and journalists had acted as if Australians were greedy expansionists, when 'we once had the Pacific in our grasp... it is not a series of greedy annexations that we have been attempting, but a series of aggravated and exasperating losses which we have had to sustain.'²

It was not just that Australia was worried that the Empire was losing its grip on the Pacific. It seemed the Imperial Government did not even recognise that other Great Powers

¹ For the 1907 conference, see Ronald Hyam, *Elgin and Churchill at the Colonial Office, 1905-1908: The Watershed of the Empire-Commonwealth* (London, 1968).

² CO 885/18/06, TNA, 'Minutes of the Proceedings of the Colonial Conference 1907,' pp. 549-550, though Deakin's lecture continues to p. 560.

were conspiring against it. A briefing paper prepared for the Colonial Secretary, Lord Elgin, noted that the Australians believed that France was about to cede French Polynesia to Germany in exchange for unspecified gains elsewhere. The Foreign Office, aware that the Third Republic was not going to sell its empire to the Kaiser, advised that there was 'no reason to suppose that France intended to give up Tahiti.'³ Drawing on these memoranda, Elgin reminded the Conference 'that the actual authority of Great Britain was subject to some limitations in the Pacific and had always been.'⁴

It is a fascinating exchange. Deakin's denunciation of the Empire's actions in the Pacific was unashamedly linked to the injuries London had supposedly inflicted upon Australia and New Zealand. However, he was clearly not a narrow nationalist. His view of the empire was essentially romantic. At the Conference's close, Deakin assured Elgin that all Australian proposals had been made 'in the hope and belief, that it is possible to enable this vast Empire, dissevered by great distances, with its scattered populations absorbed in their own immediate interests and pursuits, to see all its members brought into line for great and closer co-operation with each other.'⁵

Deakin's time at the Conference was thus marked by both a failure to understand the strategic outlook of the government in London and also by a romantic belief in the unifying machinery of that empire. The Conference really mattered, even if only to explain to Elgin that he and his government were making mistakes.

The discontent did not arise from radical Australian nationalism. It is rather that Australian views of the world were tightly bound up in Imperial loyalty. They thought that Australia's interests were themselves the interests of the Empire. The Australian government

³ FO Memorandum, enclosed in 'Confidential papers printed in connection with the Colonial Conference, 1907,' CO 885/18/11, TNA.

⁴ Ibid, p. 557.

⁵ CO 885/18/06 'Minutes of the Proceedings of the Colonial Conference 1907,' pp. 618-619.

demonstrated in its interventions that it failed to understand the degree to which the Empire was not free to focus its attention upon its eastern borders in the Pacific. Worse still, it revealed that it simply did not comprehend the degree to which London was not interested in the Pacific.

Australian Britons saw themselves as manning a racial border between British civilisation and ‘Asiatics,’ one constantly being tested both by perfidious European rivals and the rising power of Japan. To Australia, Britain’s new alliance with Japan seemed mercenary, and an undermining of the civilising project of White Australia. Indeed in 1905 Prime Minister George Reid had noted of Japan’s victories over Russia that ‘our ideals, I hope, will be to conduct friendly relations, whilst preserving the integrity of our race; because I cannot shut my eyes to the destinies of Australia in the ages to come.’⁶ Worse, Japan’s victory allowed the British to continue to draw down its forces in the East. This meant that just as Australia became convinced that Japan was its ‘real and only dangerous enemy,’ Britain had apparently entrusted it with the defence of the eastern Empire.⁷

These disagreements were more than simply an argument over which bits of a far-flung Empire were the highest strategic priority. In fact, Australians did not always seem to understand that there was any disagreement at all: the importance of protecting the Pacific Islands, of keeping Australia white, and of taking a firm line against any foreign expansion in the region were apparently so obvious that the Imperial Government’s actions could only be explained through incompetence or timidity. Australian British identity was thus more than a desire to be an ally and partner of Britain within the Imperial system. It was a strange

⁶ *SMH*, 13 June 1905, p. 5.

⁷ Yoichi Hiramata, ‘Japanese naval assistance and its effect on Australian-Japanese relations,’ in Phillips Payson O’Brien, ed., *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-1922* (London, 2004) p. 140.

melange of conservatism and modernism, fear of an Asian future and hope for an Australian one.

New Zealand shared with Australia a belief that the British Empire was stronger and wealthier than London seemed to think, that it existed not just as a force for civilisation but as a civilisation itself: an entity whose defeats or lost opportunities could only be explained through the moral failures of indifference and inattention. The Oceanic Dominions did not just seek ‘partnership between Britain and the settler countries’⁸ as John Darwin puts it. Through their efforts to force the Colonial Office to acquiesce to their immigration policies, and their attempts to focus Imperial attention on the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand sought not only a voice within the British Empire. They sought to remind Britain of the true purpose of the Empire, at least from the way in which the world appeared when looking north from Cape York. This view was encapsulated by the British journalist and commentator on imperial affairs, Richard Jebb, who wrote in 1905 ‘modern Australian patriots are predisposed to imperialism, so long as it connotes the defensive co-operation of white nations rather than the exploitation of Australia by the coloured races.’⁹ This was the Australasian conception of the Empire: a system to unify Britons and protect them from foreign and especially non-white powers.

The dissertation seeks to explain how the Australasian conception of the Empire developed in the late nineteenth and around the turn of the twentieth centuries and how it came to influence its engagement with Britain, its outlook on foreign affairs and even how it shaped the evolution of Australia and New Zealand’s domestic politics. In doing so, it poses several questions.

⁸John Darwin, *The Empire Project* (Cambridge, 2009) p. 168.

⁹Richard Jebb, *Studies in Colonial Nationalism* (London, 1905) p. 85.

The first question is: what did the Australasian colonies think were the strategic interests and moral purpose of the British Empire? This is not a question that can be answered just by examining political writings and votes in the colonial legislature. The British Empire was not simply a political entity, it provided the entire cultural context for its settler colonies. The dissertation shows how Australasian governments acted within and understood the nature of the British imperial framework, and how those governments were in turn influenced by debates within the public sphere. As such, the thesis generally follows the actions of parliaments, agents-general and premiers, but it has striven to place them firmly within their own societies. Where possible, large-scale political developments such as intervention in the Pacific have been linked back to the popular press and the activism of groups like churches and the Imperial Federation League. This means that the policy of Australasian governments can be confidently written about as representing the views and ideals of their political constituents.

It should be stressed that the dissertation examines 'Australasia,' not simply Australia. The Commonwealth of Australia was comprised of six self-governing colonies, but there were seven such colonies in the region. To take New Zealand's separate destiny for granted is a mistake. Excluding it is to make a judgement that the Commonwealth of Australia that emerged in 1901 could only ever have had its present configuration. This is difficult to sustain. After all, Western Australia did not decide to join the Commonwealth until 1900 and tried to secede in 1933. Why then assume that that area was always an intrinsic part of Australia, but that New Zealand was not? New Zealand was shaped by the same currents as Australia; it was a British self-governing colony uncertain of its place in the Pacific, unsure of its best course economically, militarily or politically.

Thus, the dissertation looks at Australasia. It was a wide-ranging term. It included the continent of Australia, but also the large islands of Tasmania and New Zealand and at least

some of the Pacific Islands. Fiji and the Cook Islands were almost always included, but sometimes also Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and any number of smaller groups. The concerns reflected in the sources about Asia and the Pacific become easier to grasp through the lens of Australasia, for it underlines the point that the horizons of Australian and New Zealand thinkers included a vast area of the south-west Pacific with no certain borders and no clear colour line. In 1907, Deakin described that area in the language of a frontier, where every island had been bitterly contested and British honour only maintained by the efforts of colonials. That is a description that bears very little resemblance to the reality observed from Whitehall.

That brings us to the second question: how did the Australasian conception of the Empire differ from how it was understood in Britain? This is not about delving deeply into British perceptions of the Empire, which is extremely well-trodden ground, but it is necessary to provide an overview of that thinking and to compare it with the outlook from the colonies. Without a clear understanding of how the British government understood the strategic priorities of the Empire, it is impossible to point to meaningful points of difference (or, indeed, commonalities) in the Australasian position. For example, the Australasian fear that the South African War was a distraction from the real business of the Empire is only fully revealed in its fascinating strangeness if it is made clear just how high the stakes were for the government in London. It is also important to investigate the problem that even though both British and colonial writers were using the same shared language of imperial patriotism, the meanings they drew from that language could be quite different.

Lastly, how did that understanding of the empire shape the colonies' response, both in Australia and New Zealand, to the Australian Federation movement and how they imagined the future of their societies in the coming century? Federation was a decades long project, and the dissertation does not ignore its many internal drivers, chief among them the intercolonial

trade disputes. But Federation is relevant to this work inasmuch as the motivations behind it looked beyond the continent of Australia, not just within it. The dissertation is not so much interested in the mechanics of how the colonies agreed on a scheme of mutual defence, though that is relevant, but rather at the more elemental question of how they saw their new societies. ‘Colonial nationalism’ is a well-worn term, but the dissertation is interested not just in how Australasians balanced local loyalties with imperial patriotism, but how they began to imagine that in the twentieth century they might be not just partners in the Empire but even, as it were, a second heartland.

The underlying principle of this dissertation is that ‘identity’ or ‘self-image’ or ‘imaginings’ can only be meaningful when grounded in real political and social geography. That geography has three levels. Firstly, the smallest scale: the self-governing colonies in Oceania, and the nearby island groups, dominated by Britain but with at least three foreign Great Powers already present. Next, and stepping further back: Australasia as a sub-region of the Asia-Pacific, remembering that these societies were closer to India, Japan and China than they were to any other ‘white’ society. Finally, the widest scale: the self-governing colonies within a global British Empire, with political, cultural, social and economic links to societies.

i. Historiography

The foundation of this dissertation's approach is that the Australasian response to Empire can best be understood by situating the colonies in the wider region, not as ahistorical nations. It cannot be repeated often enough how frequently historians take the diverging paths of Australia and New Zealand for granted. The first part of this section deals with the nationalist histories that explicitly take the divergence of New Zealand from Australia for granted, but it must be stressed that even the latest works in the field often assume that New Zealand and Australia have always had different histories. That is true for their indigenous peoples, but in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries their settler populations shared an imperial past, existed in the same imperial political and economic structures in their present, and fully expected to share an imperial future.

It is necessary to describe a few key figures in the historiography of mid-twentieth century Australia. For much of that time, even as Australian academia changed radically, Australia's place within the Empire itself was treated as an afterthought. New Zealand will be discussed afterwards, as its historiography moved along broadly parallel lines, although it had a less tumultuous development than Australian scholarship's waves of liberal, Old Left and New Left writings.

We begin with a giant of Australian national history, Keith Hancock. Hancock's *Australia* (1930), R.W. Connell wrote in 1968, 'prefigured the main themes of almost every interpretation of Australia and Australian history that has been written since.'¹⁰ Hancock was not the founder of Australian history, but he was both a titan of his generation and continued

¹⁰ R.W. Connell, in *Quadrant* 12, March 1968, cited in Rob Pascoe, *The Manufacture of Australian History* (1979).

to appear at conferences until his death at age ninety in 1988.¹¹ Hancock's work is a bridge between the early work in the field and more modern work. It was characterised by a muscular liberalism, with a bias towards rural settlers as being the most authentically 'Australian.' In his telling the great actor of Australian politics was the Labor Party. Hancock's *Australia* had little interest in theoretical constructs of capitalism, White Australia or indeed Empire.¹² Well into the 1960s and 1970s, Australian history was still often argued on Hancock's terms - it was an Australia where the Empire and the broader world generally did not intrude on debates about stockmen and union organisers, local politicians and emerging political and economic structures.¹³ Nor was Hancock's writing at all concerned with the world beyond the Empire, save for a final remark on Australia's situation in the Pacific in 1930: 'We will not permit any strong Power to establish itself in our vicinity. We ourselves must hold the islands which cover our continent'¹⁴ 'New Zealand' does not even appear in the index.

Hancock was still primarily concerned with the material world. Russel Ward supplemented this approach by writing a cultural history of Australia that took Hancock's masculine, rural Australia, added Marxist theory and instead of traditional historical sources looked to poems, songs and the popular press. *The Australian Legend* (1958) is the best expression of the 'Bush Legend' in Australian history.¹⁵ Ward presented the Australian outback as being the domain of an egalitarian, democratic society of stockmen, drovers and itinerant workers, whose rough, fair-go attitudes originated in the society of the forced

¹¹ See Julian Thomas, 'Keith Hancock: Professing the Profession' in Stuart Macintyre & Julian Thomas, eds., *The Discovery of Australian History, 1890-1939* (Melbourne, 1995) for a precis of Hancock's professional influence.

¹² Hancock himself went on to be the first director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies and wrote extensively on the Commonwealth and Empire, which makes the elision in *Australia* more curious.

¹³ On Hancock's legacy, see D. Anthony Low, *Keith Hancock: The Legacies of an Historian* (Melbourne, 2001)

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 243.

¹⁵ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne, 1958).

convict settlers.¹⁶ This was an argument that Australian democracy and character were built by the victims of Imperial policy who nonetheless created a new life for themselves in a harsh land.

Ward was attacked by the New Left as being economically unsophisticated and backward looking.¹⁷ His assumption that the 'Bush Ballads' of publications like *The Bulletin* represented the culture of the Australian public, rather than just a strand of it, led to sweeping claims about Australian masculinity based upon a few poems and shanties. Ward's Australians were self-reliant, and so was their worldview. It is a history of nationalism that has little to say about communal structures or communal politics, and even less about how that nationalism was shaped by the imperial system that defined the experience of the settler colonies.

Both Hancock and Ward, respectively standing here for traditional liberal patriots and the Old Left, two vibrant expressions of Australian historiography, above all built a picture of Australian identity as being masculine, egalitarian, and not hugely exercised by the Empire. They are being discussed here for two key reasons. Firstly, much of the subsequent work done by historians on the subaltern in Australia - indigenous Australians, non-white immigrants, women and so forth - has struggled to supplant the preconceptions taught to generations of Australian schoolchildren by early historians like Hancock and by the Ward-style regurgitation of *Bulletin* writers like 'Banjo' Paterson before him.¹⁸ The other reason to discuss these older historians is that, although their mythology of white, masculine, egalitarian Australia has been justifiably demolished, their relative lack of concern with the

¹⁶ Graeme Davison, 'Rethinking the Australian Legend,' in *Australian Historical Studies*, 43:3, (2012) pp. 429-451.

¹⁷ See Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia* (Melbourne, 1970), which dismisses Ward on the opening page.

¹⁸ Cf. Manning Clark, whose mid-century histories of Australia remain hugely influential with the reading public and whose legacy remains debated within the academy to this day - see Carl Bridge, ed., *Manning Clark: Essays on his Place in History* (Melbourne, 1994).

wider world helped to shape the outlook of later historians.¹⁹ Unless Australian and New Zealand identities are set besides each other, and besides the identities of other Britons throughout the Empire and in Britain itself, they are untethered in the lived political-cultural experience of white Australasians.

This is clearly not to say that the Empire is a total lacuna within the orthodox national histories. Political historians such as J.M. Ward wrote extensively on the development of self-government in Australia in books such as *Empire in the Antipodes*. (1966)²⁰ However, these works looked at high politics and largely consisted of constitutional history. They explained how the Australian colonies were governed within the Empire, but they did little to illuminate the way in which the Empire acted as a political and cultural context that shaped how ordinary Australians understood themselves and their societies.

It was not until the 1960s and 1970s that studies of Australia and the Empire moved beyond that simple political framework, thanks to the flourishing of New Left scholarship. Emerging, not coincidentally, at a moment when political orthodoxies in both countries were being challenged by charismatic Labour Party Prime Ministers, historians of the day did important work in opening up the scope of Australasian history. Historians like Russel Ward had largely treated the working-class as monolithic, drawn from convict stock and inherently egalitarian. Interest in diversity tended to start and end with asking questions such as what elements of that class experience were shaped by Irish Catholicism. Not so for the New Left. Works like *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland* (1975), written two years after the end of the White Australia policy, sought to restore Indigenous Australians, Pacific Island labourers

¹⁹ Hancock's near contemporary R.M. Crawford, for example, wrote a school-book *Ourselves and the Pacific* (1941) that claims that 'until recent times both Australia and New Zealand went their ways little aware of their Pacific setting.' Cited in Rob Pascoe, *The Manufacture of Australian History* (Melbourne, 1979), p. 35.

²⁰ J.M. Ward, *Empire in the Antipodes: The British in Australia, 1840-1860* (London, 1966). See also *British Policy in the South Pacific, 1796-1893* (Sydney, 1948) and *Colonial Self-Government: The British Experience 1769-1856* (Toronto, 1976) which argued for the significance of Britain's colonial polities in helping to shape liberal democracy in the Empire.

and Asian migrants to their place in the national story.²¹ These books were better than their predecessors had been in placing Australasia in its imperial context, but they still suffered from a Marxian tendency to view empire more as a process to be experienced than as an actual practical political institution and cultural environment. Moreover, they still smacked of the national histories against which they were reacting, while New Zealand remained excluded. For its part, the smaller country did not produce iconoclasts who challenged the field in the way Australia did.

The most notable of those iconoclasts was Humphrey McQueen whose *A New Britannia* (1970) was a history of the origins of the Australian Labor Party.²² Instead of Russel Ward's whiggish portrayal of downtrodden settlers developing a fairer society, McQueen argued that Australian egalitarianism was an ethos intrinsically tied up with capitalism, imperialism, and racism. The book's reputation rests on its situating of these themes at the heart of the Labour movement, and the Labour movement at the heart of Australia, and on its iconoclasm: 'racism is the most important single component of Australian nationalism.'²³ McQueen's economic didacticism has dated more badly. The book declaims the Australian Labour movement for sharing the materialistic values of a bourgeois-liberal middle-class. For McQueen, these imperial and capitalist values originated in London and were adopted by or reacted to by Australians. In other words, Australians did not have new ideas of the Empire or independently act within it. The world is seen purely in terms of the Australian-British relationship.

McQueen rightly stressed Australian fears of invasion, for instance: 'Australia's primary concern before 1904 was that Britain should protect her from predatory European powers;

²¹ Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders, Kathryn Cronin, *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland* (St Lucia, 1975)

²² Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia* (Melbourne, 1970).

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

and after 1904 that it should protect her from Japan.²⁴ However, McQueen's work suffered from a perennial problem in Australasian historiography; it had a lack of imagination about the British Empire. Instead of treating colonial governments and societies as players within a larger enterprise, albeit weaker than their counterparts in London, McQueen made the same mistake as Russel Ward and Keith Sinclair. In *A New Britannia*, the Empire is something that happened to Australia, rather than an entire system that Australia existed within, let alone something Australia itself sought to shape.

A second key text of the period was Ronald Norris's *The Emergent Commonwealth* (1975).²⁵ A history of the unexpected power of the new Australian federal government, the book centred on two key arguments. The first was that Federation was not a product of Australian nationalism. Although not a new argument, Norris was forensically thorough in his analysis. He insisted that the unifying principle behind Federation was Imperial loyalty.²⁶ His dismissal of nationalism, though, speaks to a persistent problem in the literature, especially before the 1990s: an assumption that nationalism and imperial loyalty were innately opposed. Norris proved that Federation's architects were imperial loyalists but assumed that this was the same thing as proving they were not nationalists. That is an anachronistic assumption. As Stuart Macintyre wrote, only 'occasionally an effort is made to revive awareness of the time when colonialism and nationalism coexisted.'²⁷

Norris's second argument was more important. It was that the Immigration Restriction Act (IRA) of 1901 was not enacted just to bar non-white immigrants, which was something that could be achieved at the state level, but to circumvent the Colonial Office. His claim

²⁴ Ibid, p. 21.

²⁵ Ronald Norris, *The Emergent Commonwealth- Australian Federation: Expectations and Fulfilment 1889-1910* (Melbourne, 1975).

²⁶ Ibid, p. 98.

²⁷ Stuart Macintyre, 'Australia and the Empire', Robin Winks, ed., *Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume V: Historiography* (Oxford, 1999) p. 181.

rested on a thorough reading of pro-Federation campaign literature which, he wrote, demonstrated that many Australians believed that the colonies had already implemented sufficient restrictions through their own arrangements with states such as Japan. He also went through the political manoeuvrings around the IRA to show that Australian politicians tried to create a *fait accompli* before the Imperial government could examine the bill in detail. Norris underestimated the importance of the coming IRA to Federation. As a writer who dismissed the role of colonial nationalism, however, it was significant that he showed how colonial governments could disagree with and even countermand central Imperial policy.

McQueen's and Norris's books took very different approaches. *The New Britannia* was an academic polemic in which imperial values were seen as a moral sickness in Australian society. Meanwhile *The Emergent Commonwealth* was a dry accounting of the Australian political and business elite's politicking. Both made limited use of British sources, let alone any other non-Australian ones. The result were books that described the guiding passions and political ideals of an Australian imperial citizenry, but which never established any effective context for that Empire. They also failed to engage with the 'other' Australasian colony: New Zealand. Norris dealt with New Zealand's decision not to take part in Federation in asides; McQueen hardly mentioned it at all. Both books thus suffered from an overly narrow focus on the relationship between Britain and Australia, and by not exploring the relationship with New Zealand (or that of New Zealand and Britain) they limited their analytical scope.

The work that came closest to looking at the imperial context was unsurprisingly that on defence and security concerns. The problem here, though, was that there was a natural tendency to focus on the years after Federation. Neville Meaney's *The Search for Security in the Pacific, 1901-14* (1976) is still the best overview of Australian strategic policymaking.²⁸

²⁸ Neville Meaney, *The Search for Security in the Pacific, 1901-1914* (Sydney, 1976).

In terms of analysis of how the Australian colonies saw the geopolitical situation in the Pacific Ocean at the beginning of the twentieth century it has not been surpassed. Meaney is also interesting in his conviction that the colonies had different material interests to the metropole, and they acted in service of those interests, and that is that, but his book inevitably covers the 1890s only in passing at the start and is not concerned with New Zealand. Military and strategic historians have also generally been better at looking at the wider context: for example, Jeffrey Grey's *A Military History of Australia* (2008)²⁹ largely treats New Zealand as an 'Australian' colony in its sections on pre-Federation naval planning, and more modern works on the South African War have done the same.³⁰

These New Left works, and others of the same generation, were therefore certainly better at integrating political and cultural history than the texts of the 1950s and earlier. They have been built upon since by further detailed works on the history of the Federation process. Chapter Six has a fuller discussion of the historiography of Federation, but the key works that shaped this dissertation were John Hirst's *The Sentimental Nation* (2000),³¹ Helen Irving's *To Constitute a Nation* (1997)³² and J.A. La Nauze's *The Making of the Australian Constitution* (1972).³³ However, they still share the problem of a narrow focus on Australia. La Nauze's work is the earliest, and gives the most time to New Zealand views, especially in the opening sections - Hirst and Irving practically ignore the other colony.

The tendency for Australian historians to only look inwards is particularly unfortunate because New Zealand histories have been, if anything, even more parochial.³⁴ In general, the New Zealand academy, consisting of a smaller pool of scholars, saw less dramatic shifts in

²⁹ Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia* (Melbourne, 2008).

³⁰ E.g. Craig Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War: The War in South Africa 1899-1902* (Melbourne, 2002).

³¹ John Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Constitution* (Melbourne, 2000).

³² Helen Irving, *To Constitute a Nation: A Cultural History of Australia's Constitution* (Cambridge, 1997).

³³ J.A. La Nauze, *The Making of the Australian Constitution* (Melbourne, 1972).

³⁴ The other key works on Federation were Norris, discussed above, and W.G. McMinn, *A Constitutional History of Australia* (Melbourne, 1979), & *Nationalism and Federalism in Australia* (Melbourne, 1994).

methodologies and approaches than Australia did. The most dominant figure in New Zealand orthodox historiography was Keith Sinclair. Sinclair marked himself out as the first great national historian of post-war New Zealand with *The History of New Zealand* (1959).³⁵ This volume began with a retelling of Māori creation myth, in contrast to the Anglo-centrism of Sinclair's Australian counterparts, and it portrayed New Zealand as a bicultural society. Though a Pākehā (European), Sinclair thought that Māori culture was crucial to forming a New Zealand identity that was distinct from Britishness. Otherwise, his society, one primarily built by egalitarian-yet-individualist pastoralists, is not dissimilar to Ward's vision of Australia. Sinclair returned to this in *A Destiny Apart* (1986) which portrayed a Pākehā culture torn between longing for Britain and pride in its new homeland.³⁶ Sinclair's work is of foundational importance - he was the first great New Zealand historian to grapple with problems of Pākehā identity and questions of nationalism versus imperialism - but it is now dated and needs some challenging. For example, *A Destiny Apart* argued that the New Zealand nation-state had emerged by the beginning of the twentieth century - the next few decades of increasing political independence were just an acknowledging of existing truth. While Sinclair recognised that New Zealand used the Empire to advance its own interests, his phrase 'imperialism was an expression of an emergent nationalism' reveals his assumption that one identity had to make way for the other.³⁷

Sinclair set out a template for understanding New Zealand history that his successors such as Michael King were happy to follow, a template in which the Empire itself played a limited role.³⁸ It is notable, for example, that *The Oxford History of New Zealand* (1981) did not include a chapter on international relations at all. Then, when the second edition was

³⁵ Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand* (Harmsworth, 1959).

³⁶ Keith Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity* (Wellington, 1986).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

³⁸ Michael King's *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland, 2003) is the most recent attempt at a big 'popular' history of New Zealand. It owes much to Sinclair.

published in 1992, W. David McIntyre's chapter on 'Imperialism and Nationalism', followed Sinclair's line that New Zealand's imperial identity largely served to develop its own nationalism, rather than being a distinct worldview itself.³⁹ Mirroring the trend in Australia, it is also evident that much of the work on the history of defence and security, such as Ian McGibbon's *Blue-Water Rationale* (1981), has focussed on the world wars and after rather than the late-nineteenth century.⁴⁰ Again mirroring Australia, though, the works on the South African War have looked across the Tasman too, thus showing a slightly greater openness in the field of strategic history.⁴¹

Nor has this problem disappeared recently. Even *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, (2009), while dealing with New Zealand's existence in an Imperial world throughout, had very little to say about its place within international political history.⁴² If the imperial and international dimensions have often been neglected in the orthodox Australian national history, the problem is even more acute in New Zealand. As James Belich has drily noted there is a general 'rule that Australian and New Zealand historians should ignore each other,' and this undoubtedly hurts the smaller group of scholars more.⁴³ Late in his career, Keith Sinclair produced the edited collection *Tasman Relations* (1987), but typically his own contribution again reinforced the separate nature of the societies in 'Why New Zealanders are not Australian.'⁴⁴

Having surveyed both sides of the Tasman through the historiography produced in the middle to late twentieth century, it should be apparent that, while these various historians did

³⁹ Geoffrey Rice, ed., *The Oxford History of New Zealand* (Oxford, 1981).

⁴⁰ Ian McGibbon, *Blue-Water Rationale: The Naval Defence of New Zealand* (Wellington, 1981).

⁴¹ Nigel Robson, *Our First Foreign War: The Impact of the South African War 1899-1902 on New Zealand* (Auckland, 2021).

⁴² Giselle Byrnes, ed., *The New Oxford History of New Zealand* (2009).

⁴³ James Belich, 'Colonisation and History in New Zealand,' in Winks (ed.), *Oxford History of the British Empire*, p. 190.

⁴⁴ Keith Sinclair (ed.) *Tasman Relations: New Zealand and Australia, 1788-1988* (Auckland, 1987).

excellent work on individual aspects of the Empire, that work was not often integrated effectively with other scholarship. From the work of Hancock right through to New Zealand's *Oxford History* in the 2000s, the Oceanic colonies have been treated as if they always had separate national destinies, with generation after generation of historians failing to question that assumption, at least in full-length books. Donald Denoon and Philippa Mein Smith have both sought, separately and together, to get historians to rediscover 'Australasia,' and a few attempts have been made to bridge this gap in the form of edited collections, but they have done little to dent the emphasis on national history.⁴⁵ Moreover, the national histories have displayed a lack of curiosity about the broader Empire. This topic has been left to constitutional historians like Ward or used as something that Australia and New Zealand were defined against as in McQueen and Sinclair.

This problem is particularly notable when it comes to the Pacific. By the 1980s there was a serious revival in the study of the Pacific Islands, both on the cultural level and as an area of political contention. But this field was not well integrated into Australian and New Zealand history. The last serious history of New Zealand imperialism in the Pacific in this period was published in 1964; the last one of Australian imperialism was published in 1980.⁴⁶

There is therefore a surprising gap in the historiography when it comes to covering Australia and New Zealand as imperial actors in their own right. Although the New Zealand academy in particular produces world leading scholarship on the South Pacific, there has not been a serious high-level study of New Zealand imperialism since Angus Ross's *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century* (1964).⁴⁷ In fact, despite an explosion of interest in how the peoples of the South Pacific were affected by the empire on a

⁴⁵ See Donald Denoon, 'Remembering Australasia: A Repressed Memory' in *Australian Historical Studies*, 34:122 (2003), pp. 290-304 & 'The Isolation of Australian History,' *Australian Historical Studies* 22:87 (1986), pp. 252-260 & Philippa Mein Smith 'Mapping Australasia,' in *History Compass* 7:4 (2009), pp. 1099-1022.

⁴⁶ By Angus Ross and Roger Thompson respectively. Their works are discussed in more detail later.

⁴⁷ Angus Ross, *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1960).

social level, the actual approach of studying the political machinations of the government appears to have eased up. It is striking that when comparing two major biographies of Richard Seddon, New Zealand's arch-imperial leader, R. M. Burdon's *King Dick* (1955) devotes far more space to a serious examination of Seddon's ambitions in the Pacific than Tom Brooking's more recent *Richard Seddon* (2014).⁴⁸ Australia has likewise not had a major political study of its imperial ambitions since Roger Thompson's *Australian Imperialism in the Pacific* (1980).⁴⁹ The great work on the Samoan question, Paul Kennedy's *The Samoan Tangle* is from 1974 and as a British work focussed on the diplomats of London, Berlin and Washington, it did not and could not be expected to seriously grapple with how the Pacific Islands affected Australasian views of the Empire.⁵⁰ Again, there has been superb work on the social level, but in recent decades a serious approach to colonial relations with foreign powers in the Pacific is lacking; Luke Trainor's *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism* (1994) is good at subjecting the political questions to a wider imperial lens, but too often assumes that that imperialism and nationalism were in competition.⁵¹ The book also suggests that there was an 'Anglo-Australian system' at work in the Pacific, which implies a willingness to read cooperation into sources that appear to this author to suggest nothing but fractiousness and mutual distrust.

In recent decades there has been renewed interest in White Australasian ideas about race and immigration. For example, David Walker's *Anxious Nation* (1999) and David Goldsworthy's (ed.) *Facing North* (2001) both capture the complicated nature of the

⁴⁸ R.M Burdon, *King Dick: A biography of Richard John Seddon* (Christchurch, 1955) & Tom Brooking, *Richard Seddon: King of God's Own* (Auckland, 2014).

⁴⁹ Roger Thompson, *Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: The Expansionist Era, 1820-1920* (Melbourne, 1980).

⁵⁰ Paul Kennedy, *The Samoan Tangle: A Study in Anglo-German-American Relations, 1878-1900* (Dublin, 1974).

⁵¹ Luke Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism: Manipulation, conflict and compromise in the late nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 1994).

colonies' attitudes towards their larger neighbours.⁵² Goldsworthy's book largely deals with events after the dissertation's period, but still has much useful analysis of Australasian 'Yellow Peril' thinking. David Dutton's chapter, 'A British Outpost in the Pacific', emphasises that Australasian views towards Asia cannot be understood unless it is emphasised that the colonies saw themselves as outposts of British civilisation. They were not merely afraid for their own sakes, but for what they saw as their duty to build a more egalitarian Britain in the Antipodes.

Another successful example of this new literature is Benjamin Mountford's *Britain, China and Colonial Australia*, (2016) that shows how the Australian colonies were not merely witnesses to the British contact with the Qing Empire, but an active point of engagement.⁵³ Moving beyond well-worn stories of Chinese goldminers, Mountford demonstrates that Chinese contact with Australia complicated the colonies' relationship with the metropole. He shows how Australian Sinophobia was far more than a matter of the immigration restrictions of individual colonies, or even just of London's preferred policies versus the settler governments. Rather, because Australia was such an important point of contact between the British and Chinese empires it became a truly international affair: by taking the Chinese (and Japanese) governments seriously as actors, Mountford demonstrates that the Australasian colonies had far more import than a narrow focus on London would indicate. Mountford is primarily focussed on the period through 1888, and he does not cover the broader debates about Australasia's relationship with the Pacific. This dissertation, to some extent, continues his project: in the chapters on the Pacific and Australasian relationships with Asia, it follows his tripartite model - Australasia and the Asia Pacific and

⁵² David Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia, 1850-1939* (St Lucia, 1999) & David Dutton, 'A British Outpost in the Pacific,' in David Goldsworthy, ed., *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement With Asia, vol 1* (Melbourne, 2001).

⁵³ Benjamin Mountford, *Britain, China and Colonial Australia* (Oxford, 2016).

Britain itself. However, note once again that Mountford, along with Walker and Dutton, deals with Australia, not Australasia: New Zealand is treated as an adjunct at best, despite being as engaged with China as any colony Mountford examines.

It has taken two developments within the literature related to the place of the Anglophone white settler countries in global history for the debate to break free from national history perspectives. One of these developments was the development of the idea of the ‘British World.’ Arising at the turn of the twenty-first century, this was an attempt to move beyond the constraints of empire and national history. Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich defined it in *The British World* (2003) as ‘a phenomenon of mass migration from the British Isles. Its core was the “neo-Britains” where migrants found they could transfer into societies with familiar cultural values.’⁵⁴ This was not just about the self-governing colonies sharing a political landscape with the United Kingdom, but a socio-cultural one - and one in which the neo-Britains could shape metropolitan politics and culture too. National and local identities thus co-existed.⁵⁵ The ‘British World’ does not always sit easily with the ‘British Empire;’ for all that the ‘British World’ was an interconnected zone, the British Empire had a definite spatial seat of power.⁵⁶ Too much focus on global Britishness can elide the important regional differences between colonial societies, and the concrete political realities of the Empire. However, the school has been invaluable for encouraging scholars to find new connections between the settler-colonies and Britain beyond simple hierarchical structures.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich, *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity* (London, 2005).

⁵⁵ Cf. Linda Colley’s *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London, 2003). which deals with the creation of a ‘British’ identity that could sit over and alongside English, Welsh and Scottishness. Colley’s definition of Britishness as Protestant, anti-French, metropolitan, and pride in the Royal Navy is not dissimilar to Australasian identities in the 1880s-1890s.

⁵⁶ Gary Magee & Andrew Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of Power, Goods and Capital in the British World, c.1850-1914* (Cambridge, 2010), p.25.

⁵⁷ For a survey of the school, see Rachel Bright & Andrew Dilley, ‘Historiographical Review: After the British World,’ in *The Historical Journal*, 60:2 (2017) pp. 547-568.

A key text here is Duncan Bell's *The Idea of Greater Britain*, (2007) which traces the intellectual impact of key thinkers like Charles Dilke and J.R. Seeley upon those societies. Bell is writing high-level intellectual history; his work is very valuable for showing how educated Britons in the UK and abroad saw their societies, but it is as concerned with the way in which those ideas filtered into the wider public of the settler colonies.⁵⁸

Influenced by the 'British World' school, *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism* (2016) is a recent edited volume that marries theoretical analysis of the distinct characteristics of self-governing colonies with practical historical analysis. A key argument, certainly in Carey's & Edmonds' chapter on Australia and Richard Hill's 'New Zealand, 1840-1907', is that settler colonial societies ended up acting as the wider empire in miniature.⁵⁹ It follows, then, that the very structure of Australasian societies gave rise not so much to imperial loyalties, but to a genuinely imperialist mindset; that the way these European communities saw the world was inherently in terms of competition for land and political hegemony. That naturally led to contradictions with the policy of the imperial government when it came to relations to foreign powers: what was a rational concession in London could be seen in Australasia as the giving up of the heartland.

Deryck Schreuder and Stuart Ward's *Australia's Empire* (2008) is another of the influential recent texts on the Oceanic colonies on Empire.⁶⁰ It is a wide-ranging volume and is particularly strong as a collection of cultural historical essays: topics such as the British Monarchy in the colonial imagination do not always sit neatly with earlier chapters on the conquest and slaughter of the indigenous peoples. It features an odd absence of labour history, but the most obvious gap is the Pacific Ocean. A volume that seeks to explain

⁵⁸ Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of the New World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton, 2007).

⁵⁹Penelope Edwards & Jane Carey, 'Australia,' & Richard Hill, 'New Zealand,' Edward Cavanagh & Lorenzo Veracini, eds, *The Routledge History of Settler Colonialism* (Abingdon, 2016).

⁶⁰ Deryck Schreuder & Stuart Ward, *Australia's Empire* (Oxford, 2008).

Australia's relationship with the Empire but which does not really address Australia's very active role in defining and expanding that Empire in its own neighbourhood is missing something important. Still, there is also much of use here. John Hirst's 'Empire, State, Nation' is good on showing how the establishment of self-government through the creation of colonial versions of British parliamentary institutions also required colonial acceptance, and use of, British political mythology. Though not directly relevant to the dissertation, this is useful for thinking about how the political reforms of the 1890s were not just policy changes but also required a leap of imagination. Stuart Ward's 'Security: Defending Australia's Empire' is very good on stressing how security concerns shaped the way Australia understood the Empire, but, perhaps inevitably in a short essay, is less useful on these matters than Neville Meaney. Ward's point is sound, but insufficient; to fully understand the way that Australia's security concerns created a distinct local understanding of the Empire, those concerns must be studied alongside and contrasted with other players in the wider imperial system.

An important figure in this field is James Belich. He, in contrast to many who came before him, takes such a broad view of the Empire that he sometimes risks losing its actual societies. Belich began his career as a specialist in New Zealand history, and in his national histories *Making Peoples* (1996) and *Paradise Reforged* (2001) he very much took a stand against Sinclair.⁶¹ His contentious 'recolonisation' argument is that as New Zealand reorientated away from the federating Australian states and back towards Britain, its citizens came to see themselves not as mere subjects of the empire but co-owners. In this telling, their belief in English liberty meant that they saw New Zealand as its own part of the British metropole, not an isolated holding. Belich's use of the word 'recolonisation' for this process is, perhaps, unhelpful. It suggests that there was a loss of independence, when Belich's own

⁶¹ James Belich, *Making Peoples* (Honolulu, 1996), *Paradise Reforged* (Honolulu, 2001).

argument shows that the New Zealand imperial identity was one that gave the colony its sense of a healthy national character. It also puts too much stress on economic factors for the diverging pathways of New Zealand and the rest of Australasia; this dissertation argues that political and cultural ideas were important factors as well.

Belich's most significant work is *Replenishing the Earth*, (2009), a study of the great demographic boom of the English-speaking world in the long nineteenth century, it stresses the size and prosperity of colonial centres like Melbourne.⁶² This demographic transformation also saw, during our period, a shift between waves of settlers from the Metropole to a genuine British diaspora. In 1891 28% of British emigrants went to the Dominions, but by 1910 it was 63%.⁶³ The book's depiction of the Australasian colonies as thriving British societies rather than as mere dependencies is laudable. However, his framework's inclusion of Argentina and the United States means that the particular structures of the empire sometimes slip from view.

It is not that Australasia was not part of a larger world beyond the empire; but this dissertation stresses that the peculiar characteristics of the Oceanic colonies are marked by the fact that they exist not simply in the cultural and civilisational world of 'Greater Britain' but in the particular and definite structures of the British Empire. The two overlapped, but they were not identical. Furthermore, while Belich is excellent on showing how overseas British societies were shaped by the existence (or at least the idea) of 'the frontier', he again suffers from writing about grand models rather than specific societies. The United States and Australasia may have both been shaped by 'frontiers,' but the American drive west was a very different thing from Australia's fervent push inwards to settle the continent - not least because there was a *second* frontier in Australasia, in the great expanse of the Pacific, potentially inhabited by the sorts of hostile great power that nineteenth century America

⁶² James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth* (Oxford, 2009).

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 458.

never faced. This dissertation in fact argues that one of the distinguishing features of Australasian views of the empire was a persistent bitterness that the imperial government appeared to be insisting that they retreat from that frontier, a pressure not experienced in any of the other settler societies Belich studies.

A more convincing portrayal of that interconnected imperial world is John Darwin's *The Empire Project* (2009).⁶⁴ This volume deals extensively with the way in which Dominion (and metropolitan) Britishness was much more fungible than the traditional nationalist/imperialist dichotomy would suggest. He attacks the traditional understanding of the structure of the British Empire, saying that instead of a hierarchical polity centred on Westminster we should see the Empire as a 'British world system.' Darwin's picture of the Empire as a mess of 'chaotic pluralism' certainly shows the flaws in the old Australasian historiography that assumed Australasian governments could react to or change from a stable imperial structure: no such structure existed. Darwin's 'world system' is a useful framework because it allows the Empire to be, at times, a messy, ad hoc state of affairs. He argues that the empire relied not just on its global bureaucracy and the Royal Navy but also on a far less easily defined agglomeration of cultural affinities, economic self-interest, and the movement of labour and settlers. The dissertation largely takes this kind of vibrant disorder as its intellectual model of the empire: one in which the self-governing colonies, if not having equality in the empire, very much had more agency than a strict focus on governing structures would indicate.

These societies did not simply wish to improve socially upon the United Kingdom, they also wanted to improve upon it in terms of actual governance.⁶⁵ Darwin's 'Britannic

⁶⁴ John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge, 2009).

⁶⁵ See, for example, William Pember Reeves, *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand* (London, 1902).

Nationalism' is a convincing description of the utopian impulses of British settler colonies, but of course their identities and imaginations were also seriously shaped by dystopian ideas as well. Australasia was shaped not just by the pre-existing tensions of its own invasion and attempted destruction of its indigenous peoples, but also by its proximity to the rapidly growing societies of Asia. Importantly, while many Asians and Pacific Islanders would settle in Australasia during and before the period of the dissertation, far more important in shaping Australasian ideas of the empire was the uncertainty of whether the governments could stop that movement of peoples- and whether the British government would allow them to do so.

The other development that reshaped the literature, aside from the British World school, has been the concept of 'whiteness'. The work that looms over this field is Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds' *Drawing the Global Colour Line* (2009).⁶⁶ Lake and Reynolds, much like Belich, think that the global context for the self-governing colonies is not the empire but the English-speaking world. In this telling, Australasian views of racial science were as likely to be shaped by the southern United States as by the policy choices of the United Kingdom. It is particularly convincing in the case it makes for the importance of Charles Pearson, the Victorian politician and intellectual whose book *National Life and Character* (1893) is probably the most important work of social science published in the colonies in the 1890s.⁶⁷ The dissertation follows them thus far. Lake and Reynolds, however, once again lose track of the empire: they are convincing social and cultural historians, but they consistently underplay the importance of intra-imperial relations. They argue, for example, that the Colonial Office's eventual backing of literacy tests as a form of immigration control represents the United Kingdom bowing to an American racial worldview: this dissertation argues that this misses the much more important dimension,

⁶⁶ Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, 2009).

⁶⁷ Charles Pearson, *National Life and Character* (London, 1893).

which is that it represented the entrenchment of colonial views of the empire's racial hierarchies.

More recently, Jesse Tumblin's *The Quest for Security* (2019), drawing on both the 'British World' and the 'whiteness' literatures, has produced a more nuanced picture of the Australasian connections to the wider world, and crucially the wider empire.⁶⁸ Tumblin puts colonial policy making in the context of Lake and Reynolds' 'colour line,' but with a far defter grasp of the actual imperial contours in which colonial societies operated. A similar feat is accomplished by Cees Heere in *Empire Ascendent* (2020), which adopts a narrower focus on Anglo-Japanese relations in the twenty years to 1914.⁶⁹ Heere, like Tumblin, adeptly brings the racial thinking of the time into his account of how Anglo-Japanese relations operated. He is also concerned with the development, within Britain, of two different schools of thought about which parts of its empire were more important. There were thinkers descended from Joseph Chamberlain who believed in the importance of the Dominions.⁷⁰ Others, like Lord Curzon, believed that Britain's power rested in India and the Far East.⁷¹ Chamberlain's attempt - and failure - to change Britain's relationship with the self-governing colonies is a throughline in this work. John Mitcham's *Race and Imperial Defence in the British World*, (2016) takes more of a cultural historical approach than Heeres's or Tumblin's, despite its title.⁷² It is strong on the role of community groups like the Imperial Federation Leagues as vehicles of popular enthusiasm for the empire, and on the South African War as developing a particularly colonial expression of imperial Britishness. Lastly, Jeremy Martens' *Empire and Asian Migration* (2018) studies both Australasian and South

⁶⁸ Jesse Tumblin, *The Quest for Security: Sovereignty, Race and the Defence of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2019).

⁶⁹ Cees Heere, *Empire Ascendent: The British World and the Rise of Japan, 1894-1914* (Oxford, 2020).

⁷⁰ On the 'Round Table' movement see Andrea Bosco & Alex May, *The Round Table: The Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy* (London, 1977).

⁷¹ George Curzon, *Problems of the Far East* (London, 1895).

⁷² John Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence in the British World* (Cambridge, 2016).

African settler colonies together. Martens shows that the settler colonies should not be studied as remote outposts, but rather as societies not just linked but bridged by the shipping lanes of the Indian Ocean. Ideas about race and empire were developed and circulated within the settler colonies without necessarily being direct responses to the larger hubs of Britain and the USA. Martens also looks at the interaction of the settler colonies with Japan, but here he slightly overplays the extent to which Japan successfully sought concessions from the Australian colonies and, later, the Commonwealth.

On the British Empire's relationship with Japan, there are two groups of scholars who are relevant. The first are those who deal with Britain's formal diplomacy with Japan. Ian Nish's *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance* (1966) remains the standard work and was invaluable for understanding the Salisbury government's policy in Asia.⁷³ Antony Best's *British Engagement with Japan* (2020) draws on Australian and New Zealand sources to show how the relationship affected the settler colonies, following the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.⁷⁴ Then there are the works on Japan's relationship with the colonies. David Sissons wrote about the experience of the Japanese in Australia throughout the 1890s.⁷⁵ Henry Frei looked at the relationship from the viewpoint of Japan.⁷⁶ In New Zealand, M.P. Lissington's *New Zealand and Japan, 1900-41* (1972) determinedly shows the emergence of New Zealand as a voice in Imperial policy-making in the Pacific, but is again a national history and barely deals with the 1890s.

Where does this leave the dissertation? The obvious gap remains the Tasman Sea. That challenge is not new, but it has not been fully met. Even when the colonies are all

⁷³ Ian Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires* (London, 1966).

⁷⁴ Antony Best, *British Engagement with Japan, 1854-1922: The Origins and Course of an Unlikely Alliance* (Abingdon, 2020).

⁷⁵ Arthur Stockwin, Keiko Tamura, eds., *Bridging Australia and Japan: Volume 1: The Writings of David Sissons, Historian and Political Scientist* (Canberra, 2016).

⁷⁶ Henry Frei, *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia: From the Sixteenth Century to World War II* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1991).

considered together, Federation hangs over the writing. It really would not matter if New Zealand actually had been inevitably destined to become its own nation. This dissertation seeks to look at how the forces that shaped Australasian societies' relationship with the empire did so in totality; cutting off a valuable source of evidence due to a national border that did not exist yet pointlessly harms the work. The second gap is the 1890s. Much of the scholarship on Australasia's relationship with the empire and the wider world either focus on the 1880s - e.g. Mountford - or start in the 1900s - Liddington, Meaney, Tumblin, Heere et cetera. Though not ignored entirely – e.g., by Jeremy Martens - there is nonetheless room to explore how the colonies continued to evolve between the excitement of the 1880s and the formal establishment of the new Dominions in the 1900s.

The dissertation's focus is on how these colonial societies specifically understood themselves in terms of, on the one hand, the British Empire and on the other the geographical fact of their location in the Pacific. The acknowledged expert on this outlook was Neville Meaney, who not only saw no evidence of local nationalism but dismissed the development of Australian culture in the twentieth century as 'thwarted Britishness.'⁷⁷ In 2013-2015, Meaney engaged in a debate in *History Australia* with Marilyn Lake and Christopher Waters.⁷⁸ Lake described Meaney's 'British race patriotism' as ignoring the context of global whiteness, 'Anglo-Saxonism' and Australian links with America and Germany.⁷⁹ Meaney in turn described this as ahistorical, exaggerating Australian elite affections for these nations.⁸⁰ Meaney's broad idea is that Australians, 'finding that they held starkly divergent views from

⁷⁷ Meaney, 'Britishness and Australian Identity: The Problem of Nationalism in Australian History and Historiography' in *Australian Historical Studies*, 32:116 (2001) pp. 76-90.

⁷⁸ Waters' article 'Nationalism, Britishness and Australian History: The Meaney Thesis Revisited' in *History Australia*, 10:3 (2013) pp. 12-22 deals more with twentieth century nationalism and is beyond this work's scope.

⁷⁹ Lake, 'British World or New World? Anglo-Saxonism and Australian Engagement with America,' in *ibid*, pp. 36-50.

⁸⁰ Meaney, 'The Problem of Nationalism and Transnationalism in Australian History: A Reply to Marilyn Lake and Christopher Waters,' in *History Australia*, 12:2 (2015), pp. 209-231.

Britain about security in the Pacific, pursued their own defence and foreign policies to meet what they perceived to be their distinctive dangers.’⁸¹

The dissertation aims to reconcile these two positions: firstly, to firmly position Australasian political identities within the British Empire. Secondly, to show that while Meaney was correct to stress the divergence with Britain, that case is best made by showing how the colonies interacted with each other, with the wider empire, and with Japan itself. It matters less whether Australasians acted out of ‘race patriotism’ or ‘Anglo-Saxonism,’ it matters that they acted.

⁸¹ Meaney, ‘The Problem of Greater Britain and Australia’s Strategic Crisis, 1905-1914,’ in Meaney (James Curran & Stuart Ward, eds.), *Australia and the Wider World: Selected Essays of Neville Meaney* (Sydney, 2013).

ii. Outline

The dissertation is fundamentally grounded in the same sources as traditional studies of Australasian politics in the 1890s. It does not seek to be a truly comparative history, either within Australasia itself or by putting Australasia in contradistinction to the imperial politics of Britain itself. As this project is about Australasian attitudes to empire, it has usually followed the secondary literature when it comes to describing the intentions of the imperial government. Some use has been made of the British governmental and personal papers to the extent that these can help to illuminate Australasian thinking.

Due to the wide geographical range that the dissertation covers, it was not possible to visit every state archive,⁸² however it cites material from every self-governing colony. The approach has been to cite public-facing sources because this study is about the public rhetoric of empire. That means a focus on Hansard and other parliamentary sources as the single richest vein of material where politicians actively discussed their responses to imperial actions - by Britain or by an Australasian colony. The private papers of various colonial politicians were consulted, although more was read of the correspondence of men like Edmund Barton or Richard Seddon than ended up being directly cited. The 1890s was a healthy period for the Australasian media: newspapers from across the region have been drawn on.

The thesis is broadly divided into thirds. The first chapter is contextual, explaining how the 1890s were shaped by the turbulent decade that preceded them. This chapter lays out how the various political currents that are dealt with in the dissertation's period had played out by its starting point: the first overseas foray into an imperial war, the long history of Australasian entanglements in the Pacific, and the way that fear of Pacific Islanders and

⁸² Tasmania, Western Australia and South Australia were not visited.

Asian-Australians began to play a dominant role in colonial politics. It also discusses the debate between Britain and her Australasian colonies about how the Royal Navy's Australia Station should be funded.

Chapter Two deals with ideologies of empire. It also necessarily steps back before the start date somewhat, as the books that were most influential upon Australasian conceptions of the empire were often published in previous decades. It uses the abortive and often mocked 'imperial federation' movement to show how the language of imperial reform had become pervasive in Australasian society, even as the movement's activists struggled to make headway. Right up until the end of the period, this shared language of hoped-for-reform shows that there was serious public interest within Australasia in *shaping* the empire rather than simply prospering within it.

Chapters Three and Four deal with two great external questions of the empire: the geopolitics of the south-west Pacific and the South African War of 1899-1902. For the government in London, South Africa was one of the vital interests of the Empire, and the Pacific Islands a tertiary interest at best; but for the Oceanic colonies, these held almost equal weight in their imperial imaginations. The Pacific Islands are discussed first, including the Samoan 'crisis,' the state of Britain's 'rival' powers in the region, and colonial fears about imperial policy. Then in Chapter Four, the South African War is looked at as the greatest crisis the empire faced in this period.

The two chapters, taken together, show how, although the Australasians often took the same approaches to the empire as the home government, even imperial loyalists could come up with radically different assessments of where the empire's interests were. The simple fact of making that assessment from their standpoint of the Pacific, rather than from Europe, led in itself to a distinctly Australasian view of imperial geopolitics.

The last third of the dissertation considers how internal racial paranoia interacted with the Australian federation movement. Chapter Five examines the various attempts to pass anti-Asian restriction measures in the 1890s, and the surprising tendency of these measures to stall. This is set against the British and Japanese governments' cautious exploration of closer relations; from the 1894 Treaty of Commerce and Navigation onwards, those two governments were becoming more amiable exactly at the same time as the Australasians became convinced that the mere presence of the Japanese was a threat to white women and children. This necessarily had an imperial dimension: the Australasians saw themselves as standing on the frontier of white civilisation, and the British government appeared to be inviting Japan *within* that frontier.

Chapter Six looks at how Australian Federation was affected by the development of these political and cultural currents. The chapter examines how many of the external pressures that drove Australian politics - fear of imperial insecurity, fear of non-whites, fear that the imperial government would override domestic immigration laws - also drove New Zealand *out* of federation. The chapter shows that just as Australia had a distinct view of itself in the world and empire that kept it together, that same view convinced New Zealand to step aside. That decision was largely taken because of a sense that the colony was the best hope for a racially pure British society, the same sense that had motivated Australian paranoia. Next, the focus returns to the continent. The Commonwealth of Australia's first action was to purge itself of a non-white population, the Pacific Island labouring-class in Queensland and the Northern Territory. Its second was to introduce the Immigration Restriction Act, generally taken as the start of White Australia. This was not simply the realisation of long-desired policies, but part of an active program to define the new Commonwealth as a British society, a response to both the British and Japanese governments.

This is a disparate approach, but it is hoped that read together these chapters will show how Australasians responded to empire both in their external approach to the world and in their internal conceptions of themselves. The dissertation's purpose is to take Australasia seriously as a seat of imperial thought. In an age where the telegraph had connected the world, the Australasian public could stay in touch with worldwide political developments with ease. If Australasia arrived at its own conclusions about what the interests were of the empire; if Australasians read the same intellectual works and developed different ideas about the purpose of that empire and its necessary reforms; if, even, Australasia's fears and bigotries led it to a different appreciation of what threats were posed to that empire - then we owe it to the sources to take all this seriously. Australasians were not simple provincials. They were colonial nationalists, yes, but that colonial nationalism was as much an attempt to redefine what it meant to be a British nation within the Empire as it was to create new ones.

Chapter One: Australasia and the Paranoid 1880s

The 1880s were a turbulent decade in Australasia. Intercolonial conferences were convened, but there was no Federation. Asian immigrants were railed against, but it would be ten years before the white Australian policy was implemented. Troops were sent overseas for the Empire in 1885, and imperial policies were questioned in the Pacific; but the anti-Mahdist campaign and the dispute over the New Hebrides were small beer next to the later debates over South Africa and Samoa. The dissertation will examine how those issues played out and found resolution in the 1890s, but first will lay out the context of the previous decade, which would determine how Australasia faced the empire from 1892.

Colonial paranoia was much more pronounced in the Pacific than in London. The fear of rival empires saw the self-governing colonies repeatedly embarrass the Imperial Government: firstly with Queensland's attempted annexation of New Guinea in 1883, and secondly in 1886 with the crisis over Franco-British rule in the New Hebrides.¹ However, not only would the New Hebrides themselves continue to occupy the attention of Australasians in the 1890s, but the lessons learned from the dispute by the governments both in Oceania and Britain would greatly affect British Empire politics in the Pacific for the next fifteen years.

The 1880s also brought heightening racial paranoia. This directly mapped upon Australasia's increasing nervousness about its place in the world. The Pacific was not just a place of foreign empires, but also a source of vital labour for Queensland's plantations. The labour trade was a challenge to the sense of Australasia as a 'White Man's Country' and raised questions about the basic geographical concept of Australasia: where were its borders? New Guinea? The Solomon Islands? Or did they end at the Torres Strait?

¹ Vanuatu.

Another element was fear of China. Sinophobia had been a popular sentiment since the days of the Gold Rush, but in the 1880s it became a truly trans-colonial cause. By the end of the 1880s anti-Chinese sentiment had become so clear a driver of colonial politics that the Salisbury government had to engage in talks with the Great Qing about colonial migration restrictions. Politicians in both London and the Oceanic capitals often convinced themselves that the people of the Australasian colonies and their leaders were speaking with one voice about the position of Asians in British societies. Whether opinion was that united is less important than the belief that it existed.

Before proceeding, let us review the structure of Imperial governance in pre-Federation Australasia. The colonies had been granted responsible government via the Constitution Acts of the 1850s.² These Acts established local legislatures and their rights to make their own constitutions. Colonial laws were valid provided they had the assent of the Imperial government and were not ‘repugnant’ to the Common Law. In the early 1860s a South Australian judge overturned so much local legislation that Britain passed the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865, which clarified that colonial laws were valid provided they did not conflict with imperial statutes.³ Chapter Three discusses the Colonial Defence Act of 1865 which permitted the self-governing colonies to raise local navies; on land, the first Volunteer Acts had passed in 1854 in Victoria and New South Wales, though the Australasian colonies were largely as inert in their spending on infantry as they were on gunboats. The Australian Colonies Duties Act 1873 allowed the colonies the right to set preferential tariffs on other colonies’ goods. The Imperial government still prohibited the colonies from giving preferences to goods imported from beyond the Empire. Significantly

² Western Australia was an outlier, only being granted responsible government in 1890.

³ For the Act’s creation from the view of the Colonial Office, see D.B. Swinfen, *Imperial Control of Colonial Legislation: A Study of British Policy towards Colonial Legislative Powers* (Oxford, 1970); for the Australian viewpoint, see W.G. McMinn, *A Constitutional History of Australia* (Oxford, 1979).

all communications with London had to go through the governor. Though several colonies had Agents-General in London to help secure investment and report on important goings-on, these were not official lines of communication with the British government.

The most important power the Imperial government had to influence colonial affairs was the governor's ability to reserve assent to a bill and the Crown's authority to disallow a bill even after the governor had assented. This power was used sparingly; McMinn notes that only fifteen bills in New South Wales were reserved before Federation, and only five in the whole of Australia were disallowed.⁴ It is important to understand then, that although Imperial Federation and other reform movements were popular in the 1880s and 1890s, as a matter of legislative fact the self-governing colonies were moving away from central Imperial authority.

⁴ McMinn, p. 90.

i. New South Wales and the Sudan

Before discussing the Pacific or Australasia itself, however, we will turn to Africa. In 1885, New South Wales made a tiny contribution to the Imperial crisis in the Sudan. That contribution serves as a useful case study of colonial attitudes towards the broader empire in the 1880s and contextualises and contrasts with Australasian responses to the South African War in the 1890s.

Australian historians seem slightly embarrassed about the Sudan Expedition. It is not just that the country's first military expedition outside Australasia was in the service not merely of an imperialist disaster, but that it seemed so inconsequential. In New South Wales's Legislative Council, Philip Gidley King proclaimed the event was 'an epoch in our history. It is more, it is an epoch in the history of Great Britain. It is still more, it is an epoch in the history of the world.'⁵ This is not a judgement shared by many chroniclers. The Australian contribution to the war would be lucky to merit a footnote in a general history; even in Australian narratives it is usually passed over. Jeffrey Grey's *A Military History of Australia* devotes fewer than two pages to it, while Stuart Macintyre's *Concise History of Australia* offers a single sentence.⁶ Macintyre lumps it in with the colonial forces sent against the Māori and then later the volunteers who fought the Boers and the Boxers as a collection of ignominious imperial wars.⁷ Those historians who deal with it in detail tend to treat it as a prelude to later campaigns - K. S. Inglis's centenary study from 1985 is literally called *The Rehearsal*.⁸

⁵ Sam Hutchinson, *Settlers, War and Empire in the Press: Unsettling News in Australia and Britain, 1863-1902* (Wellington, 2018), p. 111.

⁶ Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, 3rd ed (Cambridge, 2008), Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, 3rd ed (Cambridge, 2009).

⁷ Macintyre, p. 141. Macintyre's conflation of the settler-colonial states of South Africa with the Māori iwi as victims of imperialism seems ill judged.

⁸ K. S. Inglis, *The Rehearsal: Australians in the Sudan, 1885* (Sydney, 1985).

On 3 March 1885, troopships sailed out of Sydney Harbour bearing the first Australian soldiers ever to serve outside Oceania. 200,000 people reportedly saw them off; ‘out of the main streets the crowds of people came hurrying into Phillip-street, Young-street, and Castlereagh-street, whence they proceeded in thousands into one surging mass, which gathered in Albert-street at the Quay.’⁹ General Gordon was dead, and the New South Wales volunteers were ready to avenge him.

In 1885, New South Wales duly dispatched troops to rescue Britain’s position in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. That contribution was tiny. However, it represents an awareness in the Australasian colonies that the days when local imperial crises could be easily resolved with the resources on hand were coming to an end. The campaign to save Gordon was expensive, logistically cumbersome, and ultimately unsuccessful. It prefigures the complex international interventions of the coming decades - the half a million men deployed to South Africa, the multilateral force assembled to secure the Beijing legations in the Boxer War. More importantly, it shows that the Australasians were linking events on one side of the Empire to their own local concerns. Theirs was not a local nationalism; their societies were based on being units within the wider Empire, and they believed that prestige won or lost in other parts of that Empire would have direct consequences in their own region.

Crucially, this view was mirrored by the Imperial government itself. In 1885, the British Prime Minister William Gladstone complained to his Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville, that he could not secure Britain’s interests in Egypt and the Sudan without making concessions to Germany in the Pacific, concessions that the self-governing colonies were resisting. They were, he said, ‘the bar to the Egyptian settlement.’¹⁰ Both the Imperial government and the self-governing colonies believed that events in north-east Africa and the south-west Pacific

⁹ *SMH*, 4 March 1885, p. 6.

¹⁰ To Granville, 6 March 1885, in Ross, *New Zealand Aspirations*, p. 148.

were linked. New South Wales did not decide to send troops to try to force a change in Gladstone's policy, but, nonetheless, there was a real sense that this was a chance for the colony to show it was not a bargaining chip, but a defender of the interests of the British Empire.

This was not like the slow descent into war in South Africa in 1899. Then, volunteers were dispatched after vigorous and prolonged debates in parliaments and the press. Though imperial fervour and race-patriotism played an important part, there were also reasoned arguments marshalled about the justness of the cause. In 1885, however, the decision to intervene in the war was literally taken within hours of the news of Gordon's death arriving in New South Wales, and it was taken unilaterally by Premier William Dalley. Dalley's speedy response spoke for the genuine grief of many Australians. It was not merely Sydney or the major centres that felt injured - the rural Victorian town of Inglewood proposed renaming the county of 'Gladstone' as 'Gordon'.¹¹ The speed of that reaction shows that on an instinctual level at least, there was no separation of Australian pride from Britain or the Empire. Gordon was a British hero, and his death an attack on Britain; New South Wales was British, so it had been attacked too.

There was no serious objection by local politicians to Australian participation on strategic grounds. In the 1890s in South Africa and in the Pacific Islands, colonial politicians argued that the government in London did not have a clear enough sense of the Empire's true geopolitical priorities. It is tempting to dismiss those arguments as local parochialism, but the response to the Sudan suggests they were genuine. When in 1885 people believed that the Empire's pride had been injured, Australasians were perfectly willing to make sacrifices on its behalf. At a meeting to raise funds for the contingent, politician Edmund Barton

¹¹ John Griffiths, *Imperial Culture in Antipodean Cities, 1880-1939* (London, 2014) p. 35.

challenged the Sydney crowd to consider ‘whether we regard ourselves as part of the English nation or as mere hewers of wood and drawers of water?’¹²

This was a view shared by British leaders in Britain. Lord Salisbury thought the offering of troops by New South Wales was far more important than the probably more useful supplies given by the Princely States. The volunteers were ‘true Englishmen and have behaved in a manner worthy of the race from which they have sprung and the splendid Empire of which they form so important a factor.’¹³ The response to Gordon’s death shows that, however much colonial leaders might debate imperial policy, they still considered themselves bound to its defence as a matter of patriotic and indeed racial duty. Any disputes over policy at this time should thus be framed as internal matters, not as the result of nationalists or proto-nationalists being set against the Empire itself.

The opposition to the dispatch of troops to the Sudan is also worth touching upon briefly. The radicals who opposed the South African War had three years to stick with that opposition at the risk of their social standing, or compromise to keep an audience. In 1885 there was simply no time for people to change their positions. From opposition, Henry Parkes tried to make an issue of Dalley’s circumvention of Parliament. This moved few people: the *Sydney Morning Herald* remarked of the old statesman’s desire to fill the colony’s leadership entirely with his sycophants that ‘Sir Henry Parkes would like nothing so much as to be the only male in a community of such eunuchs.’¹⁴ However, just as the grief for Gordon was sudden and genuine, so was the opposition to sending troops. The *Bulletin’s* opposition to the war sometimes still used the imperial framework. No less a writer than Andrew ‘Banjo’ Paterson

¹² Hutchinson, p. 98.

¹³ Salisbury to Lords, quoted in Michael Bentley, *Lord Salisbury’s World* (Cambridge 2004) p. 222.

¹⁴ *SMH*, 3 March, 1885, p. 5.

(later Australia's most famous observer of the South African War) wrote an anti-war poem from the perspective of the Mahdists!

El Mahdi to the Australian Troops

...Waking the desert's echoes with the drum –
Men of Australia, wherefore have ye come?
...
And fair Australia, freest of the free,
Is up in arms against the freeman's fight;
And with her mother joined to crush the right.¹⁵

It is a remarkable set of verses, but it still does not challenge the familial bond with Britain. Even many radical opponents of imperial policy still thought in these terms.

The fervour of 1885 quickly petered out, because when New South Wales troops returned in June, there was a new war scare - this time with Russia in Central Asia and the Northwest Frontier.¹⁶ Now that the defence of the Empire was something to be argued about on strategic terms, rather than as an emotional response to the slaying of a hero, the mood in the colonies rapidly turned against contributing troops. Dalley once again offered to send men 'to assert the arms of England wherever our help is needed,' but to his embarrassment almost none of the returning volunteers had any desire to re-enlist.¹⁷ The colonial press now joined its London fellows in condemning the Gladstone ministry, and increasingly described the crisis as an indication of a mismanaged Imperial strategy. The Christchurch *Press* suggested Gordon's death would injure 'British prestige in the East, where it is of vital importance that

¹⁵ *The Bulletin*, 28 February 1885, cited in Paterson, Andrew, *Singer of the Bush: Collected Works 1885-1900* (Sydney, 1983).

¹⁶ The 770 men had spent two months guarding railway pickets. They took several injured in a skirmish at the end of the Battle of Tamai, but their fatalities were entirely due to illness and injury.

¹⁷ Grey, p. 50.

it should be maintained'.¹⁸ By March the *New Zealand Herald* was explicitly noting that citizens were turning 'from the contest in the Sudan to the threatened war with Russia, which would be far more likely to affect us closely.'¹⁹ This was not simply localised patriotism. The conservative *Argus* suggested that Gladstone's advisors were not loyal to the Empire and asserted that the disloyalty at the top of the imperial government made it all the more important that Australia federate. It argued that a Victorian citizen who tried to speak for the Empire would not be heard so long as they spoke just as a citizen of Victoria - they would be a 'non entity.' But if the colonies united - first within Australia, but then within the whole Empire, they could have the weight to stand up to the weak leaders in London. Therefore, the paper said, 'we must enter upon imperial Federation on equal terms.'²⁰

Sam Hutchinson notes that this great outpouring of Imperial grief and loyalty came only two years after the abortive attempt by Queensland to annex New Guinea, but he fails to make the more important link to what was about to happen next. The *Argus* claimed that the mismanagement of the Sudan was 'part and parcel' of the same weakness on display in the New Hebrides.²¹ That is a remarkable statement but should be taken seriously. If we are to understand the way in which the Oceanic colonies saw the Empire and their place within it, then the Sudan Crisis shows us that we must always return to what the Britons in the South saw as the true Imperial frontier: the South Pacific.

¹⁸ *The Press*, 7 February 1885, p. 3.

¹⁹ *NZH*, 11 March 1885, p. 5.

²⁰ *The Argus*, 17 March 1885, p. 5.

²¹ *Ibid.*

ii. **Unclear Borders: Australasia and the Pacific Islands to 1883**



The South West Pacific in 1895²²

Note the proximity of New Guinea to Queensland, and the relative distance of the New Hebrides from the Australian colonies - French territory in New Caledonia is much closer than British possessions in Fiji or Western Samoa which are to the east of the territory shown.

If the eye follows the chain of islands from New Guinea through the Solomons, down through New Hebrides and New Caledonia, then to Norfolk Island and New Zealand below it, it is easy to understand why Australasians could conceive of this area as being a concrete geographic region.

²² *The Times Atlas* (London, 1895), reproduced in the David Rumsey Historical Maps Collection.

Two years before the Sudan crisis, in 1883, Australasian delegates met for an Intercolonial Convention in Sydney. All the Oceanic self-governing colonies were represented, including New Zealand. The convention passed a slew of resolutions, most of which moved the colonies towards the idea of Federation haphazardly at best, as with the founding of the toothless and ill-defined Federal Council. But it did know its mind on one subject at least. The convention unanimously called for Britain to adopt a new expansionist policy in the South Pacific. Britain should strongly press France to end its policy of penal transportation to New Caledonia and French Polynesia; the New Hebrides should be secured against that country's influence; and all non-Dutch New Guinea must be annexed to the Empire. The convention resolved:

That further acquisition of Dominion in the Western Pacific, south of the Equator, by any Foreign Power would be highly detrimental to the safety and well-being of the British possessions in Australasia, and injurious to the interests of the Empire.²³

Colonial Secretary Lord Derby was astonished by this militant line. It was, he wrote, 'mere raving.' The idea that French expansion into New Hebrides could seriously threaten Australasia seemed ridiculous; the idea that 'any Foreign Power' could injure the Empire's interest by acquiring territory in a region so far removed from what the Colonial Office considered the vulnerable frontiers of the Empire was clearly silly. Derby thought the proposal part bluster, part arrogant ignorance. It was not 'seriously intended,' he told Gladstone, 'though it is hard to fix the limits of colonial self-esteem.'²⁴

²³ *Proceedings of the 1883 Intercolonial Convention* (Sydney, 1883) p. 13.

²⁴ Derby to Gladstone, 7 December, 1883, in Stewart Firth, *New Guinea under the Germans* (Melbourne, 1982) p. 17.

The intent, though, was serious indeed. For all the ineffectiveness of the new Federal Council, one thing the convention had been clear upon was that its first responsibility was a problem that required joint action: ‘the relations of Australasia with the islands of the Pacific.’²⁵ In other words, this first attempt at joint intercolonial action, abortive as it would eventually prove to be, began by placing those colonies squarely in the context of Imperial politics in the Pacific. There is nothing original in saying that the process of Australian Federation was closely linked to the broader issues of the British Empire. That is, after all, the assertion made by Alfred Deakin in *The Federal Story*. He wrote that although the 1880s Federation movement was shaped by purely domestic causes, such as the arguments over intercolonial tariffs and the establishment of a rail network that crossed colonial boundaries, the chief stimulus for the 1883 convention was ‘the threatening aspect of affairs in the Pacific in the immediate neighbourhood of Australia.’²⁶ Later historians have also been careful to note the importance of the Pacific Island disputes of 1883 as a key force in shaping the Intercolonial Conference that would close that year. Deakin’s posthumous editor and interpreter, J. A. La Nauze, for instance, stressed that the Federation sentiment of the 1880s had many parents but that fear of imperial encroachment in the Pacific was the catalyst for the conference: ‘those apprehensions were, however, certainly the proximate reason for the assembly in Sydney in 1883.’²⁷

Colonial interest in the Pacific started early. New Zealand was and remains more oriented towards the South Pacific than most of the Australian states and had an interest in the islands since the Treaty of Waitangi had established the recognisable colony in 1840. Initially interest in the islands was largely the domain of New Zealand-based missionaries like Anglican Bishop George Selwyn, whose Melanesian missions were run from his New

²⁵ *Proceedings*, p. 18.

²⁶ Alfred Deakin (ed. J. A. La Nauze), *The Federal Story* (Melbourne, 1963) p. 9.

²⁷ La Nauze, *The Making of the Australian Constitution*, p. 2.

Zealand see. Over the coming decades, however, many of the colony's leading politicians adopted a distinctly expansionist tone. An 1871 report warned Her Majesty's Government that the Pacific Islands were in danger of seizure by foreign powers. They could not be trusted to govern themselves. It was warned, for example, that Fiji had just constituted a new government 'so weak in itself that the first foreign Power which chooses to interfere will assuredly be eagerly welcomed.' By the time of annexation in 1874, that foreign power would be Britain. This was not a development that concerned New Zealanders.²⁸

In the 1870s, both Julius Vogel (Premier 1873-1875, 1876) and George Grey (Premier 1877-1878) investigated the possibility of either British or New Zealand annexations in the region. Vogel commissioned an economic survey of the islands in 1874 which was little more than a shopping list. It was recommended that Britain should annex the Kermadecs, the Cook Islands, Tonga and Rapa Iti. In turn, the annexationists offered to kindly take over the administration of Fiji. The Colonial Office was not impressed. Colonial Secretary Lord Kimberley, noted that the colonial government did not even have full control over its own islands yet:

N. Zealand Govt. would have thought it as well first to get possession of the whole of *New Zealand* before undertaking to govern other territories. They will have enough to do in New Zealand for years to come without embarking on these Quixotic schemes.²⁹

Grey had been the architect of the Waikato War of the 1860s. The Colonial Office perhaps failed to realise that to Grey the imperial projects within and without the boundaries of New Zealand were all part of the colony's destiny of presiding over the whole region. In

²⁸ Premier William Fox to Governor George Bowen, 24 November 1871, in 'Papers Relating to the South Sea Islands,' part 1, no.1, *AJHR*, 1874, i.

²⁹ Minute, 28 December, 1873, on Fergusson to Colonial Secretary CO 209/230.

1879 he would proclaim that New Zealand was ordained to accomplish just that, that (pakeha) New Zealanders ‘were the proper future rulers and governors of the Pacific.’³⁰

This sense that expansion was not merely profitable but *proper* is important. Greed and ambition are, of course, key drivers of any program of Imperialism; but the politicians who promoted this assertive policy in the 1870s and 1880s, and indeed their heirs of the 1890s and beyond were also convinced that they were participating in a necessary and unavoidable national destiny. Vogel wrote in 1880 that it would be useless to struggle against a policy forced upon New Zealand by geographic and racial determinism: New Zealand could not escape ‘the responsibilities entailed upon [it] by geographical and natural laws.’³¹ In August 1883, contemporaneous to the Intercolonial Conference, New Zealand’s Parliament passed a ‘Confederation and Annexation’ bill written by Grey. The bill declared that if New Zealand wished to confederate with a Pacific Island, the governor might appoint a commissioner or commission to take soundings from island rulers, following which a proposal would be made to parliament. Once parliament approved, the proposal would be passed to the Colonial Office. Legally, it was quite innocuous. The Colonial Office had a shrewd idea of how many of those ‘proposals’ would actually represent the wishes of the islands, and the governor was instructed to reserve the bill.

By 1883, then, New Zealand was the most ambitious of the Australasian colonies in its program for British expansion in the Pacific. That was also the year, though, that, to the astonishment of the Colonial Office, Queensland attempted to force London’s hand by annexing southern New Guinea to the empire. Lord Derby, the Colonial Secretary, never

³⁰ *ODT*, 1 September 1879, quoted in Raewyn Dalziel, ‘Southern Islands: New Zealand and Polynesia’ in Andrew Porter, *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III, the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1999) p. 591.

³¹ Quoted in Dalziel, p. 592.

entertained the proposal, telling the House of Lords that ‘We are not prepared to undertake the annexation of New Guinea.’³²

Derby was prepared to mollify the colonial governments by saying that the British government ‘should not view it as a friendly act if any other country attempted to make a settlement on that coast,’ but he simply did not see any pressing threat to Australasia. He also made the same argument that Kimberley’s Colonial Office had made against New Zealand’s expansionism in the 1870s - that the colony was not in sufficient control of its own territory to justify acquiring any more. Finally, Derby praised the potential of the Australian colonies, but politely dismissed their geopolitical relevance. ‘I think they underrate their own powers and their own importance,’ and he concluded, ‘they have really no such cause for fear as they suppose.’³³ In other words, Derby was saying, the settler colonies were too weak to successfully expand further into the Pacific, but too strong to be threatened by any other power’s expansion into the region.

Derby’s argument would be a point of contention between London and the colonies over the next two decades. Both sides viewed the region almost as a mirror image. Derby saw Australasia as being a set of fundamentally strong societies, far removed from the flashpoints of the Empire, and already at the natural limit of their borders. The colonies saw themselves as vulnerable and precariously positioned, on the frontline of the Empire’s boundaries with France, Germany and Asia, and awkwardly held back from achieving their natural frontiers.

Not only Queenslanders resented Derby’s policy; it was objected to across the rest of the Australasian colonies. New Zealand’s annexationist lobby has already been described. Within Australia many of the most vocal proponents of an assertive policy in the Pacific came from Victoria, a colony that was neither geographically proximate to the Pacific Islands nor as

³² House of Lords Hansard, 2 July 1883.

³³ Ibid.

commercially involved in the islands as some of its neighbours. Queensland was obviously nearer the islands and more directly involved in the wider Pacific Plantation economy; New Zealand and New South Wales were much more important financial centres of Pacific commerce. Victorian discontent with British policy in the Pacific was partly due to a feeling that the home government was mismanaging the region. Victorian Premier James Service told the Victorian House of Representatives in 1885 that he regarded ‘the action of Lord Derby in connexion with New Guinea and the islands as one of the most melancholy and marvellous illustrations of political imbecility that has ever been recorded in history.’³⁴ A colleague, John Gavan Duffy, was more jocular: had Lord Derby been Colonial Secretary half a century earlier, he remarked, then Australia would have been ‘just as much peopled by Frenchmen as New Guinea by Germans.’³⁵

³⁴ *VPD*, Legislative Assembly, vol 48, 1 July 1885, p.214.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 24 June 1885, p. 99.

iii. What makes a crisis? The Colonial Publics and the New Hebrides

No issue in the Pacific attracted more attention in Australasia in the 1880s and 1890s than the Anglo-French negotiations over the New Hebrides. The dispute shows that the desire for Britain to take a stronger hand in the Pacific Islands was not restricted to particularly ambitious local politicians. Nor was it the parochial interest of those colonies most exposed to the region such as Queensland or New Zealand. The New Hebrides dispute aroused public demonstrations across Australasia and revealed just how differently the British and colonial governments saw the Empire's position in the Pacific. It would eventually spark a confrontation between colonial delegates and the Prime Minister that would irritate the British government and become a touchstone for Australian statesmen. Its importance is that it convinced many Australasian leaders that the Colonial and Foreign Offices did not understand and thus could not be trusted to defend the real interests of the Empire, a conviction that is vital to understanding the course of Australian politics and society in the 1890s.

So why use the word 'crisis?' Simply: because it better expresses the depth of feeling that many British imperial citizens had about this matter. They wrote letters and petitions, attended large public meetings, demanded that their elected officials and their governors take action, and insisted that their government in London should change course. It was the most important political event in the region in 1886 and it affected not just the islanders of the New Hebrides or their Australasian neighbours but also the governments in London and indeed Paris. Calling it a 'crisis' therefore places the British citizens of Australasia back at the centre of the Imperial context that they believed they occupied and dispenses with the ahistorical and anachronistic framing that assumes that the perspective of the British government is the 'natural' lens through which to view Imperial policy and priorities.

The Australasian colonies had a long history of unease with the French presence in the Pacific. The French practice of supplying a labour force for New Caledonia and French Polynesia via penal transportation caused persistent worries for the Australasians. French convicts could and did escape from the islands to the larger British colonies, and they were seen as inherently destabilising. In 1874 a group of French convicts talked their way onto a sympathetic trading vessel and escaped to Sydney. Propertied Australians were unimpressed and duly spun paranoid fantasies that the nucleus of an anarchist French army was being formed. By 1883, the *Daily Telegraph* warned that French escapees were forming a ‘dung heap’ in Eastern Australia.³⁶ The Australian willingness to forget that convict transportation to their own shores had only ceased in Western Australia in 1868 aside, it is also ironic that the New Hebrides dispute largely arose because the French wanted to secure the islands as a source of labour to ease their reliance upon penal transportation. Nonetheless, the public revulsion towards French expansionism was genuine. The French were foreigners intruding upon what Australasia considered the natural destiny for British expansion; they were filling the islands with politically radical criminals; they were thought to mistreat the indigenous peoples, which offended Australasians who liked to believe in British benevolence; they were competing with hardworking Australasian traders; and, not least, they were Catholic.³⁷

Australian approaches to the Pacific were closely linked to an assertive, muscular Protestantism. In 1886 the Australasian colonies heard that the Anglo-French negotiations over the New Hebrides would likely lead to the British recognising the French claim to the islands. It resulted in a genuinely massive, intercolonial wave of protests organised by but by

³⁶Cited in George K. Behlmer, *Risky Shores: Savagery and Colonialism in the Western Pacific* (Stanford, 2018) p. 121.

³⁷ On Australasian francophobia and the Pacific, see Briony Neilson, “‘Moral Rubbish in Close Proximity’: Penal Colonisation and Strategies of Distance in Australia and New Zealand, c.1853-1897,” in *International Review of Social History*, 64:3 (2019), pp. 451-471 & Alexis Bergantz ‘The Scum of France’: Australian Anxieties towards French Convicts in the Nineteenth Century, *Australian Historical Studies*, 49:2 (2018) 150-166,

no means exclusive to the Presbyterian Church.³⁸ In July 1886, the Colonial Office began to forward to the Foreign Office the increasingly alarmed correspondence it was receiving from Australasia. On 14 May, for example, the Colonial Office received a resolution passed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, sent to London at the request of the Queensland Colonial Secretary. It reads, in part:

[The Assembly] views with deep concern the prospect of the New Hebrides Islands annexation by France or any other Power than that of Great Britain, as such annexation would interfere most seriously with the Christianizing and civilising of the natives of those islands carried on for many years past with signal success by means of missions, in which a large amount of Australian and British money, labour and life has been expended, as well as hinder the progress of commerce, which largely contributes to promote the advancement of the islanders. The Assembly therefore prays that the several Colonial Governments and the Imperial Government will adopt such a policy as shall prevent the annexation by any other Power from taking place.³⁹

This is a classic late Victorian endorsement of the ‘three Cs’ approach to Empire - Commerce, Civilisation and Christianity. The French consul in Sydney in 1883 had observed of the Presbyterian rallies that they could not admit out loud that ‘the principal motive of their efforts is the desire to keep the Catholic missions from obtaining preponderance in the islands for which these religious sects are competing.’ A foreign presence in the islands was not merely a threat to ‘Australian and British money, labour and life,’ but a challenge to British Protestant civilisation and culture.⁴⁰ Nor was this view exclusive to the Presbyterians of Queensland. The same month, the Presbytery of Oamaru in the South Island passed their own

³⁸See Thompson, pp. 107-132 for Australia and the crisis, and Ross, pp. 206-230 for New Zealand.

³⁹ ‘Selected Papers Respecting the New Hebrides’ June 1886 to June 1887, No. 28, CO to FO Inclosure [sic] 2, FO534/17, TNA.

⁴⁰ Robert Aldrich, *The French Presence in the South Pacific, 1842-1940* (London, 1990) p.226.

resolution that ‘the matter affects the moral and social order, not only of that archipelago, but all the islands of the Southern Ocean, with mainlands adjacent.’⁴¹ It was not just British rule in the New Hebrides that was at risk; it was British civilisation in the wider region.

The popular protests show that that assertiveness in the Pacific was not the policy of a few expansionist politicians. While the New Zealand government abhorred French annexation of the New Hebrides, at the same time it hoped that if it came to pass then France might make concessions elsewhere. It especially hoped that Paris might part with the island of Rapa Iti in French Polynesia. This had been one of Vogel’s and Grey’s long desired targets for annexation. However, Protestant New Zealand’s cultural antipathy to France and Catholicism proved stronger than the government’s desire for Rapa Iti. Premier Robert Stout encouraged the New Zealand churches to moderate their stand, suggesting that if French annexation was made conditional on an end to penal transportation, that evil practice would end and then New Zealand could acquire territory into the bargain. The churches refused. The Moderator of Otago held that it was ‘unbecoming to the dignity of Great Britain to entertain the proposed concession of France to induce her to discontinue a practice which is universally and justly condemned by all civilised nations.’ The Anglican Bishop of Auckland concurred. Stout had to bow to public opinion.⁴² So these protests were not simply about a thwarted sense of expansionism, where a loss in the New Hebrides could be balanced by a gain in New Caledonia. It was not merely that the islands should be British; it was also important that they not be French and Catholic.

Nor were these protests confined to the churches. Protests reached London from ‘the unanimous desire of the Council of the City of Melbourne... in opposition to the proposals which are reported to have been under the consideration of the Secretary of State for the

⁴¹ FO 534/17, no. 34, inclosure 2.

⁴² Ross, pp. 224-6.

Colonies for the cession of the New Hebrides Islands to a foreign Power.’⁴³ The Dunedin Chamber of Commerce expressed its opposition, as did shire councils such as Lilydale and Warrnambool in Victoria. The Premier of New South Wales, Sir Patrick Jennings, took a moderate line on the crisis believing that the important thing was to stop transportation. However, the residents of Glebe in Sydney condemned his policy in the belief ‘that the whole Colony is opposed to the scheme of handing over those islands to France.’⁴⁴ This is also notable for their backing of the strong line of Sir Henry Parkes, then in opposition; the arch-Federationist took a strong line against concessions to the French in a prefiguration of the way in which decisive action in the Pacific would become the assumed line of the emerging Commonwealth. All these protests occurred in the first six weeks of the crisis, from April to May 1886. But in February 1887 Governors were still forwarding protests to London, such as that of the Victorian Presbyterian General Assembly who petitioned Her Majesty’s Government to intervene against France’s ‘oppressive, tyrannical treatment’ of the New Hebrides’ inhabitants.⁴⁵

Support for action cut across intercolonial lines; urban Victoria was as exercised about French intrusions as tropical Queensland. In 1886, when the colonies believed that their region was being ignored by uncaring British mandarins, the *Otago Daily Times* called for colonial unity:

For so long as Australasia is united with regard to it, we may hope to prevail, but if each Colony can look no further than whether some Colony has a greater interest in each separate island, we shall as assuredly as deservedly lose all of them.⁴⁶

⁴³ FO 534/17, no 28, inclosure 4.

⁴⁴ Ibid, no 29, inclosure 4.

⁴⁵ Ibid, no. 133, CO to FO, February 5 1887, Inclosure 3.

⁴⁶ *ODT*, 8 April 1886, p. 3.

Australasian governments, in fact, often did not stand united on the issue of control of the Pacific. It was not always a chief concern. Nor did unity of interest necessarily translate into a unity behind a specific desired outcome; by the end of our period we shall see that New Zealand and the Commonwealth, (and indeed the individual states within that Commonwealth) were certainly not fully aligned in their goals for the region. However, what was true at the beginning and the end of the period was that the political future of the Pacific Islands touched directly on Australasian ideas about their religious, political and economic life; and whatever divisions existed within Australasia were dwarfed by that between the local visions for the British Empire in the Pacific and the policies actually being carried out by British governments. New Zealand and Australia are, all in all, merely large islands in the Pacific themselves - understanding that, it is no wonder that their maritime societies took such interest in their neighbours.

iv. The 1887 Colonial Conference

The Colonial Conference of 1887 was the first of the great conferences that would discuss, consult upon and often fail to reach decisions about the issues facing the British Empire. The Conferences would start and end with pious expressions of imperial unity, but that often frayed as colonial delegates realised that their concerns about local security were seen as non-issues by the government in London. Britain's rulers meanwhile would be frustrated with the intransigence and apparent ignorance of their colonial counterparts. A few years afterwards, in 1890, Charles Dilke would describe the conference as a missed opportunity:

A conference, which ought to have assisted in bringing about better relations between the mother-country and the colonies, resulted in the Australian delegates going home in an unpleasant state of mind.⁴⁷

Dilke's assessment of the Conference has generally held up. Benjamin Mountford writes that the Conference 'highlighted the difficulty of balancing the demands of self-governing settler societies with the geostrategic objectives, diplomatic obligations, and economic priorities of the imperial government in London.'⁴⁸

Despite Australasian worries that the British government was kow-towing to France, in 1887 Salisbury was making contingencies for a confrontation. He signed the 'Mediterranean Agreements' with Italy and Austria-Hungary that sought to prevent Russia or France expanding 'their dominion over the shores of either the Mediterranean, the Aegean or the Black Sea.'⁴⁹ No matter any tensions over the New Hebrides or elsewhere, it was the Mediterranean where Britain's interests were most threatened by France and Russia. Egypt,

⁴⁷ Charles Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain* (London, 1890), p.260.

⁴⁸ Benjamin Mountford, 'Colonial Australia, the 1887 Colonial Conference, and the Struggle for Imperial Unity,' in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 47:5, (2019), pp. 912-942.

⁴⁹ Andrew Roberts, *Salisbury: Victorian Titan* (London, 1999), p. 460.

the Turkish Straits, Malta, Cyprus, Gibraltar: these were where the Royal Navy and the British Empire would have to test their strength. The idea that such a test should be risked over the Pacific was ludicrous from London's perspective; Australasia itself was of secondary strategic interest to the Empire at best, but the New Hebrides were of tertiary importance, if that. John Grenville's *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy* has eighteen chapters covering the various matters Salisbury dealt with as Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, ranging from the Eastern Question to the control of the Portuguese Empire; not one of them is devoted to the South Pacific.⁵⁰ Paul Kennedy, who literally wrote the book on the Samoan crisis of the 1890s, barely mentions it or the Pacific in his general work on British diplomacy.⁵¹ So far as Salisbury was concerned, the colonial obsession with the islands was misplaced. Before the Conference opened, Salisbury complained that New Zealand's claim to Samoa, 1600 miles away, was as ridiculous as Russia declaring it had a special interest in Hawaii. Salisbury had visited Australasia as a young man and had found New Zealand particularly unimpressive. Andrew Roberts notes that this personal disdain for settlers complicated the Prime Minister's dealings with the Pacific colonies.⁵² This disdain would soon collide disastrously with colonial disrespect.

The only significant outcome of the conference was the Naval Defence Agreement of 1887. Britain had sought to persuade the colonies to contribute to the upkeep of the Royal Navy in their waters for decades. Although the Australia Station was a backwater posting, the costs of running it were considerable. It was exacerbated by the Australasian colonies' reluctance to even fund gunships for their own coastal waters. The 1865 Colonial Naval

⁵⁰ J.A.S. Grenville, *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy: The Close of the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1964). David Steele's *Lord Salisbury: A Political Biography* is similarly light on Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

⁵¹ Paul Kennedy, *The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy, 1865-1980* (London, 1981).

⁵² Roberts, p. 463.

Defence Act had allowed colonial legislatures, with the approval of the Queen in council and at their own expense, to create local squadrons and to raise and appoint their crews, subject to Royal Navy discipline. The hope that the colonies would take advantage of this did not eventuate; only Victoria, Queensland and South Australia purchased any gunships, and these in tiny numbers.⁵³ In 1881, the Australasian colonies offered to pay for their own land defences, for example, gun batteries at ports, but declared that ‘in the opinion of this Conference, considering the large Imperial interests involved, the naval defence of these Colonies should continue to be the exclusive charge of the Imperial Government, and that the strength of the Australian squadron should be increased.’⁵⁴ This lack of interest in contributing to naval expenditure was not so much an Australasian as a colonial view; Canada was decommissioning its gunboats on the Great Lakes.⁵⁵ The British defence theorist John Colomb remarked that ‘England does not expect every man to do his duty,’ but every man expects England to do hers.’⁵⁶

In 1884, George Tryon was appointed Admiral of Australia Station. An able reformer, he wrote a memorandum setting out a plan whereby the Admiralty would supply, man and maintain the ships of Australia Station and the colonies would reimburse her. Crucially, those ships would stay in Australasian waters even in times of war. A colonial subsidy was not a new idea, but it finally gathered momentum, offering a compromise between Australasians who wanted the best defence possible and an Admiralty (and Treasury) that was straining to pay for it. Henry Loch, the Governor of Victoria, gave Tryon his backing - not least because he worried that if the colonies did eventually develop their own navies under the 1865 act,

⁵³ For the failings of the 1865 defence regime, see John Seymour, ‘The Colonial Naval Defence Act 1865 and its Impact in Australia’, in *The Mariner’s Mirror*, 107:4 (2021) pp. 435-452.

⁵⁴ *Minutes of Proceedings at the Intercolonial Conference Held at Sydney*, January 18, 1881, p. 7.

⁵⁵ Richard Preston, *Canada and Imperial Defence: A Study of the Origins of the British Commonwealth’s Defence Organisation, 1867-1919* (Durham, 1967), p. 100.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Preston, p. 93.

‘there are many men in these colonies, who would not hesitate, under certain eventualities, to despatch them to seize Samoa, the New Hebrides or any other place or island on which they had set their desire.’⁵⁷

The agreement would be hammered out at the 1887 Conference, largely on the terms of the Tryon memorandum. It took ten days and would be the Conference’s ‘only real achievement.’⁵⁸ The Australasians would pay £126, 000 per annum to fund an auxiliary squadron of Royal Ships for the local defence of the colonies. It would be commanded by an officer of Australia Station, but crucially it could not leave Australasian waters without the assent of colonial governments, the first time that Britain had agreed to tie any portion of the Navy to any particular part of the globe.⁵⁹ The agreement’s limitations soon chafed on all parties.⁶⁰ In the 1890s with the Admiralty committed to Mahanism and the concentration of naval power, the colonies complained that the ships they paid for were not being used in their interest.⁶¹ Still, it demonstrated that Imperial cooperation was possible, even if it did not resolve the underlying issues that Britain and Australasia still disagreed about what the ships were for.

Alas, Salisbury’s personal interactions with the colonial delegates were not so productive. He had largely taken a hands-off approach to the conference, leaving it to the

⁵⁷ Quoted in Donald Gordon, *The Dominion Partnership in Imperial Defence, 1870-1914* (Baltimore, 1965), p. 87.

⁵⁸ John Edward Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences: A Study in Imperial Organisation* (London, 1967) p. 9.

⁵⁹ On the 1887 Defence Agreement and colonial naval strategy generally, see John Bach, *The Australia Station: A History of the Royal Navy in the South West Pacific, 1821-1913* (Sydney, 1986), Glen Barclay, *The Empire is Marching: A Study of the Military Effort of the British Empire, 1800-1945* (London, 1976), & Brian P Farrell, ‘Coalition of the Usually Willing: The Dominions and Imperial Defence, 1856-1919,’ in Greg Kennedy, ed., *Imperial Defence: The Old World Order, 1856-1956* (London, 2008) & Gordon, *The Dominion Partnership*.

⁶⁰ With the exception of New Zealand, which was broadly content until late in the decade. See Ian McGibbon, *The Path to Gallipoli: Defending New Zealand, 1840-1915*, pp. 63-67.

⁶¹ Late Victorian and Edwardian naval policy and the balance of power is a dense field. The standard works relied upon are Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500-2000* (London 1988), *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London, 1976), and Arthur Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power: A history of British Naval Policy in the Pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905* (New York, 1940).

Colonial Secretary Henry Holland to preside over proceedings. However, he agreed to Holland's request to meet with the Australasian representatives in his capacity as Foreign Secretary, so that he could brief them on the on-going negotiations with France over the New Hebrides.

Salisbury had already encountered several of the Australasians. At a dinner held by the Imperial Federation League in London the year before, James Service had spoken of the passionate public interest in the New Hebrides, and the fear of encroachment by Britain's rival great powers. Rolling back that encroachment, he said, 'would do more to secure and to strengthen the links that bound the Australian colonies to the Empire than could be done by a succession of men who would treat such questions with comparative indifference.' Salisbury was present, and his famous diplomatic ability appears to have failed him. He acknowledged the importance of clear communication between the colonies and the imperial centre and stressed the difficulty confronting his government in balancing the demands of the different parts of the Empire. However, he dismissed Service (at this time one of the leading and most accomplished politicians in Australasia) as not understanding the realities of the situation. To the laughter of the assembled guests, Salisbury said that anyone who seriously believed that the French or Germans might be negotiated out of Oceania was 'not dealing with matters within the immediate range of practical politics.'⁶² Following this, Salisbury seems to have understood that this was a matter where his self-control might fail him. Before the meeting with the Australasians he had warned Holland that 'I will do my best also to keep my temper but the outrecuidance of your Greater Britain is sometimes trying.'⁶³

⁶² *The Times*, 12 August 1886.

⁶³ Salisbury to Holland, 18 April 1887, cited in Mountford, 'Colonial Australia'.

Salisbury was not a man accustomed to explaining the workings of his foreign policy to anyone beyond his inner circle. He told the assembled representatives that their concern over the New Hebrides was unwarranted. The islands were strategically unimportant, and it would be more trouble than they were worth to contend for them with the French Republic, a state that in any case was too unstable to pose a threat to the interests of Britain and its colonies. Deakin found the Prime Minister's demeanour patronising: 'his tone breathed the autocratic condescension of a Minister addressing a deputation of visitors from the antipodes whom it became his duty to instruct in current foreign politics for their own sakes.'⁶⁴ Most of the colonial leaders present accepted Salisbury's report, and in fact apologised for the hostile treatment that Britain's policy in the islands was receiving from the Australasian press. Service and the third Victorian representative, Sir Graham Berry, both argued for a stronger policy but expressed 'deep regret' at the awkwardness that now existed between the colonies and London.

Deakin, however, was less restrained. As he would modestly say later, 'he broke quite new ground not only with unrestrained vigour and enthusiasm on the general question, but because he did so in a more spirited manner, challenging Lord Salisbury's arguments one by one and mercilessly analysing the inconsistencies of his speech.' Deakin observed that Salisbury was arguing that the New Hebrides were worthless and thus dispensable, while being valuable and therefore vital to the French; that the French were proud, powerful and ready to fight, which seemed to suggest that Salisbury's Britain was none of these things; and that the British had to be tolerant of the instability of the Third Republic, which could not tolerate a colonial setback - were, then, the colonies 'to regret the absence of political chaos in the mother country and to pay for that elsewhere?' Most importantly, Deakin decried the

⁶⁴ Deakin, *The Federal Story*, p.20.

fact the colonies were being treated as presumptuous for directly exerting pressure on the French, 'and yet a greater power, the British Empire, was asked to consent to be negotiated out of her place without protest.'⁶⁵ This was, in other words, a declaration that the colonies were the ones who were taking up a duty that the government in London was shirking; the advocacy for and defence of Imperial interests.

Crucially, no official record of this meeting remains.⁶⁶ As it was held in the Foreign Office, away from the actual Conference itself, it was not minuted - or if it was, the full minutes never became part of the official proceedings of the Conference. The outline of the confrontation between Salisbury and the Australasians was, however, leaked to the *Standard*. The fact that Deakin had previously suggested that the proceedings be opened to the press did not go unnoticed. Holland suspected the Victorians, but made no public accusation, diplomatically telling the Conference's closing session that the breach in confidence had 'caused me, and which I am sure has caused the Delegates, great pain.'⁶⁷

The consequence for historians is that the only detailed sources we have of the meeting, contemporary or otherwise, are heavily slanted towards the Victorians and Deakin in particular. Deakin claimed later Salisbury took him aside to say the British embassy in Paris had been told to take a strong line on the matter 'and afterwards went out of his way to speak of him privately and publicly in the warmest manner as belonging to a type of man to whom the destinies of Australia might safely be trusted.'⁶⁸ Later, Dilke wrote that Deakin was 'remarkable for his oratorical power, of which Lord Salisbury has reason to remember

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Mountford, 'Colonial Australia.'

⁶⁷ Proceedings of the Colonial Conference, 9 May 1887, CAB 18/8 TNA, p. 542

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.21.

the force at the Colonial Conference,' which suggests that contemporaries believed in the power of his response.⁶⁹

If Salisbury ever did compliment Deakin so highly, it is not borne out in his own private remarks. He told Holland that the Australians' views were not grounded in reality.

They are the most unreasonable people I ever heard or dreamt of. They want us to incur all the bloodshed and the danger, and the stupendous cost of a war with France, of which almost the exclusive burden will fall on us, for a group of islands which to us are as valueless as the South Pole- and to which they are only attached by a debating-club sentiment.⁷⁰

'A debating-club sentiment.' Even accounting for Salisbury's irritation it is striking that all the Australians' arguments were dismissed in such a phrase. Salisbury had met with some of the most cogent politicians in the colonies. Queensland's Samuel Griffith had politely if unenthusiastically accepted the Prime Minister's position but not before delivering what Deakin had admiringly called 'a cool and dignified acceptance of the situation,'⁷¹ and given Griffith's accomplished legal career this rings true. Service and Berry were accomplished men and had certainly expressed their disagreement with Salisbury more calmly than had their younger colleague Deakin. All of this was dismissed as 'sentiment.'

Deakin does not personally appear to have preoccupied Salisbury at all. Instead, there existed a general and non-specific sense of aggravation at all the Australasians. In his private correspondence with Holland Salisbury was firm that he wanted no colonial representative anywhere near the talks. In fact, he told Holland, the problem was not even that the colonial

⁶⁹ Dilke, p. 133.

⁷⁰ Salisbury to Holland, 27 April 1887, cited in Mountford, 'Colonial Australia'.

⁷¹ Deakin, p.21.

governments did not understand the briefing he had given, or even that they had been rude in their response to it. The problem was that they had been treated as parties to the process at all.

It really was altogether wrong as Foreign Minister for me to have spoken there [at the meeting] at all: and it was a stupid want of thought on my part not to have seen that.⁷²

Salisbury, for all his formidable powers as a diplomat, had not taken the Australasians seriously before the meeting, and he was enraged when they had acted as if they were worthy of being taken seriously. He was certainly not wrong that their concerns could be parochial to the point of ludicrousness; in order to soothe their tempers he had to agree to criticise the presence of the French penal colonies in the Pacific, as he complained to Holland.

What they have insisted on – and have made us do – is to require that French convicts shall be kept in France – within twenty miles of our shores – in order to keep them from sullyng Australian purity by living a thousand miles from their shores.⁷³

No matter how ridiculous the Australasian geopolitical worldview looked from London, it was sincerely held. Service and Deakin, and even moderates like Griffith really did believe that the existence of French and German colonies in the Pacific was an *Imperial*, not local issue. In fact, just as they had convinced Salisbury that their policies were irrational and based on sentiment, so too did Salisbury convince the Australasians that his government lacked the moral firmness to defend the Empire. Deakin makes the remarkable claim that in 1888 and 1889, the Victorian Government had decided that in the event of further French expansionism London could no longer be trusted to act decisively. Believing that a formal

⁷² Salisbury to Holland, 25 June 1887.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 16 October 1887.

French annexation of the New Hebrides was imminent, Victoria quietly sounded out the feelings of the other colonial governments and then prepared to seize the islands.

Taking into account the electrical conditions which then obtained, this decisive action might have had the gravest consequences. It must at least have forced the hands of the British government to some extent, if indeed it did not provoke a final settlement of the vexed question. At this time Australians had grown tired of appealing and protesting and were determined to act for themselves on behalf of the Empire should the necessity arise.⁷⁴

This would have been a deliberate provocation of both France and the British government. The framing is crucial. This was not about putting Australian interests ahead of the Empire; it was a statement that Australian interests were Imperial and Imperial interests Australian. What Salisbury would have (apoplectically) thought of as an outrageous act on behalf of the colonies was seen by its planners as forcing the hand of an administration that was not prepared to act in its own interests.

By the end of the 1880s, then, the Australasian colonies were positioned in opposition to the home government. That opposition though was not about an emerging local nationalism, but rather, about a different conception of the Empire itself; where issues that London saw as small disputes about smaller islands on the periphery of the Empire were in fact skirmishes on the immediate Imperial frontier. The stakes, as seen from the colonies, were very high indeed. This is vital to understanding why Australasia in the 1890s was prepared to argue against and seek to circumvent the policies of the home government: because the 1880s had convinced them that the home government no longer recognised or defended its own interests.

⁷⁴ Deakin, p.22-23.

v. **The Pacific Labour Trade and its implications**

Another area of growing concern for the colonies was the movement of non-white peoples from the Pacific Islands into northern Australia. Nowhere was the permeability of the line between Australasia and the islands clearer than in the issue of the use of Pacific Island labourers in northern Queensland. Queensland's sugar industry was one of the most lucrative sources of revenue in the colony. In 1867, it exported 388 tons of sugar; by 1880 that figure had risen to 21, 000 tons. It had risen primarily through the importation and exploitation of Pacific Islanders - largely, though not exclusively, Melanesians from the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands.⁷⁵ Between 1863 and 1904, approximately 61,000 islanders arrived in Queensland. A quarter of them would die there, a mortality rate five times higher than that of European Australians.⁷⁶ Many of the islanders, especially in the early decades, had been forcibly trafficked and more still were taken to Queensland with little understanding of the indentured servitude to which they had supposedly agreed. These conditions outraged many Britons within and without Queensland from the start. The fact that a large part of a British settler colony was getting rich with a mentality that looked uncomfortably like the slave trade that Victorian Britain took a great deal of pride in ending was deeply embarrassing.

One particularly articulate champion of the plantations was a foreign visitor, but his words are useful as a summary of the usual arguments made by the landed elite of Northern Queensland. Anthony Trollope visited the colony in 1873 and dedicated a chapter of his book on Australia and New Zealand to defending the use of 'kanaka' labour:

⁷⁵ Clive Moore's article 'Labour, Indenture and Historiography in the Pacific' gives the demographic origins as Vanuatu (New Hebrides) 55%, New Guinea 4%, Loyalty Islands 2%, Solomons 25%, Asia (Sinhalese, Javanese, Malay, Japanese & Chinese) 14%, Other 0%. In Brij V. Lal (ed.), *Pacific Island History: Journeys and Transformations* (Canberra, 1992) p. 138.

⁷⁶ Figures drawn from Behlmer, pp. 121-125.

Let us have no slavery, in God's name. ... [but] an ill-conducted enthusiasm may not only debar Queensland from the labour which she requires, but debar also these poor savages from their best and nearest civilisation.⁷⁷

Trollope's argument is typical of any defence of forced labour, especially that by whites of a non-white people. However, it also needs examining as an argument about the specific situation of Queensland. The Queensland labour trade rested partly on the belief that, while this work could not be done by white people, neither was it suitable for local non-whites. Indigenous Australians were used as labour on Queensland's cattle and sheep stations but were never a serious portion of the plantation work force during this period. Melanesians were held to be naturally better workers, and thus more worthy of an effort to 'civilise.'

Trollope, again:

Civilisation is within their reach...because they will work... They are unlike the Australian aboriginal, or even the African negro... they are like the Chinese and the Indian coolies, who know the comforts conferred and the power given by accumulated possessions, and who are therefore capable of receiving the blessings of civilisation.⁷⁸

Trollope's linking of the Islanders, indigenous Australians and Asian labourers is important. Right up until the end of the Labour trade, the presence of so many distinct groups of non-white Queenslanders made it hard for European Australians in the colony to separate the question of 'native' non-white people from the broader question of immigration controls.

The difficulty in drawing a neat boundary between Northern Australia and the wider Pacific was encapsulated in the colonial struggle to create a satisfactory racial hierarchy of

⁷⁷ Anthony Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, vol 1 (Melbourne, 1873) p. 134.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 146.

indigenous Australians, unquestionably local to Queensland; Pasifika, born overseas but within geographical areas that Queensland thought it should rule directly; and the 10, 000 or so Asian labourers who were the easiest to think of as foreign outsiders.⁷⁹ Plantation owners in the north had long been worried that they would need to find a new source of labour. As early as 1881, John Ewen Davidson of Mackay, acting as spokesman for a group of landowners, had petitioned the government that Queensland follow the example of Fiji and allow the mass import of Indian workers, ‘since we consider the islands of the Pacific will *not*, after a short time be able to supply the demands made upon them.’⁸⁰

As far as the landowners' detractors were concerned, this scheme was even worse. Indians were regarded as more intelligent, and thus more dangerous. This project of trying to build a workable system of white supremacy was thus both inwards looking - controlling an indigenous population who were still fighting the last of the Queensland frontier wars in the 1890s - and outwards looking, especially seeking to control the dangerous ‘Others’ of the Asian population. It is no accident that the law that set up Queensland’s major indigenous reserves in 1897 was the ‘Aboriginal Protection *and Sale of Opium Act*. (emphasis mine).’⁸¹

The very presence of Island Labourers also contributed to the atmosphere of cultural uncertainty that would characterise the ‘Nervous Nineties,’ as John Docker has characterised the succeeding decade.⁸² Just as the political changes of that decade were accompanied by a depression that challenged existing economic models, so too were the politicians of Australasia living in an environment where both masculinity and whiteness were in question. Melanesian sexuality was seen as threatening white women and white society not merely through interracial relationships but by creating children who would be more dangerous still.

⁷⁹ Moore, p. 132.

⁸⁰ J. E. Davidson to Colonial Secretary, 17 February 1882, COL./A311, Letter 1536, QSA.

⁸¹ The treatment of Asians is dealt with more directly in the chapters on the Immigration Restriction Act and the Anglo-Japanese treaties.

⁸² John Docker, *The Nervous Nineties: Australian Cultural Life in the 1890s* (Melbourne, 1991).

This fear was heightened by the fact that the immigration of islander women had always been avoided lest a settled population begin to outnumber Europeans. In 1883 there were only approximately one thousand Melanesian women in Queensland.⁸³

The fears competed against each other: Melanesian men reproducing with Melanesian women threatened white society by producing children who were better adapted to the tropical climate. Melanesian men reproducing with European women represented either rape, or perhaps worse, the voluntary degradation of said women, and in turn the production of an unnatural and dangerous mixed population. And not allowing Melanesian men to enter the country at all ran the risk of leaving northern Australia empty, ‘untamed,’ and exposed to invasion. Tracey Banivanua-Mar has described this as the ‘paradox of white settlement in the tropics, where success was seen to be dependent on the absence (to vacate the land) and the presence (to work the land) of blackness.’⁸⁴ This competition of paranoias is vital to understanding Australasian engagement with Asia and the Pacific in the 1890s, an engagement that was fundamental to how the British societies of Oceania understood the empire. Engaging with the region threatened the sexual and racial makeup of their societies; isolation made them vulnerable to other, more organised, perhaps even more racially threatening societies such as Japan.

As Australasia entered the 1890s, then, the Labour trade brought into focus the painful questions that had to be asked of the colonial societies that were building their own South British nation. It forced contemporary Australasians to reconsider where the boundaries of Australasia actually were. If northern Queensland was merely a continental adjunct to the south-west Pacific, to be run along the same lines as the plantation economies of that region

⁸³ Tracey Banivanua-Mar, *Violence and Colonial Dialogue: The Australian-Pacific Indentured Labour Trade* (Honolulu, 2007), p.205.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 71.

and with the same workforce, then our view of Australasia necessarily needs to integrate the stories of Solomon Islanders, New Hebrideans, New Guineans and all the rest. It might also be argued that such a framework is unmanageable and requires a linguistic and cultural dexterity beyond most historians of Australasia. But it is still important to keep our idea of what 'Australia' and 'Australasia' is and was as wide open as possible, to keep the counterfactuals alive for as long as possible, if only to avoid inadvertent agreement with the views of south-east Australians who believed in the smallest, whitest possible continent.

vi. The Chinese in Australia, and those who feared them

In the 1880s, the Chinese were a small community within Australasia, making up a majority only in the most isolated parts of the Northern Territory and Queensland. They had no political capital to speak of, no great cultural presence, and were economically marginal. This was not enough to spare them from a sustained campaign to end Chinese immigration, and perhaps to destroy the existing community.

The Chinese had been in Australia for decades, and so had anti-Chinese sentiment. The Lambing Flat riots of 1860-1861 had been sparked by anger at the presence of Chinese miners on goldfields of New South Wales. But even at the height of the gold rush, there were never very many Chinese in Australia.⁸⁵ In 1861, they made up a quarter of the population on the Victorian goldfields - but only 4.56% of the colony itself.⁸⁶ Their birth rate was low, too, largely due to the fact that very few Chinese women were allowed to enter the colonies - in 1860 the ratio of women to men was approximately 70:100, and even in 1890 it had risen only to 90:100.⁸⁷ This trapped the Chinese in a cleft stick. Those Chinese women who were present made the community appear as an invading, competing force of colonisers, who would inexorably outbreed white Australians.⁸⁸ However, if Chinese women were *not* present, then equally inexorably Chinese men would seek sexual partners among European women. This was possibly even more horrifying to the contemporary white Australian mind than Asian colonisation.⁸⁹ Throughout the 1870s there was an increasing fear of the Chinese

⁸⁵ Arthur Huck estimated the Chinese population as a proportion of the larger whole peaked at one in seventeen, and was declining steadily by 1891. *The Chinese in Australia* (Croydon, 1968) pp. 4-5.

⁸⁶ Andrew Markus, *Fear and Hatred: Purifying Australia and California 1850-1901* (Sydney, 1979) pp. 15-16.

⁸⁷ W.D. Borrie, "'British' Immigration to Australia", in A. F. Madden & W. H. Morris-Jones (eds.), *Australia and Britain: Studies in a Changing Relationship* (London, 1980) p. 106.

⁸⁸For instance, see Lake and Reynolds, *Colour Line*, chapter three for a discussion of Charles Pearson's beliefs about the Chinese capacity for rapid population growth.

⁸⁹ This fear was felt in New Zealand too. See Nigel Murphy, "'Maoriland' and 'Yellow Peril': Discourse of Maori and Chinese in the Formation of New Zealand's 1890-1914," p. 74 in Manying Ip, ed., *The Dragon and the Taniwha: Maori and Chinese in New Zealand* (Auckland, 2009).

‘opium-peddler,’ tempting virtuous European women to use drugs and then moving on to ‘miscegenation’, ‘degradation’ and white slavery.⁹⁰ This meant that by the 1880s Asian immigration had already become a sort of axiomatic threat to Australasian Britons; whether the Chinese only intermarried within their own community or sought to integrate and assimilate into wider society, the only result imaginable to most white Australasians was the destruction of whiteness itself.

Prior to the 1880s, most opposition to the Chinese was expressed through social prejudice or simple violence. In 1879, the Melbourne *Age*’s correspondent reported on an American who murdered a Chinese worker over what the journalist reported was a ‘perfectly valueless’ claim. He was acquitted, however: ‘The man acted foolishly in taking life, [but] it would never do to have him punished. Why, we would have no end of trouble with the Chinkies.’⁹¹ This violence was common, as was the belief that it was in some ways a defence against a Chinese invasion. In the 1880s, however, the nature of European resistance to the Chinese changed. Wariness of the Qing Empire’s growth in wealth and prestige played a part, as did the increasingly assertive and well-organised labour movements of the Australian colonies.

In 1880, an Intercolonial Conference passed a motion written by New South Wales’ Henry Parkes. It read,

that in the opinion of this Conference the grave consequences which must follow the influx of large numbers of Chinese call in a special manner for the concerted action of

⁹⁰ See Anne Curthoys’ *Race and Ethnicity: a study of the response of British colonists to Aborigines, Chinese, and non-British Europeans in New South Wales, 1856-1881* (Macquarie University, PhD Thesis, 1973) pp. 413-430

⁹¹ *The Age*, 1 January 1879, pg.3.

all the colonies, both in representation to the Imperial Government and in local legislation.⁹²

Only Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia were in attendance, and South Australia's delegates had not thought that 'the Chinese Question' would be on the agenda. Nonetheless, that 'concerted action of all the colonies' would be forthcoming. By the end of the decade, the internal politics of the Australasian colonies would have become an imperial matter; and it would ensure that in the 1890s, as the British imperial government began its fateful realignment in East Asia, it would have to be conscious of the policies and prejudices of its Oceanic colonies.

Henry Parkes was a strong supporter of Free Trade, and (white) immigration to New South Wales. This matters because it is striking that he was persistently a leader of an anti-Chinese movement that was dominated by a Labour movement which opposed almost all his other policies. His successful passage of the New South Wales 'Influx of Chinese Restriction Act' therefore shows us the extent to which sinophobia cut across all lines of colonial politics. The Act did not just attempt to restrict Chinese migrants from arriving at New South Wales ports; it was also directed against Chinese workers coming south from Queensland, already seen as a potential site of dangerous racial difference from the other colonies. Nor was New South Wales alone; the same year New Zealand passed its own act. Sinophobia particularly flourished among working-class leaders who saw Chinese migration as a threat to their precarious existence as free British workers. Cheap Chinese migrants, they feared, could be used to 'sweat' white workers out of their jobs - they would work for less, for longer hours, and they would not form unions. In Melbourne in 1882, white unionists in the newly formed Furniture Trade Society worked hard to drive out Chinese craftspeople who had come

⁹² *Minutes of Proceedings of the Intercolonial Conference held in Melbourne, December 1880* p. 8.

to dominate the market for cheap goods. Similarly, in 1884, dockworkers in Sydney formed a Vigilance Committee to target vessels that employed Chinese seamen, claiming that they drove down wages by as much as a quarter. Ship owners who employed the Chinese might have their goods rot on the deck as dockers refused to unload them.⁹³ It is important to understand that when Australasian politicians took such a hard line against the Chinese - and later the Japanese - they were very much speaking for their constituencies on any side of the house.

By the late 1880s, Australian anti-Chinese sentiment was becoming a diplomatic headache for Lord Salisbury's government. In April 1888, the United States of America had begun negotiations with the *Zongli Yamen*, or Board of Foreign Affairs, in Peking to discuss the restriction of Chinese immigrants to the West Coast. This happened just as another round of anti-Chinese sentiment was peaking in New South Wales. The Colonial Secretary Lord Knutsford had hitherto attempted to placate the colonies with niceties but had been reluctant to engage closely with the issue given the importance of the relationship with the Qing and the British government's own uncertainty about immigration policy in the United Kingdom itself. However, by the middle of April the pressure was such that Knutsford approached the Foreign Office to alert the latter to the strength of feeling in Sydney. The Colonial Secretary warned that 'the question thus raised by the colonial government is one of great importance as well as considerable difficulty.'⁹⁴ Salisbury approached the Qing to see if such an arrangement could be made but did not pretend to understand the colonial depth of feeling. When he learned that New South Wales had passed another Chinese Restriction and Regulation Act, he wrote to Knutsford that the Australians had 'gone stark raving mad.'⁹⁵ Nor was the government alone in realising that the colonies were placing the Empire in a

⁹³ Markus, pp. 122-123.

⁹⁴ Cited in Mountford, *Britain, China and Colonial Australia* (Oxford, 2016) p. 112.

⁹⁵ Salisbury to Knutsford, 27 May 1888, in Benjamin Mountford, 'Colonial Australia'.

diplomatic bind. Charles Dilke summed it up simply: ‘Australians are tempted by the difficulties of their local labour problem to forget the need in which the Empire may one day stand of the Chinese alliance in eastern Asia.’⁹⁶ This diagnosis would prove just as true a decade later when it was Japan, rather than China, that the Foreign Office was wooing.

In June 1888, another Intercolonial Conference called for an end to Chinese immigration. The week before, a ‘Grand National Anti-Chinese Demonstration’ had seen a turnout of 50,000 people in Sydney alone. The marchers carried a banner showing a giant boot kicking out the Chinese. It was near a Union placard that called for ‘Justice for All.’⁹⁷ It is important not to overstate the power of these demonstrations. This was by no means a record crowd - four times as many people had thronged the streets in 1885. Now that colonial sinophobia was affecting British diplomacy with China, this was no longer a local issue. Anti-Chinese sentiment had achieved the rare trick of unifying the political leadership, Labour organisers, the socially conservative and the *Bulletin* radicals. Moreover, it would not take much for that anti-Chinese sentiment to redirect itself. When the later chapters examine how the Australasian relationship with Japan would come to greatly influence the position of the Oceanic colonies within the British Empire at the end of the 1890s, it is vital to understand that an organised anti-Asian movement had already been built across class and political lines - and that this, in turn, affected the way in which the metropolitan Imperial government saw its colonies, too.

⁹⁶ Dilke, p. 534.

⁹⁷ Markus, p. 144-145.

vii. Concluding thoughts

The chapter has aimed to set up what might be termed the physical relationship of Australasia and the wider British Empire in the 1890s. Australasia should not be understood either as a self-contained area or as a remote colonial outpost, but as a set of societies that were already politically and culturally connected to Asia, Africa and the broader Pacific.

The New South Wales contribution to the Sudan Expedition shows that the self-governing colonies were, for the first time, beginning to try and act upon the broader stage of the Empire. Though that contribution was but a minor piece of what proved to be an embarrassing failure, it is the first demonstration that the self-governing colonies could marry the will to assert themselves with the logistical capability to do so. The volunteers may not have done anything in the Sudan, but the fact that the colony was capable of organising their outfitting and transportation is significant. What is also important is the fervour and general enthusiasm for sending the volunteers. In fact, New South Wales's response to the Sudan expedition is curious because it shows up the comparative nuance of the later discussions about sending forces to the South African War. That conflict is generally portrayed as being fairly uncritically supported by the Australasian publics and legislatures; in actual fact, there were vigorous debates in most colonies about the extent to which the Australasian colonies should participate in the crisis. Conversely, the radical nationalists of the *Bulletin* would be less vocal in their critiques of the war than the openly subversive Mahdist poetry that it had published in 1885. By 1899 both imperial loyalty and local radicalism had developed into a more sophisticated positioning of the self-governing colonies as British Imperial actors.

The New Hebrides crisis showed the extent to which this transformation was already occurring. Fear of France and Germany provoked outrage across the political spectrum in the colonies; these fears were shared by the general public, whose worries about the possible

strategic threat posed by these Great Powers were matched by a suspicion that French Catholicism would pollute the civilisation of the southern Pacific. Worse than the fear of France and Germany was the fear that the British government either did not understand what was at stake in the Pacific or was too afraid to pursue its own interests. Alfred Deakin was unusual for the openness with which he voiced that opinion, but it was an opinion shared by many Australasians by the end of the 1880s. This is important, because the 1890s would be a decade of further territorial changes in the Pacific. The British government saw its actions were being viewed with bitterness and suspicion even by its most loyal governments. It mistook this bitterness for separatism and local nationalism; as we shall see, it was rather a bitterness born of imperial loyalty and a sense that the Empire's stewards were not doing their duty.

The chapter also sought to give context to Australasia's internal racial paranoia. Pacific Islanders and Asian-Australasians were living challenges to the widespread belief that Australasia was meant to become a new and better Britain. Their physical presence raised awkward questions about how Australasia should relate to its neighbours; as we have seen, expansionism into the Pacific Islands was a popular policy, but it sat increasingly uneasily with the fear of those Pacific Islanders actually existing in the same space as white Australasians. The racial threat that was supposedly posed by non-white immigrants was also a sexual threat; whether the fear was that non-white people would outnumber white Australasians or intermarry with them, their presence complicated the idea that Australasia would be a society dominated by pure Anglo-Saxon stock. In the 1890s, the failure of the local colonies to convincingly 'resolve' these problems would be a key driver of Australian Federation. That would, eventually, lead to the formation of an Australian Commonwealth whose first actions were to embark upon a program of racial purity, to realise the colonial conceptions of a healthy, white British imperial society.

Chapter Two: Imperial Ideologies in Australasia

Chapter One was a political study; it established the geopolitical context in which the Australasian colonies operated in the 1880s, and how that established the future choices they would make. Now it is time to thoroughly ground the study in the intellectual context; to establish the ideological sphere in which Australasian political leaders developed their thought.

The 1890s were probably the moment of the most intense intellectual political debates in Australasian history. There were serious political thinkers before, like Charles Gavan Duffy in Victoria, and there have been many since. But the debate around Federation saw a concentration upon constitutional thought that has not been matched. This was also a moment when colonial leaders were looking for inspiration from a wider range of sources. British and American constitutional thinkers were particularly important, but models as far afield as Switzerland, Ancient Greece and Italy, and Canada were all studied.¹ Conservative thinkers at the conferences competed with liberals over the inheritance of Edmund Burke.² Believers in local government like South Australia's Charles Kingston fought for a federal government and saw no contradiction in simultaneously trying to devolve power to local communities, in line with 1880s proponents of co-operative thought.³ This chapter cannot possibly hope to track all the different strands of intellectual thought that influenced the colonial elite in this decade. What it can do is focus on something underlying the entire Federal movement: the nebulous idea of Greater Britain.

¹ For an overview of the various intellectual sources that Australian Federation drew from, see Nicholas Aroney, '“A Commonwealth of Commonwealths”: Late Nineteenth-Century Conceptions of Federalism and Their Impact on Australian Federation, 1890–1901,' in *Journal of Legal History*, 23:3, (2002) pp. 253-290.

² For conservatism in Federal thought, see Stephen A. Chavura & Gregory Melleuish, 'Conservative Instinct in Australian political thought: The Federation debates, 1890-1898' in *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 50:3, (2015) pp. 513-528.

³ See Alan Atkinson, 'Federation, Democracy and the Struggle Against a Single Australia' in *Australian Historical Studies*, 44:2, (2013) pp. 262-279.

Federation in Australasia was not simply a reorganisation of local colonies, but also a reorganisation of an entire region of the British empire, a wealthy (if depression-struck) and fast-growing region at that. It cannot, therefore, be treated as purely a political process - a consolidation of governments and nothing more. That process was carried out by people who were deeply aware that their actions could have wide-ranging consequences across the wider empire. Therefore, before later chapters examine the Imperial problems those leaders faced, it is vital to understand the political philosophies that shaped their views of the Empire.

That means, firstly, engaging with the theorists of Greater Britain: political philosophers like Robert Seeley and J. A. Froude who had tried to explain the nature of the diffuse and dispersed nationality that was global Britishness. These thinkers were widely read across Australasia and were cited as influences upon Australian Federation, helping shape the Imperial worldview of Australasians.

That also means grappling with the Imperial Federation movement. Imperial Federation does not get its due in the literature because it never gained serious momentum, especially in the United Kingdom itself. Too often it is written off as a political hobbyhorse of Joseph Chamberlain, or as a simple extension of the Greater Britain ideas of writers like Charles Dilke. It rarely made the political agenda of any government within the Empire apart from nodding references at the Colonial Conferences, and in an Australasian context is often treated as a failed precursor to the successful Federation movement of the 1890s.⁴

Imperial Federation did not, though, seem like a chimaera to colonial thinkers in the 1890s. It excited much public debate, in Australia, New Zealand and Canada. This was not a debate driven by Joseph Chamberlain or even particularly fuelled by British political writers, but a genuine *Imperial* movement that was widely supported or at least recognised. Whatever

⁴ e.g., John Darwin's section on Australian Federation in *The Empire Project*: 'By the 1890s, Imperial Federation no longer seemed feasible,' p. 165.

the case in Britain, in the colonies the idea had enough traction to be routinely referred to in newspapers and the periodical press as an almost axiomatic good.

Imperial Federation was not a mass populist movement, nor a regular topic of colonial parliamentary debates. It was not a policy priority of colonial governments. The idea's importance lies not in the accomplishments of its adherents, but in its wide resonance with a colonial public. It was the subject of pamphlets and essays and town-hall meetings, yes; but it is referred to in passing in discussions of other, more immediately important issues such as colonial Federation and debates on immigration restrictions. This matters, because it shows us that even if the movement was not a great driver of public discourse, the debate about the future course of the British Empire was something that Australasians were immediately expected to recognise. It required a position, if not passion.

This chapter will use the Imperial Federation movement to show that Australasians in the 1890s were actively engaged in debate about the future cultural and political course of the Empire, and that this sat alongside rather than in opposition to any divide between colonial and imperial nationalisms. The movement may have been born in Britain, but it was experienced in Australasia as a local movement. Intellectual history being even harder to force into neat periods than political events, this will mean delving back into the 1880s - but in the main we will be carrying these ideas right through to the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia. Studying the Imperial Federation movement gives us clear examples of how Australasians, from radical nationalists to so-called Imperial loyalists, saw the British Empire not merely as something to respond to but as something that they could change. The discussion around the movement also provides a window into how Australasians saw the world more generally: who were the true citizens of the Empire? And who would be its enemies?

i. Greater Britain, and its challenge to Australasia

‘We constantly betray by our modes of speech,’ wrote Cambridge historian John Seeley, ‘that we do not reckon our colonies as really belonging to us.’ Seeley’s book *The Expansion of England* was written about the literal expansion of the English polity, but its great project was to try to expand the *conception* of Englishness- so that Seeley’s countrymen would cease ‘to think of ourselves as simply a race inhabiting an island of the northern coast of the Continent of Europe.’⁵ It is a curious book. A collection of lectures, it marries an absolute faith in English civilisation with a nominally scientific, clear-headed approach that disregards openly triumphalist narratives. It celebrates the conquest of India, for example, while stressing that British rule was as much an accident of Mughal collapse as Clive’s daring - Seeley even pre-empted Lenin with the remark that power in India had fallen in the street and ‘lay there waiting to be picked up by somebody’.⁶ Seeley was a liberal Anglican to the point of deism and his work is in many ways a late flourishing of the Romantic nationalist thought that had taken hold in continental Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For all his pride in his scientific approach to history, there is a certain messianic tone to *The Expansion of England*: it is a book written in ‘the quest for the earthly immortality of the Anglo-Saxon race.’⁷ For Seeley, the stakes could not be higher, for nothing was as politically important as ‘the mutual influence of the branches of the English race. The whole future of the planet depends upon it.’⁸

For Seeley, population was power, and that necessitated the unification of populations into greater units. Russia and the United States were rising in wealth and power, and Britain could either unify its far-flung holdings, putting it ‘on a level with the greatest of those great

⁵ John Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (London, 1883) p. 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁷ Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton, 2007) p. 160.

⁸ Seeley, p. 175.

states of the future,' or it could gradually reduce its Empire and become a Spain, looking back 'to the great days when she pretended to be a world-state.'⁹ This was not, it seemed, an entirely impractical suggestion, for the mid-nineteenth century had been a time of federations. Italy and Germany had been transformed by unification.

Seeley's book resonated with Australasians, many of whom were increasingly unhappy with the disunity of their colonial governments. They did not necessarily believe in the unity of Greater Britain, but Seeley's book was an argument for local Federation too. His emphasis on the ability of large nations to intimidate smaller ones also suggested worrying things about Australia's proximity to the apparently rising empires of Japan and China. At the 1897 Federation Conference, South Australia's Patrick Glynn used Seeley to argue that the colonies needed to federate to catch up with Asia.

What does Mr. Seeley tell us?... that the larger states must dominate... We are endeavouring to build up a large state, a strong state, which will have by its magnitude some power to offer against possible aggression from the young giants in the north and the east from Japan [and China.]¹⁰

Seeley's worldview suggested by implication that Australasia was insecure. Its neighbours and near neighbours included states like Japan or China and the powerful empires of Germany and France. Colonial panics were not, of course, entirely rational - it was not long since the *New Zealand Herald* had reported that Auckland harbour had been seized and held to ransom by the suggestively named Tsarist vessel *Kaskowski*.¹¹ Still, as with the New Hebrides scare addressed in the last chapter, it is worth taking colonial concerns seriously. They were not based just upon their own fears about foreign encroachment; they were also a

⁹ Seeley, p. 350.

¹⁰ *Official Reports of the National Australian Convention Debates* (First Session, Adelaide, 1897), pp. 449-450.

¹¹ See Glynn Barratt, 'The Enemy that never was: the New Zealand 'Russian Scare' of 1870-1885,' in *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, No. 1 (1976), pp. 13-33.

product of books like Seeley's that told them that the scientific wisdom of the day was that small states were in danger. Nor was this the diagnosis of cloistered academics. Lord Salisbury himself would warn in 1898 that

You may roughly divide the nations of the world as the living and the dying... the living nations will gradually encroach on to the territory of the dying, and the seeds and causes of conflict amongst civilised nations will speedily appear... Undoubtedly, we shall not allow England to be at a disadvantage in any rearrangement that may take place.¹²

The speech was noticed and republished in colonial newspapers. It was, the *New Zealand Herald* wrote, 'a remarkable speech.'¹³ Salisbury was not a particular believer in Imperial consolidation, and he certainly did not romanticise it the way some of his cabinet colleagues did - recall him telling Holland in 1887 how tiring he found 'your Greater Britain' (emphasis mine).¹⁴ Salisbury's speech owed more to Social Darwinism than Seeley's Romanticism. But it shows that the general intellectual climate was one that warned of the inherent weakness of small states. And Australasia, in the 1890s, seemed to be little more than a collection of small states.

Seeley was perhaps the most influential of the theorists of Greater Britain, but two others are worth touching on. The first was James Froude, another historian. Froude's *Oceana: or, England and her colonies* (1886) was a less scientific survey of Britain's holdings than Seeley's although even more idealised. Seeley made the case for the consolidation of the English-speaking peoples but was conscious of the gravity of that task: his argument, fundamentally, was that the stakes were too high *not* to embark upon the

¹² *The Times*, May 5 1898.

¹³ *New Zealand Herald*, June 11 1898, pg. 3.

¹⁴ Salisbury to Holland, 18 April 1887, cited in Mountford, 'Colonial Australia'.

difficult project of Imperial unity. For Froude, ‘of all great political achievements the organisation of the United British Empire would probably be found the easiest.’¹⁵ Froude believed that as soon as the political will was there, which would surely be merely a matter of time - ‘a war might precipitate a solution,’ but failing that it was better just to wait for the inevitable flowering of sentiment. Froude’s work sold well throughout middle-class Australasia; Deakin would read *Oceana* on his journey to irritate Lord Salisbury at the 1887 conference.¹⁶

Unfortunately, Froude’s relentless praise of Australasians did not have entirely the desired effect; it came off as patronising, and the next year one British traveller reported that ‘poor Froude’s name in Australasia is as the red rag to the Colonial bull.’¹⁷ Radical nationalists, as we shall see, liked him still less. Froude remained one of the most popular writers on the Empire, in the Empire. If nothing else, Froude shows that even the language of fervent imperial loyalism, supposedly shared by Britain and Australasia could still sound different depending upon the audience. Froude’s vision of the Empire was fundamentally as a place where the British poor could journey for self-improvement; this was not going to be received well by Australasians who saw themselves as equals, not charity cases.¹⁸

The third great writer on Greater Britain was a politician. Sir Charles Dilke was the sometime great hope of Britain’s Liberal Party whose political fortunes died in a well-publicised divorce case. Dilke wrote about Greater Britain throughout his life, generally in meditations on his travels. Of greatest relevance is his 1890 edition of *Problems of Greater Britain*. Something of a travelogue, it is more perceptive than *Oceana* because of its unapologetic elitism - Dilke travelled around the colonies, dining with local politicians and

¹⁵ J.A. Froude, *Oceana: or, England and her colonies* (London, 1886) p. 11.

¹⁶ Judith Brett, *The Enigmatic Mr Deakin* (Melbourne, 2017) pp. 128.

¹⁷ Katherine Bates, cited in Anna Johnston, ‘Travelling the Tasman world: travel writing and narratives of transit’ in Catherine Colebourne & Katie Pickles, eds., *New Zealand’s Empire* (Manchester, 2016) p. 72.

¹⁸ See Bell, p. 318.

other dignitaries. The book lacks Seeley's theoretical sweep or Froude's enthusiasm, but it has a specificity to its understanding of colonial politics that the other books lack. It is also a marked contrast to Froude's optimism in that Dilke thought that, over time, the colonies would drift further away from Britain:

The political tendency is to put Australia first, England second. If ever Australian and British interests should clash, the colonists of the new generation would cast their votes for their own home. But without strong causes of dissension, the Victorians will be inclined to uphold the maintenance of the imperial connection.¹⁹

Furthermore, this was not something to be remedied with strong action. Britain's best course was masterly inactivity; any attempt to bring about some great scheme of Imperial Federation might shatter the link. Relations between Australia and Britain could continue as they were, Dilke wrote, but 'it would be dangerous to try and tighten them.'²⁰ Dilke was not a sage; he overstressed the role of Irish Catholicism in radical Australian nationalism, for instance.²¹ He was, nonetheless, respected by Australasians. He was consulted for his views on the 1891 Federal Convention; in the 1897 session in Adelaide, Western Australia's H.B. Higgins justified his criticisms of various measures by invoking Dilke's objections.²² In other words, he was a bridge between the political worlds of Britain and the colonies. Dilke's work is perhaps more important to understanding how radical Imperialists like Dilke or his sometimes colleague Chamberlain understood Australasia; but the respect with which the work was greeted also suggests something about how Australasians liked to be understood.

¹⁹ Dilke, p. 156.

²⁰ Ibid, p.209.

²¹ See Dilke, p.202.

²² *Official Reports*, p.205.

It is that colleague who will be discussed now: Joseph Chamberlain, and his transformation of the office of Colonial Secretary from a minor Cabinet posting into, briefly, a great office of state.

ii. Joe Chamberlain and the Colonial Office

Under Joseph Chamberlain, New Zealand's William Pember Reeves wrote in 1902, the Colonial Office 'was in the somewhat unusual position of having a man at its head who had a mind of his own.'²³ Reeves was correct that the Colonial Office was not a department known for visionary leadership. It was an administrative and bureaucratic body, not a seat of policy-making.²⁴ In 1892, many of Britain's Imperial possessions were no longer under its direct authority. The self-governing colonies of the Cape, Australasia and North America usually ran themselves, Egypt was a de facto protectorate that came under the Foreign Office, and the Raj was in the purview of the India Office. 'For three generations,' wrote A.P. Thornton, 'the Colonial Office had been a parliamentary cockshy. It lacked the dignity of the Foreign Office... it had no tradition even of a reluctantly-permitted "secret diplomacy."' ²⁵ When the arch-Tory Salisbury formed his third ministry in 1895, he had depended upon the support of Chamberlain's Liberal Unionists. He offered Chamberlain the War Office, the Home Office and even the Treasury; Chamberlain chose the Colonial Office instead 'in the hope of furthering closer union between them and the United Kingdom.'²⁶

Chamberlain was an enormously talented man, and he approached his ministry with vigour. His admirers spoke of him revitalising a moribund office like a 'sleeping city awakened by a touch.'²⁷ Others thought his interest in grand projects caused a hopeless breakdown in the actual work of the office.²⁸ This was, in miniature, his tenure as Colonial Secretary: great energy directed towards ineffectual results.

²³ Reeves, *State Experiments*, vol ii, p. 341.

²⁴ For the Colonial Office before Chamberlain, see Brian Blakeley, *The Colonial Office: 1868-1902* (Durham 1972).

²⁵ A.P. Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and its Enemies: A Study in British Power*, 2nd Ed (London, 1985).

²⁶ Denis Judd, *Radical Joe: A Life of Joseph Chamberlain* (Cardiff, 1993), p. 184.

²⁷ Flora Shaw, quoted in Judd, p. 186.

²⁸ See Robert V. Kubicek, *The Administration of Imperialism: Joseph Chamberlain at the Colonial Office* (Durham, 1969), pp. 33-36.

Chamberlain was an admirer of Seeley and had supposedly sent his son Austen to Cambridge to study under him.²⁹ Seeley's wariness and his doctrine of the supremacy of large states greatly affected Chamberlain. It is vital to note that, just as the Australasians were in the grips of various panics about foreign invasion or racial contamination, the Colonial Secretary had his own apocalyptic tendencies. It was not just that he thought Imperial Federation would make the Empire stronger; it was that it was necessary to avoid the collapse of British power. This was not a view shared by Salisbury, but several of Chamberlain's younger colleagues like Lord Selborne and Alfred Milner paid attention to what Robinson and Gallagher called 'this forecast of imperial cataclysm.'³⁰ This fervour worsened over time; in 1898 Lord Esher wrote that Chamberlain 'talked of China and West Africa, and of France and Russia, with an amplitude of view and phrase that would have astonished Birmingham ten years ago.'³¹ It is a curious parallel to colonial fears; just as Australasian paranoia made it hard for colonial leaders to understand Imperial strategy, so too did the fears of the Colonial Secretary shape his actions.

Chamberlain's great reform project was Imperial Preference: the rolling back of the laws that had granted the colonies the right to set their own customs regimes and the creation of an enormous Imperial free trade zone or *zollverein*.³² He became preoccupied with the declining levels of trade within the Empire, which fell to less than a quarter of Britain's imports and exports by 1892.³³ The *zollverein* would be a stepping stone to Federation; once the Empire truly shared an economy, it could share political structures. However, at the 1897 Colonial Conference he failed to persuade any of the self-governing colonies of the merits of this plan. Canada had no desire to compromise her trade with the United States, and the

²⁹ Enoch Powell, *Joseph Chamberlain* (London, 1977) p. 52.

³⁰ Robinson, Gallagher, Denny, *Africa and the Victorians, 2nd Ed* (London, 1961) p. 460.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² An allusion to the customs union that preceded German unification.

³³ Judd, p. 191.

Australian colonies were in the middle of thrashing out their own internal compromise on tariff regimes during the process of local Federation.³⁴ Chamberlain accused colonial leaders of being ‘Premiers first and patriots second,’³⁵ but the real problem was that Chamberlain was asking the colonies to make sacrifices that he could not promise to honour. Canada, after rebuffing him at the Conference, reduced its tariffs on British goods by 12.5 percent in 1897 but expected reciprocity; this was not given. Chamberlain could not in fact convince his own government of the plan for Imperial Preference, let alone anyone else’s government. In 1903 he would fail to persuade British voters too.

Chamberlain’s other reforms were equally unsuccessful. In 1897, when proposing a revision of the 1887 Defence Agreement, he mismanaged the arguments so badly that Richard Preston suggests that he was lucky that colonial contributions did not actually diminish.³⁶ Generally, Chamberlain relied too much on his own force of presence rather than understanding the way his interlocutors thought. The Colonial Office had always been able to work with the Foreign Office, but its relations with the India Office were more complicated.³⁷ Chamberlain could generally work well with Salisbury in the latter’s capacity as Foreign Secretary, but Chamberlain had a blind spot when it came to India, which he never mentioned in his speeches. Lord Curzon observed that apparently ‘the Empire is to be bound together (or, we are told, if the prescription is not taken, destroyed) without apparent reference to its... largest and most powerful unit.’³⁸ As shall be seen later, many Imperial Federationists struggled to grapple with the problem of India - but the most famous among them never dealt with the problem at all.

³⁴ See Chapter Six.

³⁵ Chamberlain to Devonshire, 4-07-97, quoted in Judd p.212.

³⁶ Preston, p. 118.

³⁷ T.G. Otte, ‘The Foreign Office and the Defence of Empire, 1856-1914’ in Greg Kennedy, *Imperial Defence*, pp. 15-16.

³⁸ Max Beloff, *Britain’s Liberal Empire, 1897-1921*, 2nd Ed (Oxford, 1987), pp. 47-48.

The failures of Chamberlain's reform program are interesting for Australasia not because they demonstrate that Imperial Federation was impractical. Such a demonstration was hardly necessary. Nor is it because they somehow show that Australasians were not interested in Imperial Federation or reform; again and again in this chapter and the dissertation we shall see that the rhetoric of the movement was sincerely used to justify Australasian positions on Imperial policy. It is that even a British leader who apparently shared that same ideology of Imperial Federation as colonial leaders could not convince them that they could trust him to protect or reform the Empire. Chamberlain declared himself an admirer of colonial structures of self-government, saying that 'the federation of Canada may be the lamp lighting our path to the federation of the British Empire.'³⁹ But when negotiating with colonial leaders, that path always entailed the dismantling of those structures. To Imperial Federationists like Chamberlain, the movement, in the end, meant centralisation. No matter his genuine interest in progressive government, his program, at least in the short and medium-term was one that entailed rolling back reforms, not carrying out new ones. To Australasia, Imperial Federation was something quite different: a promise of something new and genuinely utopian.

³⁹ Judd, p. 180.

iii. The Imperial Federation League in Australasia and Britain

The most obvious distinction between the way in which Imperial Federation was discussed in the colonies and in Britain was that far more colonials were interested in it. Admittedly, this is not saying much. In 1879, the Canadian Imperial Federationist Granville Cuninghame opened his proposal for an Imperial Senate by admitting that,

As a rule, the British public is supremely indifferent to colonial affairs.... Nor is the reason for this indifference far to seek or difficult to understand. To the individual Briton the Colonies are totally uninteresting, because he has no immediate interests bound up in them....⁴⁰

In Britain, Imperial Federation was meant to be lobbied for by the Imperial Federation League. Founded in 1884, it was successful at bringing together members of the academic and political elite. Leading members included the noted imperialist theoreticians J. R. Seeley, R. Rawson and J. A. Froude, and its chairman between 1885 and 1892 was Lord Rosebery. But it never really marshalled its intellectual talent or political connections in service of a coherent program. It formed branches overseas but had difficulty reaching out to them. Having never decided whether it existed to discuss Federation or to press for it, the League fell apart in the mid-1890s when its members could not agree on the question of imperial tariffs. Or rather, it fell apart in Britain. The League survived in Canada and Australasia until the twentieth century; a decade after the British league collapsed, its Australian successor was still filling the Melbourne Town Hall for addresses by a former prime minister.

To study the importance of Imperial Federation in Australasia in the 1890s, we must briefly return to the 1880s. When the League was founded in 1884, it attracted support from Australasians both in Australasia and London. At the first conference in London, Australian

⁴⁰ G. C. Cuninghame, 'A Scheme for Imperial Federation: A Senate for the Empire' (London, 1879), pp. 1-2.

attendees included Sir Saul Samuel, the New South Wales Agent-General, and his predecessor in the post, Sir Daniel Cooper. British attendees included colonial grandees like George Phipps, Marquess of Normanby, who was a former governor of Queensland, New Zealand and Victoria. Clearly, these men were not ordinary citizens of the colonies. The colonial attendees were landowners and investors, men who had moved back and forth between the colonies and metropole and in and out of politics. They show that the political elite were engaged with the Imperial Federation movement from the start. Even conservative pillars of society - newspaper owners like *Ballarat Star's* proprietor Thomas Wanliss, or the Agents-General - were engaged in what was, despite the wealth and privilege of its proponents, a quietly radical project to reshape the British constitution. If the League had achieved its eventual, if, admittedly, somewhat indeterminate aims, the Australasian colonies would have undergone a political and economic transformation just as great if not greater than that brought about by the creation of the Australian Commonwealth in 1901. Imperial Federation was about creating a new governing structure for a quarter of the globe; the fact that it was advocated for by the elite of a global power, and the apparent hopelessness of the idea should not blind us to how radical that proposition was. Nor should the League's short existence in Britain lead us to ignore the strength of its colonial offshoots.

Traditionally, the Australasian branches of the Imperial Federation League have been treated as a weak association that never achieved the vibrancy of other nationalist Australasian societies of the time. The Australian Natives' Association (ANA) was seen both by contemporaries and by later writers as, if not a rival to the League, sitting squarely on much of the same territory. The first local branch of the Imperial Federation League was founded in Melbourne in June 1885. At the establishing meeting and apparently nervous of the opprobrium of the ANA, one speaker (and member of the ANA) stressed that Imperial and local Federation were not in conflict:

[we know] the jealousy between the different colonies, especially between New South Wales and ourselves; but the very existence of that jealousy is a proof that if Imperial Federation is necessary, so also is Australian Federation.⁴¹

Indeed, in 1893, the Victorian League's secretary Henry D'Esterre Taylor wrote to a colleague that he hoped to speak at a meeting of the ANA which would 'give me the opportunity to fuse the movements in such a way that no one will be able to separate them.'⁴² Nonetheless, despite the hope of the League's local founders it never achieved anything close to the support of the ANA, or even a particularly viable coexistence. The ANA was not merely a venue to express patriotic sentiment - it also acted as a benefit society, grounding it in the wider community. The ANA had over forty branches by 1885 and would not wind down until 1993; the League never even opened in New South Wales at all. By the early 1890s the Victorian League had become, to quote Luke Trainor, 'a remote and ineffectual body,'⁴³ which tried to influence the larger ANA in the absence of any effective populist movement of its own.

However, this obscures the fact that the membership of both bodies overlapped. The most prominent Australian supporter of Imperial Federation, a member of the league and a man who attended and addressed its meetings right until 1911, was Alfred Deakin. In the absence of membership rolls, it is impossible to see how many people joined both societies; but it seems clear that the paltry membership of the Australian League is not the best indicator of support for Imperial Federation generally.⁴⁴ In fact, the League's elite pedigree

⁴¹ "Report of public meeting held in the Town Hall, Melbourne on Friday evening, 5th June 1885... together with a statement of the objects and rules of the League." Imperial Federation League Pamphlet, in *The Pamphlet Collection of Sir Robert Stout*, Victoria University of Wellington Library, digitised at <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Stout84-t13-body-d1.html>, accessed on January 2, 2019.

⁴² Taylor to A.H. Loring, November 6 1893, Letterbook of the Imperial Federation League of Victoria, National Library of Australia.

⁴³ Luke Trainor, 'The Imperial Federation League in Britain and Australia, c. 1884-1900,' in Andrew Bosco and Alex May, *The Round Table: The Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy* (London, 1997) p. 168

⁴⁴ I searched both the National Australian Archives and the Victorian Public Record Office for the League's membership records but had no success.

may have held it back. In New Zealand, Robert Stout - a man with no small interest in social status himself - worried that the Australasians who supported the idea in London weakened the cause by only speaking to, and speaking for, the top of society. 'Coming from a democratic country, 'he wrote, 'they seem to become intoxicated with the aroma of aristocratic civilisation.' Rather, the idea needed to be championed by politicians like Stout who had a better appreciation of the public mood.⁴⁵

Stout's view was borne out by his home colony of New Zealand, which had neither a successful local branch of the League nor the ANA. The New Zealand Natives Association was founded, after an abortive attempt in 1890, only in 1894. It never achieved anything like the success of its trans-Tasman counterpart, partly by never emulating the ANA's function as a benefit society, and partly through an absurdly narrow definition of 'New Zealand native' that reduced them to handing out honorary memberships to inconveniently ineligible supporters like Richard Seddon.⁴⁶ Founded in 1889 in Christchurch, the New Zealand branch of the Imperial Federation League was even less impressive. One member, the young William Pember Reeves, worried that by founding the branch before holding any public meetings the League would look like a small clique. He was right: it met once more, and then disappears from the record.⁴⁷ Clearly, Imperial Federation's influence in New Zealand certainly did not stem from an organised movement.

It was in Melbourne, though, that the League was first founded in Australasia, and it was here that it had its greatest success. The Victorian Imperial Federation League cannot be dismissed out of hand. It may have lacked the ANA's populism, but what its membership lacked in numbers they partly made up for in social connections. The first member was the

⁴⁵ Robert Stout, *A Colonial View of Federation* (1887), p. 360.

⁴⁶ For the uninspiring history of the NZNA, see Keith Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart* (Wellington, 1986) pp. 33-45.

⁴⁷ Keith Sinclair, *Imperial Federation: A Study of New Zealand Policy and Opinion, 1880-1914* (London, 1955) p. 13.

Mayor of Melbourne, Godfrey Carter, for example, and at that first meeting he shared the stage with the Bishop of Melbourne and a Justice of the Supreme Court. We must not dismiss the simple fact of the League's survival in Australia for almost two decades after the collapse of its British parent. When that original society dissolved in 1893, broken like so many other late Victorian political projects on the rock of free trader versus imperial preference, it neglected to send even a courtesy notice out to the various colonial branches. Simultaneously, the Australasian colonies were undergoing a severe depression that bit into the League's donor base. The Victorian League, by now the hub of the Imperial Federation movement in Australasia, might have crumbled. Instead, as Trainor puts it, 'it says something for the persistence of Taylor and the Victorian branch that in 1893 it weathered the depression, accepted without reply the Government's disowning of the project, [and] soldiered on through the dissolution of the League itself.'⁴⁸ If the Victorian League really was a mere adjunct of the British society on one hand, and a weak competitor to the local federationists of the ANA on the other, then even if it survived the collapse of the British League the great triumph of local federation should surely have done for it. In fact, it actually grew from its nadir in the early 1890s. In 1905, Deakin - now President of the League - could address the League's supporters at the Melbourne Town Hall and position Australian Federation as merely a stepping-stone to a greater victory:

As a unit Australia, with her small population, if we stood alone, must obviously fall a prey to allied aggression. Even Great Britain herself, in confined to Europe, must shrink from the high estate and commanding authority she now enjoys. All our

⁴⁸ Trainor, 'Imperial Federation League', p. 168.

interests, all our memories, characters, aims, and hopes of realising them pacifically must draw us closer together.⁴⁹

This is an address by the country's most influential politician, a month before he became Prime Minister for the second time, in the largest venue of the largest city. This does not suggest a society that was conscious that its time had passed. In fact, there are echoes of the original League's founding members in Britain in 1884: perhaps a tiny group compared to the great popular movements of the day, but impeccably credentialled and confident that their voices would be heard in the press. The Victorian League did not, in our period, bind the British Empire together: but if the idea of Imperial Federation enjoyed more currency in Australasia at this time than is generally admitted, the doggedness of the League's leadership must surely have something to do with it.

⁴⁹ 'Imperial Federation: an address delivered by the Hon. Alfred Deakin, M.P., at the annual meeting of the Imperial Federation League of Victoria, Town Hall, Melbourne, June 14, 1905.', State Library New South Wales, p. 6.

iv. Imperial Federation and middle-class values

Between the elite proponents of Imperial Federation and the radical nationalists, most Australasians experienced the movement as a sort of background hum. It became a sort of political and cultural piety, an expression of faith that at some unspecified time in the future, and without giving up any self-government or independence of spirit, all the free (white, Anglo-Saxon) peoples of the Empire would live in a great and virtuous world-state.

Consider that great inculcator of late Victorian values, the society for young men. Groups for young adults existed to further the moral education of the adolescent citizen, from the YMCA to the various Irish-Australasian societies that sprang up to preserve immigrant culture. Though the general tenor of their so-called ‘muscular Christianity’ varied by denomination, they were important avenues by which Imperial values and patriotism were transmitted. In at least some cases, those values moved beyond general loyalism to a full-throated support for reform and federation. In South Australia, for example, one of the more prominent such societies was the North Adelaide Young Men’s Society. In April 1901 it was respectable enough that its annual session was chaired by the state’s Chief Justice Sir Samuel Way. He introduced the keynote speaker, the preacher and Australian federationist James Jefferis, to lecture his young audience on ‘The Federation of the British People.’ Jefferis proceeded to call for the new generation to strive for Imperial Federation not as a mere political project, but as a naked vision of utopia. It is worth quoting at length, just to get a sense of how grandiose the rhetoric was:

We shall have Olympic games on a nobler scale than were ever celebrated in Elis, and honors for the worthy as deeply prized as the garland of wild olive. The old home country with its immemorial traditions, its Westminster hall, its tombs of the mighty dead, will be an inspiration from the past, as well as the stable centre of our

worldwide national life. It will be the great gathering place of British souls... What an object lesson for the world would be such a federation of the British people!⁵⁰

Few of the young men in the audience can be expected to have been swayed to anything approaching Jefferis' messianic fervour. The address is fascinating because it really is a prayer more than a political call to action; the audience are not directed to join a given society or vote a given way, but to have faith that this next great stage of civilisation awaits them. That religious tone is perhaps not surprising in an address by one of South Australia's most prominent churchmen, in the most unquestionably Protestant of the Australasian colonies and in the presence of dignitaries like the Chief Justice. Still, the mainline Protestant Churches, then and now, were not known for promising paradise on this present earth. That perhaps suggests another, more cynical nuance - like all promises of God's paradise, Jefferis did not actually expect it to happen soon.

The other salient point is that this address was not an introduction to the concept of Imperial Federation. Jefferis does not explain the topic to his audience, but he strives to impress upon them its importance; he was reminding young men of the value of something they had already been taught. Given that the Imperial Federation League never had anything close to the prominence in South Australia that it achieved in Victoria, we can see clearly that interest in the topic was far more widespread than a few committed activists. Furthermore, Jefferis takes pains to establish himself as a local nationalist of long standing as well as an imperial patriot:

Twenty-one years ago I strongly advocated in the press and on the platform the federation of the colonies of Australia... [now] Federation is accomplished... it is with

⁵⁰ James Jefferis, 'The Federation of the British People: a lecture delivered April 15th, 1901 at the opening of the forty second yearly session of the North Adelaide Young Men's Society,' State Library New South Wales, p. 18.

the gladness of gratitude that I offer thanks to the Ruler of men, for the favor he has granted the country I love.⁵¹

It is well apparent that this is not Taylor's careful attempt to woo the nationalists of the ANA, or the speakers at the League's inauguration in 1885 trying to avoid being seen as enemies of the local Federation movement. When Jefferis gave his address, Australia had been a Commonwealth for four months. This is a genuine expression of the belief that Imperial Federation was the next step in the growth of Australia. 'What could be better,' Jefferis asked, 'than that the process should be complete, and that all these daughter States of the august mother of nations should enter into an indivisible family alliance?'⁵² Jefferis had been one of the foremost preachers in South Australia for forty years. He was every bit a man of the respectable establishment. His fervour shows that to whatever extent there was a divide between local nationalism and Imperial loyalism, even many of those so-called loyalists were trying to change the political structure to which they were so devoted.

The idea that there was no contradiction between local and Imperial Federation was by no means generally accepted. If we accept that men like Jefferis and Deakin were devout partisans of both, we should also accept that their opponents, who thought the two movements worked against each other, were also genuine in their beliefs. But the extent to which Australasian imperial identities were in flux is also shown in the way that opponents of Australian Federation used the rhetoric of imperial reform to strengthen their case for colonial isolation. The New Zealand Royal Commission on Federation, a body set up to examine whether New Zealand should apply for late entry into the Australian Commonwealth, spent January to March 1901 taking testimony from various New Zealanders about their preferred place in the British Empire. It is unclear as to what extent the various

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 4.

⁵² Ibid.

members of the commission were genuine partisans of Imperial Federation, but the frequency with which they brought it up as a noble cause that might be compromised by joining the young Commonwealth is intriguing. The arguments were never so much about whether Imperial Federation was a good idea or even possible but whether Australian Federation would help or hinder that project. The commission, temperamentally anti-Federation, took general Imperial unity as an assumed good. In Invercargill, grain merchant George Nichols began his testimony by immediately making the case for joining Australia:

We are bound to be brought into very close contact with the Commonwealth, and in the future we are bound to be always rubbing up against it. We belong to the same race, we are part of the same Empire, our aspirations socially and our interests commercially and politically are the same, and I cannot help thinking that if we federated we would not be placed at any disadvantage.⁵³

The commission's chairman, Alfred Pitt, immediately interrupted:

Those are reasons apparently which tend more to an Imperial Federation. Will you give us your reasons why you think we should federate with the Australian commonwealth?⁵⁴

Nichol's arguments were, cleverly, dismissed by being immediately accepted. Those were good arguments for a good cause, just an irrelevant one. The commission would use this tactic several times, questioning pro-Federation witnesses if they thought that the Australian Commonwealth would harm the greater project of Imperial unity. A Dunedin ironfounder, John Shacklock, supported Federation. Commissioner William Russell, a delegate at the 1890

⁵³ *New Zealand Royal Commission on Federation*, National Archives of New Zealand, p. 17, evidence of George Willis Nichols.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Federation Convention wondered why. It is worth quoting some of the back and forth, to get a sense of how the witness was pressed:

Russell: You have told us, Mr. Shacklock, that you would like to belong to a large nation: do you think that Imperial Federation is likely to be assisted or retarded by the creation of the Commonwealth?

Shacklock: I think it is likely to be assisted.

R: Have you read of the state of feeling in regard to Imperial Federation in Canada, which is a very loyal country?

S: Just merely casually—what I have seen in the newspapers.: Are you aware that there is a very anti-Federal feeling in Canada?

S: I was not aware of that.

R: And you think that as the Commonwealth increases in power and strength it will be more likely than at the present time to favour Imperial Federation?

S:—I think so.

R: Do you or do you not think that the Australian Commonwealth and New Zealand might be more likely to lead to Imperial Federation than if New Zealand united with Australia?—

S: I favour the other idea rather. I look upon Federation as being a matter of growth.⁵⁵

Russell's suggestion that even the 'very loyal' Canada had been isolated from the wider Empire by Confederation showed how important it was for both sides of the Australian Federation debate to establish their loyalist Imperial bona fides. This led to odd paradoxes. Opponents of Federation could claim that they supported continued New Zealand legal

⁵⁵ Commission, p. 90, John Bradley Shacklock.

independence the better to give it up; proponents that they were embarking upon the first stages of a great imperial rationalisation. The back and forth is most clearly seen in the Commission's dialogue with Dunedin journalist Mark Cohen: 'If there is any good in Imperial Federation, surely there must be some good in the genesis of it in Australian Federation.' If New Zealand joined an Imperial Federation separately, it would not be 'an effective part of it, it strikes me.'⁵⁶

The Commission asked if:

a powerful state like New Zealand and the Commonwealth - the two together - are not more likely to assist in [Imperial] Federation than if we were one people only?

Cohen: 'I do not think so.'⁵⁷

It is striking how rarely the Commission asked if the witness were in favour of Imperial Federation. The support of right-thinking people for the project was taken as given, hence Russell's conflation of Canadian pro-Federal sentiment and Imperial loyalty. It is perfectly possible that this support was nominal: New Zealand and Australia hardly spent the period pressing to return legislative powers to Westminster. What is important is that Imperial Federation was something, the Commission implied, that would be driven from the colonies and Dominions as much as from the metropole.

Note also that these witnesses were drawn from a variety of settlements and occupations. They were generally middle-class professionals, but they also included landowners, journalists and merchants. They seem to have shared the virtues of the Victorian middle-class, including a faith in the goodness of Imperial Federation. This in a colony, remember, where the organised League had managed a grand total of two meetings. Despite

⁵⁶ Commission, p. 103, Mark Cohen.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 104.

that failure, Imperial Federation was, if not a truly popular proposition, a thoroughly respectable one. That was why each premier of New Zealand between 1883 and 1912, as Keith Sinclair noted, could be cited as offering ‘some measure of support to the ideal of Imperial Federation.’⁵⁸ It may not have been a powerful political movement; it certainly seems to have spread throughout the culture.

⁵⁸ Sinclair, *Imperial Federation*, pp. 11.

v. Imperial Federation and Colonial Nationalism

A useful gauge of Imperial Federation's influence in Australasia was the vitriol it inspired. It is important, once again, to stress that this is not an argument that Imperial Federation was some great popular cause. Rather it is that it was an idea that permeated the discourse of the Oceanic colonies, and that shaped the way in which Australasians thought about the Empire. Perhaps the best evidence for this is the vehemence with which Imperial Federation was attacked by the most fervent colonial nationalists.

At this point, we need to discuss the most infamous example of colonial nationalism - the champion of 'Australia for the Australians,' (later, 'Australia for the White man,') Sydney's *The Bulletin*. *The Bulletin* was quite specific in its targeting. When Froude died in 1894, the paper marked his passing with a gleeful recitation of his most bigoted statements about the Irish. Dilke was wrong to think that the Irish were the drivers of colonial nationalism, but they were certainly well represented among the disaffected supporters of the Labour movement who made up much of *The Bulletin's* audience. In the mid-1890s, the paper was thoroughly opposed to Greater Britain in all its forms. It seems clear that the (generally English) writers of the paper decided that rather than quoting the fairly banal *Oceana*, there was more ammunition in Froude's 1873 book *The English in Ireland*. Froude was 'putrid,' the paper declared, a defender of 'the fiercest barbarities of the English and Scotch settlers... he believed in the Cromwellian policy of wholesale extermination to the glory of God and profit of the saints.'⁵⁹

Even in Britain, *The Bulletin's* opposition to imperial loyalism was noted. In 1901, W.T. Stead, the editor of the *Review of Reviews*, wrote about the chief opposition to his own paper's Australian edition. He believed that the soul of Australasia was in the balance

⁵⁹ *The Bulletin*, 10 November 1894, p. 7.

between his own stable and the ‘clever, wicked, lawless, cynical, scoffing’ *Bulletin*; ‘the future destinies of the Empire will probably be decided by the question whether it is the Australasian *Review of Reviews* or *The Sydney Bulletin* which dominates the policy of the continent.’ *The Bulletin*’s response was cheerful; firstly, it was not called *The Sydney Bulletin*. Secondly, it outsold the *Review* ten to one. Thirdly, it was ‘most gratifying to find that this paper’s efforts to procure and erect an independent breed of Australian, and to blot out of existence the truckling-to-trifles, crawling-to-royalties, indecently self-prostrating variety, are thoroughly appreciated.’⁶⁰

For all its radicalism and undoubted popularity, it is hard to gauge just how influential the *Bulletin* actually was. Its cuttings do not appear in official correspondence with the Colonial Office, unlike articles from more respectable broadsheets such as *The Age* or *The Argus*. It was rarely cited in parliaments, either. And its initial cherished dream of an independent Australian Republic certainly never came close to realisation. ‘The beacon-fire of national progress,’ it dubbed itself, in the service of ‘United Australia and Protection Against the World.’⁶¹ Its circulation reached eighty thousand by the 1890s. But its liveliness was not the same as actual impact. Sylvia Lawson’s *The Archibald Paradox* showed that the magazine’s many voices ‘all existed together, with inconsistency, clash and discord,’ and is more important as a literary school than as a political vessel.⁶² Perhaps it is best to treat the paper as the Australian media’s id, a ferociously iconoclastic snarl that, if not representative of widespread views, probably gives some ideas of the quiet thoughts that Australasians occasionally had about their betters.

⁶⁰ *The Review of Reviews* (London, February 1901), *The Bulletin* (30 March 1901), both cited in Meg Tasker, ‘Two Versions of Colonial Nationalism: The Australian ‘Review of Reviews’ v. the Sydney ‘Bulletin.’” in *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 37:4, (Winter, 2004), pp. 111-122.

⁶¹ This was the masthead for most of the 1890s- e.g., see *The Bulletin*, 17 November, 1894, p. 4.

⁶² Sylvia Lawson, *The Archibald Paradox: A Strange Case of Authorship* (Melbourne, 1983) p.260.

It was not, however, alone in its ferocity. In 1888, the republican Robert Thomson published a broadside calling for ‘the Sons of Australia’ to be wary of the machinations of the imperialists: ‘One set of persons is trying to divert the attention of Australians from the straight course before them to the meshes of the net of Imperial Federation.’⁶³ He accused the League of being rich, absentee landlords- and as we have seen, not entirely unfairly.

These persons, whilst contributing nothing to the country which protects their properties and from whence they draw the means to live in luxury in foreign countries are forever prating of what Australia should do for Imperialism- which, when closely analysed, means for themselves⁶⁴

Thomson took pains to distinguish the Imperial Federationists from the local opponents of all Federation (‘their game is to make a South America or nothing of our country.’)⁶⁵ He dismissed the Imperialists as rich parasites grovelling to London, but this dismissal also implicitly gave them the credit of being a movement. He believed them to be both less dangerous than the ‘small brained and narrow minded’ anti-Federationists, but also a genuine force, even if one that should be despised. Thomson was an extremist, and an eccentric; he believed that nothing would unify the colonies so well as a Qing invasion – ‘it would be the greatest blessing we could possibly receive’⁶⁶- but his condemnation of the Imperialists shows that even radical nationalists did not think they were the only Australasians who wanted to change the status quo. Their opponents, they believed, might want to change it for the benefit of a wealthy governing elite - but change it would still be.

⁶³ Robert Thomson, ‘Australian Nationalism: An Earnest Appeal to the Sons of Australia in Favour of the Federation and Independence of the Status of Our Country by Robert Thomson, a son of the soil, who fervently loves Australia, and whose highest ambition an aspiration is to be true to her and to serve her cause.’ (Sydney, 1888), State Library of New South Wales, p .2.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 3.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 112.

It was not just that Imperial Federation was the province of a foreign elite, but that it also posed a potential threat to the lives of ordinary Australasian workers. In 1891, Labour agitator George Muir Black published a print edition of his popular and incendiary speech, *Why I am a Republican, or Imperial Federation v. Australian Nationalism*. Beginning with a list of the personal moral failings of every English monarch since the Norman Conquest ('the so-called virtues of this woman [Victoria] are merely an absence of glaring vices!'),⁶⁷ Black suggested that Imperial Federation was a plot by the elite to transform Australia into a fiefdom for younger royals and destroy self-government. But it also meant locking Australia into an inescapable alliance with a nation that sooner or later would carry the colonies into terrible war. Australian nationalism meant neutrality, said Black, and peace, whereas

Imperial Federation means for us a share in England's quarrels, a share in her blood thirstiness, a share of the enmity that she has worked so hard to earn for herself in every corner of the globe.⁶⁸

Support the movement, Black was suggesting, and the bosses would send you to die. But there was an even more dire warning - for it was not just that Britain had enemies Australia had no quarrel with, it also had allies that Australia despised. For in the service of preserving her holdings in Asia, the Imperial government would surely deny the Australians the immigration restriction bills they so desperately wanted. Imperial Federation would mean that the now servile colonies would have to accept 'all the savage hordes that the Chinese Empire may think fit to send us, no matter how strongly we object.'⁶⁹ China was an ally that the Tories could not afford to lose, even if it meant selling out their kin. Racial paranoia, once

⁶⁷ George Muir Black, *Why I am a Republican, or Imperial Federation v. Australian Nationalism* (Sydney, 1891).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

again, underlay the political argument. Conversely, Chinese-Australians often supported Imperial Federation because they hoped the broader structure would protect them from the bigotry of local governments.⁷⁰

These devoutly anti-Imperial Federation views were probably no more representative of the general population than those of the leaders of the Imperial Federation League. There were few demonstrations either for or against the movement throughout the 1890s. It is striking nonetheless that when the radical nationalists denounced the status quo, Imperial Federation was one of their most cherished targets. That alone implies that there was a certain political saliency to the idea; at the very least, it was in the Australasian political zeitgeist, a shorthand for ‘imperial reform.’ It is further evidence that people across different levels of society were interested in the broader questions of how Australasia should relate to the Empire.

They were not alone in worrying, moreover, about whether the Empire’s present course would bring it to destruction.

⁷⁰ John Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie: Chinese Australians in White Australia* (Sydney, 2007) p. 108.

vi. Entropy and the Empire

The Imperial Federation movement was a response not just to a set of judgements about the British Empire, but also to judgements made about the conditions of Britain's fellow Great Powers. If Britain was approaching the end of the nineteenth century as the preeminent global power, it was also clear to many observers that it faced rivals who were growing apace. In Europe, German unification had created a behemoth; the United States of America had become a mighty republic that, if delighting Anglo-Saxonists with its strength, played an ambivalent role in their imagination; traditional bogeys like France and Russia were both allied and expanding in the Pacific; and the rising powers of Japan and Qing China provoked a mix of disgust, fear and admiration. Imperial Federation was thus a doctrine not just about preserving Imperial strength but consolidating and growing it in the manner of younger, more vital nations. That sense of unease pervaded our period, and it was not restrained to the Imperial Federationists, of course. In 1897 Kipling's *Recessional* prayed that Britain might avoid the inexorable decline of the empires of antiquity -

Lo, all our pomp of yesterday

is one with Nineveh and Tyre!

Judge of the Nations, spare us yet

Lest we forget - Lest we forget!⁷¹

We have already seen Lord Salisbury warn that the world was dividing into the nations of the living and the dead.

It is perhaps this fear that helps explain the vitality of the Imperial Federation movement in Australasia. It is one thing to write mournful poems about the ruins of empire

⁷¹ Rudyard Kipling, 'Recessional', *The Times*, 17 July 1897.

when sitting securely in its heartland and quite another to do so on the border, where such a decline might reasonably be expected to be more painful. Thus, the Imperial Federation movement in Australasia was characterised from the beginning by a fear that if the British Empire did not unify it would suffer at the hands of races who did. At that inaugural meeting of the League in Melbourne, James Moorhouse, Bishop of Melbourne, told the crowd that:

the time that is coming none but great states will be able to live. [What has caused Europe's wars?] Why, the desire for unity, begun in Italy, and completed in Germany. These states feel, and know, that they cannot live in the future, unless they are large enough, for it is an age of the renewal of universal empires.⁷²

It would be careless to read too much into simple rhetoric. When Jefferis waxed rhapsodically about the united future of the British Empire to his young audience, he perhaps was allowing himself poetic licence. When his fellow churchman Moorhouse warned that Australia would be devoured by Germany upon the first excuse like 'the old proverb of the Lamb and the Wolf,'⁷³ it is possible he was simply exciting his crowd. Still, his speech points to one of the striking features of the Imperial Federation movement - that it at once gloried in the British Empire, and yet was aware of the genteel ruthlessness with which empires were built.

Did England stop because the Canadians were Frenchmen when she wanted to swallow up Canada? Not she; she swallowed up Canada, and then she swamped the first colonists by alien colonists, and Germany would find no place on this globe so

⁷² 'Report of public meeting held in the Town Hall, Melbourne on Friday evening, 5th June 1885...' (London, 1885).

⁷³ Ibid.

admirable a country to receive the overflow of her swarming hives as this great Australia of ours.⁷⁴

Moorhouse was unusual only to the extent that he acknowledged that Britain's past actions were a model for its current rivals. His warning against the Germans placed him squarely in the mainstream of the Imperial Federation movement, which held as a central tenet that the unification of peoples was the inescapable historical and political process of the day.

In August 1885, Professor Edward Morris of the University of Melbourne would address the League and tell his audience not to be swayed by idealistic anarchists who thought the future of the world lay with small communities - 'For the whole set of history has been in the direction of unification... the future belongs to the big States.'⁷⁵ Morris went as far as to say that Seeley, the great thinker of Empire, had not fully understood the extent to which Britain had to worry about rivals even beyond Russia and the USA:

It has seemed to me that in this prophecy sufficient weight is not attached to the future growth of other continental nations. Germany at least has not reached its full size... If we look forward 50 years, I would put it, we shall find three great Empires - the United States and Russia, with Germany not far behind them. '

To the Imperial Federationists, then, Britain risked not just pride of place in the world but her position in the first rank of powers at all. For her part, Australasia risked being swallowed up by these triumphant new foreign empires, even as the mother country retreated inwards. This was an alarming prognosis, and some enthusiasts for the movement thought that the doom-laden rhetoric could be overblown. In 1891, the retired Major General T. Bland Strange wrote in the *United Service Magazine* that should Australia adopt the 'cut the painter policy,' and

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Edward E. Morris, 'Imperial Federation: A Lecture,' Victorian Imperial Federation League (Melbourne, 1885) p. 8.

become independent, it would be swallowed up ‘in the face of the earth hunger that pervades the armed nations of Europe, in whose teeming workshops, on whose partially worn-out farms every able-bodied man has been a trained soldier.’⁷⁶

This was too much for the New Zealander and Imperial Federationist Norwood Young, who in the next issue replied that

The conquest of Australia, though feasible to a first-class Power, would be, even for her, an undertaking of magnitude and even danger. [And would any of the Great Powers permit its neighbour to go conquering without restraint?] Surely there can be but one answer.⁷⁷

This was a prudent, rational analysis based on a sober study of European geopolitics, and as such appears to have made no real mark on the debate. But Thomson, typically of the radical nationalists, was unrestrained in his own paranoia. Like Black, he wondered if the British government supported Imperial Federation only to secure a bargaining chip to trade to a non-white power - for ‘The day may come when Britain will be glad to purchase the Chinaman’s aid at any price.’⁷⁸

In Chapter One we saw that the Australasian colonies had convinced themselves that their position in the Pacific was dangerous enough that it was worth risking war with France for security. It should now be clear that this was not simply the product of a parochial inability to accurately judge the political risks. Rather, it was a fear that quite naturally rose out of an intellectual climate where both radical nationalism *and* imperial loyalism encouraged paranoia.

⁷⁶ See below.

⁷⁷ Norwood Young, ‘The Material value of the Imperial connection to the Australasian colonies,’ in the *United Service Magazine*, no. DCCXLVI. National Library of Australia, p. 316.

⁷⁸ Thomson, p. 115.

The point, then, is not that Imperial Federationists were uniquely afraid of Australia's place in the world. Rather, by studying the movement, its adherents and opponents, we can see how concerned Australasians were about their place in the world. Before the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty, before the South African War, before the Sino-Japanese War, politically active Australasians thought that their continent, their region and their empire were already facing existential threats. Even as they embarked on local, Australian Federation, there was an undercurrent of disquiet about whether their achievement might not be swept away in some greater conflagration. It was this strange blend of utopian dreaming and fear of the abyss, in the deeply held beliefs that Britain was both intrinsically strong and yet about to crumble that characterises so much of not just the Imperial Federation movement, but Australasian views of the Empire and the broader world more generally.

The 1890s was a period when Australasians believed that their political choices truly mattered; that the nation they shaped, and inhabited, might someday usher in unimaginable glory or foreign conquest and extinction. This makes it clear why the characterisation of an active local nationalism versus a conservative imperial loyalism is such an inadequate way to conceive of contemporary politics and culture. Many of the most fervent imperial loyalists wanted to change the status quo. The Imperial Federationists believed their contemporary situation to be just as untenable as any radical republican, and that if left unchecked Britain and Australasia would encounter catastrophe - the question was what action to take to avoid it.

vii. The Empire, and the limits of imagination

The other reason to study the Imperial Federation movement in Australasia is that as a force, it reveals not just the ways in which many Australasians perceived the British Empire but the tremendous conceptual limitations of those understandings. Later chapters in this thesis will show how Australasian politicians and press repeatedly found themselves differing with the metropolitan British over seemingly minor points which sometimes escalated into serious disputes: most notably over the restrictions on non-white immigrants, culminating in the dispute over the Immigration Restriction Act in 1901. Differences also emerged over the Anglo-Japanese relationship and the proper strategic policy to pursue in South Africa and the Pacific Islands. None of these disagreements relate directly to Imperial Federation - but by studying the rhetoric around the movement it becomes apparent that from the very beginning of the period Australasians simply conceived of a narrower, whiter Empire than the one in fact run by the government in London.

There were many serious practical objections to putting a scheme of Imperial Federation into practice. One of the most important, of course, was that none of the various Imperial Federationists in Britain, Australasia, Canada or anywhere else ever came close to constructing a plan that had the support of their fellows in the movement, let alone a single local parliament. Various proposals for an Imperial constitution were drawn up, sometimes even in the form of draft legislation, but none really existed as anything more than a curiosity for the enthusiasts of the movement. Still, by studying some of the ideas proposed by Australasian Imperial Federationists we can begin to understand how even the most enthusiastic imperial loyalists in the colonies had difficulty translating their earnest desires for reform into anything approaching a practical way forward.

In 1887, Rawson W. Rawson, James Froude and John Seeley published 'England and her Colonies: The Five Best Essays on Imperial Federation.' The book was the product of a competition run by the London Chamber of Commerce to find the writer of an essay 'best formulating a practical working plan for the federation of the colonies and the mother-country.'⁷⁹ The judges noted that the essays 'come to us from all parts of the empire, apparently in larger number from the colonies than from the mother-country,'⁸⁰ another indication of the extent to which imperial reform was an area of broad interest for colonial Britons regardless of partisan or geographic affiliation. Two of the winners were British, one Canadian, and two Australasian - J.C. Fitzgerald of Wellington and W.C. Bradshaw of Melbourne. Both the Australasian winners seem typical of the general Imperial Federation movement of the colonies. There was certainly the same sense of importance given to the question. 'Does any future destiny present itself as possible for the British Empire,' asked Fitzgerald, 'but, on the one hand a federation upon fair and equitable grounds; or, on the other, its final disruption?'⁸¹

The essays also, however, point to an unavoidable problem with Imperial Federation as a solution to the difficulties of Empire: without exception, what its proponents meant by it was a Federation of white, English-speaking people. Fitzgerald's model was essentially to replace the House of Lords with an elected Imperial Senate, and he acknowledged that the great question of any new Imperial constitution would be

Above all, is the vast empire of India to have a voice in the senate which rules its destinies? Or are its inhabitants, manyfold more numerous than the population of the rest of the empire, to be unheard in the Supreme Council?⁸²

⁷⁹ Froude et al, p. iii.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. iv.

⁸¹ J. C. Fitzgerald, 'Causa non praemia,' in Froude et al, p. 47.

⁸² Ibid, p. 58.

He cannot and does not answer, instead saying that if no plan were to be put into effect until it was settled, ‘no reform can ever be effected. A man does not go naked because he fails to find clothes which exactly fit him.’⁸³ A colourful phrase, but it does not change the fact that confronted with a central problem to imperial reform, the Federationists tended to ignore it. Fitzgerald also chose not to work out exactly which colonies would be represented in that senate. ‘It may be deemed right that those of our own race, and whose inhabitants are trained in the use of political privileges, should at all events be more fully represented than those under less favourable conditions,’ as he delicately put it.⁸⁴ Still, even this tentative attempt to deal with the non-white colonies pays more attention to the issue than most Federationists managed.

The other winning Australasian entry, by the Victorian Bradshaw, simply did not deal with the issue at all. Bradshaw had the characteristic self-importance of the colonial federationist, and began his essay by declaring that

To the average Briton it is no doubt satisfactory to find that the great question, how to draw together the various British communities into some kind of effective union, is beginning to attract the attention of leading men in all parts of the Queen’s dominions.⁸⁵

Bradshaw, no doubt a ‘leading man,’ went on to decry Imperial Federation’s opponents as ‘not confined to the class which may fairly claim an excuse for their ignorance.’⁸⁶ These ignorant opponents apparently included *The Times*. His plan was to create a new Federal government for the Empire, with voting power weighted by population and contributions to

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 60.

⁸⁵ W.C. Bradshaw, ‘Vincit Amor Patriae,’ in Froude et al, p. 73.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 75.

imperial revenue. Here, again, we see the typical failure of imagination. Bradshaw declared that

For Imperial Federation, worthy of the name, must suppose a future as well as a present... the time is certainly not far distant when the population of the outlying portions of the empire will approximate very closely to that of the United Kingdom.⁸⁷

Yet if Fitzgerald was unable to satisfactorily answer the question of non-white citizens, Bradshaw simply did not raise it. At no point did he discuss the possibility of new colonies attaining self-government; the Australasian dispute with France over the New Hebrides excites more commentary than the entire rest of the non-white empire. Not even Ireland merited a mention, and that was as clear and obvious a candidate for a new dominion as even the most chauvinist of Imperialists could find.

Sydney attorney Alfred de Lissa proposed a scheme in 1895 in which he attempted to square the circle by advocating a constitution where representation would be based on each colony's volume of trade within the empire, rather than population. This would conveniently also leave the Australasian colonies with 26 representatives to Canada's 13, and India's 20 (the metropole would have 120).⁸⁸ This suggests slightly strained mathematics, although it did allow for the growing representation of presently non-self-governing colonies. It still showed the problem with any scheme that sought to govern the Empire as it actually existed compared to the collection of white men's dominions most people preferred to picture.

Nor is this criticism born out of hindsight. Even at the time, opponents of the Imperial Federation movement saw that the sheer scope of the British Empire was an obstacle to serious reform. Seeley himself went further than many of his contemporaries in admitting that

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 79.

⁸⁸ Alfred de Lissa, 'An Empire League,' (Sydney, 1905) p. 34.

the British had in fact actively damaged the capacity of Indian polities to exercise effective self-government.

Think too that we have undermined all fixed moral and religious ideas in the intellectual classes... [British withdrawal] would be the most inexcusable of all conceivable crimes and might possibly cause the most stupendous of all conceivable calamities.⁸⁹

The bold argument that British imperialism was justified by its own destructiveness did not convince all contemporaries. In June 1889, a debate on 'Imperial Federation versus Australian Independence' was held in Hobart, Tasmania. The Federationists were represented by the Canadian Imperial theorist George Parkin. The librarian Alfred Taylor represented those nationalists who were not convinced that imperial and local federation could co-exist, and he gleefully cited Seeley as his chief source. The 'Expansion of England,' he noted, was the book that imperial Federationists were

...always imploring them to read. Well, he had read that book, expecting to find in it a most impassioned appeal in favour of Imperial Federation. On the contrary, however, he found that Professor Seeley so fully recognised the difficulties standing in the way of the accomplishment of such a dream that he would quote him as a witness.'⁹⁰

Taylor also alludes to the real contradiction between metropolitan and colonial ideals of imperial policy when he declares that a truly independent Australia would be free of British vetoes. Once again, it was racial policy.

⁸⁹ John Seeley, 'The Expansion of England,' (London, 1883) p. 196.

⁹⁰ Alfred Taylor, 'Imperial Federation versus Australian Independence: A few words on the subject,' (Hobart, 1889), p. 1.

The Colonies would be free from the annoyance of interference in their legislation.

[e.g.] England vetoed the Queensland Chinese Bill.

In later chapters dealing with the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation and the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, we shall see the extent to which the Australasian colonies simply did not understand why the metropolitan government placed such importance on the free movement of its subjects. Australasians never truly understood that the Empire's prize foreign possessions were not the so-called White Dominions, but rather its great Asian empire. As the period began, Henry Parkes proposed that the Empire could be run with a Great National Council where Britain and its colonies would sit as equals, but Salisbury politely observed that any such council's seats would either have to ignore population disparities - enraging citizens 'not of Anglo-Saxon origin' - or use proportional representation, in which case the Empire would fall 'into Asiatic hands.' Neither seemed palatable.⁹¹ Salisbury went on to point out an even greater problem, the one which more than any other broke the Imperial Federation movement: someone, either in the colonial governments or in Britain, was going to have to give up their self-government.

⁹¹ Cited in Mountford, 'Colonial Australia.'

viii. Whose Federation?

This is the most important thing about the Imperial Federation movement: the way in which the concept was discussed revealed what the writer thought the key interests of the Empire actually were. Imperial Federation was, supposedly, a movement of global unification; an Imperial Federationist in the Toronto branch of the League, Chamberlain in Birmingham, and Reeves in Christchurch were all espousing the same cause. But because that cause involved the dissolution of existing political structures and the birth of new institutions to safeguard the interests of the Empire, it actually revealed the differences in how those imperial loyalists conceived that Empire. One of the things it showed was that Seeley's work *The Expansion of England* was well named. For all his great vision, his Greater Britain - and it was, in the end, very much a Greater England - was actually one in which the identity of people at the centre of the Empire is extended back out to the periphery. Seeley was not really interested in how Englishness or Britishness in Canada was distinct from Australia or Yorkshire; for him, the root of the problem was that people in the home islands had stopped thinking about emigrants as fellow citizens. If that was corrected, he wrote, then 'Canada and Australia would be to us as Kent and Cornwall.'⁹²In fact, many Australasians saw themselves as every bit as English as the Cornish or Kentish - but they had their own regional distinctions and wanted those respected. At best, there was something infantilising about Seeley's rhetoric, which tended to treat overseas Britons as peasants-made-good, waiting to be gathered back into the bosom of the mother country as soon as it woke to that necessity. At worse, it smacked not of Imperial Federation but of imperialism. It was easy for *The Bulletin* to attack. Seeley's ideas, it wrote, would lead to Australasia, Canada and all the rest being 'annually drained for the

⁹² Seeley, *Expansion*, p. 63.

maintenance of 'The Empire' - that is to say, of a web of sticky intrigue with a gorged British spider in the centre.'⁹³

Australasians did not have to be radical nationalists to worry that this was a reform movement that would strip them of their freedom. In June 1884, when the Imperial Federation League was set up in London, Robert Murray Smith, the agent-general of Victoria, stayed away because he had not been able to receive instructions on how to proceed. In August, he reported on the League's resolutions and in November finally received a reply from Premier James Service on what position to take.

It may be difficult to say in what way so vast and scattered an Empire can be federated... but it cannot take from us anything that we at present possess. ⁹⁴

Service put it even more succinctly in a telegram the week earlier:

Imperial Federation. Sympathise with idea as opposite disintegration Empire. You may support generally, guarding all local rights of government.

James Service⁹⁵

Smith was, in other words, to take all action short of compromise. The problems were recognised. They would be discussed. They would not, truly, be dealt with. His colleague, the Young Irelander and former Victorian premier Charles Gavan Duffy would, in 1890 speak in favour of Imperial Federation, but only once local Federations had been created throughout

⁹³ *The Bulletin*, 20 April 1895, p. 9.

⁹⁴ Letter from Premier's Office to Agent-General in London, 20th November 1884, 04651/P/0001, Victorian State Archives.

⁹⁵ Telegram, 12 November 1884, *ibid.*

the Empire, to balance with the centre. Imperial Federation was possible and even desirable - imperialism was something to oppose.⁹⁶

This, in turn, meant that Australian Federation was embraced by local Imperial Federationists not just as a stepping-stone towards greater unity, but as a way of setting a new standard for the Empire. In fact, once the Commonwealth was established, the Victorian Federation League began to worry that it had moved too far and too fast. If other Imperial governments did not modernise at the same pace, Australia would become separatist by default. Surveying the lack of enthusiasm for Imperial reform at the 1902 conference, the League's secretary worried that 'Australia is so committed to them [reforms] that unless they are adopted, Australia is likely to stand out from any unity of the Empire.'⁹⁷

In other words, even this movement that was supposedly based around bringing the Empire together had regional variations - was it about bringing the colonies back to Britain, or making Britain more like the colonies?

In the end, it did not matter how clever the plans were that Federationists put forward. Even had they been enthusiastically backed by colonial legislatures, rather than published privately by middle-class activists, so long as they did not grapple practically with the Empire as it actually existed they could never have reformed it.

It is hard, in the end, to determine the exact nature of the Imperial Federation movement in Australasia. It had a far larger scope than a simple focus on the Imperial Federation League would indicate; yet it was far smaller than other popular movements of the day. It was widely recognised, and widely supported; yet few of those supporters appear to

⁹⁶ Sean Farrell, 'Irish Rebel, Imperial Reformer: Charles Gavan Duffy and Australian Federation', in Timothy G. McMahon, Michael de Nie & Paul Townend, eds., *Ireland in an Imperial World: Citizenship, Opportunism and Subversion* (London, 2017), p. 85.

⁹⁷ Henry D'Esterre Taylor, *Imperial Federation and the Imperial Conference of 1902* (Melbourne, 1902)

have felt strongly enough to have actively striven for it. Politicians sang its praises, but ‘references made to Imperial Federation by those of the leading men of Australia who are in favour of it are not taken up by popular feeling,’ as Dilke put it.⁹⁸ In one sense it was based on a faith in the civilising destiny of Britain that approached a religious mission; in another, its strength sprang from the fear that Britain was losing ground to newer, tougher rivals. And it excited large amounts of discussion that rarely had anything to do with how the Empire was actually run.

The true import of the movement to this thesis is to show that there was no sense in which even ‘imperial loyalists’ were conservative. True, their ideas might be hopelessly vague: but in Australasia at this time the debate was never between a comfortable status quo and an exciting new nationalism. Many of the Imperial Loyalists overlapped with those nationalists anyway, most notably Alfred Deakin. Instead, the question was not whether to change the nature of the Australasian position within the Empire - but how?

⁹⁸ Dilke, p. 636.

Chapter Three: The Pacific - Periphery, or new frontier?

The 1890s are often seen as a fallow period in terms of colonial interest in the Pacific. Distracted by economic depression and then the outbreak of the South African War, this is supposedly the decade in which the colonies were more acquiescent in British policy in the region. However, even when the Great Powers were not actively engaged in disputes over the South Pacific, the colonial governments and publics maintained an interest. Their sense of alarm at minor territorial changes shows that even in years of recession and domestic uncertainty the islands could seize the attention of the press, politicians, and public.

Small changes in how the pieties of imperialism were mouthed would mount upon each other until Britons in the United Kingdom and Australasia developed radically different views of the purpose and importance of the Empire. The Pacific is the geopolitical stage upon which those abstract differences were most clearly displayed. It was the area of imperial contention closest to the Oceanic colonies and furthest from the Metropole, both in terms of literal geographic distance and political priorities. Here we can see not only how the Australasian governments pursued their own interests, but how they believed they were pursuing the interests of the Empire - even when Whitehall opposed them.

The Pacific was also the only sphere in which the Australasian colonies attempted to exercise real, autonomous agency. At no point in the diplomatic manoeuvrings before, after or during the South African War were the governments of Australasia treated as serious players with their own interests.¹ Even in East Asia, where both the British and Japanese governments were aware of the anti-Asian sentiment of the Oceanic colonies, the

¹ Chamberlain did offer the colonial governments a seat at the post-war peace talks, but this was seen as an empty offer that distracted from the Pacific. Tumblin, p. 47.

Commercial Treaty and the preliminary moves towards an alliance were things that the Australasians tended to respond *to* rather than shape. In the Pacific, however, things were different. The self-governing colonies did not have foreign policies; but they did have clear goals in the Pacific for themselves and for the empire.

The chapter will first look at the balance of power in the Pacific, to contextualise Australasian fears about non-British empires. Then the chapter examines two case studies. Firstly, Samoa, and secondly the Cook Islands. New Zealand's fervent interest in both regions illustrates the divisions between the colonial and British governments on the Southwest Pacific's place in the empire - tiny and unimportant, or a key frontier? Having examined these two cases in detail, the chapter will close with a broader overview of how the colonies were trying, through their own actions, to assert the empire's presence in the region, even when this went against the wishes of London.

The historiography of British imperialism in the Pacific was discussed in the introduction and Chapter One. Many of the key works in the field are over forty years old, such as Angus Ross's *New Zealand Aspirations*, (1964) and Roger Thompson's *Australian Imperialism* (1980). These are national histories of what is clearly a transnational topic. If there is any area where it is anachronistic to speak of separate 'Australian' and 'New Zealand' histories in this period, it is in the South Pacific. Their businesses often used the same banks, their missionaries served in the same churches, and often the political headaches they gave London stemmed from the same policies. They are also so focussed on political viewpoints that they lose track of what the region meant to Australasian societies generally. So too do works that look at the region from the perspective of the Great Powers. Paul Kennedy's *The Samoan Tangle* (1974) is the best book on Samoa and imperialism, but colonial leaders like Seddon

are reduced in the text to a minor irritant.² This is accurate from a diplomatic history perspective. But it means that too often the historiography is either too focussed on specific colonial concerns, or so generalised that colonial societies are overlooked.³ In other words, there is a gap in the historiography for work that looks at the British Empire in the South Pacific in the round: Australia, New Zealand, the Western Pacific High Commission,⁴ and the central imperial government.⁵

If Australasian connections to the Pacific created a different understanding of the British Empire than that of their metropolitan counterparts, the nature of those connections must be understood. New Zealand's ties to the region are described by Damon Salesa as being 'domestic colonies of imperial interest.'⁶ That is to say, they only represented interests of small segments of society, such as missionaries, banks, and the expansionist members of the cabinet. For Salesa, this small group of settlers tried to impose their agenda upon the broader Pākehā public. This is unsatisfying. It is a view that descends from J.R. Hobson, and the idea that imperialism is fundamentally a study of elite actors pursuing material interests.⁷ In an odd way, it approaches Bernard Porter's view of the British Empire from the other direction.⁸ Those 'domestic communities of imperial interest' certainly existed, but they were not the isolated preserves of a rarefied elite.

In Chapter One, the powerful missionary lobby was discussed. Churches active in the islands were able to rally Protestant Australasians against any supposed surrender of the New

² Paul Kennedy, *The Samoan Tangle* (Dublin, 1974).

³ See also in Deryck Scarr, *Fragments of Empire: A History of the Western Pacific High Commission*. (Canberra, 1967) for the perspective of the local colonial administration.

⁴ Henceforth WPHC.

⁵ Cees van Dijk's *Pacific Strife: The Great Powers and their Political and Economic Rivalries in Asia and the Western Pacific, 1870-1914* (Amsterdam, 2015) is excellent but *too* broad, looking at China and Thailand. Denoon and Mein Smith's *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific* (Oxford, 2000) covers several millennia of Pacific history and is thus not useful here.

⁶ Damon Salesa, 'New Zealand's Pacific' in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand* (Melbourne, 2009) p. 154.

⁷ J.R. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (London, 1902).

⁸ Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford, 2004) which argues for the general indifference of the British public towards the empire.

Hebrides. These missionary societies were active across all the island groups in which the British had an interest during this period, and their letters back to congregations and parishes in Australasia were one of the key ways in which the colonial publics were informed about developments in the Pacific. They were also closely connected to the agitation against the trafficking of Pacific Islanders for labour in Queensland. Mission work and the labour trade were vital parts of the colonial relationship with the islands, but as they have been discussed in Chapter One (and in the labour trade's case, Chapter Six) they will be passed over here to discuss the economic ties of Australasia to the Pacific Islands.⁹

Australasian companies and businesspeople were also key players in the colonial island economies. Though the phosphate trade would not develop until the early twentieth century, the islands were already seen as having their share of lucrative resources. European settlers in Fiji, Samoa and Tonga were often Australasian. The trade in island copra, even from non-British possessions, largely ran through Sydney or Auckland. New Zealand banks were often the only financial institutions represented in the islands. And the persistent lure of gold and other precious metals attracted attention to New Guinea.¹⁰ Raw goods from the islands were often processed in Australasia proper. Auckland, for example, was where most Fijian sugar was refined.¹¹ Multiple colonies were involved in these trades - the majority of Fijian goods were exported through New Zealand, but the majority of Fijian imports came through Sydney.¹² This was true even in contested territories such as Samoa. For example, the Municipal Council of Apia, a joint German-British affair, relied upon the Union Bank of

⁹ On missionaries and empire, see Andrew Porter, 'Religion, Missionary Enthusiasm, and Empire,' in Andrew Porter, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III, the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1999), & for Catholicism in the islands Hugh Laracy, 'Insular Eminence: Cardinal Moran and the Pacific Islands' in Hugh Laracy, *Waitiama and Co: Further Pacific Islands Portraits* (Canberra, 2013).

¹⁰ For plantations and banks see Ross, for copra Stewart Firth, *New Guinea under the Germans* (Melbourne, 1982), for phosphates Katerina Teaiwa, 'Ruining Pacific Islands; Australia's Phosphate Imperialism' in *Australian Historical Studies* 46:3 (2015) pp. 374-391.

¹¹ Salesa, p. 154.

¹² Ross, p. 105.

Australia in Sydney.¹³ Nor did Australasian traders always pay much attention to the nominal rule of law in the islands. In 1892 the Imperial Commissioner of German New Guinea led an expedition to the atoll of Ontong Java after German traders were driven off by islanders who preferred to work with Australian merchants. Captain Thomas Kirkpatrick of Sydney had bought twenty tons of copra from the local king. A dispossessed German trader claimed that the Australians had told the indigenous population that ‘the German regime was bad and oppressive’, although upon his arrest Kirkpatrick stated that ‘he was not aware that the German Government had assumed control over or annexed this Group of Islands.’¹⁴

Clearly, the banks and corporations who made money from these trades had a vested interest in a strong Australasian presence in the islands. However, financial interest does not explain Australasian policy in the Pacific. The search for wealth often followed colonial interest in the region, rather than causing it. Take New Guinea’s gold. In the 1890s, British (southern) New Guinea witnessed a flurry of interest from Australian companies in prospecting and mineral rights following the discovery of gold in the neighbouring German colony. However, Britain had only acquired the colony as a sop to Queensland after the latter’s somewhat farcical attempt in the 1880s to pre-empt the Germans by annexing as much of the island as possible. The colonial governments wanted the territory as a bulwark against German expansionism, to the point that even distant New Zealand was prepared to contribute to the upkeep of the province.¹⁵ Throughout the whole of the 1890s, only 423 European miners came to British New Guinea.¹⁶ The widespread popularity of Queensland’s annexationist policy in New Guinea can thus not be explained by purely material motives.

¹³ FO58/266, 123- Quarterly Report of the Municipal Council of Apia, September 8 1891, TNA.

¹⁴ Firth, *New Guinea under the Germans* (Melbourne, 1982), pp. 54-56.

¹⁵ Albeit cautiously. New Zealand’s Premier advised Queensland in 1886 that they would be prepared to contribute to Queensland’s rule of New Guinea, ‘but we do not feel that this colony is justified in going beyond the limit [in the memorandum.]’ Robert Stout to Premier of Queensland, 17 May 1886, *AJHR*, 1887, A.4, no.8

¹⁶ L.P Mair, *Australia in New Guinea* (Melbourne, 1970) p. 113.

This chapter argues that Australasian views of the Pacific were shaped by the idea that it was a frontier: a place of potential riches, but also a vacuum into which other civilisations could expand. If Britain did not assert itself, not only would those riches go elsewhere, but the empire would shrink, and potentially hostile powers come ever closer to the ports of Australasia. That does not mean accepting that the paranoid invasion fantasies of Australasia were as rational as the analyses produced by the Admiralty or the Foreign and Colonial Offices. It means that, while studying them, we accept that they were genuine and sincere expressions of concern that were not made by foolish or ignorant people. They spoke to a real vision of the Pacific as a new heartland for the British Empire, whose wealth could be used to build a great new bastion of the British race, if only the dream was not sabotaged by timorous officials in London. Australasian societies were deeply connected with and interested in the world of the Pacific Islands.

i. The Rivals

A key divide between Australasia and Britain in the Pacific was that Australasia thought that there were real strategic threats to the empire in the region; Britain did not. The colonial views of these supposed threats were sometimes so overblown as to seem comic, and to the extent that strategic vulnerabilities were identified, Australasians often wildly overestimated Britain's ability and will to deal with them. The British government had the money, influence and naval power to take a firmer line - but it might reasonably be asked, why would it? The Pacific Islands which seemed so very important to Australasia were hardly the key strategic concern of Whitehall in the 1890s.¹⁷

This dissertation is concerned not so much with the actual strength of the various other empires in the Pacific but with the perception of those empires in the Australasian colonies. However, a quick grounding is necessary, both to contextualise Australasian worries but also the often-bewildered response of London to those worries. This section will try and describe the actual position of these other empires, and then give a taste of how they were seen in colonial paranoia, via George Cathcart Craig's *The Federal Defence of Australasia*.¹⁸ Craig, a Queensland journalist, was utterly convinced that a Federal Australasia was needed to secure British civilisation in the Pacific from hungry foes.¹⁹ Australasia was the 'modern British fatherland' every bit as much as England. Craig's book alternates between elaborate invasion fantasies and condemnations of the imperial policies that supposedly made those invasions plausible.

¹⁷ A view shared by the secondary literature: e.g., Marder's *The Anatomy of British Sea Power* does not even mention the Samoan 'crises' in its index, and the only mention in the text is used to compare it to what Marder regards as the actual problem facing British naval planners in the Pacific Ocean in the 1890s, the Far Eastern Question that followed the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. P. 302.

¹⁸ George Cathcart Craig, *The Federal Defence of Australasia* (London, 1897).

¹⁹ He is very clear he is writing about New Zealand as well as Australia.

The first bogeyman was the Russian Empire. The Tsars had long desired a presence in the Pacific, but by the 1890s they had yet to acquire a warm water port. Nonetheless, these logistical challenges did not dampen the fears of the settler colonies. Following the Pandjeh Incident of 1885, for example, Dunedin in New Zealand built a state-of-the-art battery on Taiaroa Head complete with a ‘disappearing’ Armstrong gun emplacement.²⁰ It was unclear how Russia would attack Dunedin from Vladivostok. Between 1853-1903, there were forty-three different visits by Russian naval vessels to Australasia, but these goodwill voyages did nothing to dampen suspicion. In 1894, Russia’s Melbourne consul wrote to the ambassador in Britain that Victorian society thought that in the event of war Russia would invade the continent. Fears of raids may not have been *completely* baseless - Admiral Tryon thought Russia might raid the colonies in wartime - but no contingencies for this or a full invasion have been found in Russian archives.²¹

France was a greater concern. As discussed in Chapter One, its presence in the Pacific had long been a sore spot for the colonies. Unlike Russia, France had colonies in the South Pacific - and therefore ports and coaling stations from which a hostile force could mount an attack. France’s *jeune école* doctrine promoted the use of commerce raiders to harass an enemy’s shipping, which dovetailed with colonial fears of an enemy cutting Australasia’s commerce and telegraph cables off from Great Britain. The New Hebrides, wrote Craig, were surely intended to be the base for ‘a second Brest among the islands, as a port to fit out and prey upon all Australian shipping in the Pacific.’²²

²⁰ For New Zealand and Russia, see Glynn Barratt, *Russophobia in New Zealand, 1838-1908* (Palmerston North, 1981).

²¹ On Australian fears of Russia, see Alexander Massov, ‘War Scares and Growing Russophobia in Australia, 1875-1903’ in Alexander Massov, John McNair, & Thomas Poole, eds., *Encounters Under the Southern Cross: Two Centuries of Russian-Australian Relations, 1807-2007* (Belair, 2007).

²² *Ibid*, p. 55.

The British government, for its part, never thought that France's Pacific possessions posed a threat to the Empire's interests. If France was a problem anywhere, it was in the Mediterranean. As Lord Brassey put it, if Britain's position there was compromised 'we cease to be a first-class power in Europe.'²³ Moreover, by the end of the period it was clear that France - by itself - could not overcome the Royal Navy's maritime dominance. In 1898's Fashoda Incident in the Sudan, France backed down in the knowledge that its navy was only capable of hurting Britain with a few commerce raiders in far-flung seas.²⁴ Still, as a likely target of those raiders, Australasia worried nonetheless. After the signing of the Franco-Russian alliance in 1894, the Tsarist fleet was seen as the potential edge that France needed to drive Britain from the Pacific. Craig warned that 'the aim of the Dual Alliance is war, first against the British Colonies, and then against all Europe who oppose it.' He also claimed that Russia had plans to annex New Zealand, and to burn Sydney and Melbourne.²⁵ Needless to say, these were not contingencies that worried the Admiralty and the War Office.

Germany was a relative newcomer to the Pacific in 1892. Despite Queensland's attempts to circumvent it, Germany had acquired northern New Guinea in 1884. From there it administered the Imperial German Pacific Protectorates, the most significant of which were the Solomon Islands and the Bismarck Archipelago and eventually Samoa. These were not settler colonies, nor were they particularly profitable. In the 1890s, Germany had not yet usurped France as the chief rival of the Royal Navy, and its ability to protect its colonies in the Pacific was limited.²⁶ Despite fears that they could be used as a staging area for attacks on Australasia, the Protectorates had no naval bases of note. In the event of a crisis the closest

²³ Marder, p. 303.

²⁴ Hugues Canuel, 'From a Prestige Fleet to the Jeune École: French Naval Policy and Strategy under the Second Empire and the Early Third Republic (1852-1914),' in *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 71, No. 1 (Winter 2018), pp. 93-118.

²⁵ Craig, pp. 7-8.

²⁶ See Marder, or Paul Kennedy's *Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (1976) for Anglo-German naval rivalry.

reinforcements were located in German East Africa. In 1898 Germany acquired a concession at Tsingtao in north China, but even that was hardly close.²⁷ The Reich pursued an active naval policy in Samoa throughout the 1890s, but it was never the threat Australasian expansionists claimed it to be. In fact, the feelings of racial kinship between ‘Teuton’ and ‘Anglo-Saxon’ meant that Germany was in some ways an almost acceptable neighbour compared to France, Russia or Japan.

The last two powers of note were Japan and the United States. The USA had long had an unofficial presence in the region via its own missionaries and traders, but its first serious entanglement was in Samoa. It was not until its defeat of Spain in 1898 that it formally acquired territory in the Philippines and Guam. American expansionism in the Pacific did not panic the Australasians in the way that the French, Germans or even Russians did. The United States was an Anglo-Saxon power and a powerful model for Australian federation. As New Zealand leaders put it in 1886, if islands could not be British then it was better to have the Americans as neighbours, ‘the same race as ourselves... [rather than] the European nations that have attempted to interfere in Pacific affairs.’²⁸ This did not mean that American expansion was welcomed. New Zealand in particular still wanted it blocked, even to the point of suggesting that Britain ally with Japan to secure the independence of Hawaii in 1897.²⁹ American expansion into Hawaii and Spain’s Pacific empire, coupled with its confrontation with Britain (and later Germany) over Venezuela, mark the 1890s as a period when the British Empire chose to deliberately cede influence in peripheral areas to the United States rather than risk confrontations it did not want.³⁰

²⁷ Gerd Hadach, ‘Defining Separate Spheres: German Rule and Colonial Law in Micronesia,’ in Herman J. Hierry & John M. MacKenzie, eds., *European Impact and Pacific Influence: British and German Colonial Policy in the Pacific Islands and the Indigenous Response* (London, 1997).

²⁸ AJ, 87, A-3, Robert Stout to governor, 16 June 86.

²⁹ Seddon to Chamberlain, CO537/136, 30 July 1897.

³⁰ See Kori Schake, *Safe Passage: The Transition from British to American Hegemony* (Cambridge, 2017).

Curiously, Japan did not feature much in terms of Australasian fears in the Pacific Islands, at least in this period. As Chapter Five will explore, the colonies had plenty of paranoid racial fantasies about Japan and the Japanese. However, in terms of the specific strategic concern about the British Empire being pushed out of the Pacific Islands, there is surprisingly little overlap with worries about Asian settlers in northern Australia. In fact, fear of the Japanese military attacking Australasia - as opposed to general racialized distrust of the Japanese as a non-white rising power - did not really take hold until after Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05.³¹ At the start of the 1890s, however, Japan had yet to secure any territories outside the Home Islands other than the Ryukyu Islands; its military had not proven itself a force and there was little reason for Japan to trouble the dreams of even the most fearful colonists.

Country	Battleships in 1883	Battleships in 1897 (incl. under construction)
Britain	38	62
France	19	36
Germany	11	12
Russia	3	18
USA	0	11
Japan	0	7

TABLE: BATTLESHIP TONNAGE, 1883-1897³²

³¹ See Heere, and Meaney's *Search for Security*.

³² This is a modified version of a table from Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, p. 209.

The above table speaks to the sheer strength of the Royal Navy. From the 1880s to Federation in 1901, there was never any moment at which the preponderance of British naval strength *in toto* was seriously challenged. Britain sought to maintain a standard of being as strong as the next two naval powers combined, and it achieved that goal. Note that this table only marks battleships, ships of the line. When cruisers, torpedo boats, gunboats and all the other craft of the Royal Navy are counted, the British lead advanced even more. However, that comparative advantage was best maintained through the concentration of naval power, as per the contemporary doctrine of the American naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan. Mahan believed that a naval war would be won not by dispersed squadrons protecting a power's many ports, but through the concentration of naval force and the elimination of an enemy fleet.³³ The doctrinal implication for the Royal Navy, therefore, was that it should not be spreading itself thinly trying to maintain supremacy in all its regional stations; instead it should concentrate the fleet in home waters the better to quickly mass against a rival European power.³⁴ This was obviously not a strategy or military philosophy that found favour with the Oceanic colonies who depended upon the strength of the Australia and China Station squadrons.

From 1890 to 1894 the fears sketched out above were about potential threats. However, from 1895 to 1899, the balance of forces in the Pacific shifted. It is in this period that the gulf between how Australasians and the British government saw the region became particularly pronounced. Even as the colonies continued to demand an expansionist policy, Britain saw the area as a backwater that was a drain on much needed resources across the Empire in general.

³³ Mahan's influence was chiefly due to his book *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783* (1890).

³⁴ On Mahan and the Royal Navy, see Marder, *Anatomy*, Kennedy, *Rise and Fall* and Bernard Simmel, *Liberalism & Naval Strategy: Ideology, Interest and Sea Power during the Pax Britannica* (Boston, 1986).

The first shock was the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894-1895, which resulted in Japanese territorial gains, the collapse of Chinese influence in Korea and harsh reparations. Then came the Triple Intervention by France, Germany and Russia, when the three European powers forced Japan to return much of its spoils of war. This latter event in turn saw Germany and Russia expand their holdings in China, which meant their navies now had better harbours from which to exert influence in the Pacific. This fuelled colonial paranoia and dismayed the Admiralty. The Royal Navy was stronger in Asia than the French or Russian fleets, but whether it was stronger than both fleets together was uncertain, especially if Germany were able to act as a spoiler. Lord Salisbury's government knew that Britain's position in Asia had to be consolidated and among other things that meant avoiding useless squabbles in the South Pacific.³⁵

Then came the end of Spain's Pacific empire following its humiliation in the Spanish-American War of 1898. The United States was now expanding into the Pacific, and what Spanish islands it had not claimed were sold to Germany shortly afterwards. The British government largely welcomed this development, envisaging the United States as a potential partner and a counterweight to potential European rivals. Kori Schake goes so far as to describe this cooperation as 'E Duobus Unum,' which exaggerates, but Britain was largely positive about the emergence of this new Pacific power.³⁶ Australasians were more ambivalent.³⁷ Germany and the United States were 'the natural allies and race friends of the British Empire,' Craig wrote, 'but the unexpected sometimes happens.'³⁸

³⁵ Again, for naval policy in Asia in the late 1890s see Marder, as well as Kennedy (*Great Powers, Naval Mastery*). In Chapter Five the literature on Anglo-Japanese diplomacy is discussed.

³⁶ Schake, p. 179.

³⁷ See Marilyn Lake & Vanessa Pratt, "Blood Brothers," Racial Identification and the Right to Rule: The Australian Response to the Spanish-American War,' in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 54:1 (2008), pp. 16-27.

³⁸ Craig, p. 55.

For Australasia, this situation meant that by the late 1890s, Britain's rivals seemed to be expanding into the region, while Britain seemed to have an eye on withdrawal. In Samoa, Australasia perceived the United States and Germany as possessing the vigorous commitment that the colonies wanted out of Britain. Moreover, Russia had moved south, even if it was still many thousands of kilometres away from Oceania. Britain was still the strongest power in the region, so why was it not acting to defend its interests?

In London, the answer seemed obvious. There was no possible gain in the Pacific that was worth the effort to secure it. The island groups were worth more to France with its bruised prestige and Germany with its desire to build an empire. Moreover, while Australasia made much of the need for an active policy, at the 1897 Colonial Conference they made it clear that they were still unwilling to revise the 1887 Naval agreement. The Admiralty came to see that agreement as a failure and felt that the Australia Station was an expensive drain of men and resources, even as a base for third-rate ships.³⁹ By 1895, the Royal Navy had ships of a combined weight of 59,908 tons in Australasian waters, approximately equal to the Russian Naval Pacific Detachment at Vladivostok.⁴⁰ That was materiel better deployed in areas where the Admiralty expected a decisive battle. It was better to free the ships to face Russia in the Turkish Straits, rather than to chase commerce raiders across the Pacific.

The colonies recognised the same changing strategic situation, but they did not understand the British response to it. Craig, for example, both recognised that 'the Far Eastern question is a fresher danger to the life and independence of Australia,' but he thought that what was developing was a Russo-Japanese alliance against Britain.⁴¹ The way to defend against all this was to reverse the cautious policies of the 1880s and defend the empire

³⁹ Bach, p. 190. See Chapter Five for the 1897 conference.

⁴⁰ Massov, p. 56.

⁴¹ Craig, p. 60, pp. 64.

through expansionism. ““The Pacific for Australia” and woe to the France, Russia or Japan that opposes this Austral-Pacific doctrine.’⁴² It is crucial to understand that Craig thought that Salisbury and Chamberlain shared his viewpoint. His book was published in 1897, before the settlement in Samoa, and he wrote under the assumption that at last Britain understood the need for firm action. ‘The do-nothing policy of Gladstone, Morley, Derby, Ripon and Rosebery is unsuited to the race in the Australian colonies. That of Mr. Chamberlain is more suited to their tastes and ambition.’⁴³ In other words, Craig was demonstrating exactly the problem of a shared language of patriotic imperialism. He read the statements made by Salisbury and Chamberlain about intending to defend the British Empire’s interests and could not conceive that those leaders had a different conception of those interests to himself.

Having surveyed the balance of forces in the Pacific, the broad context of the region’s power plays is clear. This makes the response of Australasia to the region more fascinating still. For at the very point when power was shifting across Asia and the Pacific, the colonial governments were still concerned with places like the Cook Islands, the New Hebrides and Samoa. That might seem myopic from London’s perspective, but it reveals just how disconnected the colonies were becoming from imperial priorities. Just when Britain was about to go to war in South Africa, the Australasians still believed that Salisbury’s government should be keeping a weather eye upon the south-west Pacific. And because they saw this as an imperial priority, not a local one, they maintained the same approach as they did to the issue of the Australia Station: they wanted an active policy but did not want to pay for it.

⁴² Ibid, p. 19.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 44.

ii. Case Study I: Samoa

The ‘Samoaan Tangle,’ to use Paul Kennedy’s phrase, is an issue in which almost all the different strands of Oceanic British Imperialism came into play. It exposed the gulf of understanding between the London government and the colonies. Colonial Office mandarins even thought that the disagreement with New Zealand was fuelling a serious separatist movement. The crisis showed the extent to which the Pacific Islands had come to be seen not simply as a sphere of influence but as a natural heartland of the settler colonies, complete with invocations of the Franco-Prussian War and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine. Above all, it showed that a decade and a half after the New Hebrides dispute, the British government still did not credit its colonies with having a coherent strategic outlook; and that in turn the colonies, with every confidence in that outlook, assumed that the empire was being undermined through deliberate neglect.

It is helpful to set the scene and describe in the broadest of strokes the political situation of Samoa in the early 1890s. Samoa was much more of an obvious prize for a global empire than the New Hebrides; the harbours were better, the population denser, the trading routes more proximate. Samoa was not a unified polity like the Kingdoms of Hawaii or Fiji. There were four paramount chiefs, the *Tama-a-Aiga*, three of whom were the *Mata’afa*, the *Tamasese* and the *Malietoa*. The Imperial powers preferred to deal with a single ‘King,’ but did not agree on which of the paramount chiefs to back. After the usurpation and exile of the *Malietoa* Laupepa, the United States and Britain supported the *Mata’afa* Iosefo, the Germans the *Tamasese* Titimaea, leading to the First Samoan Civil War of 1886-1894. More than any other Pacific Island group, Samoa was a point of great power tension. In 1889, a standoff

between the German and American fleets was only broken by a hurricane that wrecked every ship in Apia Harbour.⁴⁴

After the hurricane the imperial powers tried to de-escalate. Somewhat akin to the New Hebrides, they agreed on an influence-sharing arrangement. The Americans, in the east, had the largest share of the islands with the Germans and British as equal authorities in the west. It was not a simple pact to physically split the land. The intention was for the empires to agree upon who should be 'King' of Samoa and to make sure that no one empire became too dominant. This held together through most of the 1890s; no one wanting a war over Samoa, no one happy with the facts on the ground.

The arrangement was an expensive, cumbersome hodgepodge of laws, treaties and gentlemen's agreements. Samoa was far less valuable to the British Empire than it was to either to the United States or to Germany. From the perspective of London then, it made good sense to use Samoa as a bargaining chip. This was not so clear to New Zealand.

New Zealand had become involved in the market for Samoan land. William MacArthur & Co., an Auckland branch of a British trading house, had sought to gain market share through semi-legal mortgages. Goods had been given in advance of actual payment, and in some cases entire villages had ended up on the firm's books. When the three powers set up a Land Commission, it discovered that white traders controlled 1, 691, 893 acres of land. Given that Samoa only covered 950, 000 acres of territory, almost all mortgages were invalidated. MacArthur & Co., and other Auckland companies were devastated.⁴⁵ Several of the major banks, including those used by Germans and Americans were based in Auckland. New Zealand's interests in the islands, then, were not hypothetical.

⁴⁴ For the history of the islands and empire, see Kennedy, *The Samoan Tangle*.

⁴⁵ Scarr, pp. 73-74.

As the First Civil War wound down in 1894, both New Zealand and the Imperial Government thought that there might be an opportunity for change. Seddon had become Premier in 1893 and did not want a foreign naval base in Apia. The end of the war provided a pretext for British intervention. Clearly, the influence-sharing agreement had failed. Therefore, Britain should unilaterally declare a protectorate. If that were unacceptable (or a blatant *casus belli*), then surely the treaty powers could at least agree that the situation was untenable. Instead of dividing the islands between three governments, why not let New Zealand run it as a third party?⁴⁶

Seddon worked hard to persuade the other self-governing colonies to support him, arguing that this would represent a victory for imperial interests in the Pacific. Although he did not get the support of New South Wales, he did gain the favour of South Australia, Tasmania, and Victoria's Premier George Turner. 'I congratulate you,' Turner wrote to Seddon. Victoria had 'consistently advocated, that the control of the Islands of the Western Pacific should rest with Australasia. I think you should press for undivided control.'⁴⁷ Tasmania's Edward Braddon's reasoning was succinct: all territories adjacent to Australasia needed to be Australasian to protect it from attack, and in the process British commerce would increase.⁴⁸

Seddon's desire to make this an *imperial* rather than a local issue also led to him raising it with the government of Canada. Ottawa was hosting a Colonial Conference, and Seddon sought to have Samoa put on the agenda. He argued that it was in Canada's interests to help New Zealand acquire Samoa in order to protect the Trans-Pacific cable and mail

⁴⁶ Glasgow to Ripon AJHR, 1894, a1.

⁴⁷ PROV, Premier's Outward Correspondence, George Turner to Seddon, 24 April 1894.

⁴⁸ FO 534/66, Edward Braddon memorandum, 11 May 1894 (enclosure from Colonial Office).

routes. In the event, the British government refused to let the matter be discussed at the conference.⁴⁹

Seddon's proposal was obviously not taken seriously in Whitehall. But in turn, Whitehall misunderstood the colonial perspective. Sidney Buxton, the parliamentary undersecretary at the Colonial Office, was unnerved by the colonial enthusiasm for British assertiveness in Samoa. There were good reasons to make sacrifices in the islands, but doing so, he warned the Colonial Secretary, Lord Ripon, would cause 'the devil's own row' with Australasia. In fact, it could provoke a general revolt of 'the growing party of secessionists... it would be suicidal.'⁵⁰

Australasian nationalists were in no position to revolt. But Buxton was not the only mandarin to worry. Ten years earlier the Colonial Office's F.W. Fuller had warned that British concessions to Germany might 'drive the Australasian colonies into revolt.' And in 1894, Prime Minister Lord Rosebery commented that giving ground in Samoa was perilous: 'that concession might involve the loss of Australia, or New Zealand or both.'⁵¹ The imperial government saw that Samoa and the Pacific were emotive topics for the self-governing colonies. However they understood the reaction of the colonies to British policy to be one of *anger*, when the sources suggest that what was felt was more akin to *disappointment*. Seddon and Deakin and Turner and Braddon were not enraged that the interests of the Australasian colonies were not being upheld, they felt let down by what they saw as the failure to fulfil the needs of the empire itself.

In 1898, with Seddon's initiative in abeyance, another civil war began. Iosefo was now backed by Germany, and Laupepa's son Tanumafili by Britain and the United States. All

⁴⁹ Ross, pp. 247-249.

⁵⁰ FO 800/38/30, Buxton to Grey, 23 December 1894.

⁵¹ FO 58/287, Minute by Rosebery to Kimberley, 25 November 1894.

three powers ended up landing troops to support their local clients. By April 1899 things were escalating: the Royal Navy had bombarded Apia, while US Marines were fighting German-armed Samoans. The status quo pro antebellum was undesirable and unstable. Moreover, the imperial government had a much graver crisis to deal with in South Africa. German non-belligerence was crucial to a British victory there, and the decision was therefore made to make concessions in Samoa.⁵²

New Zealand sought to pre-empt this. Seddon had visited Samoa in 1897 and met Laupepa. No minutes of the meeting survive, but Seddon appears to have been convinced that that New Zealand's intervention would be appreciated by the Samoans. In 1899, as the violence worsened, he offered to land troops in Samoa. He had, he told Chamberlain, ordered the government steamer *Tutanekai* to be put at the disposal of the imperial government and had a contingent of troops ready to sail on her.⁵³ Chamberlain accepted the steamer, but declined the troops. In May, Seddon offered them again, and was refused again. Seddon was backed by his Māori Colonial Secretary James Carroll. Carroll told Seddon that he could raise 300 Māori infantrymen. Māori leaders had long been interested in Samoan affairs, and there seems to have been a general feeling of solidarity with the beleaguered islanders.⁵⁴

Seddon's antics accomplished nothing. In November 1899, with British forces already receiving bloody noses in South Africa, the Tripartite Convention was signed. The UK withdrew from Samoa. Germany took the western half of the islands, and in return Britain received concessions in Tonga, the Solomon Islands, Zanzibar, Togo and the Gold Coast (Ghana). It was a serious diplomatic success, seen from London.⁵⁵

⁵² See Chapter Four.

⁵³ CO 209/259, Ranfurly to Chamberlain, enclosure of 31 March 1899.

⁵⁴ R.M. Burdon, *King Dick: A Biography of Richard John Seddon* (Christchurch, 1955) p.209.

⁵⁵ Van Dijk, *Pacific Strife*, pp. 408-409.

Not so in Australasia. The *Argus* criticised its ‘slip shod statesmanship,’ while the *Sydney Morning Herald* said that it had to be swallowed due to the wartime conditions, ‘in a time like the present we must not embarrass the British government in preserving its foreign relations.’⁵⁶ New Zealand was most disappointed. Chief Justice Robert Stout warned London that the Colonial Office should not mistake the sacrifice the colony had made - given the war - for genuine acceptance of the German presence. ‘Samoa is New Zealand’s Alsace,’ he wrote, and ‘people will feel keenly [its] surrender.’⁵⁷ Joseph Ward told Parliament that the deal was ‘one of the most regrettable incidents in the history of the British Empire.’⁵⁸

Militarily it is clear that Australasians were mistaken in thinking that there had been a great setback. The Royal Navy had viewed Samoa as a distraction for years. As early as 1893 Admiral Bowden-Smith of the Australia Station thought it ‘a pity that we ever meddled with the Navigator Islands.’⁵⁹ The Germans agreed. By 1902, the German navy was considering a defence of Samoa to be ‘pointless.’⁶⁰

Nonetheless, the Australasians were disappointed. This disappointment was not fully understood in the Colonial Office. If, five years earlier, the Liberal government of Lord Rosebery had had an exaggerated view of the threat posed by Australasian insurrectionists, their Conservative successors were complacent to the point of smugness. Lord Selborne, Chamberlain’s undersecretary, thought the Samoan settlement to be such a self-evident triumph that

⁵⁶ *Argus*, 11 November 1899, and *SMH*, date unknown. Both cited in Kennedy, *The Samoan Tangle*, p.260.

⁵⁷ CO 209/59, Stout to CO, 12 November 1899.

⁵⁸ *NZPD*, 28 September 1900.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Bach, p. 110.

⁶⁰ Kennedy, *Samoa*, p.277.

If New Zealand or an Australian Colony do not like it, it can only be by misapprehension and we should spare no money in telegraphing them the fullest explanation.⁶¹

His comment shows that it was very hard for either the colonial governments or their imperial counterparts to understand each other's position. Selborne did not grasp that the colonial objection to giving ground in Samoa was because they had a broader idea about the importance of a strong, united British Pacific. Their disagreements could only, it seemed, be the product of ignorance or parochialism. Once again, he was not alone in this thought. John Anderson, principal clerk of the Colonial Office, wrote that the colonial critics 'are ignorant of the actual facts in regard to the islands.' Chamberlain simply commented: 'I agree.'⁶² It is worth remembering, when the histrionics of Seddon or Deakin are judged, that they were not the only imperial statesmen who did not give their opponents the intellectual credence that they should have.

⁶¹ CO 225/58, Selborne minute, 8 November 1899.

⁶² CO 209/59, John Anderson minute 18 November 1899.

iii. Case Study II: The Cook Islands

Samoa was studied because it was the closest to a real point of imperial contention in the Pacific in this period. We turn our attention to the tiny Cook Islands because this island group was totally insignificant: it had no important resources, harbours or telegraph cables. And yet throughout the 1890s we see all the Australasian arguments about the importance of Britain's Pacific empire get played out in miniature: the demands that the islands be taken, the demands that Australasia not pay for them, the eventual demands that they be turned over from local administrators who were not sufficiently committed to white Australasia. This tiny island chain thus tells us much about Australasian attitudes to the Pacific and to the empire generally.

During the 1880s, it became clear that the Cook Islands would soon be swallowed up by either Britain or France. In 1888 Queen (Ariki) Makea Takau of the main island of Rarotonga decided that her people's chances were better with the British, and she petitioned the Colonial Office to grant a protectorate. This was granted and by 1891 the other islands joined together with the Kingdom of Rarotonga in 'The Cook Islands Federation.' Imperial interests were represented by the British Resident, the New Zealander Frederick Moss. Wanting to establish a model government, Moss encouraged Makea Takau Ariki to establish a parliament in 1890.⁶³ Moss spent most of the 1890s as the dominant influence on the developing constitutional model of the Cook Islands, and, as the islands became a point of contention between New Zealand and Britain, he became the fulcrum point for that competition.

The Cook Islands demonstrate that New Zealand (and, by extension, the other settler colonies) could be expansionist *without* being necessarily nationalist. Wellington had long desired that the Cook Islands be part of the British Empire, but until late in the 1890s it did

⁶³ See Moss to Governor Glasgow, nos. 1-2, *AJHR*, 1893, i, a-06, *Federation and Annexation: Pacific Islands*.

not want to rule them directly. The expense of running them was borne by the Colonial Office, while their economic exploitation would pay dividends to the self-governing colonies. Thus in 1890, Premier John Ballance could write to Moss that 'I look upon the Group now as really a dependency of New Zealand' without taking any real measures to formalise that arrangement.⁶⁴ Four years later Ballance's successor Seddon, a much fiercer imperialist, was even clearer that he was 'quite willing that the Imperial government should take on the Cook Islands,'⁶⁵ and Moss received further correspondence that year indicating that New Zealand was resolute in its desire not to possess the colony.⁶⁶

On the face of it, this is a puzzle for New Zealand had wanted the Cooks since the 1870s.⁶⁷ In 1885, Robert Stout had pressed Gladstone's government to annex the group, alongside Samoa and Tonga.⁶⁸ Why the sudden reticence? The old idea of settler colonialism calling for expansion into the Pacific and butting heads with the Colonial Office, does not explain the acquisition of the Cook Islands. Nor does the idea of an Anglo-Australian (Australasian) system where sub-imperialist powers snapped up the vulnerable island groups under the aegis of the wider Empire.

Rather, the claiming of the Cook Islands shows that the Colonial Office recognised that the settler colonies were acting out of an idea of imperial interests, rather than simple greed or land-hunger. The prospect of French annexation did not bother the Foreign Office, but the Colonial Office recognised that this apparently insignificant concession to France would destabilise Britain's Pacific Empire. In 1888 New Zealand's governor Lord Jervois warned the Colonial Secretary Lord Knutsford that Britain's diplomats were about to cause

⁶⁴ Frederick Moss Papers, University of Auckland, 1/1/13, Balance to Moss, 31 October 1890.

⁶⁵ Moss Papers, 1/3/9, Seddon to Moss, 10 February 1894.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1/3/9, James Willis to Moss, 15 March 1894.

⁶⁷ See Grey's 1883 Confederation and Annexation Act, etc.

⁶⁸ AJHR, 1885, a-4c, 15, Stout to Bell, January 1885.

unnecessary problems for the Colonial Office. The Foreign Office had treated the business with ‘as little consideration as they usually shew for Colonial interests’ he wrote, and he predicted that a French annexation of the Cook Islands would mean ‘we shall have the same indignant protests over again from the Australian Colonies and perhaps another penal settlement in the Pacific.’ Knutsford’s undersecretaries concurred, and the British Protectorate was authorised.⁶⁹

One wonders if the embarrassing spectacle of the Colonial Conference the year before played a role. Deakin’s upbraiding of Salisbury for British ‘weakness’ in the Pacific had not convinced London’s policy makers of the soundness of Australasian strategic thinking, but it may have influenced them into thinking that disregarding colonial interests would create unnecessary headaches. The reference to the ‘same indignant protests’ was probably correct; the mass protests of 1886 might have flared up again if the French had taken over another group of Pacific islands. Still, by the 1890s the Colonial Office was in a familiar bind: the settler colonies cared about British rule in the Pacific and were prepared to do anything to secure that rule save paying for it.

Both the Colonial Office and New Zealand became discontent with the status quo. In 1893, Governor Lord Glasgow had suggested to the Colonial Office that the islands be placed in the care of the Western Pacific High Commission. Moss’s response was to attempt to head this off by appealing to Glasgow’s predecessor Lord Onslow, back in London and now ensconced in the House of Lords. Onslow agreed that Glasgow had not ‘yet quite grasped the subject,’ and agreed to press against the transfer.⁷⁰ The WPHC’s High Commissioner, John

⁶⁹ CO 209/248, 44, Jervois to Knutsford, 21 May 1888.

⁷⁰ Moss papers, 1/1/27, Moss to Glasgow 1893 (letter undated).

Thurston, for his part, did not appear to think much of the matter. What did ‘the natives believe and understand when the flag went up?’ he asked Moss. ‘Were they to be under “The Queen” or under “the loving democracy of New Zealand?”’⁷¹ Despite Thurston’s amusement, the issue would not be easily resolved.

Yet soon New Zealand had formally taken over the Cooks - and Frederick Moss had been transformed from a defender of the colony’s interests to a political disgrace, forced out for not pressing New Zealand’s aims. The usual explanations for the colony’s new assertiveness over the Cooks are simple: Richard Seddon’s discontent with the British departure from Samoa, and the creation of the Federation of Australia acting as a spur to the now isolated colony. New Zealand ‘expansionism’ is thus treated as both a partisan affair and a regional one, born out of local considerations with little in the way of a wider imperial context.⁷² However, this ignores the fact that both Federation and British discontent with its position in Samoa had been known facts for well over a decade. In 1891 Moss had described the Cook Islands as the necessary acquisition that would make New Zealand the coming centre of ‘an island federation that would form a fitting companion to federated Australia.’⁷³ Federation and Samoa were key drivers in changing New Zealand policy, but they were representative of something much greater: a mounting dissatisfaction with imperial policy generally. It was a dissatisfaction that spoke to a broader sense that Britain was no longer defending the interests of its Empire in the region.

New Zealand’s distaste with the status quo in the Cook Islands was growing before Britain retreated from Samoa, because it was not purely a matter of political but also racial distaste. By the late 1890s, Britain was suspected not just of being insufficiently committed to

⁷¹ Moss papers, 1/1/29, Thurston to Moss, 17 September 1893.

⁷² E.g., in Ross.

⁷³ Ross, p. 253.

territorial expansion in the Pacific or of defending the territory it possessed but also of not pursuing White government in the islands. This was absurd; for all the British lip service to their client King of Tonga, or the persistent attempts to found a stable Samoan monarchy, power resided with the WPHC.

In the Cook Islands, Frederick Moss found himself isolated from his home colony. His attempts to set up a model constitution had occupied him for most of the decade and he was proud of opening the first Polynesian legislature. But this marked him as an opponent of New Zealand's destiny. The Arikis of the Cook Islands had played a key role in bringing the islands into New Zealand's sphere of influence, but they were now objects of suspicion. New Zealand traders complained that Moss was taking the side of the indigenous leaders. One complaint to the WPHC is representative: white settlers had no recourse to the rule of law, 'the Native Courts and Judges being quite incompetent [and] subject to outside influence.'⁷⁴

Even Moss's critics admitted the allegations of corruption and incompetence were specious. The *New Zealand Herald* noted that the charges 'broke down absurdly.' But the more serious allegation - a civilisational one, not a criminal one - remained. Under Moss's term as resident, the Cook Islanders had become convinced that they deserved a say in their own affairs. The newspaper observed that 'The desire of the native chiefs to have the Resident here only at their will,' would lead to the 'entire reconstruction' of the government. 'The Cook Islands, if to be retained at all,' it warned its readers, 'must be governed by white men.'⁷⁵ Note the escalation of rhetoric; it was not just that the Cook Islands were being misgoverned, it is that Britain's grip upon them was slipping, that unless Moss was thwarted the islands would not be 'retained.' This is fantasy. There was no prospect of a local rebellion

⁷⁴ AJHR, 1899 i, a-03, 'Pacific Islands: Proceedings of the British Resident, Rarotonga,' no. 2, enclosure, complaint to WPHC, 1 February 1898.

⁷⁵ NZH, 11 January 1898, p. 5.

against British rule nor were there any foreign designs upon the islands. The problem was that Moss was not committed to the firm rule of the islands by British men. Isolated from both the WPHC and New Zealand, Moss was forced to resign. The builder of the Cook Island Protectorate had become a threat to it.

Seddon forced out Moss for being too respectful of Polynesians. He then claimed that New Zealand would better rule the Cooks than Britain because the colony had a ‘duty to preserve the Polynesian race.’⁷⁶ That duty came from New Zealand’s supposedly successful management of the Māori. Seddon’s government was presiding over a tumultuous decade in Pākehā-Māori relations, seizing large areas of the remaining Māori lands. Seddon considered himself a progressive on this matter. One of his key ministers was the Māori James Carroll, who tried to salvage what he could for his people in the 1890s. The partnership between the men summed up New Zealand’s approach to Polynesia; a self-satisfying illusion of benevolence, under which Pākehā used racial paternalism to justify expansionism and Māori leaders sought to use imperialism to burnish their own credentials as loyal subjects of the crown.⁷⁷

In the Cooks, Seddon based New Zealand’s right to rulership on the similarities of the islanders and the New Zealand Māori: ‘we can take our Natives and gauge the Polynesian of the islands by them.’ If they were similar then that meant the islands were naturally part of New Zealand. He also mused that the same standard could be applied to the inhabitants of Niue.⁷⁸ The member for Northern Māori, Hone Heke, spoke in favour of annexing the Cooks and Niue, but suggested that forming a Land Court (a hated institution) there ‘would be disastrous.’⁷⁹ Heke was in favour of more legal autonomy for Māori than Carroll, and here he

⁷⁶ *NZPD*, 28 September 1900, p. 393.

⁷⁷ On Seddon’s domestic government, see Burdon, *King Dick & Tom Brooking, Richard Seddon: King of God’s Own* (Auckland, 2014)

⁷⁸ *NZPD*, 5 October 1900.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

played a clever game - supporting annexation meant that he was publicly arguing for the expansion of the colony while posing his own critiques of its governance as patriotic and helpful thoughts about how to run the Empire. Thus, the New Zealand government, by the end of the decade, had carved out an ideological space for itself that was different from both Britain and the rest of Australasia: more committed to race patriotism than the unreliable bureaucrats of the WPHC, but more enlightened and aware of the needs of Pacific Islanders than the rest of the colonies.

By 1900, there were calls for New Zealand to formally annex the Cook Islands. New Zealand assertiveness had gathered steam after Britain's agreement to withdraw from Samoa. The Colonial Office appreciated New Zealand's disappointment with the resolution of the Samoan tangle and considered the transfer of the Cook Islands an acceptable sop to colonial opinion. However, neither Chamberlain nor his office appreciated the nature of the disappointment. They thought that it was because New Zealand's expansionism had been checked. Handing over the Cooks was a way to let the colony grow its borders and show that Britain was grateful that New Zealand understood that imperial interests sometimes had to be put first. Chamberlain wrote that:

Her Majesty's Government recognise the legitimate disappointment of New Zealand in regard to the settlement of Samoa, and the loyalty with which it has been accepted by the Colony, relying on the assurance of Her Majesty's Government that the arrangement of which it formed a part was advantageous for the Empire as a whole.⁸⁰

However, this fundamentally misread Seddon and the expansionists. They were not disappointed that Britain had put imperial interests first. They were disappointed because they believed that Britain had sacrificed those imperial interests.

⁸⁰ CO 209/260, Joseph Chamberlain.

Six months after the Samoan agreement, Seddon wrote to the Colonial Office asking for support for a policy of expansionism to bolster an empire that had been weakened by the withdrawal from Samoa. He ended his memorandum:

Some definite action of a forward character is required in the Pacific at the earliest opportune moment, for the surrender of Samoa has disheartened the natives in the Islands, disappointed the people of Australasia and lowered the prestige of Great Britain in this part of the globe.⁸¹

Seddon's rhetoric about the 'duty' to Polynesia was not simply for domestic consumption. He was criticising the imperial government for not respecting the interests of the Pacific Islanders. New Zealand, he implied, carried the 'White Man's Burden,' and the Colonial Office did not. While Chamberlain thought the main reason to give the Cooks to New Zealand was to mollify the colonial public, Seddon ranked that second. He did conflate New Zealand's disappointment in Samoa with Australasia more generally. But the key point is the third: the empire's prestige had been damaged.

Seddon had been content with the Cook Islands Protectorate being held independently of New Zealand in 1894, but six years later was trying to annex it. This was because in 1894 he trusted the Colonial Office to defend imperial (and by extension New Zealand) interests in the region and by 1900 that trust had been battered. When, in September 1900, he was finally sure of imperial approval for New Zealand's annexation of the Cook Islands he used the rhetoric of crisis - and the rhetoric of imperial defence:

⁸¹ Premier's Memorandum, 16 April 1900, AJHR 1901, a1.

There is the cruiser 'Mildura' in our harbour buoyant and ready...She wants to get away as the messenger of peace and expansion. What is her mission? Her mission is to help you, to help this colony, and to help the Empire.⁸²

He still feared backsliding from the government in London, which, insofar as he was concerned, had spent three decades ignoring warning after warning about the British Empire's position in the Pacific. 'Delays,' Seddon told the House, 'are dangerous.'⁸³ The Liberal MP William Napier concurred, and neatly encapsulated the way New Zealand expansionists saw no difference between acting for themselves or the wider empire. It was not the government's fault, said Napier, 'that this is a somewhat belated effort to secure the predominance of New Zealand, or rather, Imperial interests in the South Pacific.'⁸⁴

Seddon did not entirely carry his public with him. The *Christchurch Press* told its readers that New Zealand had enough to deal with in the future 'without taking the government of Tonga, Fiji and the Cook Archipelago on its shoulders.'⁸⁵ The *New Zealand Times* however celebrated the annexation by proclaiming that it would create the long-desired 'Dominion of Oceania... the counterpoint and complement to the Australian Commonwealth.' It also noted that that scheme had been delayed by the imperial government's incompetence and intransigence. 'It was prescience of this,' it wrote, 'that made so many people here deplore the blunder that enabled Germany to obtain a foothold in Samoa.'⁸⁶

⁸² *NZPD*, 28 September 1900, p. 423.

⁸³ *NZPD*, 28 September 1900, p. 423.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 399.

⁸⁵ *Christchurch Press*, 10 May 1900 p. 4.

⁸⁶ *New Zealand Times*, 29 September 1900, p. 4.

The British Cook Islands Protectorate came to its formal end in 1901. The group remains in 'free association' with New Zealand to the present. The eight years of the protectorate's existence are a story of New Zealand's loss of faith in the Empire's willingness to protect its interests even in this small corner of the Pacific.

iv. **Australian Federation, Imperial Fragmentation, 1: Fiji, the Cooks, and the Transvaal**

The end of the period saw New Zealand and Australian approaches in the Pacific begin to shift apart. This was due to Australian Federation, which turned New Zealand from being one of several colonies interested in the islands to being very much a smaller partner. However, this change in the political landscape did not transform attitudes to the islands. Though the annexationist ambitions of New Zealanders like Seddon were spurred by Federation, we have seen that this program had been pursued for decades. Likewise, the occasional mistrust between the Commonwealth and New Zealand did not change the fact that each was considered by the other as being a better steward of the region than the imperial government.

At the beginning of the period, different colonies had different priorities, and some were more assertive than others, but the broad strategic priorities were agreed upon. Their agreement at the 1883 Intercolonial Conference that any foreign expansion in the Pacific would be ‘injurious to the interests of the Empire’ still held.⁸⁷ New Zealand supported Queensland’s quixotic drive for New Guinea, and had done so at great expense, without ‘the territory being annexed, the knowledge of the country materially increased, the natives benefited, commerce or settlement encouraged, or a stable government formed.’⁸⁸ Defending the interests of the empire was important, even if those interests were in this case being chiefly imperilled by the British Exchequer. Similarly, the crowds that protested against French expansion in the New Hebrides had done so for the sake of the British Empire, not for

⁸⁷ *Proceedings of the 1883 Intercolonial Conference*, p. 13.

⁸⁸ Julius Vogel, in Ross, p. 151.

the particular interests of any one colony. By the end of the period, however, that accord had been breached.

In 1900, with the annexation of the Cook Islands and Niue underway, Richard Seddon felt the need to defend New Zealand against charges of hostility to Australian Federation. On both sides of the Tasman, the expanding colony was being compared to the new Commonwealth. The *Bulletin* accused Seddon of empire-building for the sake of his ego, and worse, racial treason. ‘Richard of Kumara,’ its readers were informed, ‘is trying hard to build up a Maoriland Federation or empire in the Pacific, and to increase the population of his province by a large annexation of niggers and sundries.’ The article was republished throughout New Zealand from Wellington’s *Evening Post* to the *West Coast Times*.⁸⁹ In November, Seddon declared that annexation was not ‘actuated by jealousy towards Australia.’⁹⁰ He was not helped by his minister Joseph Ward advocating expansion on precisely that basis: ‘[Shall we let Australia] overshadow us while we go on doing nothing, and let them collar for all time the whole of the islands of the Pacific?’⁹¹

For Australia the issue was not that New Zealand was expanding. Prime Minister Edmund Barton did not care about the Cook Islands. The Australian colonies were not as financially involved with the islands as New Zealand, and what access they did have was not at risk from Seddon’s annexation. What he cared about was that the annexation had not even been raised with the Australian premiers. The Cook Islands were not important, but colonial influence over the Pacific islands was. Barton advised the governor-general Lord Hopetoun

⁸⁹ The article and details of its republishing were found in Nicholas Hoare, ‘Critics of Empire: Domestic Opposition to New Zealand’s Pacific Empire, 1883-1948’, (Victoria University of Wellington, Masters Thesis, 2014).

⁹⁰ *NZH*, ‘Speech by the Premier,’ 14 November 1900.

⁹¹ *NZPD*, 28 September 1900, p. 409.

that the hope had been held that ‘the Federal Government would be able to exercise a direct and growing influence over the islands forming part of his Majesty’s Dominions in the South Pacific.’ Barton argued that when the British government had approved of the new Australian constitution it had also agreed to give the Commonwealth a sort of imperial stewardship over the Pacific.

Ministers desire respectfully to submit that by giving Statutory Authority to the Constitution of the Commonwealth, a tacit recognition has been given... to the power and influence of the Commonwealth in connection with the Islands of the South Seas.⁹²

The issue was not that the islands should or would stop being British, but that it was more appropriate for the administration to come from a new, more local Britain. The WPHC was being relieved of a heavy burden, said the Commonwealth. The Colonial Office gave its traditional response to colonial impudence: polite silence.

The Commonwealth’s first years saw several incidents in which it set itself against New Zealand’s expansionist program. In 1900, the Colonial Office had formally established a protectorate over the Kingdom of Tonga, and immediately considered transferring the Tongans to New Zealand rule. Barton objected, claiming that the bulk of the Kingdom’s trade was conducted with Australia rather than New Zealand.⁹³ This was probably untrue, but Barton’s objection was seconded by the WPHC, which had a distaste for allowing any islands to be transferred to the Oceanic colonies but particularly to New Zealand. One minute to the

⁹² CO 418/20, Hopetoun to Chamberlain (and enclosure), 2 February 1901.

⁹³ CO 418/9, Tennyson to Chamberlain, 1 January 1903.

Colonial Office spoke of the WPHC's intent to save the islands from 'the tender mercies of Seddon [and his] N.Z. Parliamentary hoodlums.'⁹⁴ It is here that we can see how the British Empire's policy in the Pacific had become so fractured.

In the 1880s, right through to the first years of the 1890s, there had been roughly two different approaches to governance in Britain's Pacific territories. The WPHC and its various crown colonies and protectorates represented what might be simplified as 'the Colonial Office view.' This was comparatively light-touch: Residents, Commissioners and Governors were allowed to run the islands as their own fiefdoms with few worries about the interests of the white settlers. Thus Arthur Gordon, the first governor of Fiji told a group of colonists that Fiji was 'emphatically not a white man's colony.' Later, as governor of New Zealand, he described New Zealand parliamentarians as 'drunken, ignorant, corrupt boors.'⁹⁵ The second school of thought was that of the drunken boors; Australasians felt that the Pacific Islands should be the white man's colonies and that they had to be secured as quickly as possible.

By the late 1890s, however, that two-way division had broken down. The twin messes of Samoa and the New Hebrides had diverted more Colonial Office attention to the South Pacific than any of its officials thought warranted. Following Chamberlain's appointment as Colonial Secretary there was an attempt to divest Britain from unnecessary entanglements in the Pacific. That led to growing discontent in the self-governing colonies which, in turn, meant that Chamberlain looked for prizes he could give to Australia or New Zealand to placate them. The latter policy fostered disagreement within the office itself, as local administrators sought to preserve the status quo. Australia and New Zealand found

⁹⁴ Hamilton Hunter, WPHC inward correspondence 1902, cited in Scarr p. 110.

⁹⁵ In Lorenzo Verracini, 'Emphatically Not a White Man's Colony,' *The Journal of Pacific History*, 43:2 (2008), pp. 189-205.

themselves competing for scraps. There were now at least four different approaches: the metropolitan government's plan for consolidation and occasional divestment; the WPHC's paternalistic horror at turning the islands over to the emerging dominions; New Zealand's decades-long expansionist program, now turned to gaining ground *within* the existing empire rather than pushing out its boundaries; and the Commonwealth of Australia, still worried about New Guinea and the New Hebrides.

If the colonies had ever acted as part of a cosy Anglo-Australian system, to use Luke Trainor's phrase, it was clearly under strain now. But the disputes reveal that imperial loyalties had not faded but changed. This can be seen in the case of one island group that Britain's self-governing colonies had coveted for decades, the crown colony of Fiji.

The self-governing colonies had been involved in Fiji before it was even part of the empire. The Bank of Fiji and its feared role as a trojan horse of New Zealand interests has been discussed earlier. Unlike the Cooks or New Guinea, however, Fiji was desired by more than one colony. The *Sydney Morning Herald* first proposed New South Wales annex Fiji in 1854; and in 1869 the *Argus* asked 'Since England can rule India, why should not Victoria... govern Fiji?'⁹⁶ There was also a definite sense that if Fiji were not to be Australian then it should not be New Zealand's either. In 1900, Sydney had become the chief source of exports to the islands, and the news that the Colonial Office was considering transferring the territory to New Zealand prompted 73 Sydney trading firms to sign a petition against such a move.⁹⁷

The Trans-Tasman suspicion was mutual; before the Colonial Conference of 1902 New Zealand's governor, Lord Ranfurly, warned Chamberlain that public opinion would be

⁹⁶Roger Thompson, *Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: The Expansionist Era, 1820-1920* (Melbourne, 1980) pp. 21-25

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 165.

outraged if Fiji became an Australian territory, but ‘at the same time in my opinion it could not be properly governed from New Zealand.’⁹⁸ But one of the most revealing statements came from Australian Senator Staniforth Smith, who in May 1902 told the senate that New Zealand was ‘straining every nerve’ to acquire Fiji and other Pacific islands.

The object of New Zealand is to build up a confederacy in the Pacific, and this is a very injurious policy for Australia and the Empire. We desire that those islands shall be controlled by the British people, and that there shall be but one control in the Pacific.⁹⁹

This is extraordinary rhetoric. It positions New Zealand ambitions as being anti-Australian, and thus anti-Imperial, and therefore anti-British. It was Australia’s duty, he commented three days later, ‘to secure sufficient influence in these islands to prevent their annexation by other nations.’¹⁰⁰ In an odd sense, this is the antithesis of proto-nationalism. For Smith Federation had created a more perfect outpost of the Empire, and it was the colony that had remained outside that was therefore more independent and suspicious.¹⁰¹

The WPHC was also suspicious of New Zealand’s designs upon Fiji. Seddon visited Fiji in May 1900, where local settlers told him the colony wanted federation with Wellington. Among them was the Mayor of Suva, who told the Premier that ‘he should be glad to see it annexed to New Zealand.’¹⁰² Soon afterwards, Seddon told the Colonial Office that it was time for Fiji to be granted self-government, and that the new government would then vote to federate with New Zealand. Seddon did not appreciate that he had aligned himself with settlers who were opposed to Fiji’s governor, George O’Brien. Seddon wrote a letter to the

⁹⁸ CO 209/264, Ranfurly to Chamberlain, confidential 3 March 1902.

⁹⁹ *CPD*, Senate, 27 May 1902, p. 12835.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 30 May 1902, p. 13117.

¹⁰¹ See Chapter Six for how this position was held, in reverse, by New Zealand.

¹⁰² D.K. Fieldhouse, ‘New Zealand, Fiji and the Colonial Office’ in *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand* 8:30, (1958) pp. 113-130.

Mayor advocating self-government and annexation, it was published in the *Fiji Times*,¹⁰³ which O'Brien took as something of an insult.¹⁰⁴ A month later, a New Zealand government financial statement declared that 'it is well known that the residents of the Fiji Islands are no longer content to remain a Crown Colony... they have moved in the direction of annexation to New Zealand.'¹⁰⁵ This angered New South Wales, but it also ignited a feud with O'Brien. In October, the governor gave a speech at the opening of a hospital for indigenous Fijians at Wainibokasi. He warned that if the islands were ruled by New Zealand, Seddon would confiscate local land just as he had that of the Māori.¹⁰⁶ O'Brien had the speech translated into Fijian and published across the colony. O'Brien was recalled by the Colonial Office, but he at least convinced London not to allow the annexation. One staffer advised Chamberlain that it would be good to 'see how New Zealand manages the Cook group before entrusting them with anything bigger.'¹⁰⁷

By breaking with white racial solidarity O'Brien undermined his position with an issue that would have made annexation untenable anyway. Seddon could convince New Zealand of many things but inviting so many non-white Fijians into the country was not going to be one of them. Opposition leader William Russell warned that it would be hard to discriminate against Fijians given that 'the British flag will be over them all the same.'¹⁰⁸ This issue was already seen by the New Zealand expansionists as a key obstacle to public approval. Robert Stout, the Chief Justice, set out a plan in the *Evening Post* whereby Australia would look after New Guinea, New Zealand Polynesia- and in its turn, protect those new island territories from 'black' and 'yellow' labour.¹⁰⁹ In the end, the great hurdle to New

¹⁰³ *Fiji Times*, 18 August 1900, cited in Ross, p.272.

¹⁰⁴ Ross, p.272.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p.273.

¹⁰⁶ See *Fiji Times*, October 31 1900. For the full speech see <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Stout76-t23-back-d1.html> (accessed 20th March 2021).

¹⁰⁷ Minute (signature illegible), on O'Brien to Chamberlain, 15 August 1900, CO83/71.

¹⁰⁸ *NZPD*, 19 October, p. 481.

¹⁰⁹ Brooking, *Richard Seddon* cites the *Evening Post* of 11 November 1900, but no such edition was published.

Zealand acquiring the plantations of Fiji was the popular fear of the plantations in Queensland.

Nor was this racial solidarity simply something that held together the colonial publics against the awful spectre of Pacific Islanders enjoying rights in their own islands. Seddon's most daring tactic to secure Fiji had been to take the rhetoric of the Colonial Office, and that of his colleagues across the Tasman, and repurpose it to his own ends. It was no accident that he spoke of Fiji 'federating' with New Zealand. He wrote a telegram to the Colonial Office in which he argued that he was asking for no more than that the 'same consideration be given to aspirations of people in Fiji and New Zealand as was given to people comprised within the Commonwealth of Australia.'¹¹⁰ He implied that his Australian opponents were hypocrites; but so were the Colonial Office if they denied the Fijian settlers their freedom.

He also attempted to draw a direct link between the South African War and the situation in Suva. Seddon told parliament that the white Fijian settlers were loyal Britons, productive workers denied their due rights by an autocratic and out-of-touch ruler they had not elected. Was there a recent precedent for defending such a group of Britons?

There you have your own flesh and blood practically in the same position as were the Uitlanders in the Transvaal... any free British people would never tolerate such a state of things as exists in Fiji... [and now we are expected] to deny the request of the Fijians that they should be given self-government?¹¹¹

Seddon was grounding his policy in the wider imperial context. He began by noting that he was speaking on the anniversary of the mobilisation of the Transvaal's armies, and that those

¹¹⁰ Stout to Chamberlain, 6 October 1900, CO209/260.

¹¹¹ *NZPD*, 19 October 1900, p. 472. It is unclear how Joseph Chamberlain reacted to being attacked for not defending the rights of Uitlanders.

armies had now been defeated. Seddon argued that just as the Empire had to be defended in South Africa, it had to be guarded in the Pacific, by New Zealand and by Australia as well.

Seddon used this rhetorical device on several occasions in 1900. It was a way to contrast the forward-thinking policies of Australasia with the mistakes of multiple Imperial governments. It also allowed him to paint himself as the latest in a long line of far-sighted colonial statesmen. Again, in the debate over the annexation of the Cook Islands, he named a list of predecessors including Vogel and Grey, who had seen this supposed crisis coming. He painted a picture of a Pacific whose islands could have been developed by British immigrants, connected with steam ships, and booming commercially. If that had been done, if Vogel had been listened to, then

Samoa would now form part of New Zealand. She would not now be away from us and under the control of a foreign power. Other islands have gone to France over which today the British flag would be flying... there has been a short-sighted policy on the part of the imperial authorities... [who have] failed in their duty and have in so doing injured the colonies and the Empire.

What has been the result? Bloodshed, disaster and commercial loss.¹¹²

Seddon put little emphasis on the role of other powers. Germany and France might take advantage of British weakness, but they were not capable of overcoming British strength. Every failure in the Pacific, so far as Seddon was concerned, was thus attributable to an imperial mistake.

The speech is one of the most explicit cases any colonial leader ever made for an expansionist policy in the Pacific. It comes at the end of our period, at a moment when New

¹¹² Ibid, 28 September 1900, p. 388.

Zealand's imperialist program is often identified with Seddon and a small clique in his party. It comes when that program, at the time and today, was portrayed as a small, nationalist attempt to balance the colony against its powerful new neighbour. Neither critique is entirely untrue.

Seddon went out of his way to play down the rivalry with Australia, saying that some of the Pacific Islands would best be administered by the Commonwealth. The tragedy, as he described it, was not that New Zealand had been left weaker by the failure to acquire the islands of the Pacific. It was that the Empire had been left weaker. The islands had been left weaker. Australia had been left vulnerable to attack now that valuable naval bases had been ceded to France and Germany. If New Zealand was now breaking with the policies of previous governments, it was not in terms of its ambitions; it was in its new intolerance for the failures of the imperial government. For fifty years, Seddon said, the imperial government had not grasped the nettle, sometimes changing its mind at the last possible moment. It could not be permitted to do so again.¹¹³

It is clear, then, that by the end of our period New Zealand was increasingly confronting Australia and the Imperial government. But this fragmentation of colonial solidarity was not simply about the self-governing colonies competing for the same islands. New Zealand was adamant that it was defending Australian and British interests. In other words, if the divide at the start of the 1890s had been between the Colonial Office functionaries and the self-governing colonies over how best to pursue imperial interests, now the self-governing colonies had at least two different approaches to that question. But the fundamental calculus had not changed. New Zealand was not pursuing empire simply for New Zealand; it was securing rule over the islands because it was no longer prepared to sit by

¹¹³ Ibid.

while Britain betrayed those islands to France, to Germany, to the United States, or to the islanders themselves.

v. Federation and Fragmentation, II: New Guinea and the New Hebrides

The new Commonwealth of Australia was not so militant. Despite the confidence born of Federation, the Australian government did not push as hard as New Zealand for the annexation of British Pacific territories, and it made a point to be more politic in its rhetoric. It would be unwise to mistake this for continuity of policy, however. Disenchantment with the Imperial government had prompted New Zealand to adopt a policy of assertive expansionism, and that same discontent with the regional status quo was felt in Melbourne. The Commonwealth government also changed tack from influencing the imperial government with petitions and public letters. Australia did not do this through Seddon's emotive rhetoric, but through use of the empire's bureaucracy, unofficial diplomacy, and even espionage. The Commonwealth's Pacific policy was inaugurated however with the damp squib that was the acquisition of New Guinea.

Just as New Zealand ended the period by finally annexing the Cook Islands, in 1902 Australia realised Queensland's long-cherished dream of controlling southern New Guinea. In contrast to New Zealand, the Commonwealth was reluctant to do so. Despite the hopes of occasional investors and prospectors, the strip of land that comprised Britain's New Guinea territory was never profitable. So far as the local administrators were concerned, their role was to transform the colony into a money sink for both Australasia and London. They sought to do this by making it a viable plantation economy, but ran, once again, into the problem of who was meant to work the plantations.¹¹⁴

Turning the locals into indentured workers was unacceptable to the paternalists of the Colonial Office, while, even if the conditions had been healthier for European settlers, it was difficult to persuade them to come to a colony where all land grants could be withdrawn by

¹¹⁴ For details of the Australian administration, see Firth, *The Australians in New Guinea*.

the British administrator Sir William Macgregor. Macgregor proposed to bring in Indian labourers who would work for British land syndicates. In 1898 Macgregor worked with Queensland's governor Lord Lamington to set up a new budget for the colony on that basis. The hope was that this would satisfy both the Exchequer and the self-governing colonies. Instead, the scheme outraged the Australians. By 1898, the tide had firmly turned against non-white labour being used in Queensland. Now the Colonial Office was proposing to set up rival plantations on that colony's doorstep undercutting the white workingmen of Australia. Moreover, Macgregor and Lamington had consulted the Australian governments who as part funders of British New Guinea thought they should have influence there. The plan, warned *The Age*, 'cannot fail to astonish and excite resentment.'¹¹⁵ The scheme fell through, but the problem remained: no one wanted to pay for New Guinea.¹¹⁶

The British government had never seen the point of the territory at all. The Australian colonies saw it as an imperial interest, and therefore an imperial cost. Queensland wanted to rule the territory, but as a Federal expense. And both Australia and Britain thought that the territory, at present, was turning a profit for the other's businesses. Chamberlain wrote to Barton in 1901 complaining that 'each year it is becoming more difficult to induce the House of Commons to vote money for the administration of a Colony' that was benefiting Australia and not Britain.¹¹⁷ Australia, though, was not feeling that wealth. The depression of the early 1890s had been followed by severe drought, which by 1902 was affecting seventy percent of Queensland.

Yet something had to be done about the territory. Predictably *The Bulletin* called for the exclusion of 'the bastard child [from] the Australian family of states,' but in 1902

¹¹⁵ *The Age*, 10 May 1898, p. 6.

¹¹⁶ Hans-Jurgen Ohff, *Desperate Ventures: German and British Enterprises in East New Guinea up to 1914* (Melbourne, 2015), pp. 269-275

¹¹⁷ Ohff, p.281

Australia acquired the territory.¹¹⁸ The mood in parliament was one of glum acceptance. Staniforth Smith, who had attacked New Zealand expansionism as being opposed to Britain, Australia and the Empire, admitted that due to the ‘questions to be considered with regard to the black population’ it would be better to pay for the imperial government to keep running the colony.¹¹⁹ Even New South Wales’ Senator Edward Pulsford, who decried the ‘Little Australians’ who opposed expansionism in the Pacific, could only weakly thank the efforts of Australian firms in New Guinea who had ‘so far done little but lose money.’¹²⁰ And when it was suggested that the trade of New Guinea was growing, Queensland’s Senator Fraser remarked that the trade was in ‘black labour.’¹²¹

Almost twenty years after Queensland had tried to annex New Guinea, it had been accomplished – satisfying no one. The territory was racially threatening and unprofitable. Yet this did not mean that Australians thought that taking it was a mistake. Rather, once again it showed that they were thinking in terms of imperial security as much as parochial profit-seeking. The purpose of the New Guinea territory, above all else, was not to be German. There might not be any settlers, and there might not be profits, but the non-existent settlers were potentially British and the losses were being made in English ledgers. Such was the logic of empire.

New Zealand’s campaigns against the status quo in the Pacific were marked by Seddon’s open assertiveness. Edmund Barton, by contrast, was a quieter figure. When he campaigned for the Federal Parliament, he was clear that he would seek to defend the Commonwealth’s interests in the Pacific, but there was no insulting rhetoric about ‘Uitlanders.’ Rather he modestly promised to bring ‘firm, consistent, and constant pressure

¹¹⁸ *Bulletin*, 30 November 1901, p. 6.

¹¹⁹ *CPD*, Senate, 30 May 1902, p. 13117.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, p, 13115.

¹²¹ *Ibid*.

upon the Imperial Government to prevent further aggression on the part of foreign powers in the Western Pacific.¹²² He did not intend to pick fights, quipping that his policy would be ‘Pacific in both its tone and in its aims.’¹²³ The Imperial Government also hoped for an accord, and though the Admiralty had to reassure the Commonwealth that France’s quasi-Antarctic Kerguelen islands were no strategic threat to Australia and therefore not worth a fuss, compared to their neighbours across the Tasman the Australians seemed at ease in the region.¹²⁴

Barton had been very clear that Australia had no foreign policy. Tellingly, he defined the Pacific as falling under Australia’s ‘national policy,’ and therefore being legitimate grounds for his government to intervene in and interfere with. Barton, a New South Welshman, had to balance his cabinet carefully to ensure that the Commonwealth’s first government was representative. This meant that when Alfred Deakin was appointed the first Attorney-General of Australia, he had the backing of a powerful clique of Victorian politicians. Victoria’s own Attorney-General Isaac Isaacs, suggested to Barton that Deakin become the unofficial foreign minister.¹²⁵ Thus Deakin, once the junior radical who had embarrassed Lord Salisbury at the 1887 conference, was now the architect of the Commonwealth’s External Affairs.

Just as in 1887, Deakin’s attention turned to the New Hebrides. When Barton wrote to the Colonial Office in February 1901 that there was ‘considerable unrest in Australia on the subject,’ it is difficult not to read in it Deakin’s voice. Despite the Commonwealth’s disagreements with the New Zealand government over the region, Barton was careful to note in his missives to London that the Pacific was ‘a matter of greatest importance to the

¹²² *The Age*, 7 March 1901.

¹²³ Meaney, *Search for Security*, p. 93.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 94.

¹²⁵ Meaney, pp. 92-94.

Commonwealth and New Zealand.¹²⁶ Before the 1902 Colonial Conference, Deakin advised Barton to ‘press all you can for the acquisition of the New Hebrides.’¹²⁷ Barton was unsuccessful, and Lord Salisbury was no keener to open negotiations with Paris on the subject in 1902 than he had been in 1887. Seddon and Barton struggled to present a united front at the conference. Both agreed in principle that Britain’s Pacific possessions should now be ruled from Australasia, but whether that meant Melbourne or Wellington was more difficult. The Colonial Office remained untroubled.

In fact, there was a curious difference. Richard Seddon was despised by the WPHC, but rather liked by the Colonial Office. Chamberlain’s aide John Anderson noted approvingly that ‘Mr Seddon is not deficient in loyalty of a practical nature.’¹²⁸ Barton and the other Australians had a much tenser relationship with the Imperial Government after the somewhat fraught negotiations to get their constitution approved, but the working relationship with the officials in the region itself appears to have been much better.¹²⁹ For instance, Barton had the help of a senior WPHC official when he set out to undermine the imperial government’s policy in the New Hebrides.

The WPHC as an institution was not unduly bothered by the New Hebrides. In 1892 John Thurston wrote a memorandum on the islands that included several cuttings of Australians complaining about the French presence. The *Sydney Morning Herald* quoted a trader that ‘the interests of foreign nations should not be allowed to clash with those of Great Britain.’¹³⁰ Thurston noted that the newspapers in New Caledonia were singing much the

¹²⁶ CO 418/95, Hopetoun to Chamberlain, 6 February 1901.

¹²⁷ Barton Papers, 51/535, Alfred Deakin to Edmund Barton, 20 May 1902.

¹²⁸ CO 209/259, no. 29, Ranfurly to Chamberlain, 29 May 1899.

¹²⁹ DK Fieldhouse speculated that Seddon was despised as ungentlemanly: lower middle-class by temperament, with little formal education, he was almost designed to invite the snobbery of the empire’s civil service. Certainly, the WPHC descriptions of him as a ‘hoodlum’ suggest a certain class-based disdain for the New Zealand premier. See Fieldhouse, ‘New Zealand, Fiji and the Colonial Office.’

¹³⁰ *SMH*, January 16 1892.

same tune: ‘The French, on their part, complain loudly that they have lost what business and influence they ever had.’¹³¹ There was little, so far as the WPHC was concerned in 1892, to be concerned about. At the end of the decade, not all of its senior staff still held that position.

On 22 January 1901, a Deputy Commissioner for the Western Pacific wrote to Barton urging him to act against France. Arthur Mahaffy was a respectable civil servant who by 1901 had spent six years in the Pacific, first in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate and then in the Solomon Islands. Thus, when he advised Barton that the Imperial Government’s ‘laissez-faire’ approach to the New Hebrides risked French annexation within six months, it was not the complaint of a typical Pacific expansionist. He recommended that Barton dispatch agents to the island group immediately to gather intelligence, which would ‘reveal a state of affairs so startling as to call for immediate action on our part.’¹³²

Barton’s government, lacking a formal intelligence service, recruited a merchant mariner named Wilson Le Couteur and dispatched him to the islands in August 1901. Atlee Hunt, the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, instructed Le Couteur that his mission was ‘not to be made public in any way.’¹³³ It was soon made public in every way. This did not matter as Le Couteur’s report was essentially the same as every other Australian report: France was planning immediate annexation, the indigenous peoples were praying for British intervention, Protestant missionaries were mistreated. Still, the story is not unlike Seddon’s ‘Uitlander’ speech. Just because it is ridiculous, does not mean it is not instructive. However much the affair had been fumbled, and however misguided Mahaffy had proven to be, Barton had sought to carry out an intelligence operation on foreign soil with the aim of effecting a change to the imperial government’s policy. Moreover, he had worked with a

¹³¹ WPHC papers, 8/11/35, J.B Thurston ‘Memorandum Relative to the Present condition of the New Hebrides’ 17 February 1902.

¹³² Justin T McPhee, ‘Creeping Suspicions: Antecedents of Australia’s Foreign Intelligence Activities,’ in *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* (2019), 32:1, pp. 120-145.

¹³³ Atlee Hunt to Wilson Le Couteur cited in McPhee.

WPHC official to do so, thus showing that this was not simply the cause of proto-nationalism. Even career Colonial Office administrators, who owed no allegiance or sympathy to the Australasian governments, could be convinced that the best interests of the British Pacific Empire were being served by Melbourne, not London.

Barton was not alone in trying to spy on the French. In December 1901, Chamberlain met Sir Edward Hutton, the first chief of the Australian military. Among the instructions Hutton was given was that he was never to appear as the agent of the Imperial government or imply that he was colluding with Chamberlain.¹³⁴ Unremarkable, save that when he took up his posting Hutton began sending reconnaissance officers to the French Pacific possessions, notably New Caledonia, and developed plans for the forcible seizure of the islands. These plans were never brought to the attention of the Commonwealth, because the Imperial government believed they would meet ‘violent opposition.’¹³⁵ The irony is that by the end of the 1880s, according to Deakin, the Victorian government itself had drawn up plans for the sudden seizure of French possessions.¹³⁶ So it seems that despite the period superficially ending with an apparent rapprochement between the Australian fire-eaters and the Salisbury government, both sides had set up contingencies for violent action against France that they were working to keep secret from each other. Neither the Dominion nor the home government trusted each other to defend the Empire’s interests; and Mahaffy’s letter suggests that the actual administrative machinery of the Empire may have been more divided than is now apparent.

The muddled responses and overlapping plans of these actors show how hard it is to distinguish imperial and proto-nationalist policies. Still, it is fair to say that by the end of the

¹³⁴ Hutton Papers MS 50 0078 cited in McPhee.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ See Chapter One.

period Australian Federation had not yet led to the creation of an Australian foreign policy. Instead, the Commonwealth was attempting to take responsibility for large parts of the Pacific Empire in its guise as an imperial outpost. The islands were of 'national interest' to Australia, in Barton's phrase, and though he did not openly condemn the imperial government's actions it is apparent that the Australians had as little faith in London's commitment to the Pacific as Seddon. The speeches were subtler, though: Barton and Deakin began to refer to the New Hebrides as the 'Australian Channel Islands.'¹³⁷ In the introduction we saw Deakin's bitter attack on British policy in the Pacific at the 1907 Colonial Conference; it should be clear now that it was the fruit of twenty years of mounting frustration at Britain's apparent failure to protect its own empire.

That is where to leave the examination of the Pacific. A decade of disappointments, of mounting disagreements, of mounting disengagement between the imperial and colonial governments. This was not a decade when Australia and New Zealand began to act as national powers; this was a decade when after years of discontent with imperial policy, they finally set out to try and force London's hand. It was their duty, as Seddon saw it, as loyal citizens of the empire.

The Pacific was where the interests - both the geopolitical interests and the literal attention - of the colonies lay. Next it is time to turn to an area considered by most Australasians to be a side-show, that would nonetheless become the stage of the single greatest crisis that the British Empire in the period. In 1885, the colonial experience in Sudan was something of a joke. Their experience in South Africa would not be so laughable.

¹³⁷ Mcphee, p. 130.

Chapter Four: The South African War

The South African War is vital to understanding how Australasia understood the British Empire. In Chapter Three, we examined how the Australasian colonies responded to perceived threats in the Pacific Islands, threats that they believed demanded more attention and alarm than the Imperial government was offering. In this chapter we examine a crisis that was very much concrete. Thousands of Australasians served in South Africa. Until World War One it was the single greatest expenditure of Australasian blood and treasure in the name of the British Empire.¹ Colonial enthusiasm for the war was taken to show that imperial loyalism had triumphed over local nationalism.² And yet the war that Australasians imagined themselves to be fighting was not precisely the same war being run by the empire's rulers in London. This Chapter will examine how those differences in perception arose, and what they suggest about Australasian views of the Empire.

To Australasia, the South African War was only remote geographically. The conflict excited the public for three years, engaging all levels of civil society in the first demonstration of massed support for a foreign war in both New Zealand's and Australia's history. Opponents of the war feared for their careers, and, on occasion, their lives. The experience of fighting alongside Imperial forces from Britain, Canada, the other Oceanic colonies and South Africa cemented feelings of imperial kinship and caused Australasians to examine their place in that family more closely. It was the first inheritance of the Commonwealth of Australia, requiring an immediate assessment of the new nation's policy

¹ The Australian naval brigades in China represent an interesting expression of imperial loyalty, but one beyond the scope of this work. For a brief recent treatment that neatly contextualises them within the history of Sino-Australian relations, see Mountford, *Britain, China and Colonial Australia*, Chapter Seven.

² See Deakin's letters of 15 January 1901 'The New Commonwealth,' pp. 29-34, and 5 February 1901, 'Australia's Loyalty,' pp. 43-48 in Diane Herriot, ed., *From Our Special Correspondent: Alfred Deakin's letters to the London Morning Post, Volume 1:1900-1901* (Canberra, 2019)

regarding foreign affairs and security. It also clearly demonstrated the gaps between metropolitan and colonial British understandings of imperial strategy and imperial purpose.

Most notably, the conflict in South Africa gave rise to a great outpouring of Australasian thoughts on the Empire generally. Proponents and opponents of the war, politicians, journalists, poets, suffragists, capitalists, and unionists were all moved to write with greater force and emotion about how they saw Australasia's Imperial role and Imperial soul than at any other time in our period. The commitment of troops and rhetorical effort expended on South Africa was not thus a mere dress rehearsal for Gallipoli. It was both a cause for change and a lens through which to study that change. Thus the South African War acted both as catalyst for the continued transformation of Australasian imperial identities and as a way to see how Australasians conceived of those identities with greater clarity than at any other point in the decade.

i. The War seen from Whitehall

The South African War was the culmination of a century's worth of uneasy relations between the British and the Boers in South Africa. Few Whitehall mandarins or MPs had much direct experience in South Africa. It was, however, a region of the Empire that increasingly exercised the minds of Imperial planners and policy makers in the 1890s.

In 1881, the South African Republic³ successfully rebelled after two years of British annexation. According to the Pretoria Convention of that year it remained a British vassal, but in the London Convention of 1884 Britain's claim to suzerainty was not mentioned. In 1886 gold was discovered in the Transvaal, leading to an economic and demographic boom. Thousands of 'Uitlanders,' or non-Boers, poured into the mining settlements. The Uitlanders had limited rights; they did not have the franchise, nor were English-language schools permitted, and despite the great wealth of the foreign mining firms the magnates were frustrated by the Republic's monopolies of key industries. This did not discourage further migrants, however, and by the middle of the 1890s it was estimated that there were more Uitlanders in the Republic than Dutch-speaking citizens. At the end of 1895, Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain turned a blind eye to an attempt by the Cape diamond magnate Cecil Rhodes to sponsor a coup d'état in the Republic; the resulting Jameson Raid was an embarrassing fiasco notable for the abject failure of the Uitlanders to rise up in support of the British plotters.⁴

The landlocked ZAR had traditionally been reliant on the ports and railroads of the Cape Colony and Natal, rendering it logistically dependent on Britain no matter what

³ The *Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek*- ZAR. Usually known as the Transvaal.

⁴ On the origins of the war see John Gallagher, Ronald Robinson, Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians*, 2nd Ed (London, 1961), Ian R. Smith, *The Origins of the South African War* (New York, 1996) & Peter Henshaw, 'The Origins of the South African War' in Keith Wilson, ed., *The International Impact of the Boer War* (Chesham, 2001).

protestations of independence came from Pretoria. In 1895, the ZAR completed a railroad to the Portuguese port of Delagoa Bay which upended Britain's strategic calculus. In March 1896, Lord Selborne, the parliamentary undersecretary at the Colonial Office (and Salisbury's son-in-law), wrote a memorandum that clearly set out the economic threat posed by the ZAR's wealth.

The key to the future of South Africa is in the Transvaal...[which] is going to be the natural capital state and centre of South African commercial, social and political life.... [the loss of rail revenues would drive the Cape and Natal] to the verge of bankruptcy, so dependent are they upon their rail revenue. It needs no words to prove what a powerful use could be made of this instrument in squeezing the British South African Colonies into joining a United South African Republic.⁵

His assessment of the impact of the Portuguese railroad proved to be true - the Cape's profit from the rail line dropped from £349,000 in 1896, at the time of Selborne's memorandum, to almost nothing in 1898.⁶ Moreover, many Boers in the Cape and Natal now had a new sense of Afrikaner nationalism after the open perfidy of the Jameson Raid. From London, it seemed quite possible that they would choose to unite with their fellows in the Republic if given the chance. In the final crisis of 1899, High Commissioner Alfred Milner telegraphed Chamberlain that the Cape Afrikaners in the colonial government had the objective 'evidently not so much to help Her Majesty's Government as to get Transvaal Government out of a tight place.'⁷ To Chamberlain and Selborne, then, it seemed clear that Britain's position in South Africa weakened with every day that the ZAR grew stronger.

⁵ Selborne to Chamberlain, 26 March 1896, reproduced in Robinson, Gallagher, Denny, p. 432.

⁶ Ibid. p. 438.

⁷ Milner to Chamberlain, Telegram, 26 July 1899, JC 30/3/9/4, CRL.

Moreover, the British government's strategic interests were quite clear: it could not afford to lose South Africa. If the region passed out of British control, so would control of the Cape shipping routes. Thirty years after the opening of the Suez Canal, the Cape was still a vital logistical base for the Royal Navy - and the only alternative if the canal was interdicted by a hostile power. In 1897 the Admiralty reported that

It is impossible to over-estimate the strategical value of the Cape. [If Suez were cut] the Cape would at once become the most important coaling station of the Empire.⁸

This was not only obvious to military officials. As Austen Chamberlain, then a junior member of the Admiralty Board, declared to the House of Commons in July 1899, 'the importance of the Cape is patent to everyone. It is a great calling card for our trade in times of peace, and a much larger volume of trade would, probably, pass there in war time.'⁹

The spectre of German interference in South Africa was another factor that exercised the minds of the Colonial Office. Seen as culturally akin to the Boers, the Germans through their annexation of Southwest Africa (Namibia) in 1884 had caused consternation in London. Gladstone had fumed that 'wherever there is a dark corner in South African politics there is a German spectre to be the tenant of it.'¹⁰ This was, ironically, a year after his government had publicly dismissed Australasian concerns about German encroachment in the Pacific. Just as that dismissal had done nothing to diminish colonial concerns about Germany, British worries did not abate in the 1890s either. By 1895, the outgoing Foreign Secretary Lord Kimberley was convinced that 'Germany is beyond doubt nibbling at the Transvaal.'¹¹ His worries were not assuaged by the Kaiser publicly congratulating Kruger and the Boers for

⁸ ADM 231/28, Intelligence Department Report no. 494, TNA.

⁹ Austen Chamberlain, House of Commons Hansard, 25 July 1899, column 279.

¹⁰ Smith, *Origins*, p. 284.

¹¹ Kimberley to Lord Ripon, 13 January 1895, cited in D. M. Schreuder, *The Scramble for Southern Africa, 1877-1895* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 299.

crushing the Jameson Raid ‘without calling on the aid of friendly Powers.’¹² Kimberley was convinced that this was not simply Wilhelm’s personal view but ‘part of a settled policy.’¹³ Selborne in the Colonial Office concurred. He wrote in October 1896 that so long as South Africa remained disunited:

France and Germany will... strive only to disintegrate British influence and Empire in South Africa by playing off the different South African states against each other and by helping the Transvaal in its game of attracting British Colonies away from the British Empire.¹⁴

Selborne may have had more familiarity with Great Power machinations - though one wonders what threat he thought France posed in inland South Africa, given that its nearest base was in Madagascar - but he still treated the mere existence of the non-British ZAR as a threat. Note the change in tone - in his first memorandum in March of 1896, he warned that the ZAR would attract the British colonies by simple economic gravity - but by October, he had convinced himself they were playing a deliberate ‘game’ to drive out British rule.

This was arguably a misreading of the situation. The ZAR was certainly pressing for the end to the charade of British sovereignty. Kruger’s government even hoped that Russia and France would join the Kaiser in pressuring the Lisbon government to make Delagoa Bay a neutral port.¹⁵ The ZAR was also clearly able to play the Cape Colony and Natal off against each other, as in the ‘Drifts Crisis’ of 1895 when the ZAR’s hike of railway rates to Cape Town saw Natal (with its port of Durban) aligning with the ZAR against the Cape. However, Selborne was overegging this manoeuvring when he described the ‘game’ as being intended

¹² *The Times*, 4 January, 1896.

¹³ Kimberley to Ripon, 8 January 1896, in Schreuder, p. 300.

¹⁴ Selborne, 18 October 1896, cited in Henshaw, p. 16.

¹⁵ Given the contemporaneous Triple Intervention of those powers in China, this unlikely alliance was not entirely a fantasy.

to drive Britain out of South Africa. Any such scheme would have meant uniting the ZAR not just with its fellow Afrikaners in the Orange Free State and the Cape, but with Britons in the Cape and Natal. Furthermore, the continued attempts to diminish Uitlander rights in the ZAR, as in 1897's attempts to enact the Aliens Immigration and Aliens Expulsion Laws (withdrawn under British pressure), speak to a ZAR government that was trying to preserve the status quo of government by Afrikaner farmers, rather than uniting the settler peoples of the subcontinent in a United States of South Africa.¹⁶ For their part, the German Foreign Office soon decided that 'we can't burden ourselves with the luxury of England's antipathy simply for the sake of the Boers.'¹⁷ Selborne was, however, correct that the status quo was no longer tenable. The South African states were being bound together by economic pressure, and this threatened Britain's southern naval route to India and Asia.

The situation continued to decay. In 1898, Britain wooed Germany away from further friendly gestures towards the ZAR, and the two countries agreed to pressure bankrupt Portugal to sign away its customs revenues in southern Mozambique (including Delagoa Bay) and Angola in exchange for a loan. This did not eventuate, and it was now clear Britain had lost its chance to secure Delagoa Bay and thus regain the economic initiative. Through 1898 and 1899, Britain pressed Kruger to give more voting rights to the Uitlanders. In April 1899 Kruger offered the 'Great Deal' to the Uitlanders, but this still did not offer ordinary miners the franchise. In mid-July, Kruger finally offered serious concessions, but at this point Chamberlain and Milner overplayed their hand in the belief the ZAR's nerve was breaking. They demanded that the ZAR acknowledge that Britain was suzerain and had the right to intervene in Transvaal affairs; Kruger refused. A final round of negotiations fell through, and

¹⁶ See Robinson, Gallagher, Denny, pp. 410-446.

¹⁷ Fritz von Holstein, cited in Smith, p.208.

in October the Transvaal demanded Britain withdraw its troops from the borders. The war began.¹⁸

These, then, were the pressures on the British Government by 1899 and the cause of the final decay of relations that led to war. There was a large population of British citizens living outside of British territory in South Africa, with no certain rights and of no certain loyalty. The Uitlanders were but the most obvious manifestation of the wider rebalancing of the South African economy, with Britain's loyal bases in the Cape and Natal being bled increasingly dry by the flow of wealth and migrants to the ZAR. The Colonial Office believed this to be a threat to Britain's entire presence in the region and feared that Britain's long-term dream of a South African union might be achieved by a foreign power instead. This would entail the loss of Britain's naval base at the Cape and thereby threaten the entire Empire in the east - from the Raj to Australasia. Moreover, a setback in South Africa would mean a blow to national pride that Britain could not tolerate. In 1881 the ZAR had been allowed a victory; but Salisbury was not Gladstone and any concession to the Boers might now appear to be a British defeat. Finally, British uncertainty about Germany's intentions in the region meant that it operated on the assumption that at least one rival Great Power was intending to break its hold on South Africa.

¹⁸ Robinson, Gallagher, Denny, pp. 446-457.

ii. **‘Whose quarrel we do not and cannot understand:’ Australasia’s entry into the War**

Months before the war began in October 1899, the Australian colonies and New Zealand were already being sounded out, and were, in turn, sounding out Britain and each other as to the extent of their potential involvement. Popular memory told a straightforward story.¹⁹ Mother England called, and her children came. This is certainly backed up by a wealth of evidence - photos of cheering crowds farewelling the troops, despondence after defeat, frenzied celebrations after victory. In the 1970s, this orthodoxy was challenged by a new wave of historians. Chris Connolly’s article ‘Manufacturing Spontaneity’ and Laurie Field’s *Forgotten War* challenged the extent of Australian popular support for the war and showed how large segments of the population - chiefly trade unionists, recent migrants, and Irish Catholics - did not have the same level of enthusiasm for killing Afrikaners.²⁰ Connolly, indeed went as far as to claim that the Colonial Office had manoeuvred the Australian colonies into committing troops against their better judgement, and that ‘no more than two of the six offers of troops were spontaneous.’²¹ This assertion has been effectively rebutted, but nevertheless Connolly and Field did successfully show that the war was not entirely the popular endeavour it is still sometimes presented as being.²² This chapter argues that, while the revisionists’ more conspiratorial thinking can be discarded, until December 1899 there was a marked uninterest in colonial participation in the war, even amongst imperial ‘loyalists’ in Australasia. In fact, many Australasian leaders married a bland certainty that the colonies

¹⁹ See Craig Wilcox, *Australia’s Boer War* (Oxford, 2002) pp. 352-366.

²⁰ Laurie Field, *Forgotten War: Australian Involvement in the South African Conflict of 1899-1902* (Melbourne, 1979).

²¹ Chris Connolly, ‘Manufacturing “spontaneity”: the Australian offers of troops for the Boer War’, *Historical Studies*, 18:70 (1978) pp. 106-117.

²² Wilcox, p. 364.

should support Britain with an equal indifference as to what form that support should take and doubts as to whether in fact the war had anything to do with the wider Empire or not.

The Transvaal's gold rush had expanded Australia's link to South Africa to more than just the British Colonies. There were approximately 1,000 Australians in Johannesburg, with their own Australian Rules Football matches and an Australian brothel to happily contribute to the city's melting pot. Before the Jameson Raid, the West Australian timber merchant Walter 'Karri' Davies had even formed a militia known as the 'Australian Corps' that was hurriedly disbanded when the Raid descended into farce. Arrested for suspicion of helping the uprising, Davies wrote from prison that he never sought to be a rebel but that he 'wanted it known that Australians when they left their native country were willing to fight for justice.'²³

Despite the Australasian presence in Johannesburg, the initial colonial response to the crisis was muted. Australians may very well have been willing to fight for justice overseas, but that does not mean that they flocked to do so. The Jameson Raid spurred a surge of volunteers for the militia in the Australian colonies, but these citizen soldiers were acting to *defend* Australia and the empire rather than take revenge on Paul Kruger. When George Reid, Premier of New South Wales, telegraphed London with an offer of support after the raid in 1896, it was met with controversy in the colony.²⁴ Support for the empire was high, but it was not unconditional. By the Imperial Conference the next year Reid politely but firmly rebuffed Chamberlain's suggestions for increased military cooperation between the colonies and the regular army. The citizens of New South Wales would only tolerate that, Reid said, if the Empire was attacked.

²³ Wilcox, pp. 12-14.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 16.

In a defensive war, you will find that sentiment would determine everything... that feeling of Patriotism [would] flame out just as practically in the Colonies, in the hour of danger, as in England; but it is only in those moments that you can make the people one in the sense of sacrifice.²⁵

Australians, Reid was saying, would not pay for wars that did not concern them. Craig Wilcox claims that this slight delineation between British and wider Imperial interests constituted an Australian 'just war' policy that he calls the 'Reid Doctrine.'²⁶ This reads far too much into a vague statement. However, it can be said that there was a real, if cautious, implication in Reid's words that Australians had a right to judge whether the Empire was affected by a question, rather than just being told this was the case by Britain.

Reid's caution was born out by the gradual decline in public interest in South Africa. By 1899, the post-Jameson Raid enthusiasm had died down. In August Victoria's Governor, Lord Brassey, telegrammed Chamberlain that 'Popular opinion in Victoria fully recognises claims of Uitlanders on wh. H.M.G. insist. Public meetings have been held in support.'²⁷ Wilfully or not, he exaggerated. The meetings only attracted the most intense loyalists and radicals and were dwarfed by the pro-Dreyfus rallies a few months later - a political scandal far more removed from Australasia than the Uitlanders.²⁸ As we shall see, prior to the shocks of Black Week, most of the colonial publics did not really have a sense of crisis in South Africa. The war did not exercise much public attention, and if it did it was vaguely conceived as the stage for a short and just imperial expedition. It is important to stress that neither the avowed *casus belli* - the mistreatment of Uitlanders - nor the private concerns that the whole

²⁵George Reid, Minutes of the 1897 Colonial Conference, CO 885/6/30, TNA, p. 107,

²⁶Wilcox, throughout.

²⁷Brassey to Chamberlain, 1 August 1899, CO 309/148, TNA.

²⁸Laurie Field, *The Forgotten War* (Melbourne, 1979) pp. 7-8.

of Britain's South African possessions were slipping from her grasp received much attention in the colonial press.

If Chamberlain had noticed the caution in Reid's tone in 1897, it did not stop him soliciting troops from Australasia in 1899. Always eager for displays of Imperial unity, on 3 July he cabled the governments of Canada, Victoria and New South Wales and asked them to offer troops:

Can you, without publicity, find out from authorities whether they would avail themselves of this opportunity to show solidarity with Empire. [sic] Such an offer spontaneously made would be welcomed here and might have great effect in South Africa.²⁹

Chamberlain did not elaborate on what 'great effect' a few hundred colonial volunteers might have, either in persuading the Transvaal not to fight or in defeating it if it did. Seeing that their contribution was more likely to be both symbolic and expensive, the two Australian colonies initially opted to stall, only collecting the names of potential volunteers. This was unsurprising: in June 1899, George French, the Commandant of New South Wales, wrote to Britain's Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Sir Garnet Wolseley's private secretary to complain that 'the average Colonial Government has usually not got backbone enough to offer the services of their men who volunteer, if they have to bear the cost, and defend their actions in Parliament.'³⁰

On 10 July however, Queensland, despite not having received an invitation to send forces, volunteered to raise 250 mounted infantry.³¹ Premier James Dickson cabled London

²⁹ Joseph Chamberlain telegram to colonies, 3 July 1899, CO 418/6, 'Australia Original Correspondence,' (1899).

³⁰ George French to George Gough, 27 June 1899, WO 32/8208 'Colonial contingents raised for South Africa'

³¹ Ibid, QLD Governor to CO, 6 July 1899.

about this offer on the urging of the local commandant, Major-General Howel Gunter, and without having sought prior approval from Parliament. The urgency is surprising, as peace would still reign in South Africa for another three months. Both men claimed to have been moved by the enthusiasm of local volunteers.³² In September, Governor Lord Tennyson of South Australia tried to chivvy the Premier Charles Kingston into making a gesture of support. Kingston merely suggested that the colony would not protest if the Navy pulled ships from the local station for the duration of the crisis. Given that the ZAR was landlocked, Tennyson was unimpressed. Eventually, Kingston agreed to cable London that, in the event of circumstances rendering such action desirable, some members of the defence forces would be found who were willing to volunteer.³³ However, this clarion call to inaction still worried Kingston because he had not consulted his legislature. In the event, when their respective assemblies voted on raising contingents in October both Kingston and Dickson came closer than any other premiers to having the motions defeated. When the Legislative Assembly in Brisbane debated the raising of the contingent in October, Labor's leader Andrew Dawson asked the Premier to list some of those volunteers. Dickson declined.³⁴ Other Queensland members were uneasy at sending troops to face the veteran Boers; George Thorne noted that when New South Wales had sent men to the Sudan they were facing an easier fight. Queenslanders 'would not be fighting against blacks - Soudanese or Egyptians - but against the smartest soldiers in the world.'³⁵

This lack of enthusiasm was not born of anti-imperialism, as the coming storm of patriotism would attest.³⁶ Rather, despite all the great build-up to war, as late as September

³² Stephen Clarke, 'Desperately Seeking Service: The Australasian Commandants and the War' in John Crawford & Ian McGibbon *One Flag, One Queen, One Tongue: New Zealand, the British Empire and the South African War* (Auckland 2003), pp. 12-27.

³³ Tennyson to Kingston correspondence, August-September 1899, cited in Wilcox p. 19.

³⁴ *QPD*, Legislative Assembly, 11 October 1899, p. 345.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 13 September 1899, p. 44.

³⁶ For the muted reaction of the Australian public to the early war, see Connolly, 'Manufacturing Spontaneity' pp. 106-117.

1899 most Australians simply did not think the crisis affected them. Reid explained his government's inaction:

the sympathy of the Australian colonies with the legitimate desires of the British inhabitants of the Transvaal has already been made sufficiently manifest. A difficulty between the British people and the people of the Transvaal scarcely calls for displays of patriotism at this end of the world, the strength of the position being all on the side of Great Britain.³⁷

Meanwhile, the Australian papers covered the developments in South Africa through summaries of the cables from London, but it was not an all-consuming interest. On 4 September, a reader of the Melbourne *Argus* would find the coverage of the Transvaal sharing equal space with a summary of the latest news in the Dreyfus Affair and the poor batting of the Australian XI.³⁸ There was certainly no sense that the Empire itself (and by extension, Australia) was at any risk.

This relative lack of public concern meant that, while Australian colonial governments were willing to support Britain with declarations of loyalty, they could not justify spending their own funds on such support. Brassey telegraphed London on 12 July that 'Before the Gov't take further action, they desire assurance that Imperial exchequer bears all expenditure.'³⁹ The Colonial Office's frustration mounted. In a memorandum of 19 July clerk Charles Cox expressed scepticism that Victoria and New South Wales would offer anything beyond a few volunteers, but hoped that continued pressure from London 'may, with the example of Queensland, quicken them up a bit.'⁴⁰ Even this had limited success.

³⁷ Field, p. 17, citing archival material at the Australian War Memorial Library- *N.S.W Soudan and South Africa Contingents, 1885-1907*, p. 38.

³⁸ *Argus*, 4 September 1899, p. 5.

³⁹ Brassey to Chamberlain, 12 July 1899 CO 309/148 See also telegrams of 5 July and 20 September.

⁴⁰ Notes on War Office memorandum, 19 July 1899 by C. T. Cox, CO 418/6.

When Victoria's parliament finally agreed to send a contingent in October, Premier George Turner felt it necessary to assure the house that 'in view of the liberal terms offered by the home authorities, the cost would be comparatively small.'⁴¹

The only one of the colonial governments that showed any real enthusiasm for the coming war was New Zealand. On 28 September, the House of Representatives became the first colonial legislature to offer troops by a majority of 49 in a 74-member chamber. Governor Ranfurly duly told Chamberlain that 'On the declaration of the decision fifty-four in favour and five against there was a scene of the greatest enthusiasm, the whole house rising and singing the National Anthem followed by rounds of applause,'⁴² Members raised three cheers for Queen Victoria and sang *God Save the Queen*.⁴³ Premier Richard Seddon told the house that 'we belong to and are an integral part of a great Empire... the occasion now exists for us to prove our devotion.'⁴⁴ This seems to be the clearest cut case of a colonial government being genuinely excited for the war from the beginning. The excitement, had, in fact, overtaken capacity. 'This colony has no transport corps or at the present moment any of the ammunition proposed to be used there,' reported Ranfurly. 'Tents can be sent, if desired.'

There were certainly political advantages to being the most vocally supportive among the colonies, New Zealand was far more dependent on Britain for its exports than any other colony, and with Australian federation underway it had another reason for wanting to be seen favourably as an important voice in the South Pacific as far as London was concerned. The next year, the Colonial Office would approve New Zealand's annexation of the Cook Islands in part because of its conspicuous displays of loyalty. Still, the patriotic fervour should not be underestimated - 5.5 percent of New Zealand males aged 20-40 went on to serve in South

⁴¹ *VPD*, Legislative Assembly, 10 October 1899, p. 1728.

⁴² Ranfurly to Chamberlain, 29 September 1899, CO 209/259, TNA.

⁴³ Ian McGibbon, 'The Origins of New Zealand's South African War Contribution' in Crawford & McGibbon for the atmosphere in the colony at the war's outbreak.

⁴⁴ *NZPD*, 110, 28 September 1899, p. 75.

Africa, which was twice the rate of Australians.⁴⁵ New Zealand's early and burning interest in the South African War contrasts strongly with its more hesitant neighbours'. However, it is worth noting that the advocates for war in parliament did not frame the debate in line with the concerns of the British policymakers. There is no sense from their remarks that imperial strategic interests were at stake, or even any real assessment of the situation in South Africa.

Supporters of the war were far more jingoistic than Salisbury and his government. Independent MHR James Bollard proclaimed that 'England never draws the sword except in a good cause.'⁴⁶ James Allen, a future Minister of Defence, put it even more simply: 'I do not know what the quarrel is, but I believe our case to be just.'⁴⁷ Opposition leader William Russell thought that New Zealand must commit troops 'to assist in promoting Imperial Federation and the solidarity of the Empire.'⁴⁸ There is therefore no sense that the fears of the British government were being mirrored. As we have seen, the British government was deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in South Africa and feared that vital imperial interests were at stake. Yet at this stage of the war, New Zealand believed that this was a war being carried out from a position of strength, and that it was going to be a short and just expression of imperial glory, rather than a life and death struggle over vital interests. For all the shared imperial patriotism, the colony did not, in mid-1899, see the key strategic importance of South Africa the way that the British government did.

New Zealand's enthusiasm stands in contrast to its Australian neighbours. New Zealand offered troops in late September, a fortnight before the war began, without being approached by the British government first.⁴⁹ The Australian colonies had been under

⁴⁵ Luke Trainor, 'Building Nations: Australia and New Zealand' in David Omissi and Andrew Thompson, eds, *The Impact of the South African War* (Basingstoke, 2002) p.259

⁴⁶ *NZPD*, 110, 28 September 1899, p. 84.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 86.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 78.

⁴⁹ For New Zealand (over?) enthusiasm, see Clarke, 'Desperately Seeking Service'.

pressure from Britain from the middle of 1899 to prepare for a South African conflict, but while they did not oppose Britain's policy most of the colonial governments tried to minimise the scale of their contribution.

Even in the legislative debates in October, once the war had finally broken out, there was still no real intensity about raising contingents. The sense one gleans from these discussions was not that Britain was in a crisis and required help. It was rather that Britain was at war and the Australian colonies had a filial obligation to show their support. To this end Turner acknowledged to the assembly in Melbourne that colonial assistance would be small and that Britain 'did not really require it,' and even reassured his parliament 'that it was not every occasion which would justify these colonies taking part in any war upon which Great Britain might enter.'⁵⁰ This was hardly a ringing endorsement of the cause. The Western Australian Premier Sir John Forrest told his Legislative Assembly:

[I do not think that] the great Empire to which we are so proud to belong is in any great danger... but that does not in any way lessen our obligation to show we are in sympathy with those at the helm of State...⁵¹

The independent and republican Frederick Vosper - who prefaced his comments by saying he would vote for the contingent - asked Forrest about why the colony was involved.

Vosper: We here in Western Australia know nothing about the justice or injustice of the war...

Forrest: We do not want to know.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ *WAPD*, Legislative Assembly, 5 October 1899. p. 1556.

Vosper: I think it would have been better by far if the matter had not been discussed in this house.

Forrest: Not at all.

Vosper: We know nothing about the merits of the case.

Forrest: You are arguing that we do not belong to the Empire.⁵²

This should not be treated as simple blind loyalty. Forrest obviously believed Australia had a commitment to Britain regardless of why a war was fought; there were no shades of Wilcox's 'Reid doctrine' here. However, Forrest dismissed the idea that the Empire itself was at risk in South Africa - despite decades of Imperial military policy assuming that Western Australia depended on Britain securing the Cape. He also agreed that Western Australia was ignorant of the conflict, even though it was the Australian colony most closely integrated into the Indian Ocean trade networks that passed through the Cape and had its own links to the ZAR through Uitlanders like Karri Davies. Yet this colony appears to have had little interest in South Africa. If that were the case, as it seems to be, how much more uninterested must the rest of Australasia have been?

Forrest's patriotic indifference stands in stark contrast to the concerns about the crisis expressed in Whitehall, even though, of all the colonial premiers, he was the one best placed to understand London's concerns. That instead he backed London to the hilt while remaining disinterested in what was at issue shows that, before 1900, even loyal Australian supporters of the war simply did not see the same stakes as Chamberlain, Selborne or Salisbury. Strikingly, there was not the slightest awareness of Selborne's fear that left unchecked the Transvaal might become a new 'British Republic.' Australia had an active republican

⁵² Ibid, p. 1558.

movement in the 1890s, but there seems to have been no belief that it might be encouraged by the transformation of Britain's South African colonies into an independent, American style Republic.

In all then, the public debate in Australia in the build-up and early part of the war was muted. The initial contingents that were raised were small, with little funding. For example, Tasmania sent an initial force of eighty men, very much a nominal token of loyalty. Chris Connolly is thus correct to write that 'the argument over the war was a contest between articulate minorities.'⁵³ If there were few public opponents of the war, there were also few true believers. There was no great public interest in the crisis, or much pressure from the public for the colonies to contribute to the war effort. The British government had certainly not engaged in a conspiracy to manipulate the colonies into joining the fight. It had not needed to. The bills to raise volunteers passed every legislature with little difficulty, though Britain's willingness to foot much of the bill certainly helped. The only exceptions were Queensland and South Australia, and that was due to the legislatures feeling slighted by their Premier.

Serious debates about South African policy never arose. Henry Lawson, yet another radical *Bulletin* poet-journalist, said in October 1899 that it was as if Australians were simply bored, and that the crisis was just an excuse 'to cross the sea and shoot men whom we never saw and whose quarrel we do not and cannot understand.'⁵⁴ If we compare this to the British policy discussions earlier we can see that Australasian politicians were unconcerned about the strategic situation in South Africa. Moreover, they only had a vague idea that events there might affect them at all. It is hard to contrast two sets of positions when one position consists

⁵³ Chris Connolly, 'Class, birthplace, loyalty: Australian attitudes to the Boer War', *Historical Studies*, 18:71 (1978), pp. 201-232.

⁵⁴ The *Bulletin*, 21 October 1899, p. 8.

of years of detailed memoranda and the other of polite indifference. That indifference though is still revealing about the Australasian conception of Empire - hazily defined, tied up in pride, in blood, and in birthright, owed obligations that were clear and noble and pleasingly limited. Australians saw the Empire not so much as a political entity as a cultural touchstone.

COLONY	OFFICERS SENT	ENLISTED SENT	CASUALTIES
New South Wales	307	5, 969	198
Victoria	178	3, 393	104
Queensland	139	2, 713	77
South Australia	85	1, 439	46
Western Australia	62	1, 167	36
Tasmania	37	821	22
New Zealand	287	6, 129	230
Australian Commonwealth*			25

TOTAL NUMBER OF TROOPS AND CASUALTIES BY COLONY, 1899-1902⁵⁵

* Volunteers for Commonwealth Contingents already counted by contributing state.

⁵⁵ Figures assembled from Field, *Forgotten War*, Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, and John Crawford & Ian McGibbon, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/war/nz-units-south-africa>. NB: Multiple contingents were despatched over the three years of the war in irregularly sized units and intervals. This table simply shows the scope of colonial commitment.

iii. Black Week and 'The Empire, right or wrong'

Once the first colonial contingents were raised for service, a holiday atmosphere prevailed. In October 1899, some 250, 000 Sydneysiders came out in heavy rain to bid farewell to the New South Wales volunteers. In Victoria, bonfires were lit along the coast to farewell the departing ships.⁵⁶ Amid these expressions of imperial loyalty, there was still a general sense that the crisis was a faraway adventure in which Australasians could participate in a spirit of patriotism and excitement. Lawson's acerbic commentary about men enlisting for fun was not wide of the mark; one volunteer explained that 'England's our country's well as Australia. Then there's the change a feller gets, and the experience, and every feller natur'ly likes to be in a thing when it's goin.'⁵⁷ The young have always seen war as an excuse for adventure, of course, and that does not discount their patriotism. However, Australasian volunteers were not at this point responding to a perceived threat in the manner that a future generation would fourteen years hence. Loyalism was an excuse to act, not the driving force. Andrew 'Banjo' Paterson journeyed to South Africa as a war correspondent with the first New South Wales contingent. In the thousands of words he wrote in his time there, it is remarkable that there is almost no discussion at all as to why the contingent was in Africa or what it sought to accomplish. On landing in the Cape, he notes with surprise that even English South Africans did not seem enthused for the war, despite the fact that 'the war itself is undertaken solely to get the franchise for the uitlanders.'⁵⁸ But that one sentence is literally as much attention as he gives the matter in his first few articles - the Australians *were* in Africa, and he was more concerned with conveying a sense of the adventure than worrying about why it was happening.

⁵⁶ Field, pp. 48-53.

⁵⁷ Wilcox, p. 23- his citation is slightly unclear.

⁵⁸ Paterson for *SMH*, December 2, 1900- in *Singer of the Bush*, p. 165.

In January 1899, Western Australia's Governor Smith warned Chamberlain that:

To nine tenths of the growing lads and girls born in the Australian Colonies, the terms of "England" and "the Empire" are names alone, and convey nothing to those whose native land has hitherto enjoyed a complete immunity from hostile invasion, and whose sons have never borne arms under the Imperial Flag.⁵⁹

Smith was not the only observer to note this. Looking back in 1905, the Australian lawyer R. R. Garran would warn the British imperial theorist Richard Jebb not to overestimate the motive power of British loyalty. 'Although patriotism made [the contingents] possible, undoubtedly it was largely the spirit of adventure that made up their numbers.'⁶⁰ He was not the only observer to worry. This was not an atmosphere that showed the citizenry had any serious ideological commitment to the war.

Compare this to the British popular view of the war, which mixed patriotism with assessments of the situation that were somewhat closer to that of the Government. The *Daily Telegraph* explained that the war was a confrontation between two 'stocks, each of which is demanding itself a future dominion.' The *Daily Mail* explained that the British Uitlander was fighting 'to hold himself at least the equal of any man in any country in which he lives.' The *Times* summarised the situation in line with Selborne's memoranda. At stake was 'nothing less than that of British supremacy over South Africa... we can not evade when we are challenged upon it, and it is one we can admit no compromise.'⁶¹ In contrast, Australasian papers were much less concerned with the justice of the cause. The *New Zealand Herald* thought that any war was worthwhile as it was 'the antiseptic that prevents the putrefaction of

⁵⁹ Smith to Chamberlain, 20 January 1899, CO 18/226, TNA

⁶⁰ Trainor, 'Building Nations,' p.252

⁶¹ The *Telegraph*, 22 September 1899, the *Daily Mail* 11 October 1899, the *Times*, 8 September 1899, all cited in Stephen Miller, *Volunteers on the Veld: Britain's Citizen-Soldiers and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Norman, 2007) pp. 39, 43.

the whole social system,⁶² while the press in New South Wales and Victoria praised the raising of the contingents while cautioning against any excessive spending.⁶³ It was good to help the Empire, so long as you did not run a deficit while doing so.

In late 1899, events would finally force Australasia to consider what was really at stake in South Africa and lead the press and parliaments to debate the war in terms more familiar to Chamberlain and Selborne.

The ZAR and its ally the Orange Free State had declared war in October, hoping to achieve a quick victory before Britain could build up its local forces. Over the next two months the Boer republics inflicted a series of embarrassing defeats, culminating in the 'Black Week' of 10-17 December in which Britain lost over 3,000 men and a great deal of prestige. Defeat suddenly seemed possible. In Australasia the nature of the war at once changed from a foreign adventure to a challenge to the pride and position of the British Empire. News of the defeat burst across the empire with the rapidity of the new telegraph. General expressions of faith in Empire no longer sufficed. In 1902 Victoria's Governor Brassey recalled that after Black Week, men had stood together in the streets: 'they asked each other: "shall we stand here and do nothing?"'⁶⁴

Andrew Dawson, the leader of Queensland's Labor party, had originally opposed the dispatch of troops for South Africa for as he put it, its spirit of 'unadulterated jingoism.' Further, he said that he had 'no admiration, I have no respect, for the men who volunteer to go to the Transvaal to shoot Boers.'⁶⁵ Three months later, he rose in the house to declare that it was now of vital importance that those men get all the support they needed. Whatever the

⁶² Undated, cited in McGibbon, 'Origins,' p. 3.

⁶³ See Connolly, 'Manufacturing,' p. 116.

⁶⁴ K. S. Inglis, 'The Imperial Connection: Telegraphic Communication between England and Australia, 1872-1902', in A. F. Madden & W. H. Morris-Jones, eds. *Australia and Britain: Studies in a Changing Relationship* (London, 1980) p. 37.

⁶⁵ *QPD*, 13 September 1899, p. 34.

initial issue of the crisis, he said, the war was now ‘a question of whether Great Britain shall hold dominion in South Africa at all.’⁶⁶ This time, Queensland voted heavily in favour of raising troops.

The general belief was that now the war was in the balance. Victoria’s Liberal premier George Turner stressed that the circumstances had changed and the Empire was now in a truly serious struggle. His Labor counterpart William Trenwith agreed, infuriating the most radical members of the Labour movement but speaking to the broader mood of the party. In the press, too, previous detractors of the war shifted position. The *Bulletin* remained cynical about public enthusiasm for the war, declaring that the volunteers ‘would go just as readily to shoot parrots, or Paraguayans, or polar bears,’⁶⁷ but even this most republican of Australian publications admitted that for now the attitude had to be ‘the Empire, right or wrong... one necessity is worth a hundred moralities.’⁶⁸

To some extent, the sudden fear seems an overreaction born of the previous public disinterest in the crisis. Still, Australian commentators were at last discussing the same issues - the threat to Britain’s prestige and to its regional hegemony in South Africa - that had worried Britain’s war planners. That it took them this long speaks to the extent to which consideration of the wider Empire had not affected Australasian imperial consciousness in the 1890s. Most Australians and New Zealanders were not ‘nationalists,’ but before Black Week their mental picture of Empire had not made room for threats or vital interests outside the home regions - Australasia or Europe.

There was another way in which Australasia suddenly aligned with Britain’s view of the South African conflict: the fear of foreign intervention that set in after Black Week. The

⁶⁶ *QPD*, 20 December 1899, p. 1473.

⁶⁷ *Bulletin*, 6 January 1900, p. 6.

⁶⁸ *Bulletin*, 10 February 1900 p. 6.

Empire had had defeats before, such as Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift, but it had always had a gift for finding suitable heroic stories to soften the blow. However, Black Week was much more than just a defeat; it was a debacle and one that raised worrying questions about British leadership. It raised the question of whether, if Britain's strength in South Africa could not be trusted, then what of its defences elsewhere?

Accordingly, the public mood in Australasia now verged on panic. By April 1900, 16,000 Victorians had enrolled in rifle clubs to train against a foreign invasion.⁶⁹ It was shown earlier that German interference in South Africa was something of a spectre, but that it nonetheless created a sense of urgency in the British government. This now played out on a wider scale in Australasia. The Germans were widely believed to be allied with the Boers, and this led to disturbances. In Broken Hill, the German Club was surrounded by a stone-throwing mob.⁷⁰ Bendigo's German Club was also attacked and its flag pulled down, an incident that led to protests by Berlin's ambassador to London.⁷¹

If the British Government had overestimated the risks of German intervention in South Africa, it had at least done so based on the presence of an actual German colony in Namibia and the ill-considered statements of the Kaiser. Even when Salisbury had warned about the importance of not becoming one of the 'dying' nations whose territory was encroached upon by others, he and his cabinet had always worried that the British Empire would lose influence gradually, not face sudden dismemberment. Australasians were not so restrained. It seemed that if South Africa were in peril then the rest of the Empire would surely follow. In Queensland Dawson stressed that the Empire needed a victory now, lest rival Great Powers 'make a dash for her possessions.'⁷² This was fear not just of Germany,

⁶⁹*Argus*, 9 April 1900, p. 4. Also see Craig Wilcox, 'Australia's Citizen Army, 1889-1914' (Australian National University, PhD Thesis, 1993).

⁷⁰*Age*, 8 January 1900, p. 6.

⁷¹Madden to Colonial Office, March 1900, CO309/149.

⁷²*QPD*, Legislative Assembly, 20 December 1899, p. 1473.

but of all Britain's rivals partitioning her dominions. British defeat might mean a 'struggle for the spoil of England's colonies,' warned the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 'if the British forces do not show to advantage against the Boers, there is little doubt but we will have to face France, Russia or Japan.'⁷³

The Australasian panic over 'Black Week' drives home that even once the colonies had fully committed to the war, they still did not see South Africa from the perspective of Whitehall. The crisis had rocked London and would see British generals replaced and far more resources committed. Certainly, the disaster suggested the war could be lost if managed poorly: Arthur Balfour wrote in January 1900 that 'I not only think blunders have been committed, but I think they have been of the most serious kind, imperilling the whole progress of the war.'⁷⁴ However, this was very different from thinking that the entire empire was now on the brink of being set upon by rival powers. Nor was this a momentary panic in Australasia. From this point on, Australasian rhetoric about the war stressed the possibility of a general imperial collapse. The fact that Australasia had never entirely understood what was so important about South Africa did not help either. Australians who believed in the Empire believed that its great interests were in Asia and the Pacific and thus the commitment of troops to South Africa seemed like a trap. Defeat would threaten partition of the Empire, while a costly victory would allow perfidious rivals to gain at Britain's expense in Asia. This was also rhetoric that could be used by the war's opponents. In 1902, the Protectionist member H. B. Higgins⁷⁵ opposed the sending of more troops, saying:

⁷³ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 18 January 1900, p. 5

⁷⁴ In Denis Judd & Keith Surridge, *The Boer War: A History*, p. 126.

⁷⁵ Higgins had opposed the war at the outset because he thought it was legally dubious; interestingly, he dismissed the rhetoric of protecting Uitlanders by asking how Victoria would respond if France or Afghanistan had threatened war unless their citizens were naturalised. See John Rickard, *H.B. Higgins: The Rebel as Judge* (Sydney, 1984) p. 110.

While the lion has had its tail in the trap in South Africa, the eagle and the bear have been gorging themselves in the East; and the interests of England lie more in Asia than in the bleak and desolate ground of South Africa. It is the enemies of England who have had most cause to rejoice in the war; and they have rejoiced in it.⁷⁶

In fact, despite the enthusiasms of the Kaiser, Germany stayed carefully neutral in South Africa, while Russia realised quickly that there was no chance to exploit the situation so long as it needed loans from the City of London.⁷⁷ However Dawson and the others believed so strongly in a foreign threat to the Empire because they had hitherto simultaneously combined great faith in the Empire's strength with uninterest in its actual circumstances. Before Black Week, the jolly indifference of Australasia to the facts in South Africa had stemmed from a conviction that the Empire was strong enough to overcome any obstacle, and that South Africa was not particularly important anyway. When that strength was challenged, when that unimportant place suddenly began demanding blood and treasure, it was easy for panic to set in.

The early assessment that the war was not being fought over a vital interest of the Empire remained. Rather the Australasian concern was that Black Week had made the Empire in the Pacific look weak - and that made victory in South Africa a vital interest for Australasian imperialists. The Anglican Reverend Curzon-Siggers of Dunedin had been an outlier in October 1899 when he warned a lecture audience that British defeat would mean Australasia 'may look out for ourselves... we should in a year or two be paying tribute to a foreign Power.'⁷⁸ By January, Australasia had come round to his view that this was now a war to avoid subjugation by a rival empire.

⁷⁶ *CPD*, AHR, 14 January 1902, no. 37, p. 8759.

⁷⁷ Derek Spring, 'Russian Foreign Policy in the Boer War,' in Wilson, *Impact*.

⁷⁸ *Bruce Herald*, 17 October 1899, p. 3.

One consequence of the general gloom after Black Week was that the press in Britain and in the colonies sought to find reasons for optimism. It became politic for both British and Australasian papers to extol the virtues of colonial soldiers. Originally the British government had not envisaged using colonial volunteers as anything other than a political symbol, a sop to make sure that the overseas possessions felt sufficiently engaged in the process of Empire. Weeks before the war broke out in October and months after Chamberlain began soliciting for his spontaneous offers, Lord Lansdowne at the War Office had complained that inexperienced colonial soldiers meant nothing but ‘more sea & land transport, more expense, and more ‘congestion.’⁷⁹ In August, the Permanent Undersecretary at the War Office, R.H. Knox, told the Colonial Office that though colonial troops would be considered in the event that large reinforcements were needed, ‘For the present it will be sufficient if the offers made by the various Colonies are suitably acknowledged and noted in this Office.’⁸⁰ Field Marshal Wolseley was in favour, but even he argued the case in terms of political reasons: colonial volunteers would ‘draw those Colonies still closer to the mother Country by creating a new bond of union between all parts of our Empire.’⁸¹ In another memorandum he put it more simply: ‘It would create an excellent feeling if each of the Australian Colonies [raised troops.]’⁸²

When the early defeats forced a greater commitment of troops from Britain and the colonies, that ‘bond of union’ became an important point with which to lift public and military morale. In January 1900, the *Times* struggled to find positive stories from the front to report. It opted to stress the patriotism and performance of colonial troops. ‘Our fellow-subjects in the colonies have been stirred up by this war to a more ardent and practical

⁷⁹ Lansdowne, memorandum, 079/9112 25 September 1899, WO 32/8208, TNA.

⁸⁰ R.H Knox to Colonial Office, 26 July 1899, CO 418/6, TNA.

⁸¹ Wolseley, minute in 079/9112, WO 32/8208, TNA.

⁸² Wolseley memorandum to Lansdowne, June 8 1899, CAB37/50/38, ‘Military Strength in South Africa’.

devotion to the Imperial ideal,' said the leader.⁸³ British writers and both colonial nationalists and imperialists now had a shared interest in burnishing the reputation of colonial soldiers. Rudyard Kipling wrote *The Young Queen* in praise of Australian fighting spirit, depicting Australia as a young Boudicca straight off the veldt.

High on her red-splashed charger,
beautiful, bold and browned,
bright-eyed out of battle,
the Young Queen rode to be crowned.⁸⁴

Compare Paterson's *Song of the Federation*:

Came a voice crying, 'Lo, a new-made Nation,
To her place in the sisterhood she comes!'

And she came. She was beautiful as morning,
With the bloom of the roses on her mouth,
Like a young queen lavishly adorning
Her claims with the splendours of the South...⁸⁵

Kipling was already the most famous poet in the British Empire and *of* the British Empire. Paterson would in time become the most famous poet of Australian nationalism and had flirted with full-blown radicalism in his early career. Here, they both address Australian participation in the war with the same metaphor: the young queen who emerges on the world

⁸³*The Times*, 6 January 1900.

⁸⁴ Found at http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poems_youngqueen.htm, retrieved April 12 2017.

⁸⁵ Paterson, *Song of the Federation*, in *Song of the Pen*, ed., Rosamund Campbell & Philippa Harvie, *Song of the Pen: Collected Works 1901-1941*.

to prove her nationhood by fighting in the great struggle in South Africa. In Paterson's case it is particularly remarkable: in Chapter One we quoted his anti-imperialist poetry that denounced Australians fighting in the Sudan and even encouraged his readers to empathise with the Mahdists. Now, not only was Paterson supporting an overseas expedition, but he had also joined it - and was writing that it helped give the entire great cause of Australian federation meaning. That change was no doubt in part due to Paterson no longer being a twenty-one-year-old radical; it also shows how even Australian radical nationalists were affected by South Africa.

It is also important to note that the Australian and New Zealand soldiers saw themselves as Imperial troops first and foremost. Corporal Jack Abbott of New South Wales wrote that:

always forcing itself upon one's mind [was] the consciousness of empire... [and] the vague realisation that we, the English, and the Canadians, and the Australians, were a race that overran the globe, and that its inheritance was ours.⁸⁶

Over time, there also emerged a sense of colonial solidarity. Colonials were 'overseas sons of one mother,' and Australians and New Zealanders saw each other, and Canadians as 'colonials like ourselves.'⁸⁷ This was not precisely nationalism. The soldiers did not think there was anything shameful about being a British colonial. But there was an emerging sense that the outer periphery of the Empire perhaps shared bonds with each other that were distinct from their kinship with the centre.⁸⁸ Abbott reflected that Australians were 'pretty close, although not quite, of the same species as the Canadian.'⁸⁹ Canadians, New Zealanders, and

⁸⁶ John Abbott, *Tommy Cornstalk* (London, 1902) p.213.

⁸⁷ Alfred Hales, *Campaign Pictures of the War in South Africa* (1900), cited in Wilcox 'Australia's Boer War' p.298.

⁸⁸ See introduction and Darwin's 'Britannic Nationalism'.

⁸⁹ Abbott, p. 3.

Australians might have volunteered from Toronto and Wellington and Melbourne to serve alongside British farm labourers; but in the fast-growing mythology they were all healthy sons of the Prairie, the Bush and the Outback serving alongside anaemic survivors of the Birmingham factories. After the war, the Elgin Commission of Enquiry would describe colonial troops as ‘half soldiers by their upbringing.’⁹⁰ Wolseley’s ‘bond of union’ then, drew Australasia closer to the Empire but it also began to change the way Australians and New Zealanders looked at that Empire. A martial ode by Paterson captures the curious racial dynamic: the unity of the British race is praised, but the greatest examples of that race come from outside the isles.

They came to prove to all the earth that kinship conquers space,
And those who fight the British Isles must fight the British race!
From far New Zealand’s flax and fern, from cold Canadian snows
From Queensland plains, where hot as fire the summer sunshine grows.⁹¹

As shall be shown in Chapters Five and Six, Queensland sunshine was often said to degenerate the British race - but in this poem, the suggestion is that it has produced a truly authentic Britishness that emerges from outside Britain itself.

The increasing colonial commitment to the war was thus a contradiction. It was a clear demonstration that Australasia was willing to sacrifice blood and treasure in the name of the Empire; it was also a sacrifice that was only made once Australasia - not the British government - decided that the Empire was truly at risk. It was an undertaking that renewed colonial feelings that their identities were given greater meaning by the broader ties of kinship with other British populations; yet it also emerged out of a feeling that the empire was fragile and at risk of being set upon by other powers, a danger we saw expressed

⁹⁰ Preston, *Canada and Imperial Defence*, p. 267.

⁹¹ Paterson, *With French to Kimberley*, in ‘Song of the Pen.’

throughout Chapter Three. And in Australasia, of course, there were also those who had never supported the war at all - and that teaches us something about the nature of the Empire as well.

iv. Opposing the war, but not the Empire

Many scholars have conflated attitudes to the war with attitudes to the Empire, creating a simplified narrative that to support the war was to reject nationalism, while to oppose it was to reject imperial loyalty.⁹² Indeed, the argument has been made that the nationalist movement in the nascent Australian Commonwealth was strangled by the popularity of the war; Donal Lowry, for instance, notes that W. M. ('Billy') Hughes was an opponent of the war at its beginning but a noted advocate for imperial expansion by its end and had, therefore, moved away from Australian nationalism.⁹³ This is reading history backwards. Because Australian nationalism ended up evolving in the public mind *away* from symbols of the empire, it is easy to assume that anyone who praised the empire was simply a British loyalist. In fact, many of the 'nationalists' would also have called themselves imperialists, and many of the opponents of the Boer War grounded their opposition in the argument that the war was bad for the empire. The language used by the war's opponents show that Australasian attitudes to the South African War cannot be understood as a simple binary between interventionist imperialists and stay-at-home nationalists; rather, there were two competing ideas of what it meant for the colonies to live up to the ideals and serve the interests of the Empire.

Opposition to the war was not treated lightly. In New Zealand, the Chief Hansard Reporter, J. Grattan Grey, wrote an article on the despatch of the New Zealand contingents that was published in the *New York Times* in February 1900. It bewailed the fact that 'these democratic communities have become suddenly infected with Imperialism of the most pronounced type.' Seddon thought this sedition and subsequently forced Grey out of office.

⁹² Field, *Forgotten War*, and Connolly, 'Manufacturing Spontaneity'.

⁹³ Donal Lowry, 'The Boers were the beginning of the end?' in Donal Lowry, ed., *The South African War Reappraised* (Manchester, 2000) pp. 35-6.

Grey's open anti-imperialism saw his career destroyed and eventually his family forced to emigrate.⁹⁴

There were also more direct perils. Amid the public celebrations after the relief of the siege of Mafeking at least one 'pro-Boer' Australian was beaten and another kept his children indoors for fear that 'the savage mob might have kicked them to death.'⁹⁵ Many politicians must have viewed Black Week as a welcome opportunity to trim sails and switch to a more popular position. This was Laurie Field's bitter explanation in 1979 for why Labor members who had initially opposed joining the war so ardently backed the sending of more troops.⁹⁶ This, though, needlessly complicates the interpretation of the sources. If opponents of the war claimed to support the Empire, it is surely simpler to believe them.

Who opposed the war, and how many did so? In 1978 Chris Connolly challenged historians to 'abandon the assumption that a dominant section of the middle-classes spoke for the whole community.'⁹⁷ The 1970s revisionists painted a more nuanced depiction of Australian attitudes to the war than had previously been accepted. Native-born Australians and those who had immigrated before 1870 tended to be pro-war.⁹⁸ More recent migrants, manual workers, and Irish Catholics made up much of the opposition. That opposition was probably never particularly numerous. Unless we follow Field and posit that a great many Australians secretly opposed the war but were too cowed to say so, we must assume that anti-war societies and periodicals enjoyed little success because the war was generally popular. That is not to say that it always commanded excitement, particularly after the hysteria around Black Week began to fade.

⁹⁴ AJHR, 1900, H-29 for the Seddon-Grey correspondence.

⁹⁵ Both incidents cited in Wilcox, 'Australia's Boer War' p. 32.

⁹⁶ 'One suspects they welcomed the opportunity to shift their ground to a position more in line with popular clamour.' Field, p. 60.

⁹⁷ Chris Connolly, 'Class, birthplace, loyalty' p. 231.

⁹⁸ Connolly, 'Manufacturing Spontaneity,' Trainor, 'Building Nations'.

Irish-Catholics in Australasia were not, as a rule anti-war; but there does seem to have been a comparative lack of enthusiasm, particularly in 1899.⁹⁹ The presence of an anti-war constituency is suggested by the careful way in which the Catholic Church delayed its approval of the war until the panic at the end of 1899 forced its hand. When the first contingent was formed Cardinal Moran remarked that true patriotism was remaining at home to defend one's country; by early 1900, he was walking an uneasy path of blessing Catholic volunteers - soldiers had been saints, after all - while worrying that the war had not only exposed Australia's poor defences, but had stripped them for service overseas.¹⁰⁰ Compare this with Western Australia's Orange Order, who wrote to Chamberlain to boast that a fifth of the colony's contingent in South Africa were Orangemen.¹⁰¹

Irish Catholics served in the war, and felt slights to their patriotism keenly; still, the Church's hesitation in taking sides clearly shows that it was worried about dividing its parishioners. The *New Zealand Tablet*, the community's most significant periodical, said it was not pacifist, but it found it 'not so easy to understand why Mr. Chamberlain should be so anxious to go to war.' It wished the first New Zealand volunteers well but decried 'the waste of blood and treasure and aimless human suffering which the campaign is certain to entail.'¹⁰² Many of the volunteers in that contingent and the one that followed were themselves Catholic but the *Tablet's* doubts were not forgiven. The *Presbyterian Outlook* averred that New Zealand Catholics and their church had a natural tendency to disloyalty, as evidenced by the *Tablet's* 'disloyal attitude.'¹⁰³ This overlooked the fact that the *Outlook* itself had published

⁹⁹Patrick O'Farrell *The Irish in Australia* (Sydney, 1987) pp. 265-266.

¹⁰⁰ For Moran- and Irish-Australian leadership generally- and the ambivalent relation with the war, see Guy Murfey, 'Fighting for the Unity of the Empire,' (University of New South Wales, Masters Thesis, 2017) pp. 135-139.

¹⁰¹ Western Australia Orange Order to Chamberlain, October 1899, CO 18/226.

¹⁰² *NZT*, October 19 1899, p. 17.

¹⁰³ *Presbyterian Outlook*, 24 March 1900, p. 5.

columns questioning the purpose of the war, but sectarianism trumped consistency.¹⁰⁴ For its part, by December the *Tablet* would be suggesting that the number of Freemasons in both the British and Boer armies made it a case of ‘brothers slaying brothers.’¹⁰⁵

The Irish therefore provide a clear example of how belief in the Empire could come in different forms. At St. Patrick’s Day celebrations, placards might depict Parnell and Wolfe Tone, but they would probably be followed by Gladstone and Victoria.¹⁰⁶ Irish Nationalism does not seem to have greatly affected Australasian views of the Empire, at least in this period, and the historiography makes too much of the community’s opposition. The Irish opposed the war more than their fellow Australasians, but there does not seem to have been a particularly strong Irish nationalist impulse behind it: Irish-Australasian opponents of the war tended to be Hobsonian anti-capitalists, or Gladstonian liberals, not Fenians. Even Moran’s worries about Australian weakness were shared by Protestant Australia after Black Week.¹⁰⁷

Ironically, many of the most public opponents of the war considered themselves to be defenders of the empire’s values. This was still an imperialist position. The argument focused on the idea that the empire was not living up to its own standard of morality, not that the empire was inherently immoral. In April 1900, New Zealand’s National Council of Women opened itself up to criticism when one of its committee members gave a speech deploring militarism and calling for an arbitrated settlement; in response, its president Kate Sheppard defended the right of her colleague to speak. The ‘patriotic feeling was strong,’ she said, and her members could criticise England ‘because they were proud of her.’¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ For New Zealand sectarianism and South Africa, see Nigel Robson, *Our First Foreign War: The Impact of the South African War 1899-1902 on New Zealand* (Auckland, 2021), Chapter Two.

¹⁰⁵ *NZT*, 14 December 1899, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ E.g., *The Age*, 18 March 1906.

¹⁰⁷ See section iii.

¹⁰⁸ *ODT*, 12 May 1900, p. 8.

This argument gathered steam as the war progressed. In 1900 set-piece warfare ended and the Boer soldiers took to the veldt. With the enemy republics annexed and the war now a matter of chasing guerrillas, the public began to lose interest in the absence of exciting battles. By the end of 1901, news of the appalling conditions in British concentration camps - and reports of what the farm-burning policy of the Imperial army entailed - had changed the public mood. George Wood, a professor of history at the University of Sydney, wrote in a letter to the *Daily Telegraph*: 'is there not in Sydney enough English patriotism to protest against a policy that is bringing everlasting infamy upon the English name?'¹⁰⁹ These attitudes were not anti-British; in fact they were of a piece with Gladstonian liberal imperialism. They were not anti-nationalist either. They show that by 1900 there was still a clear part of Australasian society that envisaged the Empire as a project of moral authority, not brute power.

Many of the original anti-war commentators and those who turned against the war later did so because they believed the war was being used to enact policies that would hurt the empire and Australasia's place within it. Earlier, H.B. Higgins' 1902 speech on 'the eagle and the bear' was cited. He continued;

It is because I love England with an hereditary affection, and from training, that I have opposed this war, and in a few years it will be seen who has been the true patriot, who has been anxious to preserve the Empire, and to prevent her from leaving the path of progress which she has hitherto followed.¹¹⁰

The same year, Higgins presented a petition to the federal House of Representatives calling for peace. Its terms were close to the eventual settlement (annexation, a quick path to self-government, and limited amnesty for the rebels). Higgins did not explain why he thought

¹⁰⁹ *Daily Telegraph*, 10 December 1901, p. 8.

¹¹⁰ *CPD*, AHR, 14 January 1902, no. 3, p. 8759.

London was prolonging the war, but it is sadly possible to guess. There had always been a belief amongst some Australasians that the war was being fought purely for the riches of the Transvaal. The New Zealand Labour parliamentarian T.E. Taylor was one of five members to vote against the raising of volunteers, telling the house that '[England] is prepared to flaunt her flag and talk sentiment whilst for generation after generation she leaves a large percentage of her population in the most abject poverty.'¹¹¹ The implication was clear - this was a war for gold. Taylor was not the only man in Wellington to think so. When the first contingent of volunteers set off, an eyewitness remarked 'why do they harry those poor unfortunate farmers - and all for the love of gold.'¹¹² Why had the empire engaged in this act of armed robbery? Because, as the Queensland Labor member Vincent Lescina explained to the House, 'it is merely a Jew's war.'¹¹³

Throughout the course of the war, and indeed after, many opponents of the war were convinced that both the empire and the Boers had been the victims of a sort of capitalist coup. The 'Randlords' and their Rothschild sponsors had supposedly manipulated or bought off the government in London. The Victorian parliamentarian John Murray asked if Australian troops were to die for Uitlanders, given that they included '8000 or 10,000 Russian Jews... the riff-raff of the old world and the riff raff of the new.'¹¹⁴ This was not an idea unique to the Empire's periphery. In the House of Commons John Burns, the leader of the 1889 dockworkers strike, declared that the British army had 'become the janissary of the Jews.'¹¹⁵ John Hobson, the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent, wrote about the perfidy of the Jewish magnates and his diatribes travelled far. Even some supporters of the war found ways to

¹¹¹ *NZPD*, 110, 28 September 1899, p. 82.

¹¹² Pat Lawlor, *Old Wellington Days* (1954), cited in Malcolm McKinnon 'Opposition to the War in New Zealand' in McGibbon, *One Flag*, p. 36.

¹¹³ *QPD*, Legislative Assembly, 11 October 1899, p. 345.

¹¹⁴ John Murray, *VPD*, 10 October 1899, p. 1730.

¹¹⁵ John Burns, House of Commons, February 6 1900, p. 795.

blame Jews. New Zealand soldiers wrote home complaining of meeting Jews in South Africa who were seeking to profit by selling supplies, and the New Zealand press warned that unscrupulous Jewish bankers were selling bullion to the ZAR.¹¹⁶

In January 1902, an Anti-War League was formed in Sydney which tied together disparate opponents - liberals like Wood, devoted nationalists from the *Bulletin*, and various figures from the Labor party. One such figure was William Holman, a future state premier who said that the real enemy of the empire was 'the German Jews who prompted the war.'¹¹⁷ The league's literary committee, chaired by Arthur Griffith, condensed Hobson's arguments to produce a pamphlet called 'Facts About the Transvaal' which explained that the British government was in the hands of 'a few millionaire spectators, brewers and money-lenders, mostly Jews.'¹¹⁸ It had, the *Bulletin* enthused, 'enough truth about S' Africa to confound any Jingo.'¹¹⁹ Like the *Bulletin* itself, the League never had the audience or influence it pretended to. Antisemitism was not unpopular, but neither was it an animating force in colonial society. The racial paranoia that did speak to Australasian uncertainties about this war that many citizens had not fully understood was not directed against the Jews; as always, it was fear of cheap non-white Labour.

It had long been feared in Australasia that if its gates were thrown open to Indians or other Asians, capitalists and landowners could use a cheap foreign workforce to undercut Australians, 'and when this happens the white labourer will have met his greatest antagonist.'¹²⁰ Now it was suspected that Chamberlain was going to allow exactly that scenario to unfold in South Africa. In January 1902, a Victorian Labour weekly decried the

¹¹⁶ See Nigel Robson, *Our First Foreign War* (Auckland, 2021) p. 70 for anti-Semitism among New Zealand volunteers and journalists.

¹¹⁷ H.V Evatt, *Australian Labour Leader* (Sydney, 1940) p. 143, cited in Wilcox, 'Australia's Boer War', p. 324.

¹¹⁸ Arthur Griffith, John Hobson, *A Few Facts About the Transvaal* (Sydney, 1902) p. 6.

¹¹⁹ *Bulletin*, April 19 1902, p.20.

¹²⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 2 February 1901.

use of Indian labourers on Queensland plantations: ‘No wonder that out-of-work white farm labourers have to go to South Africa to fight, notwithstanding that the result of the war there will mean that the cheap nigger will displace the white man.’¹²¹ Labor opponents of the war had reason to feel that if Australia’s vision of an empire made up of healthy, white dominions was going to be realised then it might have to be safeguarded from policy-makers in London. Even some of the war’s advocates believed that the conflict revealed the degree to which the British government did not understand how to rule the Empire. In 1900, as the conventional phase of the war wound down, Paterson told his readers at home that ‘if Britain takes this country, she is going to have big trouble with the Kaffir question... The Boer knows how to treat the Kaffir... but the English will make a man and a brother of him.’ Worse still, said Paterson, this apparent delusion had already had political consequences. ‘These people,’ Paterson warned, ‘can vote in the Cape.’¹²² Others did not even share Paterson’s cautious regard for the Boer. In 1901, as the Immigration Restriction Act was being debated, the Free Trader Frederick Piessé warned that the Boers had once been of the ‘best and purest stock of European people’ but had deteriorated due to the proximity of an ‘inferior people.’¹²³

Labor Senator George Pearce, speaking about the war after its conclusion, warned parliament in 1903 that:

while we must be loyal to the Empire we must remember that our first duty lies to Australia. The Ministry who rules the destinies of the Empire in Westminster may not always have the best interests of this part of the Empire at heart.¹²⁴

The anti-capitalist conspiracy theories about the war arguably had a much greater effect in Australia than they did in Britain. John Burns was later a cabinet minister, but by then he had

¹²¹ Quoted in Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia* (Melbourne, 1970), pp. 31-32.

¹²² Paterson, April 14 1900, in *Song of the Pen*.

¹²³ *CPD*, AHR, 12 September 1901, no.36, p. 4818.

¹²⁴ *CPD*, Senate, 22 January 1903, p. 9026.

tamed many of his views. Hobson never saw office. By contrast, Higgins went on to be a High Court Justice, Holman a New South Wales Premier, and Griffith and Pearce were ministers at state and federal level respectively. In other words, a group of politicians that was to have a marked influence on the future development of Australian society was profoundly influenced at this moment of Imperial crisis by a crude conspiracy theory that said London was in the hands of capitalist puppet masters. That it dovetailed with existing fears about London's disrespect for White Australia made it all the more effective. It was also, at least in its Australian manifestation, *not* an example of anti-imperialist sentiment. Pearce and company never condemned the institution itself or suggested that Australia leave; rather they indicated that something was rotting - that the true empire was now found at the periphery.

v. Conclusion

The *Bulletin* produced three particularly well-known poet-journalists in the late 1890s, and they took three distinct approaches to the war. Henry Lawson was the most radical; he had begun the decade writing plays of socialist resistance, and the South African War confirmed his view that the empire was a machine for the bosses, exulting the worst impulses in Australian men and sending them to die in a shabby war. Banjo Paterson was more typical of the literate middle-classes. He had been a genuine radical in his youngest days, but the war offered a chance for adventure. His lack of interest in what the Australian contingents were fighting for did not stop him enjoying his experience as a war correspondent. As soon as he returned though, that imperial loyalism did not complain about the actual running of the war. The third, and least accomplished of the trio, joined the South Australian Mounted Rifles and after almost two years of not particularly distinguished service began to murder Boer prisoners. Harry 'Breaker' Morant's war crimes and the film that glorified them¹²⁵ remain the only real image most Australians have of the South African War.¹²⁶

For Australasia, the South African War was six months of a building crisis, six months of exciting military turmoil, and two and a half years of interminable guerrilla war. In that time the various Australasian colonies moved through all the possible states of indifference, interest, panic and mounting fatigue. We began by studying the motivations and fears of the British government as it contemplated the growing crisis. If they seemed in the end to be far removed from the worries of the colonial governments, then that suggests that even the most loyal of Australasian politicians were more distant from London than they believed.

¹²⁵ *Breaker Morant*, dir. Bruce Beresford, 1980.

¹²⁶ The night before his execution, Morant wrote 'Butchered to Make a Dutchman's Holiday': If you encounter any Boers/you really must not loot 'em!!/ and if you wish to leave these shores/ for pity's sake DON'T SHOOT 'EM!!' Paterson was Australia's Kipling; Morant was a homicidal Topaz McGonagall. *Bulletin*, 19 April 1902.

The middle two chapters of this dissertation put Australasian views of the empire within the context of foreign political developments. Britain's interests in South Africa are usually treated as the rational concerns of a Great Power, while Australasian worries in the Pacific are taken as parochial paranoia. Yet there are curious parallels: the same worries about supply lines between Britain and its possessions, the same fear of consolidating states leaving English-speakers behind, the same fear of loss of face, the same fear that ordinary Britons were being left wanting by out-of-touch central leadership. There is even, obviously, the same fear of the Kaiser. It would be unwise to make too much of all this. A war did break out on the Veldt, and not in Samoa. But what it shows us is that both the Imperial government and the colonies looked at geopolitics through the same, for lack of a better phrase, doctrinal lens. For Britain, the Empire's vital interests seemed to be at stake in the Transvaal so that was where they paid attention - and made sacrifices in the Pacific to accommodate this. In Australasia, the Empire's interests seemed to be in the Pacific - and South Africa was, in the end, a patriotic distraction. The point here is not that the situations were the same, nor is it that the strategic concerns of Salisbury's government were misplaced. Rather, it is that Australasian fears in the Pacific, rather than being merely irrational, did emerge out of the same type of strategic thinking as that of the British metropole, even as it produced quite different conclusions.

Australasia only truly committed to the War as a result of Black Week. This was not a simple matter of protecting the Empire's injured honour and prestige, at least not for its own sake. Rather, it was because a defeat on the scale that seemed possible at the end of 1899 would make the entire Empire look weak. If two small republics could inflict such a blow upon the Empire in distant South Africa, how terrible could be the damage of a sudden attack by Germany or Russia? The Australasian willingness to send more and more troops to South Africa, and to spend large sums to do so, does not indicate that the Imperial Government's

understanding of the war had been adopted. Rather, it shows that the Australasian view of the Empire had, from its own starting premises, now logically come to the conclusion that this was a crisis for the whole Empire.

Australasian opposition to the war was not, in the main, anti-imperialist. Nor was it a product of sectarianism or internal ethnic divisions. Outside the most devoted anti-war activists, opposition mainly took the form of questioning the motives of those who had called for the war. Even politicians and journalists who backed it could think it was a distraction from the Empire's real concerns in Asia. More powerfully, the anti-capitalist and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories that flourished in the popular press and were voiced in local parliaments questioned the Imperial government's commitment not just to British interests, but to Britishness itself. Supposedly, the war was going to take honest white men out of the Australian work force and replace them with non-white Labour, all in the service of Jewish bankers. The war would take a white settler colony and place it in the hands of those who would give Africans the vote.

In the last third of the dissertation, we shall pick up on the theme of colonial doubts about the imperial government's commitment to defending the racial and civilisational purity of British settler societies. In the Pacific Islands and even in the Transvaal, the enemies (and supposed enemies) of the empire were white. In Chapters Five and Six, the dissertation looks at the Britain's relationship with a rising power that was decidedly not white, and that relationship's consequences for Australasian imperial identities.

Chapter Five: Australasia, Japan, and the Natal Formula

If Australasian ideas about the Empire were changing in the 1890s, perhaps that was because the Empire was changing too. The final decades before the Great War are well studied, and Britain's slide from 'splendid isolation' (if that were ever the case) to becoming a true player in the system of great power alliances is often marked as beginning with the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance. The road to that agreement does not need to be retaken here.¹ Suffice to say that British ministers in the 1890s had to set their policy at a time when old diplomatic sureties no longer rang true with Qing China in imminent danger of collapse and Russia, Germany and France threatening the 'open door' and thus challenging British trade and investment.

Even before China was threatened with partition, British policy towards Japan had undergone substantial change. The precursor to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was the 1894 Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation.² This Treaty ended British extraterritorial rights in Japan. It was a statement that Japanese laws were now regarded as 'civilised' enough to bind a British subject. It was also a recognition that Japan was, if not equal to Britain, at least a respectable power, sovereign in the international system. More importantly for the self-governing colonies, the Treaty eliminated various tariffs and duties levied on Japanese-British trade and promised that each party's traders would have 'the same treatment in matters of commerce and navigation as native subjects.'³ This was both an

¹ It is not just out of scope, but that Australasians, at first, paid curiously little attention to it. M.P. Lissington's *New Zealand and Japan* (1972) noted that even Russo-phobic New Zealand only had a single newspaper report on the signing of the alliance- pp. 4-5.

² British policy in East Asia in the late nineteenth century is a complicated subject, and the halting process by which Japan and Britain arrived at an alliance more complicated still. The best treatments remain the magisterial works by Ian Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance* (London, 1966), and *Alliance in Decline* (London, 1972). More recently, see Antony Best's *British Engagement with Japan* (Abingdon, 2020) and T. G. Otte's *The China Question* (Oxford, 2007) and Philips Payson O'Brien's *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-1922*

³ *Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between Great Britain and Japan* (1894). pp. 1-5 Accessed at Foreign Office Treaty Archive, <http://foto.archivalware.co.uk/data/Library2/pdf/1894-TS0023.pdf>, January 24 2021. The

opportunity for the colonies, and a threat. A great market was potentially opening, but that market might not be accessible without abandoning the colonies' ability to exclude the Japanese from Australasia. If a way were to be found to square that circle, it had to be done quickly: Article XIX noted that the Treaty would not apply to Britain's various self-governing colonies (Australasia, Canada, the Cape, Natal, Newfoundland, as well as the Raj) unless they acceded to its provisions within two years of the Treaty being signed.⁴

Just as the treaty marked a turning point in Britain's relations with Japan, it also marked a turning point in Australasia's views of the Empire. Anti-Asian bills had been promulgated, and sometimes disallowed, throughout the 1880s, but they had been primarily designed to stop the Chinese.⁵ Though the imperial government had frowned upon its colonies trying to put up barriers to the immigration of British subjects from Hong Kong, and the Chinese government had also made its displeasure known, the reaction to the 1894 Treaty was different. For one thing, Japan was harder to ignore. Japan was far more diplomatically adept than the Qing government. Colonial responses to the supposed 'problem' of Asian migration thus took on a different tone than they had in the anti-Chinese movements of the 1880s. Now, anti-Asian bills were debated with much more conscious awareness of the diplomatic ramifications, as excluding the Japanese would be a definite attempt to depart from the policy of the imperial government. The bills were drafted anyway.

White Australia has a rich historiography, and anti-Asian racism was not a new development in the 1880s or 1890s. The organised exclusion movement originates primarily on the goldfields of Victoria and New South Wales in the 1850s, and the anti-Chinese riots of that era were in many ways the violent expressions of the sentiment that would be a polite

for the colonies the frightening clause was Article I which states that 'the subjects of each of the two High Contracting Parties shall have full liberty to enter, travel, or reside in any part of the dominions and possessions of the other Contracting Party.'

⁴ Ibid, Article XIX, p. 8.

⁵ The best recent work on this is Benjamin Mountford's *Britain, China & Colonial Australia*.

commonplace in the legislatures of the 1890s. Historians have been putting this xenophobia in the context of the wider empire for decades: see, for instance, the work of Robert Huttenback.⁶ His work showed how White Australia was in many ways merely ‘The Classic Example’ of immigration restriction regimes in the settler colonies. But he himself admitted that just because Australian society was one of many in the Empire passing such laws, that still did not fully explain the vehemence of hatred, or the force of terror with which Australians regarded their neighbours to the north. Huttenback, having described the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act (which we deal with in Chapter Six) remarks that ‘Why Australia continued to fear invasion by hordes of Asians, protected as it was by a legal curtain of awesome effectiveness, is hard to explain, and the answer must lie more in the realm of the romantic and emotional than the rational.’⁷

Forty years later, Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds’ *Drawing the Global Colour Line* (2008) again took a global approach to explaining settler colonial immigration restrictions. In this case, Lake and Reynolds went a step beyond the British Empire and adopted a schema that included the United States, to clarify that this was not just ‘the major skeleton in the British Imperial cupboard’ but a broader movement across fin de siècle ‘white’ societies generally.⁸ However, it ran into the same problem as Huttenback had decades earlier. Australasian racism manifested within a larger and interconnected world but describing that world (or that system) is not sufficient: there has to be a specific explanation of Australasia as an agent in that system. If the Australasian colonies were just one set of polities amongst others establishing a ‘legal curtain’ against migrants, then their continued fears were as hard to explain as Huttenback claimed. Nor is it enough to see Australasian

⁶ *Racism and Empire: White Settlers and Colored Immigrants in the British Self-Governing Colonies 1830-1910* (Ithaca, 1976), and ‘Racism and Imperialism in the Antipodes’ in *American University Fieldstaff Reports, Southeast Asia Series*, 19:2, (1971) pp. 1-15.

⁷ Huttenback, *Racism and Empire*, p. 312.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

attitudes to Asia purely through the works of racial scientists like Charles Pearson, as Lake and Reynolds largely do. Rather Australasian racial policy was developed, as David Atkinson declares, ‘subject to the imperatives of British foreign and imperial policy. The issue of Asian migration also ensured Australians’ continued global engagement, whether they liked it or not.’⁹ Jeremy Martens’ *Empire and Asian Migration* is excellent at studying British settler colonies in Australasia and South Africa together. It is oddly positive about Japanese diplomatic efforts in Australia, painting them as successful in the long-term. Later, we shall examine why this is overgenerous. However, this work is much indebted to Martens’ stressing of the Indian Ocean as a conduit for ideas about race - Australasia and South Africa were strong enough societies to produce their ideologies themselves, rather than inheriting and feeding back dogma from the UK and USA.¹⁰

The dissertation does not follow Atkinson and Martens, it also seeks to answer Huttenback’s rhetorical question by showing that Australian (and New Zealand) fears of Asia were not simply about racial paranoia or the legal regime of the Empire. They were also about a feeling of uncertainty about the Empire itself, about its leadership’s commitment to Anglo-Saxonism, about that broad feeling of imperial retreat in the Pacific that was the focus of Chapter Three. This chapter will explore those feelings through Australasia’s relationship with the rising power of Asia in the 1890s, and Britain’s new diplomatic partner: Japan.

In Chapter Six, when the Commonwealth of Australia is inaugurated with the Immigration Restriction Act, it will be seen that the new government sought to outmanoeuvre the governments of both Japan and Britain to achieve its goals. That peculiar foreign policy that denied it was foreign policy, that strange protestation of imperial loyalty that

⁹ David Atkinson, ‘The White Australia Policy, the British Empire and the World, in *Purdue University Department of History Faculty Publications*, (9-2015), pp. 1-27.

¹⁰ Jeremy Martens, *Empire and Asian Migration, Sovereignty, Immigration Restriction and Protest in the British Settler Colonies, 1888–1907* (Perth, 2018).

accompanied a carefully planned circumvention of the imperial government can only be understood with reference to the decade prior. Australasian views of Japan were, of course, fundamentally grounded in race - white supremacy and white paranoia, depending upon the moment. But they were a great deal more *politically* complicated than other expressions of late Victorian racial science in the self-governing colonies.

All of this happened at the same time as the push towards Federation. Much ink has been spilled on the causes of Australian Federation, and it can be hard to distinguish ‘external’ from ‘internal’ pressures, particularly when it comes to matters like Asian immigration. But the politicians of Australasia who sought to create ‘a nation for a continent’ were very aware of the external context; and by the middle of the decade anti-Asian politics had been identified with Federation as a progressive, civilisational cause. This was even the case in New Zealand, although it was already pulling away from that broader federating program.¹¹ The chapter will look at the work of Charles Pearson, who was the most significant Australasian geopolitical thinker, and whose work helped to provide the intellectual architecture for the racial exclusion policies that drove Federation.¹²

Having established the intellectual framework, the chapter examines the contrasting political treatment of Japanese and Chinese people in Australasia. Chinese Australasians had a thriving civil society that was engaged with international politics and the wider colonial community; but they never managed to make their cause a geopolitical or diplomatic concern to either the Chinese government or indeed the Foreign Office, let alone to marshal the support of many white Australasians. The Japanese, by contrast, had far more success. They were a rising power, confident in their ability to use international diplomatic structures to

¹¹ One New Zealand parliamentarian spoke in favour of a restriction bill because there were ‘certain things we must do as if we were federated.’ Stevan Eldred-Grigg & Zeng Dazheng, *White Ghosts, Yellow Peril: China and New Zealand, 1790-1950* (Dunedin, 2014) p. 153.

¹² Federation and its causes are dealt with in detail in Chapter Six.

defend their interests, and several scholars have noted they thus acted as a sort of mirror for emerging Australasian societies.¹³ As a result, Japanese Australasians were not a 'domestic' racial matter as Chinese or Arab-Australasians were; they necessitated an international - an imperial - level of response. Perversely, because the Japanese were better able to support their diaspora, the hatred of Japanese Australians would continue to grow. This is important because the Japanese government's attempts to protect its citizens fuelled white Australasian feelings of impotence; that in turn fuelled the push for anti-Asian legislation. The failure of that legislation - in London, not Australasia - would in turn push Australasia further away from the British understanding of the empire.

Come the mid-1890s the question of colonial accession to the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation was affecting relations with London. Talks were often mired in a complicated web of sovereignty and bureaucracy: the relationship between Japan and a self-governing colony also entailed the not entirely aligned Colonial and Foreign Offices, as well as the broader awareness of public opinion and the spectacle of the Sino-Japanese War. The very nature of these inefficient structures helped to shape an Australasian sense that its political and civilisational interests were not being respected by the imperial government.

By 1897, the self-governing colonies and the Colonial Office reached an agreement over the so-called 'Natal Formula' that provided a new basis for immigration restriction. Though this is often portrayed as a Colonial Office fudge, this chapter will argue that it marks the tacit acceptance by the London government of the colonial understanding of the Empire: it was a point at which the Dominions and soon-to-be Dominions imposed their own racial worldview upon the wider Empire. The self-governing colonies moved from being a set of

¹³ See Denoon, 'Remembering Australasia,' David Walker, 'Shooting Mabel: Warrior Masculinity and Asian Invasion,' in *History Australia*, 2:3 (2005) pp. 89.1-89.11.

autonomous dependencies to being able to confidently position themselves as future heartlands of the British people.

i. International Life and Character

In Chapter Two we studied how Australasia conceived the empire. That chapter showed how Australasians considered themselves to be part of a Greater Britain, and how that influenced their constitutional ambitions. That sense of a global imperial community was vital to Australasian identities in the period. However, there was another intellectual current that was deeply influential on Australasian imaginations. Dilke, Froude and Seeley were all Anglo-Saxonists, but they were Anglo-Saxonists in England. None of those writers had the lived experience of writing in a British society that considered itself to be on the frontier of Asia. Before studying the way that Japan and Australasia interacted in the period, it is important to understand the influence of contemporary racial science on Australasian politics and culture. This is because, if there were different ways of understanding the Empire between London and Australasia, at the heart of that difference was fear. Charles Pearson distilled this in 1893

The fear of Chinese immigration which the Australian democracy cherishes, and which Englishmen at home find it hard to understand the instinct of self-preservation, quickened by experience. We know that coloured and white labour cannot exist side by side; we are well aware that China can swamp us with a single year's surplus of population; and we know that if national existence is sacrificed to the working of a few mines and sugar plantations, it is not the Englishmen in Australia alone, but the whole civilised world, that will be the losers.¹⁴

Pearson's book *National Life and Character* was by no means the birth of Australian scientific racism or indeed of Australian invasion fantasies, but it was the great codification of White Australian fear. A serious intellectual figure in Australia, Pearson was by no means a provincial. He had been a cabinet minister in Victoria, and a lecturer in history at the

¹⁴ Charles Pearson, *National Life and Character* (London, 1893) p. 17.

University of Melbourne. His work became a major text of late-nineteenth century racial thought. Certainly, Pearson's audience was not limited to the Australian colonies. He was a correspondent of Theodore Roosevelt, and William Gladstone was reported to be 'full of Pearson's book.'¹⁵ But it was Australia where the book had the most political influence. Though his cradle and grave were British, in his lifetime Pearson was the great intellectual of the Australian colonies and had personal connections with many of the men who would go on to be leaders of the Commonwealth.¹⁶ While a young man at the University of Melbourne, Alfred Deakin became Pearson's protégé.¹⁷ No other statesman would be as important in defining the new Federation's place within the British Empire and the wider international system - and Deakin did so from an intellectual background that said Australia's identity as a white, English state was of consequence not just locally, but to British civilisation.¹⁸

This is, however, where *Drawing the Global Colour Line* and Lake and Reynolds' work generally overplays its hand. Lake makes much in her work about Pearson (and Deakin's) admiration for the United States, particularly the intellectual traditions of New England. However, *National Life and Character*, though important for the intellectual development of Anglo-Saxonism, is not actually about that. It is about geography more than demography; it is not about defining the white race against a colour line, but describing what Pearson saw as immutable scientific facts about how that white race could not survive for long in the tropics.¹⁹ Lake is correct to observe how many Australasian leaders studied the American experience of a multiracial society, incorrect to stress Pearson's part in this.

¹⁵ Marilyn Lake 'White Man Under Siege', *History Workshop Journal*, 58:1 (2004), pp. 41-62.

¹⁶ For the best precis of Pearson's intellectual life see Stuart Macintyre's *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries* (Oxford, 1991).

¹⁷ Lake, 'White Man under Siege.'

¹⁸ Deirdre Coleman & Sashi Nair go so far as to say that Pearson's book convinced the previously Indophile Deakin to turn against that culture; this goes too far. Plenty of Australians (and imperial Britons) were *interested* in Asia, but this was not the same as believing in racial equality. 'Alfred Deakin's "Austral-Asia" and the Making of "History for the Future,"' in *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture*, 64:2 (2017) pp. 136-146.

¹⁹ A general fear of the time; in 1890 the Queensland Medical Society declared the region 'a strange, if not an unnatural habitat for the European.' Atkinson, *The Burden*, p.20.

National Life and Character was not part of an intellectual project concerned with how a democracy could survive the mixing of races. It is a book that claimed that Australian societies, as presently constituted, could not survive at all.²⁰

Pearson died in 1894, well before Federation. Pearson was a believer in the supposed scientific inevitability of European retreat from the tropics.²¹ This would create a vacuum that would naturally be filled by non-white powers:

The day will come, and perhaps is not far distant, when the European observer will look round to see the globe girdled with a continuous zone of the black and yellow races, no longer too weak for aggression or under tutelage, but independent, or practically so, in government... the solitary consolation will be, that the changes have been inevitable.²²

Pearson did not claim to be happy about this. 'In some of us the feeling of caste is so strong that we are not sorry to think we shall have passed away before that day arrives,' he remarks at the end of the passage. But it was going to happen regardless of his happiness or anyone else's. This was not something that most Australasians could accept.²³

Pearson was not describing a possible future that had to be avoided, he was describing the future that was going to arrive come what may. His tone was not apocalyptic, but rather one of 'mordant resignation.'²⁴ *National Life and Character* is not a warning; it is a prediction. This distinction is important, because it shows that while Australasians were deeply influenced by his writing *they did not accept its fundamental premise*. What was the

²⁰ See Lake, Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, also Lake, 'White Man Under Siege,' 'White Man's Country: The trans-national history of a national project,' *AHR*, 34:122 (2003) pp. 346-363, and 'British World or New World?'

²¹ The standard work on racial science and 'degeneration' in Australia is Warwick Anderson's *The Cultivation of Whiteness* (Melbourne, 2002).

²² Pearson, pp. 89-90.

²³ See Anderson, *The Cultivation*, p. 107.

²⁴ Macintyre, *Colonial Liberalism*, p. 168.

point of anti-Asian legislation if the northern part of Australasia was truly uninhabitable by white men? What was the point in trying to hold back Asia, if, as Pearson wrote, its rise was inexorable? The various statements of Australasian leaders certainly do not suggest that they saw themselves as racist King Canutes, holding back a tide of Asian migrants by royal command. On 7 August 1901, when the Immigration Restriction Act was introduced, Edmund Barton read from Pearson on the floor of the house.²⁵ The Prime Minister, however, was issuing a call to arms - for the new Commonwealth to prove Pearson wrong. 'If we see the facts of today exhibiting a tendency which, unless checked, are likely to result in what Professor Pearson foresees and foretells, then it is not in the too distant future, but to-day, that action should be taken.'²⁶ Yet that very Act shows that not only was Australian racial thinking influenced by Pearson, it was also a reaction against it.

This all speaks directly to Australasian policy towards Japan. Japan was Pearson's forecast sprung to life, 'no longer too weak' indeed. Pearson predicted that non-white countries would soon be 'invited to international conferences, and welcomed as allies in the quarrels of the civilised world,' and then proceeded to die two months before the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation was signed. Many of the Australian literati who devoured his book must have seen a connection. If before it was stressed that Pearson was a writer of international influence, now it must be remembered that he was Australian. His work did not spring from a vacuum; he was the codifier and most eloquent prophet of a certain set of white racial fears, but he did not create them. Nonetheless, the worldview Pearson represented is important to understand because it has several implications for how Australasia acted, and how Australasia responded to the actions of the imperial government and Japan.

²⁵ See Chapter Six.

²⁶ *CPD*, AHR, 7 August 1901, p. 3503.

Firstly, this worldview was inherently hard to disprove. Japan wanted to be taken seriously, and treated respectfully, by Britain and its self-governing colonies. However, any effort it made to that effect made Japan less trustworthy in the eyes of anyone influenced by Pearson. Pearson died before the Sino-Japanese War saw the humiliation of the Qing Dynasty. The foreword to a posthumous collection of his writings noted that:

Had Dr. Pearson lived he would have seen some points in his forecast verified... the fact that the Chinese fell easy prey to the Japanese has in some quarters been held to imply that his forecast was mistaken.

But, the writer notes, that defeat in turn was likely to spark the revival of China, which remained populous, industrious, ‘calm and dogged,’ which made it likely the Chinese would develop along the lines of ‘that other Oriental race, who has just wakened into life and ambition before the eyes of a wondering world.’²⁷ In other words, China’s defeat by Japan made both countries more dangerous to white societies.

In Australasia, that idea would be a spur to Federation. At the 1897 Federal Convention, South Australia’s James Howe warned that:

Is it not a recognised fact that we are passing laws imposing restrictions upon great, and mighty, and populous nations? Do we not say to Japan and China, and other eastern nations, "You shall not do so and so." And what is their position today? They have to submit. Will that submission be for long?... Depend upon it, sir, those who watch passing events can see the dangers that will fall on this country if we remain divided.²⁸

²⁷ Charles Pearson (ed., H.A. Strong), *Reviews and Essays* (London, 1896).

²⁸ Federal Convention, Sydney, 15 September 1897, pp. 948-949.

The rhetoric trapped Asia either way. If Japan and China were behind Australia, ran the usual refrain, Australia had to Federate to stay ahead. But if they were ahead of Australia, Australia must Federate to catch up. In this worldview, there simply was no course for a power like Japan that would not be suspicious to Australasia.

Secondly, this worldview also naturally led to a suspicion of the imperial government. Pearson's forecast was not just that the European position in Asia was weaker than popularly supposed, it was weakening. In 1895, Queensland's Attorney-General Thomas Byrnes said that Australia was facing 'the most difficult problem the world has ever had before it - the settlement of a tropical country with a purely white race.'²⁹ 'Solving' that problem required the passage of immigration restriction laws that would bar non-white settlers, including from within the empire. This was frowned upon by the Colonial Office as an imposition on British subjects, and by the Foreign Office as a needless insult to Britain's trading partners in Asia. That opposition though was taken as opposition to the scientific facts of Pearson and other racial scientists. It was all very well for the imperial government to think it politically useful for there to be some non-white migration to Australasia, but to the colonies this seemed an invitation to disaster: it would inevitably lead to the deterioration of the British race in Australasia and the collapse of the self-governing colonies. Such a policy could only be born of ignorance, short sightedness, or even racial collusion, as a few radical extremists on the radical left held. Whatever the reason, this naturally increased resentment of the imperial government, and laid the grounds for, eventually, resistance.

²⁹ TJ Byrnes, *QPD*, 73 (1895), p. 782.

ii. Japanese Policy in Australasia

Japan had an ambivalent place in the white colonial imagination. That Japan had an internationally respected government was not necessarily something that benefited the Japanese. In the end, it was the very credibility of their government, economy and military that undermined their ability to stave off demands for their exclusion from Australia and New Zealand.³⁰ But more importantly for our purposes, because Japan was taken seriously as a government and civilisation in a way that other non-whites generally were not, the colonial responses to Japan took on a global and imperial dimension.

It is worth understanding here how Japan sought to promote and defend its interests, and the interests of its citizens in Australasia. The two were not always synonymous. Those interests would, shortly after Federation, largely unravel. But in the 1890s, the Japanese government arguably had reason to believe that it could be optimistic about relations with the Oceanic colonies. It miscalculated. It had a strategy to deal with hostile policies from Britain's colonies in that they might be mediated by the British government itself; but the colonial reaction to that strategy reveals that a more fundamental gap was opening up between how Britain and Australasia saw relations with Asia. This informal strategy rested on a dual strategy of the cultivation of sympathetic elites in Australasia and the formal diplomatic lobbying of the British government proper.³¹

This was a sharp contrast with the other prominent Asian community. Chinese-Australasians were not silent, despite the beliefs of an older generation of scholars who thought that 'the Cantonese did not engage in politics at all, due to either lack of preparation

³⁰ Rhetorically, of course. The obvious counterfactual is that if Meiji Japan had a less impressive appearance on the world stage, then its citizens would have been excluded as 'degenerates.'

³¹ I wish to note that I do not read Japanese, nor have I studied in the Japanese government archives. When I speak of a Japanese 'plan' or 'strategy,' I am not discussing a formal document or set of guidelines, nor am I claiming that Japanese diplomats and bureaucrats extensively coordinated between London, Tokyo, and Australasia, at least no more than any foreign service does. Rather, this is about my sense of the approach that the Japanese government seems to have taken in Australasia- the preferred 'tack.'

for participation, or lack of interest.³² If they were not as visible in the governmental sources, this was in part due to the ineffective work of China's consular representatives, whose failure to act on behalf of local communities helped feed the growth of nationalist and anti-Qing groups in the Chinatowns of Australasia.³³ As early as the 1950s, Australasian scholars showed that Chinese communities had tried to defend themselves from the hysteria of the press through letters to local papers and organised petitions to legislatures. In 1890, New Zealand's parliament was petitioned for redress by Wellington's Chinese community.³⁴ Local leaders, often businessmen who had made their fortunes in the various colonial goldfields attempted to lead these efforts when Qing consuls and commissioners were found wanting. Choie Sew Hoy of New Zealand formed the 'Admirable Goodness Society' that, although it focussed on the repatriation of Chinese corpses for burial with their ancestors, became a platform Hoy could use to call for justice from the devotedly sinophobic government of Richard Seddon.³⁵ This is a marked contrast, though, to the diligent diplomacy of Japan and the cultural cachet that it enjoyed among colonial elites.

Japan excited a great deal of commercial interest among the elite of the self-governing colonies.³⁶ The Japanese government was keenly interested in developing semi-diplomatic links with the colonies, and by the 1890s not only had its own representatives in Australasia but also a system of honorary consuls. These men were white British Australasians, often with experience in the colonial legislatures, who acted as bridges between Japan and the colonies. Though their function was in many ways more commercial than political - to

³² Stuart William Greif, *The Overseas Chinese in New Zealand* (Singapore, 1974) p. 40.

³³ See Mei-Fen Kuo, *Making Chinese Australia: Urban Elites, Newspaper and the Formation of Chinese-Australian Identity, 1892-1912* (Melbourne, 2013).

³⁴ Miles Fairbairn, 'What Best Explains the Discrimination Against the Chinese in New Zealand, 1860s-1950s?' in *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, 2:3 (2004), pp. 65-85, Ng Fong, *The Chinese in New Zealand: A Study in Assimilation* (Hong Kong, 1959) p. 23.

³⁵ Greif dismisses this society out of hand, but I am convinced by the (openly partisan) case made by Jenny Sew Hoy Agnew and Trevor Agnew in *Merchant, Miner, Mandarin* (Christchurch, 2020).

³⁶ For interest in trade with Japan, see David Walker, *Anxious Nation*, pp. 68-75.

smooth the path for trade deals and make it easier to do business between the two markets - they also acted as a sympathetic voice for Japan. John Langdon Parsons is a useful example of the type. In 1895 he travelled to Japan as part of a South Australian trade mission and was impressed by the country and its people. In 1896 he was appointed Japan's consul in the colony and made a member of the Order of the Rising Sun. Upon his death in 1904, his son succeeded him in the position.³⁷ This was the sort of respectable friend that Japan had, and that generally China and the Pacific Islanders had not.

This was demonstrated by one incident in which a respectable defender of the Japanese made their case specifically as a bulwark *against* Pacific Islanders. Pacific labourers had defenders in the press and the colonial parliaments, but their presence was generally acknowledged as a regrettable necessity. Not so with Noel Buxton and the Japanese.³⁸ Noel Buxton was the son of Thomas Fowell Buxton, Governor of South Australia, and in 1896 he took a personal trip to Queensland to investigate 'the number, disposition and condition of the Japanese in Queensland.' In October, he reported to the press that there was 'needless alarm' at the presence of the Japanese in Australia, that their numbers were greatly exaggerated, and that they were clever workers who nonetheless only displaced Malays and 'kanakas.' His curiosity had been sparked by his personal acquaintance with Japanese diplomats in London. This may have accounted for two other important statements he made: firstly, that fear of Japanese invasion was 'absurd, so long as Australia is part of the British Empire,' and secondly that the Japanese government itself was not encouraging migration to Australia.³⁹ Buxton was clearly not Australasian, but however temporarily he was a member

³⁷ See 'John Langdon Parsons,' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/parsons-john-langdon-7966> accessed 27 January 2021.

³⁸ I found this incident in Mark Caprio & Matsuda Koichirō, *Japan and the Pacific, 1540-1920* (Aldershot, 2006).

³⁹ Caprio & Koichirō cite the Townsville *Bulletin*, 10 October 1896, but I was unable to find a copy. The Brisbane *Telegraph* republished the article on 19 October, from which I have sourced the quotes.

of the colonial elite. Japanese diplomats had developed personal connections with Britons in the metropole and within Oceania, and that meant that the Japanese had not merely allies and agents but, as it were, friends.⁴⁰ Buxton was in no sense acting for Japan, but he was making the case that Japan wanted made to the Australasian press: the Japanese were better than other non-whites while not being a threat *to* whites, their government was not trying to undermine Australia's racial hierarchy, and the structures of the British Empire prevented them from doing so even if that had been their intention.

Japan did not rely, of course, upon white elites to make its case. Throughout the 1890s, the Japanese government assumed, generally correctly, that its diplomats would have the most success at blunting anti-Asian legislation in the colonies by lobbying the British government not to approve any objectionable bills. The Japanese envoy to Britain, Katō Takaaki, had more access to Lord Salisbury as the Foreign Secretary than any colonial agent-general in London while in Tokyo his British counterpart Ernest Satow met regularly with Japan's foreign ministers. In contrast, a colonial government's premier would write to his governor who would write to the Colonial Office, where an undersecretary would minute it and pass it to the Colonial Secretary who might have the correspondence forwarded to the Foreign Office or Downing Street. This matters because it means that in certain respects the Japanese government had easier access to the top of the Imperial government than the Australasian premiers did. As long as this held true in the 1890s, the Japanese were consistently able to win exemptions from colonial racial exclusion laws.

New Zealand's attempt to pass an 'Asiatic Restriction Act' in 1896 is a useful example. Richard Seddon annually introduced anti-immigration acts, which were disallowed every year. Typically, the rhetoric tended to be more Sinophobic than anything else, but

⁴⁰ See Henry Frei, *Japan's Southward Advance* (1991), on Australian elite sympathisers with Japan in this period and after Federation. pp. 85-86.

Japan was not spared its share of bigotry.⁴¹ Specifically in 1896 Seddon warned his parliament that the Japanese had overwhelmed Hawaii's indigenous labourers and merchants, and implied that the same was now happening in Queensland.⁴² Meanwhile, the Minister for Immigration, William Campbell Walker, admitted that while the Japanese were not yet a problem in New Zealand 'they may be upon us one day... [and then] this colony will be the dumping ground to which they will first come.'⁴³ In contrast, the war hero Sir George Whitmore defended the Japanese as 'the British of the Pacific,' and stated that he would support the bill if it were written to be specifically anti-Chinese.⁴⁴ Whitmore was not an honorary consul, and indeed if he had any particular connection to Japan I have not found it. His opposition was to no avail - the bill passed. The Legislative Councillor Morgan Grace subsequently warned Seddon that the bill would be frowned on by the imperial government, as it had assumed the 'portentous proportions of dictating to the Empire a whole policy.'⁴⁵ He was correct. In 1896, the self-governing colonies did not have capacity to change the empire's external or internal borders, and that was what immigration restriction bills sought to do. The decisions about how to manage Australasia's borders were not made in Australasia alone. In this case, New Zealand would have less say than a foreign power.

On November 24, 1896, Ernest Satow wrote to Salisbury about a meeting with minister Ōkuma Shigenobu. Ōkuma requested that the Queen withhold her consent for New Zealand's bill, and for any other similar acts passed by Australian legislatures. He told Satow that the colonies had more leverage than Japan; if they excluded the Japanese, Japan could not retaliate as Australasians could simply enter Japan as Britons, besides which, 'the trade

⁴¹ On Seddon's regular bills, see Stevan Eldred-Grigg & Zeng Dazheng, *White Ghosts, Yellow Peril: China and New Zealand 1790-1950* (Dunedin, 2014)

⁴² See David Atkinson, *The Burden of White Supremacy* (Chapel Hill, 2016) pp. 23-30 for overview of the passage of the bill.

⁴³ *NZPD*, 92, June 26, p. 372.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 376.

⁴⁵ Atkinson, *Burden*, p.28.

was of more importance to Japan than Australasia.’ However, he also told Satow that he was confident that the Japanese government would now earnestly push for a friendly arrangement with the colonies under the Treaty’s Most Favoured Nation Clause. Would Satow please inform Lord Salisbury?⁴⁶ The next night, Katō visited Salisbury. He was ‘impressed,’ wrote Salisbury, ‘with the outrage inflicted on his country by the New Zealand legislature, in treating Japanese as if they were Chinese⁴⁷... he said it was the more gratuitous as practically no Japanese had emigrated to New Zealand.’⁴⁸ This approach worked, and the bill was disallowed. Japanese diplomacy had successfully overcome a popular government passing a popular bill. Seddon had attempted to dictate an imperial policy but Salisbury had chosen, reasonably enough, not to listen.

Finally, when considering Japanese policy towards Australasia, we turn to the third and by far the slightest aspect of that policy: information gathering. This is not a reference to espionage. Rather, it addresses the fact that Japanese contact with Australasia preceded any Japanese policy towards the region. When Noel Buxton had gone on his private fact-finding mission to Northern Queensland in 1896, he may have been a slightly ridiculous figure, but he was addressing the point that even in the middle of the decade many actors - the colonial governments, Japan, the press - simply did not know very much about the basic facts on the ground. The first major Japanese-language work on Australia had only been published in 1887, ‘Current Affairs in the South Seas.’ Its author Shiga Shigetaka had clearly been influenced by the contemporary New Hebrides crisis, since he predicted that one of the driving forces behind Federation would be unity in the face of the French.⁴⁹ In 1893 the

⁴⁶ FO46/548, Satow to Salisbury, 24 November 1896.

⁴⁷ Atkinson noted that the 1890s broadening of immigration restrictions from being anti-Chinese to anti-Asian generally had the effect of involving both the Foreign and India Offices in what had previously been narrow colony/Colonial Office dialogues. *Burden of White Supremacy*, pp. 23-25.

⁴⁸ FO46/548, Salisbury to Colonial Office, 26 November 1896.

⁴⁹ For this, and early Japanese writing on Australia, see Henry Frei, ‘Japan Discovers Australia: The Emergence of Australia in the Japanese World-View, 1540s-1900’, in *Monumenta Nipponica*, 39:1, 1984.

Japanese Diet, concerned at the lack of official reports, commissioned a Watanabe Kanjiro to survey Australia and the South Pacific.⁵⁰ He enthusiastically wrote about the thriving Japanese pearl divers in the Northern Territory and somewhat less enthusiastically tried to estimate the number of Japanese sex workers in northern Australia. Furthermore, it was not until the late 1890s that the Japanese decided to appoint their own representatives in the colonies, with a consulate opening in Townsville in 1896 and another in Sydney in 1897.⁵¹ The point here is that while the colonies tended to describe the Japanese government as a highly organised body keeping close watch over its citizens throughout the Pacific, waiting for some sign of Anglo-Saxon weakness, in actual fact Tokyo was as constrained by the tyranny of distance as were Britain and its disparate colonies.⁵²

We have thus seen how Japan wanted its relationship with the colonies to work: its merchants and workers would be unharried, and its cause taken up by sympathetic members of the great and good. If and when those friends could not sway their governments, then direct contacts with the Foreign Office in London and Tokyo would see that Japan's interests were given a hearing at the highest level of the British Empire. Japan would maintain a small but prosperous trading presence in Australasia. Jeremy Martens sees this policy as successful, describing a Japan that 'skilfully exploited' the division of the Australasian and British governments.⁵³ This seems a strangely charitable reading of the sources.

In fact, in the 1890s, it would be the Australasians who exploited the gap between Japan and the British - eventually using Japanese diplomatic rhetoric to justify a hardening of

⁵⁰ Watanabe's 1894 report is referenced extensively by David Sissons in various chapters of *Bridging Australia and Japan: Volume 1* (Canberra, 2016). He gives the reference as Watanabe, *Goshu Tanken Hokokusho* (Gaimusho Tsushokyoku, 1894). I am hostage here to my lack of Japanese.

⁵¹ Takeda Isami, 'Australia-Japan Relations in the Era of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1896-1911,' (University of Sydney 1981) p.23.

⁵² Pam Oliver notes that Sydney, not Darwin, was the heart of Japanese Australia. The Northern Territory was not so much the southern border of a Japanese world, but 'the northern most part of a large Australian network.' Pam Oliver, *Empty North: The Japanese Presence and Australian Reactions, 1860-1942* (Darwin, 2006). p. 11.

⁵³ Martens, *Empire*, p. 81.

immigration laws, on the basis that conciliatory Japanese language meant that it had inadvertently become more tolerable of proposed restriction laws than the British government. The next two sections will examine that backlash in detail.

iii. The Backlash

Japan never really attempted to address the overwhelming hostility of the colonial publics. It is not clear that there was a path for doing so. But while the Japanese government was very keen to counter misinformation and anti-Japanese hysteria in the press, it tended to be solely reactive, putting out statements well after stories had run rampant in the newspapers. Worse, its reliance upon defusing situations through contact with the British government did nothing to address the actual problem of Australasian public hostility.

Consider South Australia. The colony's Premier, Charles Kingston, was hostile to Asian migration even by contemporary standards. When the Australian colonies had brought in their anti-Chinese bills in 1888, Kingston had been disappointed by their moderation. South Australia governed the Northern Territory at this time, and thus had jurisdiction over perhaps the most prominent group of Japanese migrants in Australasia.⁵⁴ Watanabe, in his report to the Diet, was greatly excited by the success of the Japanese pearl divers. 'Here,' he wrote, 'if you say "Japanese" you mean "Diver" just as if you say "Chinese" you mean "miner."⁵⁵ Kingston clearly worried that he was right. In September and October 1895, a panic developed about a supposed fleet of Japanese merchantmen bearing down upon Darwin to monopolise trade entirely. Kingston responded by declaring that there would be no new pearling licences granted to the Japanese. He attempted to pass an anti-Asian bill that year but was denied royal assent. The public was outraged, not merely in South Australia but across Australasia. That outrage was dangerous for Japanese policy: every time a bill was cut off at the level of the imperial government, public resentment grew. This in turn made the Colonial

⁵⁴ On Asians in the Northern Territory and their place in the white imagination, see Natalie Fong, 'The Significance of the Northern Territory in the Formulation of 'White Australia' Policies, 1880-1901' *Australian Historical Studies*, 49:4 (2018) pp. 527-545, & Timothy Jones, *The Chinese in the Northern Territory* (Darwin, 2005) & Pam Oliver, *Empty North: The Japanese Presence and Australian Reactions, 1860-1942* (Darwin, 2006).

⁵⁵ Watanabe in Sissons, 'Japanese in the Northern Territory, 1884-1912' in Sissons, *Bridging Australia*, p. 13.

office increasingly wary of denying assent to anti-Asian bills - which would in time prove important to the passage of the federal Immigration Restriction Act.⁵⁶

Japan had an opportunity to address Australasian concerns, unreasonable as they were. In April 1896, Satow met Foreign Minister Mutsu Munemitsu. Mutsu had received a letter from John Langdon Parsons, the honorary consul in Adelaide. Parsons wished to warn the Japanese government that, with the South Australian elections approaching 'and the general feeling on the labour question,' the issue of South Australia's accession to the Treaty had become poisonous. If Japan wanted the latter's accession to the Treaty - and no South Australian accession potentially meant an end to the Japanese pearl divers and their lucrative trade - it needed to extend an olive branch. Perhaps, Parsons suggested,

some reassuring statement should be made by the Japanese Government or by myself [Satow] to counteract the prevailing impression that the adherence of Australia to the New Treaty would be followed by the immigration of countless Japanese subjects.

His Excellency observed that the Japanese Government naturally could not give an understanding of the kind sought.⁵⁷

The Japanese, of course, did not intend to engage upon any program of mass colonisation of Australasia, but could not give that assurance, however, without undermining their hard-won prestige. Modern powers did not make statements that implied that their citizens were undesirable immigrants, and certainly not to the autonomous colonies of another power.

Perhaps, Mutsu added, Satow might express to the colonies 'an authoritative opinion that no such unlimited immigration of labour was to be looked for.'⁵⁸ This was the Japanese

⁵⁶ Margaret Glass's biography, *Charles Cameron Kingston: Federation Father* (1997) manages to almost completely ignore Kingston's anti-immigrant policies, an odd gap in the literature.

⁵⁷ FO46/548, Satow to Salisbury, 10 April 1896.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

approach to Australasia in miniature, namely to rely upon imperial-level contacts, and trust that a favourable message could be disseminated. Mutsu may have been right that a free society could not publicly undertake to bind its citizens, but he had badly miscalculated if he thought that Satow carried weight with the citizens of South Australia. The colonial publics already understood the position of the British government and its diplomats, and simply did not believe that Japan meant no harm. Japan's word might not have been trusted, but in this case it was never given at all. Kingston won re-election.

Kingston had promised to gather the colonial premiers together for a conference on Asian immigration and the Treaty.⁵⁹ That conference took place in Sydney in March 1896. Kingston's enthusiasm for anti-Japanese action surpassed his fellow premiers: not because they were sympathetic to Japan or even the Treaty, but none were as comfortable as Kingston in whipping up public sentiment.⁶⁰ George Reid of New South Wales worried about giving the Japanese question 'undue prominence,' since the premiers should seek 'to avoid arousing the pressures of public agitation.' The problem of the Treaty was meant to be settled by the colonies working together- but not out of fear of the angry crowd.⁶¹ George Reid was the Premier of the largest and most powerful colony in Australia, the man who claimed to have invented the term 'White Australia.'⁶² The quote indicates that he was worried that he was going to be forced to take a position on a major imperial treaty because of his public's prejudices.⁶³ He was correct; the Premiers agreed not to accede to the Treaty.

⁵⁹ New Zealand was not invited.

⁶⁰ Kathleen Melhuish observed in 1965 that the other premiers were wary of moving too fast on anti-Japanese bills because of the concurrent drive towards Federation: a misjudgement by the colonies now could make it hard for a federal government to create a coherent and satisfactory treaty regime. See Kathleen Melhuish, 'Australia and British Imperial Policy: Colonial Autonomy and the Imperial Idea, 1885-1902' (University of Sydney, PhD Thesis, 1965) pp. 456-458.

⁶¹ Reid's quote cited in Takeda, p. 18.

⁶² George Reid, *My Reminiscences* (Melbourne, 1917) p. 203.

⁶³ Prejudices he shared, of course.

Japan recognised that the public mood was almost uniformly hostile to the Treaty. After the conference, it took some tentative actions to try and reinvigorate the now apparently defeated cause. The *Sydney Morning Herald* noted that ‘Japan is so alive to the possibilities of the future that a Minister is on his way here to personally inquire into these matters. But neither the chances of trade nor the perils of affronting a jealous national sentiment flush with victory [weigh against popular opinion.]’⁶⁴

After the Premier’s Conference, the *South Australian Register* ran an interview that a correspondent had secured with no less a figure than the privy councillor Viscount Enomoto Takeaki, Minister for Agriculture and Commerce. Takeaki stressed the problems that would be caused for trade if the Treaty was not acceded to. ‘We must send Japanese merchants to the colonies, and if you poll tax indifferently such men as these and the common Japanese coolies, why it is of course hardly likely that they will trouble Australia with their custom.’ When the journalist read an extract of a pamphlet from South Australia warning that Japan intended to annex the Northern Territory, Takeaki laughed. ‘The writer flatters us unduly,’ he said.⁶⁵ Even if Japan had the intention and capacity for such a deed, Britain could stop it. He ended the interview by expressing his intention to send a commission all over the world - including to Australia - to seek for ways to improve commerce. The interview does not, however, appear to have made a wide impression in Australasia.

For its part, the British government thought that the failure of the Japanese government to engage with the colonies made the situation worse. When Ōkuma met Satow in November 1896, Sir Ernest chided him for his government’s delays. The British government had hoped that Japan could make some sort of ‘gentlemen’s’ agreement’ with the colonial governments: they would accede to the Treaty that gave the Japanese the right to

⁶⁴ *SMH*, March 6 1896, pg.4.

⁶⁵ *South Australian Register*, 2 July 1896. Author is ‘W.J.S.’ Kobe, May 11.

migrate, and Japan would commit itself voluntarily to not exercising that right. The fact that the Japanese had made a similar concession to the United States proved it was a possible solution. However, according to Satow, ‘the dilatoriness of the Japanese Government in making up their minds.... had naturally produced its effect upon the minds of the colonists.’⁶⁶ Satow was right. Not privy to the deliberations of the Japanese cabinet, or indeed of the Foreign Office, colonial opposition to the Treaty hardened.

The Japanese were caught in a cleft stick. When they opted for discretion, rumours ran rampant and their silence became a fount of colonial paranoia. When they acted, that was proof of their threatening competence. *The Bulletin* wrote that:

The Japanese government is not like that of China, an oafish and ostentatious sluggard. It is jealous, intelligent, aspiring. It is not likely to endure maltreatment of its subjects by a foreign power; more probably it will strenuously insist on their right to rank as equal citizens in any country on earth.

With wary respect, the magazine went on to note that when Japanese workers in Fiji had fallen ill, a doctor had supposedly been dispatched to examine their conditions. ‘China,’ it said, ‘would not have done that.’⁶⁷ The Chinese had not been actively trying to defend their citizens, and they were hated. Japan had acted, and been hated. Any gain that they made became evidence of their calumny. This was the path along which Deakin’s infamous address to the House of Representatives lay, when he told parliament that the Japanese had to be banned because it was ‘their good qualities that make them so dangerous to us.’⁶⁸ In this light, the Japanese hope that their allies in the colonies might help their reputation is perhaps more sensible - but that presented problems of its own.

⁶⁶ Satow to Salisbury, 24 November 1896, FO46/548.

⁶⁷ *Bulletin*, 31 August 1895, p. 6.

⁶⁸ *CPD*, AHR, 12 September 1901, p. 4812.

The Japanese reliance upon friendly elites also had the problem of making them a hostage to the actions of those elites. John Langdon Parsons would prove to be a devoted friend to the Japanese from his appointment in 1896 to his death; but in 1898 his enthusiasm for Japanese trade and immigration to Australia provoked a minor diplomatic storm. In May, Satow wrote to South Australia's Governor Buxton. Parsons had journeyed to Tokyo in his capacity as a private citizen and was trying to sell land in the Northern Territory that could be opened up to 'a large body of Japanese settlers.'⁶⁹ Parsons was not planning any grand scheme; he had been trying to set up plantations on the land in question since the 1880s but it was fairly marginal. Nonetheless, the phrase 'a large body of Japanese settlers' rather panicked the South Australians. The South Australian Government already intended to introduce yet another immigration bill and requested that the Colonial Office inform the Japanese government that 'no action should be taken' with regards to settlement while the bill was being considered.⁷⁰ The unspoken threat was that Japan's actions might determine the nature of any last-minute amendments to that bill.

However, events were moving too quickly. When news of Parsons' scheme was reported in the press, confusion seems to have arisen over Satow's role. Rather than just reporting it, he was believed to be complicit. One June 25, a week after the South Australian government had sent its cable, a crowd of citizens gathered in Darwin. They were there to protest an agreement between Britain and Japan - arrived at with no consultation with South Australia - to open 4,000 square miles of territory for Japanese settlement. The crowd expressed its opposition, and 'declined to hearken to the voice of the pro-Asiatic tempter.'⁷¹

⁶⁹ *Correspondence Re Introduction of Japanese Into the Northern Territory*, Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers, 1901, Satow to Buxton, 5 May 1898.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, SA government to Buxton, 17 June 1898. It is unclear whether the South Australians intended the Colonial Office to contact Japan directly, or that it would pass the missive to the Foreign Office. Once again, it was easier for a clear message to pass between Japan and London than Australia to either.

⁷¹ *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 1 July 1898, cited in Sissons, 'Japanese in the Northern Territory,' p. 43.

By the end of that month, the Japanese government responded to a Foreign Office query: Parsons' scheme had been squashed.

The whole farce had no immediate consequences, but the hysteria was rather telling. Invasion panics of one kind or another were hardly novel but consider that four years after the Treaty had been signed a crowd of Australians could believe that the British government had sold them out to Japanese settlers. In 1898, it was believed that where settlers went, they carried their civilisation with them: therefore, Britain had (supposedly) smiled upon the Japanese carrying their civilisation into the very heart of a British society. This was, in other words, an expression of a severe breakdown in trust. The basic role of the imperial government was to defend the interests of the British Empire: in Darwin in 1898, it was believed that it was no longer doing that.

iv. The 1897 Colonial Conference

Darwin's panic in 1898 was an extreme manifestation of a common attitude. By 1897, three years after the signing of the Treaty, colonial distrust of the Japanese had taken on a new dimension, of wariness towards imperial policy. This was not, of course, rebelliousness, nor were there any serious calls at this stage to try and reverse the policy of the Empire.

Increasingly though, Australasians were willing to confront those leaders who had brought things to the boil - not the Japanese, but the British government.

The 1897 Colonial Conference would be of huge significance to Australasian relations with their Asian neighbours and the wider Empire. This section focusses on two policies that the British government hoped to persuade the Australasians to adopt, and why they failed. The first was to get the colonies to join Queensland in acceding to the Treaty; the second was to convince them to adopt the so-called 'Natal Formula' of immigration restrictions. Though the two are closely linked, for clarity's sake the Treaty is dealt with first.⁷²

The British government was keenly aware of colonial objections to warmer relations with Japan. In Tokyo, Satow was working not just with the Foreign Ministers but with various undersecretaries to try and raise awareness of the complicated nature of Australasian racial politics. When in 1896 the Queensland government broke ranks with its fellows - a mere two months after the conference of Premiers - and decided it might accede to the Treaty after all, Satow worked with the Japanese Foreign Ministry to make this breakthrough possible. Premier Hugh Nelson wanted to be sure that, although Japan would have the right to send traders to his colony, Queensland could still control the numbers of 'labourers' and 'artisans' who entered.⁷³ Satow liaised with Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Komura Jutaro

⁷² On the broader 1897 conference, see Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences*.

⁷³ QSA, Nelson to Lord Lamington, 27 May 1896.

to make the deal possible. Komura for his part was the first high-ranking Japanese official to see the benefit of committing at least one of the Oceanic colonies to the Treaty regime. By August, he had agreed to making concessions and even entertained hopes of getting New South Wales and Victoria to accede as well. This hope was in vain, but Queensland did accede to the Treaty in 1897. Both the Japanese and British governments were aware of colonial concerns. Unfortunately for them, that concern was less clear to the colonies.⁷⁴

As Queensland signalled that it was joining the Treaty, it and the other colonial governments were also preparing to journey to London for the 1897 Colonial Conference. It was now suspected that the British willingness to sign the Treaty stemmed from a basic fact of distance: The United Kingdom did not expect many Japanese immigrants to arrive on its shores. 'It doesn't care in the least about Asiatic exclusion itself,' wrote *The Bulletin*. 'J. Bull would get the commercial advantages for himself, while Australasia would pay for them by being eaten up with the swarming brown and black and yellow millions.'⁷⁵ It was expected by the press that the Treaty would be a subject of contentious debate. Andrew 'Banjo' Paterson wrote a sketch of the Colonial Office's preparations for the conference, imagining officials trying to work out who these Australians were. As well as mocking the overabundance of representatives before Federation ('They say America is mostly colonels; this place appears to be mostly Premiers'), Paterson portrays Nelson as, if not quite a traitor, at the very least a teacher's pet. 'Fights the Labour Party...' the bureaucrats note from his file, 'very courageous man... will support Anglo-Japanese Treaty. Ah! That's the sort of man.'⁷⁶ The message was clear: Nelson had had the chance to support the interests of manly, working Australian men, and had sought the respect of monocled mandarins instead.

⁷⁴ On negotiations over the treaty and colonial reactions, see Heere, *Empire Ascendent*, pp. 153-167.

⁷⁵ *The Bulletin*, May 15 1897, p. 6.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 'Preparing for Premiers,' 17 July 1897 p. 7.

The British government thought that the Conference would provide a chance to persuade the Australasian premiers to make concessions. Flattered by their invitation to London, overawed by the pomp of the Diamond Jubilee, the anticipation was that the Premiers would give way. In Chapter One we discussed Deakin's rudeness to Salisbury at the 1887 Conference, and Salisbury's frustration: but, nevertheless, most of Deakin's fellow Australians had been polite, and in fact had apologised to Salisbury for the colonial media's tone. So it was not unreasonable for the British government to hope that the 1897 conference might have smoothed over Australasian objections. Unfortunately for Salisbury's government, this was not to be.

Salisbury and the Foreign Office had gotten slightly behind the curve; they were hoping that New South Wales would alter its immigration laws so that 'Japanese merchants, tourists should be exempted from the restrictions applied to Asiatics in general.'⁷⁷ In fact, that stipulation had already been made by NSW and dismissed by Japan, who suspected that such a clause would be overzealously enforced. The Colonial Office, for its part, leaned towards the Premiers. To some extent this was realism. A minute by one official noted that anti-Asian restrictions were overwhelmingly popular, and there was a limit to how many times assent could be denied: 'We shall not be able to prevent legislation excluding Japanese labourers and artisans.'⁷⁸ However, just as Japan had, in certain ways, more access to the Foreign Office than the Australasians, at the Colonial Office things tilted to Oceania. John Bramston, Chamberlain's undersecretary, had been the Attorney-General of Queensland in the 1860s. Yet despite all this, Joseph Chamberlain - the most sympathetic audience the Australasians might expect to have in all of Lord Salisbury's government - was still a waverer next to the premiers.

⁷⁷ Bertie to CO, 9 July 1897, FO46/548/17, TNA.

⁷⁸ Minute by Edward Wingfield, 17 July 1895, CO418/4/135, TNA.

‘Here is the coloured flood coming in upon us,’ said Premier George Reid of New South Wales, ‘and we cannot have any holes in the dyke.’⁷⁹ His rhetoric was in response to a Colonial Office proposal to break the deadlock over colonial immigration bills. Chamberlain pre-empted his proposal by respectfully noting the supposed fragility of the colonies: ‘We quite sympathise with the determination of the white inhabitants... that there shall not be an influx of people alien in civilisation, alien in religion, alien in customs.’ Nevertheless, he asked the Premiers to bear in mind ‘the traditions of the Empire, which makes no distinctions in favour of, or against race or colour.’⁸⁰ These were not Imperial traditions that had been noticeable in the conquest and colonisation of the Australian continent.

Chamberlain then made the case for the Natal Formula. Earlier in 1897 the Imperial Government had approved the self-governing colony of Natal’s immigration restriction law once the latter had changed the basis for exclusion from race to proficiency in English. Anyone could enter the colony if they demonstrated fluency in English; in practice, of course, such tests were most stringently applied to African, Indian and Asian travellers. It had the advantage, so far as the Colonial Office was concerned, of neither being explicitly directed against the Japanese and other Asians nor of banning non-white British subjects. The Natal Formula would in time be the basis for the White Australia (and, later, the White New Zealand) policy, but the immediate reaction of the Premiers in 1897 was not positive.⁸¹

Some of the premiers, such as Tasmania’s Edward Braddon, saw that the Natal Formula paved the way to greater restrictions, not fewer. ‘We should get more by the Natal law than we propose to get by the Bill we passed,’ he said of the exclusion of non-whites, and noted that there was no desire on Tasmania’s part to embarrass the Imperial Government.

⁷⁹ 1897 Conference, pp. 131-5 CAB 18/9, TNA.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

⁸¹ The Natal Formula was, in turn, inspired by New South Wales’s restriction movement. See Martens, *Empire*, and Lake & Reynolds, *Colour Line*.

Queensland's Nelson attempted to make the case for the Treaty but was told by his fellow premiers that he was going to face an influx of uncontrolled Japanese immigrants. Kingston was less sanguine about the Natal Formula. A Chinese person from Hong Kong was as objectionable to him as a Chinese person from anywhere else, and he observed that if England were as close to Asia as Australia, it would have the same objections. More importantly, Reid pointed out, it was well known that Japan had never objected to New South Wales restricting Asian migration in general. 'It would be a great disappointment to Australia,' Reid said, 'if we found Her Majesty's Government as regards her coloured subjects less disposed to meet our wishes than the Japanese Government.'⁸²

The Colonial Office, in attempting to compromise, inadvertently positioned itself as being dramatically more opposed to racial restrictions than the Japanese government. Kingston warned Chamberlain to heed Reid's objection and said that if he did so it would 'operate to the benefit of the best sentiments towards the Empire throughout Australia.'⁸³ Reid was no radical, and he was clearly being sardonic. Nonetheless, it was clear that the Colonial Office and the colonies were working from different foundations: the British government, in both the Colonial and Foreign Offices, still believed that what they were facing was a policy problem with a legalistic solution. The colonies thought that their fundamental existence as British states, within British civilisation, was under threat.

Even as the Australian Premiers began to come around to the idea of literacy tests, it was clear that this was not about accepting a Colonial Office compromise.⁸⁴ Suggesting that the Natal Formula was adopted to spare the imperial government's blushes, or that it was a concession to an American worldview misses the point that the Australasians were making

⁸² Ibid, pp. 131-135.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 135.

⁸⁴ NB: Seddon was not at this meeting as he incorrectly believed he had not been invited.

the running in the meeting; throughout the discussion Chamberlain tried to find a formula that would allow some of Britain's Indian subjects into Australasia, and was talked over and dismissed.⁸⁵ Tasmania's Edward Braddon was blunt: 'Indians are the coloured aliens who more than any other we would desire to exclude.' It might be acceptable for cricketers to come from the subcontinent, but no one else. Braddon showed how the supposed compromise would, in the name of avoiding embarrassment for Whitehall, roll back the imperial government's restrictions on Australasia.

If we can attain what we desire without in any way embarrassing the British government, we should be very well satisfied. As far as Tasmania is concerned we should get more by the Natal law than we propose to get by the Bill we passed; that Bill... excluded British subjects from the operation of it, and therefore excluded the very people that I should like to see shut out.⁸⁶

The Premiers continued to press their case. At the end of the meeting a somewhat chastened Chamberlain admitted that he might need more time to consider the matter, since clearly it was 'of very great importance to the future administration of the Empire as a whole.' Yet when he suggested, once more, that the whole issue might be avoided by 'friendly arrangements with the Indian government' he was literally interrupted by the premiers in chorus.⁸⁷

The Conference was, in short, not the point at which the British government found a compromise with the self-governing colonies over immigration. It was rather the moment at which it lost control of the policy debate. Chamberlain's idea that the colonies might reach gentleman's agreements with the Raj was dead on arrival. Its very basis was that there was a

⁸⁵ 1897 minutes, pp. 130-140.

⁸⁶ Ibid, Braddon, p. 135.

⁸⁷ Ibid, Chamberlain, p. 137. See pp. 137-138 for him losing control of the meeting for a moment after the suggestion of 'friendly arrangements'.

legal equality between the government of India and its subjects on the one hand and the self-governing colonies on the other. Even his fall-back position of literacy tests (economic tests and poll taxes never achieved the same saliency) was itself a serious concession. Though none of the premiers were nationalist, the ‘compromise’ of the literacy test offered them the ability to set up border controls *within* the broader empire. It was a recognition that there was a pseudo-equality between the metropole and the overseas Britons. It was thus no surprise that the test was so enthusiastically adopted; Seddon’s government brought in a literacy test in 1899, demonstrating that the formula did not affect either New Zealand’s fervent loyalty or its assertiveness within the empire.⁸⁸

The British government did not entirely understand the nature of Australasian objections to the formula. Lake and Reynolds note that Chamberlain’s remark about distinctions of ‘race or colour’ shows that he did not understand the ‘subjectivities of white men’ in the self-governing colonies.⁸⁹ However, this reduces Australasian racial objections to an obsession with purity. The problem was rather that the Colonial Office policy of demanding that Australasia⁹⁰ respect the rights of imperial subjects to travel within the empire showed that London was still only engaging with half the supposed issue. Martens, following Jonathan Hyslop, envisions the white working-classes of the settler colonies not so much as national groupings but as an ‘imperial working class’ bound ‘by flows of population which traversed the world.’⁹¹ That imperial labouring-class is vital to understanding Australasian objections to Asian immigration; it was not just white supremacy in the sense of putting Europeans over non-white peoples, but also about keeping an idealised model of honest toil the preserve of whites. Even had they been kept entirely separate, a class of Indian

⁸⁸ For NZ and Natal, see Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, (Oxford, 2010).

⁸⁹ Lake and Reynolds, p. 132.

⁹⁰ And Canada, Natal, et cetera.

⁹¹ Martens, *Empire*, p. 162.

or Pacific Island peons would be as threatening as prosperous and politically engaged Japanese or Chinese merchants. The defence of 'Britishness' was not just about skin colour; it was also about the socio-economic model of Australasia. Non-white labourers were feared not just because they were not white; it was because they were labourers.⁹²

At the Conference, Chamberlain did not quite seem to grasp this. George Reid told him that the possible unrest and instability caused by not passing anti-immigrant bills would be against the interests of the empire. 'There would be more embarrassment to the Imperial Government by such legislation, than there might be if such legislation was not passed.'⁹³ Chamberlain acknowledged that Australasia seemed concerned about Indian migration but told them that 'the difference is very great between British subjects and other coloured races.'⁹⁴ The nature of his misunderstanding is that, as well as suggesting a literacy test, he also- and this is less covered in the literature - suggested that it might be simplest to just exclude migrants on the basis of poverty. Indians might be blocked on account of 'their pauper condition, or from ignorance.'⁹⁵ Reid explained that many of the migrants were arriving 'in a perfectly independent position' owing to signing up to recruitment schemes overseas.⁹⁶ In other words, the problem was not - as Chamberlain seemed to think - that migrants would be beggars or drains on the public purse, but entirely the opposite: that they could smoothly function within the economy, for employers who had the resources to set up

A concrete example of this thinking can be found in an incident which occurred after the Conference. In May 1898, 79 Indian immigrants arrived in Melbourne aboard the ship *Bucephalus*. The *Bucephalus* was denied docking permission in Sydney, but the migrants

⁹² On not just an imperial but an international working-class labour movement that cooperated against Asian labour, see Kornel Chang, 'Circulating Race and Empire: Transnational Labour Activism and the Politics of Anti-Asian Agitation in the Anglo-American Pacific World, 1880-1910,' in *Journal of American History*, 96:3 (2009), pp. 678-701.

⁹³ Reid, CAB18/9, TNA, p. 132.

⁹⁴ Chamberlain, *Ibid*.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*.

⁹⁶ Reid, *ibid*.

were allowed to come ashore in Victoria. Customs officials stated that under existing laws, as Imperial citizens Indians had as much right to enter Australia as ‘the people of the United Kingdom and Ireland.’⁹⁷ The press, however, treated the arrival of the Indians as an invasion. The *Argus* dubbed it ‘The Hindoo Host.’⁹⁸

The perceived problem was not that they would be interfering with Victoria’s racial hierarchy. The issue was that the Indians were en route to Queensland to work on the plantations - and this meant that they were embedding themselves into the economic structure of the colonies. The last decade had seen the movement to deport Pacific Islanders gain in strength, but what was the point of doing that if they were just to be replaced with non-white workers from within the Empire? Indian labourers would still work for less than European field hands, and that would encourage plantation owners to hire more. If non-white workers could undercut Europeans in the fields, why not as stock drivers, carpenters, miners, fishermen, dockworkers, or furniture makers? This connection of racial and economic concerns to the broader imperial structure was made at the time, particularly by the labour movement. In Chapter Four, we saw that Victoria’s *Tocsin* linked the free movements of people within the empire to the South African War. White workers were being used to kill white workers in another country, so that Asian and African labourers could plough the empty fields left in both countries. ‘Imperialism is the creed of kings, queens and millionaires,’ it wrote. ‘Therefore, workers, it cannot be yours.’⁹⁹ The respectable imperialists of the middle classes did not concur. For politicians like Barton or Deakin, the problem was not that Australasia was within the empire, but rather that its place was being undermined by the Colonial Office’s inability to make distinctions within that empire.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ *Argus*, 26 May 1898, p. 5.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 25 May 1898 p. 4.

⁹⁹ *Tocsin*, 24 January 1901, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Ships full of Asian migrants often became particular flashpoints in various white societies at this time. See Mountford, *Britain, China & Colonial Australia* on the SS *Afghan* in Sydney in 1888, and Martens, *Empire and*

This returns us to the debate over literacy tests. The Natal Formula was also an imperial policy. It would be a mistake to treat it merely as a compromise to save the blushes of the Colonial Office. Yes, it was that. But the debate over it also shows there were two different ways of looking at the Empire - two different ways of defining what the core territories of the Empire were. The issue centred on whether the Empire was simply an extension of British, or English, power. If the inherent core of the Empire was the British Isles themselves, then all territory outside it had a commonality of deference. India, Africa and the so-called 'white Dominions' might not be equal, but they were subjects together and therefore had certain reciprocal rights anywhere under the British Flag. Or was the Empire about the extension of Anglo-Saxon civilisation?¹⁰¹ Because if it was, then there was an inherent absurdity in treating the inhabitants of the crown colonies as if they had a right to freely travel to the Dominions. In this latter conception of the Empire the Colour Line, as the phrase goes, was drawn very firmly. A Gujarati merchant might have the right, might even be encouraged to travel to another non-white space such as Kenya, but it was ridiculous and offensive to suggest that they could set up a business in Perth.

The frustration over the Natal formula was not the only irritation for the British government. On the third day of the conference, 1 July 1897, Chamberlain tried to persuade the colonies to accede to the Treaty as the final deadline for accession was at the end of August, only weeks away. Any colonies that did not, he suggested, would 'find themselves placed at a very great disadvantage.' It was also possible to leave treaties as well as join them, he added, so it was surely 'advisable that all the Colonies should agree to its terms.' Somewhat inadvisably, he then asked the conference's secretary to 'explain to the gentlemen

Asian Migration. Also see Martens for SS *Courland* and *Naderi* in Durban in 1896. Cf. the *Komogata Maru* incident in Canada in 1914.

¹⁰¹ Cees Heere's *Empire Ascendent* explores this idea in detail in its early chapters, beginning with the introduction and Curzon's publication of 'Problems of the Far East.'

present what advantage they would gain.¹⁰² Once again the Colonial Office had made the mistake, as it had in the Pacific, of assuming that colonial disagreement with its policy could only be born of ignorance.¹⁰³ To Chamberlain's surprise, the Premiers openly questioned the legal advice of the Office. It was the opinion of their own lawyers, said the Premiers of Victoria and South Australia that the 'most favoured nation' clause of the Treaty would mean that any agreement the colonies made between themselves would also have to be applied to Japan. The vehement disagreement of the Colonial Office staff did not dissuade them. Richard Seddon brought things back to the Pacific Islands, as he was wont to do, speaking of a Hawaii that was 'very very sorry' it had ever permitted Japanese migrants.¹⁰⁴ Chamberlain gave up.

The Conference also saw Britain push for an amendment to the 1887 Naval Agreement. The limits the agreement imposed on where the colonial-subsidised ships could be used were resented by the Admiralty, whose blue-water doctrine was ill-served by the auxiliary squadron being tied to Australasian waters. The defence proposals the colonies would consider- defensive forts, gunboats and local squadrons- were entirely out of favour with the new Mahanism of the 1890s.¹⁰⁵ Chamberlain argued that the laws of sea power set down by Mahan required strategic centralisation; colonial leaders thought that the Empire required a strategy that fit its diverse interests and the extended outposts of Greater Britain.¹⁰⁶ Chamberlain clumsily tried to put pressure on the premiers by suggesting that without the Royal Navy Canada would have had to make concessions to foreign powers, serving only to patronise a colony that was not party to the agreement. He then asked a naval officer to

¹⁰² Ibid, p. 48.

¹⁰³ See Chapter Three and the response to Australasian worries about Samoa.

¹⁰⁴ One wonders if, following the overthrow of their Kingdom and facing annexation, Hawaiians in 1897 really thought that the mistake had been letting in the *Japanese*.

¹⁰⁵ Gordon, *The Dominion Partnership*, pp. 121-135. On the influence of Alfred Mahan on the Admiralty, see Marder, *Anatomy*, and Bernard Simmel, *Liberalism & Naval Strategy: Ideology, Interest and Sea Power during the Pax Britannica* (Boston, 1986).

¹⁰⁶ Brian Farrell, 'Coalition of the Usually Willing' p. 265.

explain the Admiralty's position; the unprepared officer explained that he was not allowed to do that but gave a halting personal speech attacking the agreement.¹⁰⁷ The proposal to remove the limitations was met by a universally hostile reception; Victoria was prepared to consider expanding the area of operation but not removing limits, while Reid and Forrest both said that their legislatures would abandon the agreement entirely before countenancing a removal of limits.¹⁰⁸ One scholar judges Chamberlain lucky not to have the entire agreement dissolve at the Conference.¹⁰⁹ He would have little more luck on immigration.

The Conference had been a muddle. Though the Natal Formula itself had been rejected, the principle of literacy tests would be adopted by Australasians over the following years, leading to the Commonwealth's Immigration Restriction Act in 1901. However, the colonial refusal to budge on the Treaty with Japan is an even better example of the Australasians deciding that they knew better about the Asia-Pacific than the Metropole. In 1897 the colonies had considered the British Government's position and rejected it. That rejection is worth contemplating: the Foreign and Colonial Offices had spent three years trying to convince them to accede to the Treaty. The Treaty itself was a major achievement for Britain and Japan, opening up commercial opportunities across the Pacific and tying an emerging power into the fold of Britain's global economy. And yet, of seven Australasian colonies only one had, very late, acceded to the Treaty, and that after coaxing by Britain and careful negotiations with Japan. Even then, Queensland had been mocked in the press and its Premier dismissed by his contemporaries. The Colonies had not even granted the Colonial Office's premise: they were not prepared to trust the word of its officials that the legal regime of the Treaty would operate in the way Britain promised. That was a less colourful objection

¹⁰⁷ Captain Beaumont was there as a representative of the Colonial Defence Committee, a body that would be discussed in a longer work but has been left out due to it spending the entire period being ignored by almost all governments in the Empire.

¹⁰⁸ 1897 Conference, pp. 54-91.

¹⁰⁹ Preston, *Canada*, p. 118.

than Reid's dry attack on Chamberlain's inadvertent racial egalitarianism, or Kingston's thinly veiled hostility. In its own way it was more telling, though. The first was an objection to the Imperial Government's position. The dismissal of its legal advice, however, was an objection to its basic competence.

v. **Towards White Australia**

The British government thought that a rapprochement with Japan would help relieve the pressures on the empire's position in Asia and the Pacific; the colonies feared that such an alignment would undermine that position.

As to Japan, its policy towards Australia and New Zealand was one that sought not to exacerbate the ill-feelings that clearly existed in the colonies. It chose to rely on the tactics that had served it well: careful attention to the imperial government, eventually the realisation that it would need contacts with the colonies themselves, the cultivation of sympathetic local elites and above all the attempt to work together on the rational basis of mutual profit and respect.

All of manoeuvrings were ineffective in the face of the blanket hostility towards Asia across the Oceanic colonies. The paranoia was pervasive. Pearl-divers, furniture makers, market gardeners, pedlars, merchants: there was no profession available to an Asian in Australasia that could not be imagined as a job stolen from a white worker, no family's existence that could not be seen as the bridgehead for a settlement. What makes that paranoia so important for this dissertation however is that it was obvious that it was not shared, not truly, by the imperial government.

The chapter has striven to show that anti-Asian racism in Australasia was not simply about the broader culture of settler-colonies in the late nineteenth century and nor were their measures to restrict Asians about building Huttenback's 'legal curtain.' These were political and diplomatic actions. Australasia was not simply quibbling with London about the appropriate legal form of immigration restriction, it was increasingly arguing about whether the British government had the necessary commitment to British race patriotism that was becoming the sine qua non of imperial loyalty in Australasia. The fact was, of course, that

Britain and Japanese diplomats had spent much of the decade trying to find a solution to Japan's insulting treatment by the colonies that both salvaged Japanese pride and respected the democratically approved xenophobia of white Australian legislatures. Nonetheless, by the end of the 1890s the Australasians were as afraid of Asian immigration as ever - and increasingly inclined to disregard what they saw as a high-handed attitude of the British government in general and Chamberlain in particular.

Having described Australasian views of Japan and the empire in this chapter, it is time to show how all that mounting tension came to a head in 1901. The fear helped drive New Zealand away from the rest of the colonies; it brought the others together. And that fear finally made the new Commonwealth of Australia do what the constituent colonies had not done in the 1890s: refuse to sit around and wait for British acceptance or refusal of their racial laws. In 1901, Australia would seek to circumvent the process.

Chapter Six: Federation as a response to Empire

i. Writing about Federation

This chapter covers two key developments in Australasia. The first was the great political divergence in the Oceanic colonies: New Zealand's choice not to join the Commonwealth. This chapter will argue that too little attention has been paid to the role of race and empire in shaping New Zealand's response to Federation. In Chapter Three, we examined how in the 1890s the Australasian colonies were losing their faith that the Imperial government had the resolve to make the self-governing colonies a strong redoubt of the Anglo-Saxon race in the Pacific. But while for continental Australia, Federation became a way of securing that redoubt, so too was New Zealand's decision not to participate based on its fear that it could only preserve its purity by staying clear. There is also a continuity with the increasing fervour with which the colonies drew up immigration restriction bills in the 1890s. The pre-occupation with the debate about whether the British race could survive in the tropics naturally contributed to suspicions about a Commonwealth that stretched so far towards the equator. Finally, the chapter will briefly examine how the colonies responded to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902, and how the newly minted Commonwealth responded to the changing balance of power in Asia in the 1900s.

This dissertation has not been particularly concerned with tracing the long history of the Federal movement in Australasia; it has been discussed as important context for the way that the self-governing colonies saw regional and Imperial issues such as the geopolitics of the South Pacific, or in terms of how it interacted with ideologies of empire such as the Imperial Federation movement. The focus of the previous chapters was on how Australasian ideas about the Empire were affected by the many abortive proposals for Imperial reform in the 1880s and 1890s, the shifting fortunes of empire in Australasia's near abroad in the

Pacific, the mass commitment of resources to an Imperial war in South Africa and the long running efforts to bring in ever tighter Immigration Restriction laws throughout the period. It would be absurd to suddenly ‘explain’ as complicated a process as Federation in the final chapter, and tangential to the work. Rather, the intent of this chapter is to look at how all those events and processes described in the previous chapters manifested themselves within Federation. In other words, the point is not that Federation was caused by Australasia’s changing relationship with the British Empire, but that that changing relationship affected how Federation developed.

Before delving into Federation, let us reiterate the dissertation’s thesis on Australasian identity again. This dissertation has sought to provide a nuanced view of Australasian imperial identities that lies between the ‘race patriotism’ of Neville Meaney and Marilyn Lake’s transnational whiteness. Once again, this chapter will show that both positions are useful and at least partially correct: White Australia was brought in as part of a global wave of immigration restrictions, and Federation was driven at least in part by imperial concerns. Nationalism, whiteness and imperialism were not contradictory values, nor were they competing poles. However, what this chapter will show is that race patriotism and transnational whiteness manifested themselves in Australasia and Federation in distinctly Australasian ways. New Zealand and Australia shared a commitment to the British Empire and to white supremacy - but those ideas helped divide the settler colonies too. It was not that New Zealand was ‘less racist’ than Australia or more loyalist; it was that the shared values encouraged the societies to develop in different ways even as they continued to mouth the same pieties of blood and patriotism. The Immigration Restriction Act was, certainly, of a piece with previous colonial legislation and of anti-migrant restrictions in the USA; but the increasing colonial suspicion of the imperial government’s commitment to the supposed shared values of the Empire meant that devout imperial loyalists thought that they were

pushing through the Act against British opposition. That that opposition was largely imagined emphasises the point even more. By 1901 then, it shall be shown that Federationism, Imperialism, race patriotism and transnational whiteness, though all global to some degree, helped contribute to a distinctly Australasian identity within the British Empire.

It is also important to note that it was easier for some Australians to be both Federationist and imperialist than others. Non-Anglo-Saxon Australians obviously related to the Empire in different ways. The Irish were by no means anti-imperialist, at least not to the degree suspected by Australian Orangemen, but Ireland's agitation for Home Rule and Irish settlers' uneasy quest for acceptance without integration meant that this large Australian community could not easily balance imperialism and colonial nationalism. Dilke thought that the Irish were the 'kernel of the Australian national party,'¹ and more recently Patrick O'Farrell has argued that 'the distinctive Australian identity [was] born in Irishness protesting against the extremes of Englishness.'² Elizabeth Malcolm and Diane Hall note that much Australian historiography simply ignores this community; in the 1200-page *Cambridge History of Australia*, there are, in total, eight references to the Irish. Increasingly, historians write about 'Anglo-Celtic' Australians.³ This term is unhelpful. It is not completely anachronistic; Queensland's Thomas Byrnes used it in 1895.⁴ Byrnes, however, was Irish-crudely, Celts wanted to be seen as Anglos, but Anglos did not see themselves as Celts. It is simply nonsensical to describe, for example, Charles Pearson or Alfred Deakin as 'Anglo-Celts;' not only were they proudly English, but they - and many protestant Australians - saw it as an important point of political principle to limit the influence of Irish Catholicism in

¹ Dilke, p.202.

² Patrick O'Farrell, pp. 11-12.

³ Diane Hall & Elizabeth Malcolm, *A New History of the Irish in Australia* (Sydney, 2018) pp. 8-14.

⁴ Walker, *Anxious Nation*, p. 74.

Australasian culture.⁵ The long-running argument over the funding of Catholic schools by colonial governments, for example, is rendered inexplicable by the ‘Anglo-Celtic’ framework. Sydney’s Cardinal Moran did not win election to the New South Wales delegation to the 1897 Federal Convention. Of the fifty delegates there, only two were Catholic.⁶ The leaders of Federation were thus generally, though not exclusively, Protestant English and Welsh. This is not a tangential aside; to understand the relationship of Australia’s leaders with the Empire, we must have an accurate understanding of who they were: not ‘Anglo-Celts,’ but ‘Anglo-Saxons.’

Let us move on to Federation itself. As stated, Federation is not the focus of the work and a chronological survey of its conventions and constitutional drafts will not be offered. For the best explanation of the making of the Federal Constitution and the dramas of Billites, anti-Billites, ‘yes-no’ Reid et alia, the reader should refer to the works of La Nauze, Irving and Hirst.⁷ Rather, a few key causes and themes in the Federation movement will be examined.

Of Federation’s domestic causes, none was more important than ‘the lion in the way’ of Federation: tariffs.⁸ Internal trade barriers were the key cause of intercolonial conflict before Federation. Britain’s Australian Colonies Duties Act of 1873 had granted the colonies the right to set their own customs regime, save for goods supplying Britain’s armed forces or in contravention of a British treaty with a foreign power.⁹ An imperial tariff regime having

⁵ This is important not to confuse with pure sectarianism, though that was present in the colonies. Deakin could praise the Victorian premier Charles Gavan Duffy as being held back by prejudice against Irish nationalists. Deakin, *The Federal Story*, p. 2.

⁶ Helen Irving, ‘Making the Federal Commonwealth’ in Alison Bashford & Stuart Macintyre, *The Cambridge History of Australia*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 2013), p. 259.

⁷ La Nauze, *The Making of the Australian Constitution* (Melbourne, 1972), Helen Irving, ed., *The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation* (Cambridge, 1999) and John Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Constitution* (Melbourne, 2000).

⁸ La Nauze, *Making*, p. 11.

⁹ *Australian Colonies Duties Act, 1873*, accessed at New Zealand Legal Information Institute, http://nzlii.org/nz/legis/imp_act_1881/acda187336vc22335/, March 20, 2022.

been abandoned, the Australasian colonies quickly took diverging paths. The chief problems were between protectionist Victoria and the more laissez-faire New South Wales.¹⁰ It was not just that this discrepancy represented different philosophies of government, it also inconvenienced travellers and traders within Australasia. Anyone crossing an internal border, one delegate told the Corowa Conference of 1893, was 'liable to be stuck up by policemen or customs officers.'¹¹ In the end, the 'lion' was not so much slain as set aside; Henry Parkes had argued at the 1890 convention that tariffs might stop Federation but only Federation could stop tariffs. Thus, the usual argument goes, the old unproductive arguments between colonial governments over customs disputes became soluble by making them the responsibility of the yet to be established federal government. This is the traditional line held by, among many others, Helen Irving¹² and John Hirst.¹³ Ronald Norris made a more general case for the centrality of economics, emphasising the importance of the depression of the 1890s: Federation would attract more British investment, allow for more intercolonial infrastructure projects such as railways, and open more markets within the Australian interior as a truly national economy developed.¹⁴

It is not an absolutely accepted case. William Coleman has argued that by the late 1890s the customs barriers were already breaking down following New South Wales's Customs Act of 1895.¹⁵ Although it is possible that the old case for freedom of trade being the great internal driver of Federation has been overstated, Coleman seems to ignore the obvious corollary of internal customs barriers: external ones. Irving notes that the domestic

¹⁰ A generalisation: both colonies trade regimes ebbed and flowed as with the protectionist NSW government of George Dibbs (premier 1885, 1889, 1891-1894).

¹¹ James Paterson, quoted in Helen Irving, *To Constitute a Nation* (Cambridge, 1997) p. 164.

¹² Irving, *To Constitute a Nation*, also 'New South Wales,' in Irving, ed., *The Centenary Companion*, and 'Making.'

¹³ Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation & Australian History in Seven Questions* (Collingwood, 2014).

¹⁴ Ronald Norris's *The Emergent Commonwealth* (Melbourne, 1975).

¹⁵ William Coleman, 'Federation Without Affirmation,' in *Agenda: A Journal of Policy Analysis and Reform*, 27:1 (2020) pp. 87-104.

concern over intercolonial trade was tied to Australia's position in the wider world; the protection of the Australian British worker did not just require the prohibition of non-white Labour as we saw in Chapter Five, it was also believed to require the protection of Australian industry against cheap imports.¹⁶ That is the first point of significance to the dissertation: in Chapters One, Three, and Five, Australasia's fear of cheap foreign labour from the Pacific and Asia was discussed. That protectionism was not just about Australasia facing the world, it was about the positioning of Australasians relative to each other.

The second point is that the Australasian colonies were prepared to drastically rethink their economic arrangements when they thought it vital to a desired political reform. This is important because the colonies also mouthed the rhetoric of Imperial reform and occasionally Imperial Federation. That they never embraced any of Joseph Chamberlain's proposals for an imperial customs regime therefore either means that that rhetoric was hollow - possible, but unconvincing, as Chapter Two's survey of the deep colonial interest in Imperial reforms shows. The alternative is that it demonstrates that by 1902 the imperial loyalists and reformists of Australasia saw no contradiction in non-cooperation with the most devout reformer ever to sit as Colonial Secretary. This chapter will show that both in the cases of New Zealand's abstention from Federation and the passage of Australia's IRA, the language of imperial loyalty was used to justify entirely different things from what those same words meant in Britain.

The third point about the tariff debate is its importance as a counterfactual: had the colonies been unable to make the necessary political compromises, New South Wales might not have joined Federation. Had the tariff lion not been slain by Federation, then as Service had feared, the lion might have killed it.¹⁷ New South Wales might very well have left the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ La Nauze, *Making*, p. 11.

early conferences of the 1890s had its compromise not been accepted. Geoffrey Bolton and Duncan Waterston argue that as late as 1897, only Queensland's fortuitous absence from the conferences of that year allowed New South Wales and Victoria to win a crucial vote on the Senate's power over money bills - without which the first colony would likely have left the convention and Federation entirely.¹⁸ This matters because it shows why the region should be treated as being in flux in the 1890s, rather than as moving towards inevitable consolidation; just as it was not inevitable that New Zealand or Fiji did not join Federation, it was not inevitable that New South Wales would. When considering how Australasians thought about the Empire and their own local polities, it is worth remembering that the boundaries and laws of both those things were still being negotiated.

That brings us to another great issue of Federation: the nature of Australian identity, and whether it was opposed to or co-existed with imperial loyalism. In recent historiography, it has been a commonplace that federation was a product both of colonial nationalism and of imperialism, as seen in the works of Hirst, Irving and Luke Trainor.¹⁹ This is a return to what was considered self-evident by many contemporary observers: Alfred Deakin's ideal of 'Independent Australian Britons' is simply a distillation of both loyalties.²⁰ Coleman, in his deliberately provocative article 'Federation without Affirmation' describes the two sentiments as 'antithetical' and 'weird,' but cannot actually muster proof against the written evidence that this was not an opinion shared by Federationists at the time.²¹ This dissertation particularly follows Trainor, who stresses the uncertainty inherent in holding these ideals simultaneously:

¹⁸ Geoffrey Bolton & Duncan Waterston, 'Queensland,' in *The Centenary Companion*, p. 105.

¹⁹ Hirst, *Sentimental Nation*, Irving, *To Constitute a Nation*, Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism*.

²⁰ Deakin, 'The New Commonwealth,' December 4 1900, in Herriot, *From Our Special Correspondent*, pp. 5-6.

²¹ Coleman, p. 96.

Federation may thus be seen as a meeting point of nationalism and imperialism; both futures seemed to be implicit in it and the ambiguity helps explain the divided and unsure response in both countries.²²

Trainor's work is very good at getting across the misunderstandings and mis-readings of each other's positions that often occurred between Britain and Australasia. However, where the dissertation parts ways with him is that Trainor describes an 'Anglo-Australian system for the West Pacific;' that is to say that while Trainor accepts that by 1901 Australians and Imperial leaders often did not understand each other's position, they were trying to co-operate in pursuit of a common agreed goal.²³ As Chapters One and Three demonstrated, Britain and Australasia were not co-operating, and the mis-understandings in the Pacific often occurred because both parties did not realise that they did not share a goal. In this chapter, it shall be shown that by 1901 the shared language of imperial loyalism could obscure more than it communicated. Although the Imperial government smiled upon Federation, and Federation's architects were devout imperialists, they did not share the same vision for the new Commonwealth's place in the Empire.

The most important question around Federation for the dissertation is the extent to which it was shaped by concerns around colonial security and the wider world. That it was a factor is not really in question. The early Federationists feared that if the Australasian colonies stayed separate long enough, they would begin to behave like independent states, and, as seen in Chapter Two, the worldview of Australasian thinkers took it as axiomatic that independent states would come into conflict. This had been true since the earliest days of the Federation movement. 'Neighbouring states of the second order,' warned the Victorian Premier Charles Gavan Duffy in 1857, 'inevitably become confederates or enemies.' It was

²² Trainor, *British Imperialism*, p. 9.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 39.

therefore necessary to choose Federation and become confederates.²⁴ Duffy was the first great exponent of Federation. He is quoted here to show that, from the beginning of the movement, Australian Federation was not simply a question of customs revenue and the ease of doing business across state lines; there was an underlying worry about the strategic vulnerability of the colonies, to each other and within the wider world. It was not just that the Australasian colonies might pose a threat to each other; their very prosperity attracted ever more foreign attention. To Europe and America, Australia was changing from ‘an obscure penal settlement, in some uncertain position in the Southern Ocean... [to] a fraternity of wealthy and important States.’ Those states therefore had to take note of ‘the condition of the world [and] the danger of war, which, to be successfully met, must be met by united action.’²⁵ Later, Richard Jebb considered the revitalisation of the Federation movement to be due to ‘a much-needed external stimulus... the intrusion of European Powers into the secluded waters of the South Pacific.’²⁶ La Nauze concurred, considering Victorian (*not* Queensland) fears of European powers in the Pacific as providing ‘the proximate reason’ for the first serious attempt at intercolonial governance in 1883.²⁷ Neville Meaney went further, calling it ‘a major, if not the chief, motive for the federation movement and for federation.’[sic]²⁸

These concerns about the ambitions of the European powers did not just manifest themselves in a concern about Australasia’s near-abroad; Federation was also spurred by feelings of vulnerability to direct attack at home. As noted in Chapter One, in 1889 Major-General James Bevan Edwards delivered a report on Australasian defence that argued for intercolonial cooperation on military affairs.²⁹ This helped prompt Henry Parkes’ Tenterfield

²⁴ ‘Select Committee on the Federal Union of the Australian Colonies,’ Victoria, 1857, *Papers Relating to a Federal Union of the Australian Colonies* (Melbourne, 1862) p. 10.

²⁵ ‘Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly,’ Victoria, 1862, in *Papers*, p. 60.

²⁶ Jebb, p. 66.

²⁷ La Nauze, *Making*, p. 2.

²⁸ Meaney, *Search*, p. 11.

²⁹ Including on railway construction; that was an issue where the economic and strategic cases for Federation were neatly aligned.

Oration in 1889 which called for a single Australian army, under Australian command. ‘The colonies would object to the army being under the control of the Imperial Government, and none of the other colonies could direct it.’³⁰ Defence was clearly a going concern for the colonies: Queensland and Western Australia were still fighting frontier wars against the indigenous population, both Victoria and New Zealand were prepared to mount military interventions in the Pacific in the 1890s and all the colonies saw increased participation in rifle clubs and other local volunteer associations.

Yet in the contemporary literature about Federation, although defence is often discussed, the argument is generally just about how to fund the new Federal military. Samuel Griffith’s 1896 pamphlet *Some Conditions of Australian Federation* stated that defence was one of the subjects ‘that naturally fall within the sphere of Federal control,’ but then only mentions it again as part of a table that discusses the colonial expenditure to be taken on by the new Commonwealth government.³¹ Similarly, at the 1897 Federal Convention in Adelaide, the debate was over defence expenditure but not the need for a unified command. Edmund Barton introduced the topic, then immediately suggested that the convention should ‘pass it over as being a self-evident proposition.’³² Jeffrey Grey claims that Federation had ‘little to do with notions of a common defence,’ but cites only Ronald Norris; as dealt with below, Norris’s arguments are based on the lack of debate about defence in the Federation conventions.³³ This does not speak to the contemporary sources that do mention it, or the general consensus in the press and among politicians for the need for a combined system of defence. As Geoffrey Bolton puts it, it seems clear that debates about the purpose of and

³⁰ *SMH*, 25 October 1889, p. 8.

³¹ Samuel Griffith, *Some Conditions of Australian Federation* (Brisbane, 1896), p. 7.

³² Edmund Barton, 23 March 1897, *Official Report of the National Australian Convention Debates*, Adelaide, p. 92.

³³ Jeffrey Grey, ‘Defending the Dominion, 1901-1918,’ in Bernard Attard & Carl Bridge, eds., *Between Empire and Nation* (Melbourne, 2000), p.21.

need for an Australian army are so absent in the 1890s because for most Australians ‘the defence argument for unified decision-making was too obvious to require stressing.’³⁴

That theme, of a key driver of Federation being surprisingly obscure in the convention debates, is also true of immigration restriction. The association of the White Australia policy with the drive for Federation goes back at least to the 1920s.³⁵ The link certainly seems intuitive enough: Federation was brought to completion by politicians who had spent fifteen years passing increasingly harsh Anti-Asian migration acts in their colonies. The Commonwealth’s first action was to enact the White Australia policy. It had been a point of serious contention with the Imperial Government over the previous decade. And yet, as Ronald Norris showed in 1975, anti-immigration measures simply do not feature very much in Federation rhetoric. It was not totally omitted. One occasion on which both defence and Asia were mentioned came in 1891, when Parkes warned that ‘the Chinese nation and other Asiatic nations... were awakening to all the powers which their immense population gives them in the art of war.’³⁶ None of the following speakers picked up the thread, however, and discussion of Asian immigration was cursory throughout the conference. The topic barely came up at the three sessions in 1897-98, and generally only in legalistic discussions over whether the Commonwealth’s power to make laws binding specific races was the same power as that which it would possess over immigration.³⁷

How to explain this? Norris’s answer was to say that immigration restriction, although popular, was the pet cause of a few particularly vehement politicians such as Barton, Reid and Kingston. Although most delegates at the federal conventions and the Australasian public

³⁴ Geoffrey Bolton, ‘Federated Australia: Republic of the Southern Seas or New Britannia?’, John A. Moses & Christopher Pugsley (eds.), *The German Empire and Britain’s Pacific Dominions 1871-1919* (Claremont, 2000) p. 152.

³⁵ See Myra Willard’s *History of the White Australia Policy to 1920* (Melbourne, 1923) for instance, for an authoritative analysis of the policy by a supporter.

³⁶ Henry Parkes, 18 March 1891, *Official Report etc* Sydney, p. 485.

³⁷ Norris, Chapter Three.

generally supported a White Australia, in this telling it was not a significant driver of Federation.³⁸ This is a profoundly unsatisfactory explanation. Norris fails to mention that, as discussed in Chapter Five, the colonies were holding separate conventions to discuss nothing else besides non-white immigration. It is therefore natural that the federal conferences would not be where that issue was discussed. The more serious version of the argument comes from John Hirst, who recognises the popularity of immigration restrictions and of the intercolonial conventions but sees the issue as having essentially been settled before Federation: ‘the problem of Asian migration had already been solved.’³⁹ This is still unsatisfying. It requires a narrative wherein the Australian colonies of the 1890s did not care enough about immigration for it to affect their views of the greatest constitutional question of the day, while simultaneously pressuring their parliaments as well as the British and Japanese governments to support ever greater restrictions. Moreover, even when federal delegates were not directly discussing immigration policies or defence, their rhetoric was absolutely steeped in the politics of racial exclusion. Deakin said the purpose of the conventions was to commit ‘the future destinies of Australia to a body of this kind, knowing that that body is to be constituted of Anglo-Saxons, elected by Anglo-Saxons.’⁴⁰ Moreover, there has been extensive work done over recent decades on the interconnection of Federation and White Australia.⁴¹ The idea that Federation’s proponents were not concerned with a White Australia can thus be disregarded.

Norris, Bolton and Hirst are absolutely correct that the consensus among most Federationists meant that security and immigration were lacunae in Federation rhetoric; their importance is clear, but seemingly hard to assess. This dissertation has argued that by 1901

³⁸ Ibid, pp. 47-4.

³⁹ John Hirst, *Australian History in 7 Questions* (Collingwood, 2014) p. 114.

⁴⁰ Alfred Deakin, 10 September 1897, *Official Report of the National Australian Convention Debates*, Sydney, pp. 540-41.

⁴¹ For the effort to restore White Australia to the narrative of Federation, see Leigh Boucher’s ‘Trans/national history and disciplinary amnesia: historicising White Australia at two *fins de siecles*,’ Jane Carey & Clare McLisisky (eds.), *Creating White Australia* (Sydney, 2009) and Trainor, *British Imperialism*.

Australasia had developed a distinct Imperial identity that was neither nationalist nor simple Greater British loyalism, but rather one shaped in large part by fears about colonial security and unwanted immigration. That distinction could be simply broken down as: an increased focus on Anglo-Saxon racial purity, particularly that of the ordinary worker; a sense of superiority to the other inhabitants of the Pacific mingled with a dread that the Empire's government did not pay sufficient attention to the threats in the region; and a feeling that the region had a historic destiny to become another pole of the Empire alongside Britain itself. But if, as those authors say, security and immigration are not visible in the main sources for Australian Federation, how do we assess their influence on Australasian identities or whether they had any influence at all?

Fortunately, there is a colony that did not take part in Federation, but whose extensive debates about that process show that all these ideas were present and in wide discussion among the Australasian body politic. In fact, the entire process by which Australasia had developed its distinct imperial identities was playing out in miniature within Australasia itself.

It is time to discuss why New Zealand is not Australian.

ii. 'Those arms bear chains!' New Zealand, Federation and the Empire

New Zealand's decision not to take part in Australian Federation has never been a particularly hotly contested part of the historiography. Regrettably, a question with such obvious relevance to both sides of the Tasman was not given the serious transnational attention it deserved in the twentieth century. The doyen of New Zealand national history in that period, Keith Sinclair, made clear that there had been little to no prospect of New Zealand joining the Commonwealth.⁴² In 1967 Australian historian Frederick Wood briefly ignited a debate by arguing that if New Zealand had not had as strong a federal movement as Victoria or New South Wales, Queensland had been at least as noncommittal.⁴³ The resulting back and forth in the field is beyond the scope of this dissertation. What matters is Wood's key insight, that 'the basic question is *not* why New Zealand stood aside, but why Australians... went ahead. Three-quarters of the answer lies accordingly at the Australian end.'⁴⁴ This chapter will take, as it were, the opposite approach: by studying New Zealand's response to Federation in the late 1890s and by putting that response in the context of the five previous chapters on the Australasian world, new lessons in the *Australian* response to Federation and the Empire will be learned.

On Boxing Day 1900, Richard Seddon appointed ten members to a New Zealand Federation Commission. They included the leader of the opposition, William Russell, who had represented New Zealand at the 1891 Federal Conference, and it was chaired by Colonel Albert Pitt, a future Attorney-General. Its brief was to 'inquire as to the desirability or

⁴² See Keith Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart* (Wellington, 1986), and 'Why New Zealanders are Not Australians' in Sinclair, ed., *Tasman Relations* (Auckland, 1988). Sinclair is fairly exhaustive in showing the general lack of interest in Federation, but rather weaker on putting it in any kind of trans-Tasman context.

⁴³ F. Wood, 'Why did New Zealand not join the Australian Commonwealth in 1900-1901?' *New Zealand Journal of History*, 2:2 (1968) pp. 115-129.

⁴⁴ For more recent works on New Zealand and Federation, see Ged Martin's monograph *Australia, New Zealand and Federation* (London, 2001) and Philippa Mein Smith, 'New Zealand federation commissioners in Australia: one past, two historiographies,' *Australian Historical Studies* 34:122, (2003) pp. 305-325.

otherwise of [New Zealand] federating with the Commonwealth of Australia and becoming a state.’⁴⁵

This was an unusual time to consider the issue. New Zealand could have sent delegates to any of the Federal Conferences since 1891 but had chosen not to. As a result, the new Commonwealth’s constitution had largely been shaped without its input;⁴⁶ New Zealand had passed up the question ‘shall we join an institution we helped shape?’ and instead asked ‘shall we join a federation that we have given up influencing for a decade?’ The unanimous answer of the ten commissioners was, unsurprisingly, negative. To some extent, the entire edifice of the Commission was clearly only an exercise intended to prove that Richard Seddon’s government had examined the issue in detail before continuing on its individual path.

The Commission’s report, however, is a tremendously useful document. Not only did it issue its own findings, but the Commissioners travelled around New Zealand interviewing almost two hundred expert witnesses for their opinion on Federation, and eventually also met with leading politicians from all the Australian States. It is thus an invaluable source for canvassing public and political opinion about Australasia and the Empire. It is well-known but understudied since Keith Sinclair’s work in the eighties. John Hirst devotes a single paragraph to it in *The Sentimental Nation*; he brushes it aside with the declaration that New Zealand’s choice not to Federate was simply because they ‘did not think of themselves as Australian,’ an unusually trite statement from a serious historian, given that hundreds of thousands of Australian voters did not want to Federate for various reasons.⁴⁷ Sinclair used it to examine how support for Federation broke down across industries and professions,

⁴⁵ *Report of the Royal Commission on Federation, AJHR*, 1901 i, A-04, p. v.

⁴⁶ With the proviso that the eventual constitution was almost entirely based on the drafts of 1891 that New Zealand had seen and responded to.

⁴⁷ Hirst, *Sentimental*, p.222.

building a table that showed, for instance, that fruit growers were divided upon the issue but manufacturers solidly against.⁴⁸ Ged Martin was more sceptical of the Commission and the testimony it collected, noting that its failure to take evidence in rural communities (save Invercargill) meant that farmers, the most pro-Federation segment of society are largely absent. Martin described the Commission as a ‘prosecuting counsel’ rather than a jury; where Sinclair saw the report as proof of how weak pro-Federation sentiment was, Martin saw in its ellipses a ‘missing movement’ for closer ties with Australia. Writing in 2001, he hoped that future scholars would give the report ‘further scrutiny of a kind that would extend the Trans-Tasman framework of historical enquiry.’⁴⁹ This dissertation can hopefully provide some of that scrutiny. It builds from the work of Philippa Mein Smith in paying attention to what the Commission can tell us about differing racial attitudes between New Zealand and Australia but differs in trying to bring an imperial lens to the source.⁵⁰

There is simply no equivalent document in any of the Australian states. The sources for the latter include the minutes of the convention reports, various speeches given by the campaigners for and against Federation during the referenda of the late 1890s and so forth. There is, however, no other government that methodically took soundings from across its public and then the rest of Australasia. The New Zealand Commission is particularly useful because it surveyed the public *after* the Federation process was (or seemed) complete. This means that its witnesses were not being asked about a hypothetical government with a constitution that was still being written; they were assessing a real state. Despite the obvious hostility of the commissioners to Federation from the outset, the report is therefore the single

⁴⁸ Sinclair, ‘Why New Zealanders,’ p. 98.

⁴⁹ Martin, *Australia, New Zealand and Federation* (section c, Martin’s website), <https://www.gedmartin.net/australia-new-zealand-and-federation-1883-1901-c>, retrieved October 9 2021.

⁵⁰ Mein Smith’s ‘New Zealand federation commissioners.’

best view of how an Australasian public thought about Federation and how it related to the wider Empire.

The report considered how Federation would affect ten areas of New Zealand political life. Mostly these were about how the administration of the polity would be affected by statehood (e.g., section i, legislative independence; and section ii, public finance) although more abstract concerns such as ‘the social condition of the working classes’ (section ix) were also dealt with. For the purposes of the dissertation, we shall concentrate chiefly on points raised in sections vi (imperial relations) and x, (the question of coloured labour).

In Chapter Two’s examination of the Imperial Federation movement, it was shown how during the interview process the Committee used the vague idea of imperial reform as a way of steering witnesses away from Australian Federation. The official report is even clearer. The Commission dismissed the idea that joining a Federation would ‘consolidate British interests, and thus tend to promote the unity of the Empire.’ In fact, it suggested that those interests would ‘be better promoted by’ the existence of two British Powers in these seas rather than one.’ This was not, so far, an unusual position for a New Zealand opponent of federation to hold. However, it went further still. This official document on why New Zealand should not become a state of Australia explained that this continued separation would allow New Zealand to check Australia if it fell to revolution or republicanism:

All British colonies now recognise the necessity of adherence to the Mother-country and to each other and have lately given splendid proofs of their loyalty to the Empire. But history teaches us how a community may be hurried by a gust of popular passion or prejudice into some irrevocable deed, where there is no check upon the action of its Government and Legislature. Neither Australia nor New Zealand would be likely in

future years under any circumstances to break away from the Empire without inquiry as to the attitude of the other; time would be gained, and a catastrophe probably averted.⁵¹

That remarkable paragraph is the first indicator of the sense of imagined destiny that came up throughout the Commission's report and its witness statements. It is a hard argument to unpick because it is so audacious: that the Commonwealth of Australia, having at some future point decided to break with the Empire would be dissuaded not by its own loyalists or the presence of the Royal Navy's Australia Station - but by the 'attitude' of the self-governing colony of New Zealand, twelve hundred miles across the Tasman. It is particularly striking given that, in the section on 'defence,' the Commission had stressed that it saw no need for New Zealand to take any part in building up its own navy.⁵² This may have been a reflection of contemporary fears about South Africa, although the American Revolution is another influence. The key point is that Australian Federation was presented as being a serious challenge to the imperial status quo. Its defenders saw Federation as an expression of patriotic imperial reforms; but now New Zealand was presenting the movement as a potential weakness in the Empire, that could best be checked by the vigilant eyes of Wellington.

It might be tempting to dismiss this section either as jingoistic self-importance or a deliberate failure to engage with the question of broader imperial reform - were it not that similar arguments were made by witnesses. Cabinet minister William Rolleston speculated that Australia would be liable to 'temporary frenzies and impulses... the traditions of the past may at times be insufficient to prevent antagonism to the Old Country.' In those circumstances, he said, New Zealand's 'power as a separate State in these seas would exercise an enormous influence in maintaining the Imperial union and guiding public opinion

⁵¹ Commission, p. xvi.

⁵² Ibid, p. xv.

should popular outbursts run riot elsewhere in these seas.’⁵³ In fact, the belief that New Zealand was more resolutely loyal to the Empire than its Australian neighbours was even shared by witnesses who spoke in favour of federating. Auckland vicar George MacMurray testified that he believed that New Zealand joining the Commonwealth would help bring about the larger goal of Imperial Federation, and that not joining would endanger the Empire. Furthermore, he said, he thought that if it joined the Australian Commonwealth New Zealand would be a stabilising influence. When asked about the spectre of Australian republicanism, he firmly replied that ‘I believe the factor of New Zealand in the Commonwealth would almost certainly prevent such a thing taking place.’⁵⁴ The view that New Zealand had to keep Australia in line had some currency, it seems, as it was not just found in the Commission minutes. During the urgent debate over the annexation of the Cook Islands, (see Chapter Three) Legislative Councillor Charles Bowen warned that ‘It is important for us, in the present state of affairs in our relationship with Australia, that these islands [the Cooks] not be hostile to us.’ ‘There should be two Powers in these seas,’ explained Bowen, so that if there might be ‘defiance thrown out to the Old Country [by Australia]’ New Zealand could act as a counterweight.⁵⁵

Australia itself, witnesses reported, was unstable and primed for outbreaks of violence. The Otago Knights of Labour submitted a statement warning that New Zealand should stay out of the Australian powder-keg as ‘some of the states are now almost ripe for revolt.’⁵⁶ This sort of rhetoric bemused even those Australian witnesses who advised New Zealand to stay out. Former premier of New South Wales George Dibbs thought that New Zealand was making the right choice by declining Federation but did not see how the colony

⁵³ Ibid, William Rolleston, p. 343.

⁵⁴ Ibid, George Macmurray, p. 385-7.

⁵⁵ *NZPD*, Legislative Council, 28 September 1900, p. 352.

⁵⁶ Ibid, exhibit 28, p. 758.

was meant to hold Australian ambitions in check. 'I do not see what advantage it would be to New Zealand to say, "No; it is all humbug; we do not believe in that," to any step that might be proposed by another Australian Colony towards republicanism.'⁵⁷ The Commission did not explain why they disagreed.

The prospect of New Zealand acting as a counterbalance to an Australian revolution was remote. However, the broader idea was that New Zealand would quite literally act as a mirror of Britain; Australia would be its Europe, a market for the industrialised islands off its coast. Rolleston's belief that New Zealand was capable of thwarting a rebellious Australia arose from his belief that the colony was steadily growing in comparison to the unified continent next door. When pressing a witness who spoke in favour of federation, commissioner Millar said 'we talk about New Zealand becoming the Greater Britain of the south - could we possibly do that if we became a part of the Commonwealth?' When the witness answered in the affirmative, Millar pressed him and made the comparison more explicit: 'Has not Great Britain's splendid isolation made her the most powerful nation in the world?... and is it not possible that New Zealand might follow suit?'⁵⁸ New Zealand would achieve superiority 'from its climate, the fertility of its soil, the physical character of its population, and its position as a maritime Power.'⁵⁹ That sense of New Zealand's superior destiny was even shared by one witness in favour of federation, who testified that New Zealand should join the Commonwealth because it would become the dominant state and 'overshadow Australia.'⁶⁰

At this stage, there are two important points that must be understood. The first is that although this was a self-aggrandising vision of New Zealand's future, it was not a nationalist

⁵⁷ Ibid, George Dibbs, p. 541.

⁵⁸ Ibid, Thomas Kempthorne, p. 118.

⁵⁹ Ibid, Rolleston, p. 343.

⁶⁰ Ibid, George Nichols, p. 18.

one. This was a vision of New Zealand with all the accoutrements of national glory - a large population (one witness testified that New Zealand could support thirty-six million people)⁶¹ - maritime splendour (this somehow co-existed with the Committee's doubts about funding a navy), and riches of industry and the soil. However, it was also explicitly a vision of New Zealand as a pillar of the Empire. Witness after witness, pro-Federation and anti-Federation, made it clear that they were not separatists. It was taken for granted that the future of New Zealand for at least the next century would be within the British Empire. But it was also not about the continuation of the status quo: it was about creating the 'Greater Britain of the south,' to quote Millar.⁶² In other words, this was neither a picture of simple imperial loyalism - New Zealand continuing to act as a dependent colony - or of New Zealand as an independent state. New Zealand, in this future, was not an imperial possession - it was an imperial partner, almost a literal physical twin to Britain as an island state off the coast of an unruly continent.⁶³ By 1901, in this part of Australasia at least, there was a clear belief that the British Empire's future in the Pacific would be guarded by another Britain, younger and perhaps fairer.

That vision becomes clearer when we consider how the Commission responded to section x. of its brief: 'the question of coloured labour.' The testimony of Edmund Barton and several colonial premiers was insufficient to persuade the Commission of the general practicality of a 'White Australia.' In its official report the Commission acknowledged that given the Australian sentiment 'in favour of preserving the purity of the British race... no serious danger from that cause need be apprehended under federation.'⁶⁴ Nevertheless, it warned that 'an influx of Asiatics into the northern territories of Australia would be attended

⁶¹ Commission, Patrick O'Regan, p. 318.

⁶² Ibid, Kempthorne, p. 118.

⁶³ Ibid, John Pearce Luke, p. 301.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. xxi.

with grave evils to the whole of the states.’ If New Zealand were to join the Commonwealth, then, some of its neighbour states would have to be placed under effective quarantine.

Witness after witness was asked if they believed that Queensland could be permanently settled by white Europeans; anyone who said yes was then asked if they could name any place in the tropics that was.

Alexander Paterson, Merchant: I have heard the men whom I consider the leading men in the sugar industry express the opinion that the industry will survive on the white labour-basis.

Russell: Do you know any tropical country in the world where white labour is employed?

P: No, I do not.

R: Can you mention any source of information where we could learn that such has been the case?

P: No, I understand it is quite admitted by these same men who hope it will be done in Australia that the thing has never been done before.

R: They believe the power of an active Commonwealth will override the laws of nature?⁶⁵

Worse than the presence of non-white Labour was the potential for racial mixing. The Chinese and Pacific Islanders were treated as threats to the political and economic order, but the Commission was repeatedly warned that the real threat was Japan. Not only was New Zealand’s insular climate ‘very much the duplicate of Japan,’ which would make it a prime spot for settlement, but the Japanese were supposedly more inclined to intermarriage than

⁶⁵ Ibid, Alexander Paterson p. 31.

other non-whites.⁶⁶ ‘Wherever the Chinese go they will not mix with the Europeans,’ said another witness. ‘The Japanese will mix. It is Japan I am afraid of.’⁶⁷ These witnesses were not, in the main, men who had spent much time in Queensland or the Northern Territory. Yet their fear is palpable; to them, the prospect of federating with an Australia that had not purged itself of non-white labourers threatened the very existence of British settlers in New Zealand. That suggests, for one thing, that if the New Zealand public saw such a clear link between the two issues of federation and White Australia, it is reasonable to assume that the various Australian colonies, particularly in the southeast, were as exercised.

The question then was not simply about the use of ‘coloured labour.’ The objections raised to it were generally not grounded in the fear that such a labour force would undermine white workers. Rather, to New Zealanders the very presence of such a population undermined the entire prospect of building a second Greater Britain. It is important to stress that link. It has already been shown that New Zealand believed itself to be on a course to out match any Australian state and act as a southern mirror to Britain; but that birthright depended upon the health of the Anglo-Saxon race. That is particularly evident from those witnesses who made it clear that the racial threat to New Zealand was not posed just by Asians or Pacific Islanders; White Australians themselves were becoming less British than New Zealanders. Once again, it came down to the Pearsonite belief that climate was king. The logic is simple: just as southern Australia was more hospitable to British settlers than the tropical north, so must New Zealand, further south and more temperate, be more hospitable than southern Australia. Combined with that sense that New Zealand was the literal antipode of Britain - the

⁶⁶ Ibid, Samuel Vaile, p. 364.

⁶⁷ Ibid, Frederick Mallard, p. 96.

island group off the coast of a larger continent - and Australasian racial science was taken to its extreme.⁶⁸

The Reverend Curzon-Siggers of Dunedin put it clearly:

We are, under the destiny of God, an insular nation. Australia is a continental nation. The history of all races shows that continental races and insular races diverge further and further apart. On the ground of history, then, alone I should strongly oppose federation.⁶⁹

The process of Australian racial degeneration had in fact begun already, an Invercargill witness assured the Commission. 'New Zealanders are looked upon with jealousy by the labourers of N.S.W. because they are physically much stronger, and have a greater amount of endurance.'⁷⁰ The Australians were not merely racially and physically inferior; they were slightly politically suspect as well. Thomas Dinern, a council member of Auckland's branch of the Australasian Federation league declared that the crime rate of Sydney could be 'easily traced to the convict element.'⁷¹ Even in the comparatively temperate southeast, Australia's urbanisation was leading to moral and physical corruption. Journalist Pierce Freeth declared that:

The Australian is not of the same robust, moral, vigorous type as the New Zealander; and it seems to me likely that in Australia the type will degenerate.... The Australian climatic influences and natural conditions breed pessimism, wantonness, desire for

⁶⁸ See Anderson, *Cultivation of Whiteness*. Also 'Racial Conceptions in the Global South,' in *Isis*, 105:4, (2014) pp. 782-792. Anderson notes in the latter that there has been comparatively little trans-Tasman comparative work on racial science.

⁶⁹ Commission, William Curzon-Siggers, p. 109.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, John Mackley, p. 23.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, Thomas Dinern p. 463.

luxury, and prodigality. New Zealand climatic influences and natural conditions tend to foster industry, shrewdness, thrift and the spirit of self-help.⁷²

There are clear parallels here with New Zealanders' and Australians' tendency to occasionally dismiss the metropolitan British population as being physically weak and mentally feeble, as seen in their opinion of British (as opposed to colonial) troops in South Africa and later Flanders.

Neither Freeth nor the Commissioners saw any apparent contradiction between the idea that New Zealand would become an industrialised and densely populated country and their vision of a nation governed by rural pioneers. Nor was any contradiction ever pointed out between the desire for Imperial Federation and the idea that closer links with the rest of the Empire would inevitably weaken New Zealand's white 'stock.' A touch of black comedy crept in: Curzon-Siggers, after explaining that New Zealand students would outperform Australians at the University of London, took the next logical step by explaining that New Zealanders were mentally more developed than Australia, 'just in the same way as the mental characteristics of the people in Otago are bound to be superior to those of the north of New Zealand.' 'Thank you,' said his questioner William Russell, 'I am a North-Islander.'

The apparent absurdity of all this should not disguise the fact that New Zealanders had clearly developed a particularly exceptionalist belief in themselves as the beacon of British civilisation in the Pacific. This was not a simple belief in racial superiority, either, for it was closely tied to the sense that New Zealand had a particular mission to uphold the Empire. That first manifested in a sense of paternalism. As has been demonstrated, New Zealanders were worried about joining the Australian Commonwealth because they feared

⁷² Ibid, Pierce Freeth p. 324.

that they would be racially polluted either by non-white labour, the intermingling of Japanese settlers and Britons, or in the end by the ‘degeneration’ of white Australians.

At the same time, however, they held themselves apart because of a belief that Australians were uniquely cruel in their treatment of non-white peoples. The complaint was generally grounded in section 127 of the Commonwealth Constitution:

In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives shall not be counted.⁷³

This was not consistent with the operation of New Zealand democracy, where Māori were not only on the voting rolls but guaranteed representation in parliament. The Commission declared that ‘as the voting-power of New Zealand would be correspondingly diminished, and as the exclusion of the Maoris would be a great injustice to them,’ New Zealand could not Federate unless the offending passage was amended.⁷⁴ This was typical of New Zealand’s pretensions to racial paternalism. Angela Ballara describes how, partly because the Māori were believed to be dying out, it was easy to imagine them as an ‘Aryan’ people, better than indigenous Australians or Melanesians.⁷⁵ The witnesses did not tend to bring this issue up, but when they did it was to emphasise how advanced New Zealand was compared to Australia. Curzon-Siggers spoke of the ‘problem of pitting against the coloured races your own noble Maoris’;⁷⁶ another witness worried that a Federal parliament would mistreat the Māori who were ‘equal to us in every respect in this colony,’⁷⁷ and a third compared ‘the aboriginal and dark races of Australia’ to the Māori who had ‘equal or greater privileges than our own.’⁷⁸ Māori witnesses were not called, so it is hard to assess their views of section 127

⁷³ Constitution of Australian Commonwealth, 1900, section 127.

⁷⁴ Commission, p. xxi.

⁷⁵ Angela Ballara, *Proud to Be White* (Auckland, 1986). On ‘Aryan’ Māori, see Tony Ballantyne *Webs of Empire* (Vancouver, 2002).

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, Curzon-Siggers, p. 110.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, James Yong, p. 225.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, John Chapman Andrew, p. 358.

- or for that matter the claim that they had greater privileges than white New Zealanders. Despite all this, even the Commission had to admit that no Australian they had spoken to thought that the section should apply to Māori, or that the constitution should be amended to reflect this.⁷⁹ In other words, this was not actually a legal or political issue: it was about how white New Zealand saw itself and Australia.

The racial and imperial context of Federation is best expressed via a cartoon that was published in the *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies' Journal* in 1900. Barton had been quoted as telling the Australian Federal League that, given that the Commonwealth was about to form, the Imperial Government should defer any decision about letting New Zealand annex any of Britain's territories in the Pacific Islands. The cartoon shows Zealandia,⁸⁰ wearing a korowai (Māori cloak) and sheltering a Pacific Islander. She is being threatened by New South Wales as personified by a huge, subhuman ogre while a Federated Australia stands in the background reading a book on self-government. 'Come into my arms,' cries New South Wales. 'Nay,' says New Zealand, 'those arms bear chains.' (continued overleaf)

⁷⁹ See Mein Smith, 'New Zealand federation commissioners' for a detailed examination.

⁸⁰ The personification of New Zealand- cf. Britannia, Marianne etc.



HOW WE SEE IT

THE OGRE: "Come into these arms." **NEW ZEALAND:** "Nay sir, those arms bear chains."

The New South Wales Premier speaking at a Federal League meeting said that as the Colonies were on the eve of federation it was proper for Great Britain to defer linking the South Sea Islands to New Zealand. He also believed that the sentiment of the people of New Zealand would force that Government into the Australian Federation.

New Zealand Graphic, Auckland, Saturday, October 20, 1900. Vol. XXV. - No. XVI. Cartoonist: Seatz.

81

⁸¹ *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal*, October 20, 1900. Ref: J-040-002, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

There is much to take in here. There is a clear dichotomy between New Zealand expansionism - a gentle, motherly embrace of the islands - and the enslaving, carnal appetites of New South Wales. The personification of Australia is absent and ineffective; despite the fact that most of Australia had had self-government since the 1850s, it was only now learning the art, compared to adult and decisive New Zealand. The Pacific Islander is a gentle figure, taking comfort in Zealandia's protection - but New South Wales is not even human. In fact, the depiction is reminiscent of the bestial caricatures of the Irish that were so common in the contemporary press and is thus perhaps an allusion to New South Wales' convict heritage.⁸² In all, it is as succinct a summation of New Zealand's vision of its place in the world as could be imagined. It is more racially enlightened than Australia, yet more pure. It is free of foreign avarice but bound to a course of enlightened imperialism. It is a greater place in the present and possessed of a greater destiny to come.

What does New Zealand's vision of itself say about Australasia generally? Clearly, there were distinct local differences that cannot be ignored. The presence of the Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi meant that New Zealand's racial politics developed upon different lines than treaty-less Australia with its doctrine of *terra nullius*. There was, to some extent, a different economic structure as well, an idea put forward in James Belich's 'Recolonisation Thesis,' that New Zealand had become once again dependent upon trade with Britain at a time when the Australian colonies were exploring new markets.⁸³ Ultimately, though, the local peculiarities of New Zealand are not the subject of this thesis. What it is interested in are the commonalities: and it is striking that many of the currents that were binding Australasia together were also the currents that bore New Zealand apart.

⁸² Another reminder that 'Anglo-Celtic' is not a useful term for white Australasia at this time.

⁸³ See Introduction for discussion of Belich.

Consider, first, the rhetoric of Imperial reform. In Australia, as we saw in Chapter Two, Imperial Federation was hotly contested ground between local radicals and respectable local Federationists. This was the case in New Zealand as well, save that the middle-class partisans of Federation never achieved a local majority. Nonetheless, the discourse was the same. Reform of the Empire was an assumed good. The various people who spoke to the Commission did not always agree on where precisely they thought New Zealand would be half a century or a century in the future; what was agreed was that it would be in the Empire. The mere suggestion that it would not was so scandalous that it was assumed such a thing could only come to pass as a result of Australian rebellion. The hundreds of people cited in the Commission Report do not include any radical nationalists, at least not any open ones. There is no indication that the movement to keep New Zealand out of the Commonwealth of Australia was 'nationalist.' Anti-Federationists considered New Zealand distinct from Australia, but so did Federationists who often cited the example of Britain itself - with its Scots, Welsh, Irish and English - as the model of a state with strong regional distinctions.⁸⁴ Both sides, then, were arguing for imperial loyalism.

Imperial loyalism, then, was what was changing. It is clear that New Zealand's sense of its place in the Empire was changing. While it is important not to pre-empt the concept of 'Dominion' status (in 1901, 'Dominion' was largely a word associated with Canada, not a particular class of self-governing colony), the fact that New Zealand would secure that title in 1905 shows that the decades-old status quo of responsible government was beginning to shift. Importantly, that title was awarded to Seddon's government - utterly imperial loyalist and anti-Australian Federation, yet clearly itself no longer happy to stay in the same position as New Zealand held in the 1880s and 1890s.

⁸⁴ See, for instance, the testimony of Arthur Ward Beaven, p.218.

New Zealand's opposition to Federation also shows just how much Australasian Britons felt that their racial identity was under threat. New Zealand would not formally inaugurate the White New Zealand policy until the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act of 1920 but this was not due to its being more tolerant.⁸⁵ Instead it relied upon the colony's 'remoteness, and the cost of the voyage to its shores, as its safeguards.'⁸⁶ In fact, as has been clearly shown, the racial paranoia that affected Australia was in certain ways even stronger in New Zealand: all the intellectual currents that told Australians that they had to stand vigilant against their own geography lest their continent be overrun by non-white labourers also told New Zealand that it had to stand clear if it wished to remain British. This is why the Commission's report should be integrated into studies of Australian Federation proper. Norris's argument that Immigration Restriction was the passion of a few politicians has been rebutted by fifty years of scholarship, most recently in the work of Mountford and Martens.⁸⁷ But Hirst's contention that the issue had already been settled or 'solved' clearly does not hold in the face of an entire Australasian colony that was clearly unconvinced Australia had arrived at any resolution on the matter. The testimony to that effect cut right across class and geographical lines; clergy, journalists, labour activists, politicians, merchants and industrialists all concurred that the race could best be defended by staying out of the Commonwealth. The fact that that strength of popular feeling was also felt across the Tasman, as has been seen in every chapter of this dissertation, is clear evidence that the argument that Federation was *not* bound up with White Australia simply does not hold water. The two arguments were so tied up in New Zealand that they played no small role in

⁸⁵ Donald Denoon, in an uncharacteristically sloppy remark, describes 1890s New Zealand as 'colour-blind' in 'The Isolation of Australian History,' in *Historical Studies*, 22:87 (1986), pp. 252-260.

⁸⁶ Reeves, *State Experiments*, vol ii, p. 357.

⁸⁷ Mountford, *Britain, China and Colonial Australia*; Martens, *Empire and Asia*.

depriving Australia of a seventh state; why, despite their shared vehemence, would they not be similarly entwined in the rest of Australasia?

These ideas about the fragility of whiteness and the importance of the Empire were closely linked. They show that in New Zealand, at least, Australasian Imperial Identities were a curious mix of self-confidence and paranoia. The colony was bound to become a Britain of the South Seas, unless it was polluted by Asians, Pacific Islanders and Australians who had degenerated either through racial intermarriage or the natural decline brought on by a tropical climate. The Pacific Islands were the natural patrimony of New Zealand, a bulwark against the Commonwealth and conniving foreign powers - unless, of course, New Zealand joined the Commonwealth in which case they were baubles for Australia who would surely reduce its new state to 'no more political importance than Samoa and the Fijis.'⁸⁸ If New Zealand did not join the Commonwealth, Australia would be an assured ally. If it did join the Commonwealth, it would be trapped with a continent full of rebels and degenerates.

As the dissertation returns to the six colonies that did form the Commonwealth, it is doing so under the working assumption that much of what held true in New Zealand held true in the rest of Australasia. Federation was not, in and of itself, nationalist; indeed, much of the opposition to the movement in Australia came from radical nationalists. In fact, the Australian radical nationalist anti-Federationists scared New Zealand's bourgeois imperialist anti-Federationists.⁸⁹ In New Zealand opposition to Federation was a way in which the respectable middle-classes could secure their sense of New Zealand's white Imperial future. In Australia the reverse was true: it was a process by which parochial nationalisms and the old-fashioned, unreformed Empire could both be worked through. It was the way by which a

⁸⁸ Commission, Edward Roper, p. 167.

⁸⁹ See Steven Loveridge, 'The "Other" on the Other Side of the Ditch' The Conception of New Zealand's Disassociation from Australia,' in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 44:1, (2016) pp. 70-94; and Rollo Arnold, 'The Australasian Peoples and their World, 1888-1915,' in Sinclair, ed., *Tasman Relations*, pp. 52-70.

new future could be built for Australia; white, resolutely Imperial and standing proud and clear of Asia.

Having dealt with how ideas about racial purity and imperial security had, in the end, helped cement the divergence of New Zealand from a federating Australia, it is time to examine how those ideas played out within that new federation. The same fears that New Zealand had had about Australia, the fears of racial degradation, fears of weakening the Empire; these fears helped shape the Commonwealth of Australia's first great legislative project. It is time to discuss the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901.

iii. **The Immigration Restriction Act and Empire**⁹⁰

Four years after the 1897 Conference, Australia federated. The Commonwealth was inaugurated in May 1901 by the Duke of York ('a thin, undersized man who has never done anything save to be born', sneered the *Bulletin*).⁹¹ In September, the Federal Parliament sat to discuss the proposed Immigration Restriction Act (IRA). The IRA relied upon a literacy test; the various immigration laws of the colonies-turned-states would now be superseded by the Natal Formula. Its potential implications for Australia's place in the empire was clear. It had the potential to insult Japan, a power that was clearly moving closely to Britain; it was cutting off the new Commonwealth from vast areas of the British Empire; and it would need to be approved by the imperial government, who had so often reserved colonial migration restrictions. To the extent that the IRA was a compromise with the Colonial Office, it was not one that the Melbourne government intended to admit. The debate was not over whether to pass the bill, but whether to direct it more explicitly against non-white migrants; for the dissertation's purposes, what is fascinating is how the imperial government was discussed. It is not so much that there was an argument over whether 'Mr Chamberlain' would support the bill, but whether it was relevant if he did or not.

Government backbenchers praised the Colonial Office and spoke about the importance of its approval - and then noted that that approval would be forthcoming regardless. 'The Commonwealth occupies such a position at the present time in the Empire,' said the Protectionist Carty Salmon, 'that a Colonial Secretary or British Cabinet would pause before doing anything that would at all strain the friendly relations which exist before us.'⁹² His colleague Langdon Bonython concurred. The Commonwealth was fortunate in the

⁹⁰ Technically the Immigration Restriction Bill for most of 1901, it has generally been referred to as an Act for ease of reading.

⁹¹ *Bulletin*, 18 May 1901 pg. 6.

⁹² *CPD*, AHR, no.36, 20 September 1901, p. 5067.

Colonial Secretary, for there was no man ‘more genuinely sympathetic with the aspirations of Greater Britain than Mr. Chamberlain.’ Australia might even waive its rights on occasion ‘in the interests of the empire.’⁹³ However, Bonython said, under no circumstances would it sacrifice the rights of the Anglo-Saxon race. There are shades here of burying Caesar, not praising him. The Labor member James Ronald argued that the Colonial Secretary had been so publicly supportive of a white Australia that the government should pass the strongest, strictest bill it could draft, knowing that ‘Mr Chamberlain, without falling over himself in a very conspicuous way, could not interfere with us.’⁹⁴ This was not the mood of a House that felt that it was having to find an accommodation with the imperial government. Those who supported the bill felt that it accomplished everything it needed to; those who felt the bill did not go far enough did not think the imperial government was in any position to withhold consent. In other words, by 1901 the political representatives of Australia felt that this was an important moment for the empire, and they were the ones making the political weather.

The government did not entirely share its backbenchers’ faith that Chamberlain could be so easily dealt with. The year before, a delegation of colonial politicians had taken the draft Commonwealth constitution to London for the approval of the imperial government. In Chapter One, we saw the young Deakin upbraid Salisbury at the 1887 Colonial Conference. In 1900, the older Victorian bit his tongue, even though he was not impressed with the treatment of the delegation. Chamberlain had spoken to them ‘as a lord paramount,’ and had, Deakin claimed, decided that if the Australians thought the bill would be passed without amendment ‘he’d see them damned first.’⁹⁵ Chamberlain was determined that Australia would retain a link to the Privy Council, thus keeping a certain judicial control in Britain

⁹³ Ibid, p. 5070.

⁹⁴ *CPD*, AHR, no.36, 12 September, p. 4802.

⁹⁵ Deakin, *The Federal Story*, pp. 135-136. Allegedly the remark was made to John Henniker Heaton, the MP for Canterbury and unofficial spokesman for Australia in the Commons. I did not find a note of the remark in the Deakin papers in the National Library of Australia.

itself. Deakin felt that Chamberlain was worried about imperial issues being decided by an Australian court.⁹⁶ The legal debate is unimportant; what matters is that the issue had put two of the most devoted reformers in the empire against each other. Chamberlain wanted the Privy Council involved because his great fear was of further decentralisation of the empire - Deakin was, as shown in Chapter Two, a devout imperial federationist himself. However, even that apparently unifying creed had now split. Chamberlain believed that to further his reforms, the self-governing colonies had to be tied to the imperial bureaucracy. By 1900, however, Deakin thought that reform would come to a stagnant Britain from the example of the colonies. London was 'apoplectic, stertorous, unwieldy, unhealthy, philistine and gross, greatly in need of a strict regiment and severe reform if it was to continue to be the centre of an Empire.'⁹⁷ The purpose of the meeting between the Australians and the Colonial Office was to decide upon:

the relations between the mother country and her most distant dependency, that of which the future was most promising, the habitable area largest, the wealth greatest, and whose isolation rendered it more than any other part of the Empire capable of standing alone.⁹⁸

Again, neither Deakin nor Barton nor any of the other delegates intended that Australia should stand alone. Nor did they yet insist that Australia be treated as an equal in all respects. Their actions were guided, however, by a sense of the Commonwealth's potential to be a partner - or, just maybe, a rival centre - of the empire. So too, as we have seen, did New Zealand's sense that it could be a second Great Britain keep it out of the Commonwealth.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 155.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 162.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 133. NB: This section relies heavily on the *Federal Story*, which was published posthumously. However, it was written between 1898-1900, and Deakin wrote the last sections as he experienced them. Bearing in mind Deakin's biases, it is still an extremely valuable source.

It is important to understand that all this optimism about the Commonwealth's place in the Empire was tempered by an increasing sense that it was running out of time to secure its borders. By 1901, more Australians than ever were unhappy with existing migration laws. The *Brisbane Courier* described existing handwriting tests as 'a singularly ineffective barrier against the quick, clever Japanese.'⁹⁹ The presence of Indian labourers was particularly concerning, because while it was now evident that the Pacific Islanders were at last facing deportation, there was nothing on the statute books that could prevent them being replaced with workers from within the empire. Said the *Courier*, 'It is not so easy to refuse them admission, when as British subjects they claim the right to visit, and live, and work in Australia... [the deportation of Pacific Islanders will lead to farmers to use Indian workers]... and when this happens the white labourer will have met his greatest antagonist.'¹⁰⁰ Later that month the paper returned to the theme, worrying that Indians 'will simply pour in' because 'a British subject has British laws at his back.'¹⁰¹ The economic structure of the new Commonwealth was at risk unless the Pacific Islands Laborers Act was passed at the same time as the IRA.

There were however, as Barton said, 'grounds even more conclusive than those of labour' to pass the IRA.¹⁰² This was the point at which, infamously, the Prime Minister read from Charles Pearson. 'The day will come...' came Pearson's warning, and Barton asked the House 'Is that not something to guard against?'¹⁰³ In Chapter Five it was noted that Pearson's pessimism ran counter to the proactive measures of White Australia. Barton told the House that he did not pretend that Australia was in immediate danger if the bill was not passed - but action had to be taken. In Barton's speech, it is also worth noting that he set the fears of

⁹⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 1 February 1901, pg.6.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 2 February 1901 p. 6.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 12 February 1901, p. 5.

¹⁰² *CPD*, AHR, no.36, 7 August 1901, p. 3503.

¹⁰³ See Chapter Five, footnote 22 for the fuller quote.

Pearson and the importance of Australia's imperial connection together. He encouraged his audience in 'the practical realisation of today that the Empire to which we belong is one that it is worth belonging to.' It would protect the Commonwealth against evil. Again, Barton projected that distinct mixture of confidence and paranoia. Pearson was right, Barton believed, that Australia's Asian neighbours were rising - yet unlike Pearson, Barton thought that future could be guarded against. The empire was a worthy moral cause - but more importantly, Australia must not 'diminish the ease with which the Empire could assist us.' Barton was declaring that the two great factors that had to be considered were the scientific facts, as laid out by Pearson and other racial scientists on the one hand, and the political reality of Australia's place in the empire on the other. That was the framing of White Australia: finding the path which would let the Commonwealth grow to its potential without sacrificing its racial unity *or* its place within British civilisation. This was, fundamentally, an imperial framing.

It was also the framing accepted by the bill's detractors. William McMillan was a Free Trader and the deputy of George Reid, now leader of the opposition. Opposition to restriction acts had often come from the capitalist right, but McMillan believed that the proposed IRA did not go far enough. The literacy test was not a strong enough safeguard of racial unity. It was so important to pass the strictest measures necessary, McMillan told the House, and parliament had to be honest about the stakes. Australia was not Canada or South Africa, he said - they had the pressure of a land border with foreign powers to keep them in the empire. Australia was an island continent, both more vulnerable than any other part of the empire and with greater potential for growth. There was an unavoidable conflict between the ideal of keeping Australia for the British race and keeping it within an empire that contained 'within its citizens men of all colours and all classes.' McMillan said that Australia had to speak firmly to the imperial government as an equal partner, and make London see that this

was a shared problem ‘which you and we have to face, and the more straightforwardly, and the more honestly we face it the better for the future.’ That honesty was all the more important, said McMillan - *Sir William McMillan*, no republican he - because some things were more important than imperial loyalty.

If I thought that we had to put in the scales, on the one side, the British connexion with certain restrictions on our autonomous government, and the populating with South Carolinas many portions of the northern parts of the continent, and on the other side a disjointed empire, I would unreservedly make my choice. But this Bill is an absolute fraud.¹⁰⁴

Deakin, now Attorney-General, for his part claimed outrage at this ‘wanton, unjustifiable misrepresentation of the attitude of the British government.’¹⁰⁵

Despite his own occasional misgivings about the imperial government, Deakin was cast in the House as its defender. Opposition MPs quoted his own glowing reports of his time in London the year before: if Chamberlain was as understanding of Australia as Deakin said, he would not stand in the way of a stronger bill.¹⁰⁶ The government was now caught in an awkward position: it was difficult to argue against harder measures due to the public’s anti-Asian hysteria, but the more it argued for conciliating the imperial government the more it sounded like Barton’s government were needlessly toadying to Whitehall.

In reality, the Commonwealth was not at all sure that even the literacy test would be approved. By 1901, then, Australian politicians were approaching the empire in a spirit of enormous confidence. They had federated, written a constitution and had that constitution accepted with minimal changes. When agreement had been reached in London on the Privy

¹⁰⁴ *CPD*, AHR, no.36, 6 September, p. 4627.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 12 September, p. 4815.

¹⁰⁶ See *ibid*, Wilks, pp. 4829-4830.

Council, Deakin, Barton and Charles Kingston had waited until Chamberlain's staff left the room and then danced around the table hand in hand.¹⁰⁷ The partner of that confidence, though, was an extreme paranoia: Australia had potential, but it had not yet realised it. It was the combination of that confidence and paranoia that led to the IRA. It was also why, upon that act passing, the imperial loyalist Barton was prepared to try and circumvent the imperial government.

¹⁰⁷ Deakin, p. 155.

iv. Approving White Australia

In December 1901, the bill passed its third reading, and the IRA went to the Governor-General. This was not a formality. The 1880s and 1890s had seen several immigration bills reserved by various governors. For all that the IRA was passed it is clear from the vantage of the archives that the bill was always likely to be approved, but only from that vantage point. While the IRA had a political tailwind behind it, not least from federation, Barton and Deakin had by their own admission drafted it carefully in case the Colonial Office directed Governor-General Lord Hopetoun to refuse consent. In the end, the bill would be approved. However, in the summer of 1901-1902 the Commonwealth did not know that. In that period, the Federal Government had to deal with the protests of the aggrieved Japanese consul. Barton was adamant that Australia had no foreign policy and would follow the directives of the empire. Yet at that crucial moment he appears to have sought to outmanoeuvre both the Japanese and imperial governments. The Commonwealth's first act as a loyal imperial society would be to try and force the hand of the imperial government. Australia professed faith that Chamberlain would do right by the empire, but it did not hurt to be sure.¹⁰⁸

The Commonwealth was right to be concerned about whether the IRA would receive the approval of the Governor-General. It was dawning on Whitehall that the Natal Formula, for all its apparent possibilities as a compromise, did not actually solve the problem that immigration restrictions were insulting to the restricted immigrants. Indian subjects being asked to take a literacy test in German were not going to be any less angry than if the law explicitly barred them on race; perhaps more importantly, the proposed restrictions angered Japan just as Britain was aiming at signing the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Worse, the

¹⁰⁸ This next section draws from the work of Heere, pp. 38-42, Norris, chapter three, & R.A. Huttenback, 'The British Empire as a "White Man's Country"- Racial Attitudes and Immigration Legislation in the Colonies of White Settlement.', *Journal of British Studies* (1973), vol.13, no.1, pp. 108-137.

opposition in the House showed that there were many Australian politicians who felt that the bill was already too much of a compromise. The Colonial Office faced a hard choice: if they told Hopetoun to refuse assent, they would enrage Australia, and risk a major political crisis by disregarding the legislature's first major bill. If they assented, they risked undermining the Foreign Office's great diplomatic endeavour, not to mention the potential ire of the Viceroy of India.¹⁰⁹ Worse, assent might not even satisfy Commonwealth fire-eaters like McMillan or Billy Hughes, or even confirm them in their view that the IRA was a half-measure. There was no clear path forward.

Chamberlain himself remained certain that literacy tests were the best route forward. He wrote to John Forrest, in November 1901 that he supported Australia:

taking steps to prevent the country from being overrun by the coloured races but I also feel, as you do, that the matter is full of difficulty, and that we, as Imperialists, must take care not to make invidious distinctions between the coloured races who live under the British flag, and that we must also avoid unnecessary offence to powerful nations like Japan whose friendship in the future may be of the greatest importance to the States of the Pacific.

The advantage of literacy tests, he continued hopefully was that 'no nations would have the right to object to legislation which is of universal application.'¹¹⁰ This was never actually tested, unfortunately, because the Australian government was making it very clear that it had no intention of pursuing 'universal application' of the tests. Throughout the debate in parliament, Barton had assured the House that the test would be a formality for white migrants. 'If a Swede were asked to write a passage at dictation, I would not dream of

¹⁰⁹The India Office's position on the IRA is not dealt with here. Chamberlain and his undersecretaries were certainly concerned about the prospect of angering it, however, and the India Office belatedly raised concerns about the IRA in 1903.

¹¹⁰ Chamberlain to Forrest, November 13 1901, JCP, JC/14/1/1/17, CRL.

instructing the officer to subject the immigrant to a test in Italian. That would be unfair, and is not what this House has in its mind in pressing this legislation.’¹¹¹ There was no chance, therefore, that the bill could accomplish the supposed goal of the Natal Formula in restricting immigration without insult.

This was proved by the response of the Japanese government to the IRA. Its objection was not based on the literacy test itself, or to racial immigration quotas. Japan was in accord with the desire to exclude undesirable immigrants. The problem was that the latter term included the Japanese. ‘The Japanese,’ complained Consul Eitaki Hisakichi to Barton, ‘belong to an Empire whose standard of civilisation is so much higher than that of Kanakas, Negroes, Pacific Islanders, Indians or other Eastern peoples, that to refer to them in the same terms cannot but be regarded in the light of a reproach.’¹¹² They preferred the dictation test to be in English, rather than ‘a European language’ so that Japanese migrants were treated equally with non-British Europeans. Ironically, this had been Barton’s preference as well before he was overruled by the Colonial Office.¹¹³ The Colonial Office thought that specifying that the test be carried out in English would insult the European powers. It also, again demonstrating that the IRA was universally understood to have imperial implications, suggested that an English-language test would undermine ‘the policy of equality between all white men for which the South African war is being fought.’¹¹⁴ Unfortunately for Eitaki, Barton’s government entirely agreed that the Japanese were on a higher plane of civilisation than the rest of Asia. That was the problem. The Japanese were worthy, Deakin said, of being counted ‘the highest and most civilised among the nations of the world.’ That was why they were ‘the most dangerous... it is not the bad qualities, but the good qualities of these alien

¹¹¹ *CPD*, AHR, vol 36, October 1, 1901, p. 5350.

¹¹² Eitaki to Barton, 3 May 1901, CO 418/10, TNA.

¹¹³ Lake & Reynolds, p. 148.

¹¹⁴ H. Bertram Cox, 23 August 1901, cited in Lake & Reynolds p. 148.

racess that make them dangerous to us.’ The Attorney-General recommended that the Japanese be excluded ‘in the most considerate manner possible,’ but they must be excluded nonetheless.¹¹⁵

The Japanese government, by December, abandoned attempts to persuade the Australians to revise their objections. They had a more serious tool to use against the IRA - the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation. As discussed in Chapter Five, Article XIX provided that colonies could adhere to the Treaty by means of a separate Protocol; most Australian colonies had decided against this in 1896, but Queensland had agreed on the condition of a cap being placed on migrant Japanese artisans. This was signed in 1899, and a further Queensland-Japanese Agreement freezing the number of migrants was reached in 1900. With the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act, it was now unclear whether that treaty was still in force.¹¹⁶

The Japanese believed that it was, and that they would not be subject to the same restrictions as other Asian groups. On December 21, 1901, Eitaki wrote to Hopetoun that, in view of the existing Treaty with Queensland, the IRA was risking a conflict ‘which I cannot help thinking would be advantageous to all parties to avoid if possible.’¹¹⁷ It is important to understand what was happening here. As in previous disputes in the 1890s, Japan was not relying upon the local colonial government. Its assumption rather was that this imperial matter could be resolved by petitioning either imperial representatives such as Hopetoun - or by approaching the imperial government directly.

The exact timing is important. On December 21, the Colonial Office advised and the Foreign Office proposed, pending the Foreign Secretary Lord Lansdowne’s approval, ‘to

¹¹⁵ *CPD*, AHR, no. 36, p. 4812.

¹¹⁶ Norris, p. 95.

¹¹⁷ Eitaki to Hopetoun 21 December 1901, NAA, ‘Governor-General’s Office, Correspondence with the Consul for Japan on Japanese Immigrants in Queensland,’ A6662/3.

approve of Lord Hopetoun assenting to the bill.’¹¹⁸ However, on that same day, Lansdowne’s undersecretary advised the Colonial Office that Lansdowne had been approached by the Japanese ambassador, Hayashi Gonsuke. Hayashi had requested that Britain withdraw the IRA, and pointed out that Deakin had admitted in the House ‘that when the Japanese learned of the discrimination with which the educational tests were to be applied, there would naturally arise a feeling of resentment which would be legitimate on their part.’¹¹⁹ The Colonial Office responded on 4 January that they had to ‘take account the words of the Bill itself, not of words uttered in debate which have no binding force whatsoever.’ Besides, if Britain disallowed the bill then it was likely that it would be immediately followed by an even more objectionable law.¹²⁰ By 18 February, it had been decided that the bill would not be overridden. Japan’s diplomacy had failed.

The Commonwealth, however, was not aware of any of this. The Melbourne government was seriously worried about the problem raised by the Queensland Treaty. Attorney-General Deakin thus wrote a memorandum that denied the Commonwealth was bound by Queensland’s agreement and warned that ‘the right of immigration into Queensland would practically, and perhaps legally, amount to a right of entering from Queensland all the States of the Commonwealth.’¹²¹ Legally, it was not the strongest case Deakin could make: whatever the unintended consequences, Queensland had acceded to the Treaty. The Colonial Office was caught off guard and on 29 January Chamberlain telegraphed Hopetoun with the advice to defer the IRA while Whitehall lawyers examined the situation. Hopetoun, however, had already assented to the act on 23 December. The Governor-General now advised Barton on 30 January that the IRA might be refused consent after all.

¹¹⁸ H. Bertram Cox to Foreign Office, 21 December 1901, copy in NAA, ‘Correspondence re Immigration Restriction Act 1901, A1/1904/7830.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, Bertie to CO, 21 December 1901.

¹²⁰ Ibid, Cox to FO, 4 January 1901.

¹²¹ Attorney-General Deakin on Treaty with Japan, CO 881/11/189, TNA.

This was the moment at which Barton began to try and force the imperial government's hand. It is clear from the correspondence in Whitehall that the bill would likely have been approved in some form anyway, although it would probably have required one more round of legislation in both Queensland and at the federal level. Barton did not know this, however. From his perspective, his government's great achievement - white Australia's great achievement - was in danger of defeat. He was prompted therefore to involve himself in a matter of foreign relations. This went against both the defined powers of his office, and against his own expressed views. When Barton had campaigned for the Federal parliament in February 1901, he told a crowd at Ipswich that 'there could be no foreign policy of the Commonwealth. The foreign policy belonged to the Empire.'¹²² Barton was not simply making a grab for power, either: he genuinely seems to have felt that Australia should not be an international power in its own right. In 1902 he complained that the French consul thought he was an ambassador, whereas Australia could have no role in foreign relations 'excepting with the express authority of His Majesty's Imperial Government.'¹²³ It is therefore telling that when confronted with the possible failure of the IRA he set out to involve himself in international affairs; Edmund Barton, imperial loyalist, did not, in the crunch, trust the imperial government to solve an imperial problem.

On 17 January, Barton met Eitaki for the first time. Eitaki pointed out that Queensland had continued to honour its agreement with Japan after it had acceded to the constitution. It seemed untenable to suddenly claim that the two were in conflict. Moreover, the Queensland government had already attempted to negotiate a compromise on its own recognisance following the bill's second reading in October: that was a recognition that the state had authority in the matter.¹²⁴ Japan and Whitehall seemed to have the better legal case; by the

¹²² *Brisbane Courier*, 28 February 1901 pg. 5.

¹²³ Barton to Hopetoun, April 1902, CO 418/18.

¹²⁴ Queensland Premier's Office to Eitaki, 3 October 1901, NAA 935014.

end of January it seemed that Barton could do little but wait for judgement. His moment came on 30 January. At the second meeting with Eitaki, the Japanese consul made a concession: while Japan considered the Treaty with Queensland still valid, he said that his government would respect Australia's right to terminate it, provided Japanese citizens with an existing visa were allowed in. Barton agreed. What Eitaki did not know was that on the same day, Barton had received advice from the Colonial Office that the IRA *and* the Treaty were valid. Nor did the Colonial Office know about Eitaki's concession to Barton.

Barton seized the moment. He asked Hopetoun to report to Chamberlain that a 'settlement' had been achieved. This was literally done on the same day, 30 January. Barton did not consult his cabinet or anyone else. The sequence of events is clear: Barton was advised that Japan was about to win a diplomatic victory that would render the IRA toothless, and that the imperial government was not going to prevent this. In his meeting with Eitaki, Barton must have realised that Japan did not know it was on the cusp of that victory. Therefore, he had a limited window to force a settlement before either the Japanese or imperial governments realised what had happened. On 13 February, he told parliament of Eitaki's offer, and that it was a 'fair, considerate, and courteous proposal, and it was accepted.'¹²⁵ The next day, he gave a statement to the *Argus* that 'the matter has been arranged by his [Eitaki's] government.'¹²⁶ Barton publicly announced the deal on the same day that Britain and Japan unveiled the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. In his statement to the *Argus*, the Prime Minister even managed to imply - without any definite statement - that the two agreements were part of the same rapprochement.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ *CPD*, AHR, no.3, 13 February 1902, p. 10041.

¹²⁶ *Argus*, 13 February 1902, p. 5

¹²⁷ This sequence is convincingly described in chapter three of Norris.

Japan was angered, but knew that it had lost the argument, at least for the moment. The Japanese government would continue to complain to Britain about Australia's behaviour in the following years, but Eitaki had blunted its best instrument.¹²⁸ To the Colonial Office, it was a *fait accompli*. It was not missed that Barton's declaration that Australia had no role in foreign affairs seemed to have caveats. A minute of 22 April noted that 'presumably such status will be claimed if at all only in instances where it is convenient to do so.'¹²⁹ Barton departed from his policy because he and his government did not trust the Colonial Office's arbitration; in this matter Britain could not be trusted to do right by the Empire.

Earlier, the idea that Immigration Restriction was already 'settled' before Federation was discussed. Ironically, much of the best evidence that this interpretation was mistaken is laid out by a key advocate, Norris. But both he and John Hirst's ideas that the consensus that had been reached in the 1890s had made the issue less politically relevant, or that its passage through the new Federal Parliament was somehow assured can clearly be dismissed. Yes, the British government eventually decided the bill would be passed: but this was only after strenuous discussions over the dictation test, after fiery speeches in the House of Representatives, and after the new Federal government decided it would immediately test the limits of its new-found autonomy to carry through its program. This issue that, more than any other, determined how Australia would relate to the outside world was important enough to the Commonwealth that the new Dominion risked a diplomatic incident with Japan, and tried the patience of Britain itself, so that it could carry the day.

Jeremy Martens, in *Empire and Asia*, portrays Japan's diplomacy in Australia in this period as being highly successful; the gaps between the British government and the colonial

¹²⁸ In December 1907, the Foreign Office requested from the CO a collection of all documents related to the dispute after Japan raised the issue again. CO 881/11/189.

¹²⁹ Quoted in Norris, p. 249.

governments were ‘skilfully exploited,’ and he emphasises the victory Japan won in 1905 when some concessions were made to the IRA to allow some Japanese merchants, scholars and tourists to avoid the dictation test.¹³⁰ This assessment rings hollow. It was not Japan who exploited the gaps between governments; it was the Australians, who took advantage of Japanese diplomatic courtesy and the slow back-and-forth of imperial communications to announce - and thus realise - their victory. Such manoeuvrings were unnecessary. Chamberlain had already informed the Foreign Office that it would be unwise to reserve the bill; he in turn was advised by Hopetoun that doing so would unleash ‘a violent agitation against what still remains of Imperial control.’¹³¹

Hopetoun’s remark, itself exaggerating the extent of Australian autonomy, gets to the heart of why the passage of the act is so revealing. Barton was in no way an anti-imperialist; nor was he trying to seize more power for the Commonwealth than the constitution allowed - as we saw above, he was prepared to tell foreign powers that he was not allowed to negotiate with them. Except that he did precisely that with Japan. It was not that he was trying to break with the Empire. His speeches to the House are concerned with the preservation of Australia: as a white society, but specifically as a British society. Opponents of the literacy test had also couched their views in loyalism. Labor leader Chris Watson pointed out that British Indians and Chinese were British subjects, but Australians were self-governing citizens; Billy Hughes accused the British of putting the values of the Empire behind an accommodation with Japan that was ‘selfishly strategic.’¹³²

¹³⁰ Martens, *Empire*, p. 81, p. 112.

¹³¹ Hopetoun to Chamberlain, 24 February 1902, CRL, Chamberlain Papers, JC 14/1/1–60, cited in Heere, p. 42.

¹³² Atkinson, ‘The White Australia Policy,’ pp. 12-21.

In 1901, the loyal leadership of Australia could try and circumvent the British government - because it was Australia, not Britain, who was putting the values of the British Empire and the British race first.¹³³

¹³³ Humphrey McQueen observed that, like white Rhodesians, Australians before 1920 were ‘suspicious of Britain’s loyalty to the empire.’ *A New Britannia*, p.22.

v. **An Alliance with Japan**

The events of January 1901 showed the strength of the British Empire, at least in the minds of many Australians. Federation was a moment of consolidation, of taking disparate colonies and forging them into something greater, a Dominion - or even a nation - that would stand as a great British outpost in the Pacific. A year later, in January 1902, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was signed. It was a consolidation of imperial strength of an entirely less triumphant nature. The imperial government had finally taken the sort of dramatic action that colonial leaders had urged in response to the rival powers of France, Germany, and Japan. That dramatic action, however, amounted not to an expansion of Royal Navy power in the Pacific but to a desire in London to cut back on naval spending.

The origins of the alliance dated back to the mid-1890s. Japan's victory over China in 1895 had been diminished by the Triple Intervention of France, Germany, and Russia. That unlikely coalition had not just embarrassed Japan, the three Powers had also, soon after, gained their own concessions from the Qing Empire. Britain's policy of preventing a partition of China into formal spheres of influence was increasingly at risk of obsolescence; Germany now had the Shandong peninsula, Russia was expanding into Manchuria, and French influence was spreading from Indochina into Yunnan. Initially it was hoped that the three powers might be dealt with solely through British strength - as Francis Bertie of the Foreign Office wrote in 1897, 'a squadron to deal with a Russian-German-French combination would be our best security.'¹³⁴ However, by the close of the decade it was clear that the Royal Navy was becoming overstretched. Despite an enormous shipbuilding program in the 1890s that had expanded the fleet by almost four hundred thousand tonnes, Britain had failed to grow relative to its rivals' fleets. In 1890, the Triple Intervention powers had a combined naval

¹³⁴ T.G. Otte, *The China Question: Great Power Rivalry and British Isolation, 1894-1905* (Oxford, 2007) p. 97.

tonnage of 689, 000 tonnes compared to Britain's 679, 000. In 1900, the figure was 1, 167, 000 tonnes to Britain's 1, 065, 000.¹³⁵ The reality was worse than the paper figure, for Britain had more interests to defend across the world compared to its rivals, who could concentrate their smaller forces where needed. Indeed, the South African War was an example of how Britain's interests could be threatened by a smaller power, as is evident from the months that it took for the empire to concentrate its forces. Arthur Balfour said of South Africa in 1901 that the war had shown that the empire had 'enormous strength, both effective and latent, if we can concentrate.' However, 'the dispersion of our imperial interests... renders it almost impossible.'¹³⁶ The Alliance with Japan made it possible again.

The Alliance was simple enough on paper. In Article I, the parties noted their respective interests in China and Korea. In Article II, Britain and Japan declared they would remain neutral if the other party went to war with another power over those interests. In Article III, they declared that 'If in the above event any other Power or Powers should join in hostilities against the Ally, the other High Contracting Party will come to its assistance and will conduct the war in common, and make peace in mutual agreement with it.'¹³⁷ This transformed the strategic situation. If Russia were to go to war with Japan, it could no longer call upon its ally France without risking war with Britain. A second Triple Intervention was now impossible. To the extent that the imperial government and the colonies had shared concerns about the balance of power in the Pacific shifting away from the Royal Navy, the Alliance was a great accomplishment. Although the Alliance did not result in an immediate drawing down of Royal Navy strength in East Asia, it meant that spending on the China Station could be capped, and funds reallocated to more pressing strategic needs. Japan, in

¹³⁵ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall*, Table 20, 'Warship Tonnage of the Powers, 1880-1914', p. 203.

¹³⁶ Cited in Keith Neilson, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and British Strategic Foreign Policy, 1902-1914.' in Philip Payson O'Brien, ed., *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-1922* (London, 2004), p. 49.

¹³⁷ *Agreement Between the United Kingdom and Japan Relative to China and Corea*, <https://treaties.fcdo.gov.uk/data/Library2/pdf/1902-TS0003.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2023.

turn, could be confident that the European powers would not combine against it again for fear of British intervention.

Initially, the Alliance was greeted with optimism in Australia. A member of NSW's Legislative assembly noted that the Alliance gave 'the protection of the Japanese fleet to our commerce.' The Japanese, it was felt, had not been greatly offended by the Immigration Restriction Act. Perhaps, some other members said, the Alliance was a recognition by Japan that the act had been passed not only in the interest of Australia but in the interests of Japan itself! George Reid speculated that the Alliance had to have had the 'moral, if not the active, support of the United States,' and thought that it was thus not just an imperial but an Anglo-Saxon victory.¹³⁸ A visit by the Japanese fleet in 1903 saw enthusiastic crowds in Australia's major ports. Intended to allay tensions and show the Australian public that the Japanese were worthy allies to fight alongside in a future war, this gesture was, though, of limited success. Barton had to be pressured by Governor-General Lord Tennyson to welcome the visitors, and however much the Australian public enjoyed the spectacle, their fear of Asian strength was not so easily overcome.¹³⁹

Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 undid what limited goodwill the Australian public had for the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. For Britain, the Japanese victory was a validation of the alliance - Russia had been hamstrung in the Pacific at no cost to the British, allowing further concentration of British resources in her home waters. For many Australians, however, Japan's emergence as a serious regional power was a vindication of long-held strategic and racial insecurities. 'The balance of power in the north Pacific has most materially altered,' Melbourne's *Herald* warned, and 'it is madness for Australians to

¹³⁸ *SMH*, February 14, 1902, p. 5.

¹³⁹ For the visit and Barton's reaction, see David Walker, 'Rising Suns', in David Walker & Agnieszka Sobocinska, eds., *Australia's Asia: From yellow peril to Asian Century*, (Perth, 2012), pp. 76-78.

live in a fool's paradise of fancied security.'¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, it was not just that a new power had emerged. The Japanese victory was also taken as an Asian victory over the accepted racial order. Richard Jebb observed that colonial nationalism in Australasia had been given a fillip by 'the spectacle of an armed Japan, flushed with victory over a white power.'¹⁴¹ Deakin gave public statements warning against the Federal Government's supposed indifference on matters of defence, and even won the endorsement of the Labor party for much of his defence policy. When he formed his second government in 1905, Deakin made naval affairs a priority. William Creswell, the Commonwealth's Director of Naval Forces, had proposed that Australia develop its own flotilla of destroyers and torpedo boats, independent of the Royal Navy. Though the Admiralty and Committee of Imperial Defence rejected the scheme as strategically unsound, Deakin commended Creswell's proposal to the House of Representatives in July 1906.¹⁴² For its part, the Committee vindicated Australian suspicions that their security was not being taken seriously, when a confidential memorandum acknowledged that the Royal Navy might need to renege on its commitment to defend Britain's Oceanic territories, observing that a potential enemy raid on Australia would be of 'secondary importance.'¹⁴³ This may have been sound, if ruthless strategy. It was not, though, an unfamiliar issue. That same disagreement over where to allocate imperial naval resources had cropped up for decades, as Chapter One and Chapter Three's survey of British strategy in the Pacific has shown. What is important is that after Federation, assertive imperialists like Alfred Deakin actually had the resources to take independent action.

¹⁴⁰ Melbourne *Herald*, June 12 1905.

¹⁴¹ Jebb, p. 85.

¹⁴² Grey, *Military History*, pp. 74-75., Peter Overlack, 'A vigorous offensive': core aspects of Australian maritime defence concerns before 1914., ' in David Stevens & John Royce, eds., *Southern Trident: Strategy, History and the Rise of Australian Naval Power* (Crows Nest, 2001), p. 149.

¹⁴³ Report of CID 25 May 1906, Confidential Memorandum 'Australia', PRO: Cab. 5/1, pp. 3-4, cited in Overlack, p. 150.

At the Colonial Conference in 1907, Deakin defended the building of a local Australian navy as an act of imperial loyalty. 'We look upon any vessels for local defence not only as Imperial in the sense of protecting Australia, but because they will be capable of co-operating with any squadron, or any part of your squadron, which you may think fit to send into our waters.'¹⁴⁴ Creswell's scheme was not yet realised, and it would not be until 1909 that the first orders for Australian destroyers would be placed by the government of Andrew Fisher. But the years 1905-1908 marked the practical realisation of the assertive strategy that Australasian imperialists had agitated for in the 1890s. The Royal Australian Navy's foundations were being laid down as a direct response to the rise of Japan, a rise that Australians saw as being directly abetted by the British government. Before leaving office, Deakin had invited the United States Navy's Great White Fleet to visit Australian ports.¹⁴⁵ Prime Minister Joseph Ward of New Zealand also invited the Americans, hoping that a display of American influence in Oceania might press Britain into granting further 'dominion participation in imperial policymaking.'¹⁴⁶ Britain's two Pacific Dominions, both resolutely loyal to the empire, were welcoming in a foreign navy. In 1903 the Australian government had to be prodded into accepting the visit of the Japanese navy, but in 1908 they invited the Americans themselves. The American navy represented a different vision of strength in the Pacific from the Anglo-Japanese Alliance - a vision where Anglo-Saxon sailors in modern ships protected Anglo-Saxon societies, with no concession to rising Asian powers. This visit of a fleet from outside the British Empire was, in other words, a demonstration of the Australasian vision of the British Empire.

¹⁴⁴ CO 885/18/06, TNA, 'Minutes of the Proceedings of the Colonial Conference 1907,' p. 476.

¹⁴⁵ Grey, p. 75.

¹⁴⁶ See G.P. Taylor, 'New Zealand, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the 1908 Visit of the American Fleet', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 15:1 (1969), pp. 55-76.

Conclusion: Thinking Imperially

On 1 June, 1906, Richard Seddon addressed a banquet in Sydney being hosted by Alfred Deakin, now Prime Minister. This was twenty years after the New Hebrides crisis of 1886 had caused Lord Salisbury such irritation; it may have been that anniversary that prompted Seddon to give a speech on the subject of the foolishness of the Imperial government's Pacific policy. It was a good speech, and perhaps his last one. Nine days later he would be dead.¹

Seddon told his audience that in 1897 he had travelled to London for the Colonial conference. He had stopped in the new 'Republic of Hawaii,' which had recently 'revolted' against Queen Lili'uokalani. Seddon may have been the only politician in the world who was genuinely surprised to see American ships at anchor in Pearl Harbour. He secured a meeting with the Committee of Public Safety that was administering the islands, and being Seddon, convinced himself that 'they were agreeable to a joint British and American protectorate.' Journeying through the United States soon after, he met with President McKinley. This was the first meeting of an American president with a New Zealand premier. Seddon's description is remarkable:

'President McKinley looked me in the eyes and said: "Mr Seddon, the Monroe doctrine or not, the Hawaiian islands are to be American, and that before long." 'I said: 'Very well, I am going to Great Britain in the interests of the colonies. I will demand that something should be said by the British government.' I proceeded to London, but when I laid before the British government the statements I have told you they laughed. I said 'you can take it from me and I shall have it put on record that the position demands immediate attention. Otherwise Hawaii will be lost to the interests

¹ Incident found in Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 196.

of Australasia and to the British Empire.’ but the British government did nothing, and Hawaii is American today.’²

He told the British government that America wanted Hawaii, and they laughed. The reader might too.

True to his word, Seddon informed the Colonial Office of the impending crisis that would ‘prejudicially affect the Imperial and Colonial interest,’ but as undersecretary Edward Wingfield minuted ‘I don’t wonder that the Australasians should deprecate the annexation - but Mr Seddon can scarcely expect Great Britain to go to war with the United States to prevent it.’³ Of course, Wingfield had missed, as Colonial Office undersecretaries tended to, that Seddon’s objection was not just the consequences for Australasia but for the Empire generally.⁴

Consider Seddon and Deakin at that banquet in 1906. This was perhaps a well-worn anecdote for Seddon; certainly, the resentment would have grown as it became clear that despite his efforts New Zealand was not going to get Fiji, or Tonga, or Samoa. But he and Deakin now shared an easy - a public! – contempt for the empire’s efforts in the Pacific. Since 1897, Seddon had always feared that the British would go too easy with other islands. ‘You could never be sure what they would do in Downing Street! (laughter).’ In fact, the British empire could now not be trusted to the British government at all - ‘Australia and New Zealand would be happier if it [the Pacific] were placed beyond the reach of Downing Street all together.’ And worse, he complained, was that the leaders of the colonies had their hands

² *SMH*, 2 June 1906, p. 8.

³ CO 537/136, Seddon to Chamberlain, 23 June 1897.

⁴ The Colonial Office seems to have thought Seddon was worried about New Zealand’s trade with Hawaii being cut off, rather than an actual strategic concern (however misguided). Merze Tate, ‘The Myth of Hawaii’s Swing towards Australasia and Canada,’ *Pacific Historical Review*, 33:3 (1964), pp. 273-293.

tied. When confidential documents detailing some coming disastrous mistake were sent to them, they could not warn the public.

‘Hear hear,’ cried Deakin. By 1906, the Prime Minister had become bitterly disappointed with the imperial government and given up his youthful dreams of persuading it into action. Looking back at the 1886 crisis, he saw that imperial policy in the New Hebrides testified to ‘the supineness of the British government and the wilful indifference of Downing Street to all Australian appeals.’ He cheered again as Seddon closed his speech. Foreign powers were still encroaching on the Britons in the Pacific. The Imperial government would not take the necessary action. Australia and New Zealand, said Seddon, had to take territory where they could: ‘Where we could possibly secure to the British Empire islands it was our duty to do so.’

The story encapsulates the problem of studying Australasian ideas about the empire. The confidence that colonial leaders had in approaching world affairs borders on the absurd. The idea of a New Zealand premier trying to intimidate an American President, or of an Australian politician playing brinkmanship with Germany and France in the islands seems to suggest a complete failure to accurately understand the resources and importance of the colonies. But it is only absurd, only stupid or misguided if we ignore what these men were telling us about their reasoning. It is forgivable for Colonial Office mandarins to make that mistake; we should not make it too.

Deakin’s assertiveness over the New Hebrides, Seddon’s drive to secure all of Polynesia, Higgins’ worry that South Africa was a distraction, and Barton’s astonishing push to circumvent Anglo-Japanese diplomacy: these actions were all carried out in the name of the British Empire. These men were products of societies that, by 1901, were convinced that Australia and New Zealand were becoming new Britains in the south seas. These were not

simply small colonies; they were small colonies that were becoming a second heartland for the British race, what Barton called ‘the last part of the world in which the higher races can live and increase freely for the higher civilisation.’⁵

Australasian leaders felt that they had the right and the duty to act on behalf of the broader empire. Politically they might have been adjuncts to the imperial government; but if that government failed to take seriously its duty to protect the white British race and to safeguard the frontiers of the empire, then Australasia was not just entitled but obliged to force London’s hand.

That confidence had a paranoid mirror image. Australasia was growing but had not yet come into its growth. The empire had rivals and enemies without, but that same thinking naturally led to considering non-white Australasians the enemy within. The intellectual atmosphere that produced the narrative of Greater Britain exalted the ideal of Anglo-Saxon democracy; even Irish Catholics were a wrinkle, let alone the Japanese, Chinese and Pacific Islanders. The cherished project of imperial reform became unworkable⁶ whenever it became clear that its imagined equal imperial citizenry with equal imperial rights might include Indians. Non-white Australasians also gave the lie to the idea of a white working man’s democracy; giving them equal pay was unthinkable but paying them less made the use of white labour in those industries untenable, a horrifying prospect in the societies with the strongest democratic labour movement in the empire.

All that was worsened, however, by the dystopian racial imaginings of Australasia. It was not just that non-white immigration threatened the economic and political structure. It was believed to threaten the existence of the white race itself; racial-mixing was a nightmarish enough prospect for most white Australasians but it was feared that even in a

⁵ *CPD*, AHR, 7 August, p. 3503.

⁶ *More* unworkable.

segregated society Asians and Pacific Islanders would simply out-populate the British. The imperial government's policy of allowing some non-white migration, however nominal, was therefore untenable. To Australasians it seemed either a dangerous misjudgement or worse, a betrayal of the British race. Therefore, Australasian efforts to close off the free movement of non-white peoples into and within the British empire were easy to conceive not just as protecting local interests, but as doing the job that the imperial government refused to do. Here, the dissertation has sought to combine the British 'race patriotism' of Neville Meaney's work with the more global understandings of whiteness expressed by Marilyn Lake.⁷ In Chapters Five and Six it was shown that while Australasian views on Asia were shaped by the global intellectual environment of late Victorian race-science, both New Zealand's decision to stay out of Australian federation and the Commonwealth's Immigration Restriction Act were (*in part!*) expressions of a drive to build and preserve British societies on the boundaries of empire. Crucially, this was not just about being distinct from Asia; it was also about being distinct from a Britain that was too lenient on its non-white subjects, and even, in the end, from each other.

The logical end point was not just that Australasians had a different understanding to the empire than the imperial government; many Australasians were now sceptical that the British government had any understanding of the empire at all. In 1907, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published a series of articles on the state of the British Empire in the Pacific. Having catalogued Britain's supposed supineness in the face of French and German expansion, it asked 'Why has all this happened?... because the Colonial and Foreign Offices are absolutely unconcerned about the Empire.'⁸ That statement would startle the British government, but do not dismiss it out of hand. What is that idea, after all, but the same attitude that the imperial

⁷ Though often, of course, Lake and Reynolds.

⁸ Anonymous, *British Mismanagement in the Pacific* (SMH, 1907), p. 13.

government so often expressed about the colonies? The historian does not need to agree with that judgement, but it is important to consider that when Australasian activity in the Pacific is dismissed as sub-imperialism; when objections to British policy are written off as colonial nationalism; when the immigration restrictions are looked at only as a regional rather than imperial phenomenon; when any or all of these assumptions are made, we are ignoring that all this took place *as a conversation between Imperial Britons*. It would be a failure of the historical imagination to privilege the view of the empire from London. Australasian ideas about the empire and its rivals were often, it is true, silly. But we will not further our understanding of these societies if we do not treat their views with more respect than the imperial government did.

By 1900 Australia and New Zealand had their own coherent understanding of the geopolitical interests of the British Empire, and the strategies that it should undertake to pursue them. That conception of the empire's interests was tightly bound up with ideas of 'Greater Britain,' and the feeling that the purpose of the empire was not the securing of resources or power for the home islands but rather the building of new prosperous Anglo-Saxon societies in the self-governing colonies and the expansion of British civilisation itself. Policies that the imperial government considered self-evidently rational such as the diversion of resources from Asia and the Pacific to secure South Africa were therefore seen by many loyal Australasians as expensive distractions from the empire's real concerns. This obviously builds on the work done by security scholars such as Neville Meaney, and more recently Jesse Tumblin. The dissertation has sought to expand on this, firstly by directly engaging with how the Australasian colonies imagined their ideal societies. Meaney's work is very aware of Australian racial exclusion as an explanatory force for Commonwealth security policies. What this work has done, however, is to show how that impulse was not simply defensive - it also prompted Australasians to try and extend and protect that ideal society in

the Pacific Islands, but also to remind Britain that protecting that society was what the empire was for.⁹

This increasing gap between the Australasian and metropolitan understandings of empire was masked by a shared political and cultural rhetoric. In fact, much of the mounting mutual frustration of the Colonial Office and the Oceanic governments stemmed from this problem of a common language of patriotism and loyalism. Governments on both sides of the world explained their policies in the same terms: the importance of working for closer relations between the metropole and its self-governing colonies across the world, the allocation of limited imperial resources to its most pressing interests, and shared touchstones of personal loyalty to the crown and the Anglo-Saxon race. Colonial and imperial governments could meet and agree on the importance of preserving the key interests of the empire, and yet fail to grasp that they had not actually reached an agreement on what those interests were. This led to a metropolitan disdain of colonial parochialism that was increasingly matched by colonial perceptions that the imperial government was weak, vacillating and sometimes even cowardly. This was shown through close study of the sources - the colonial response to British policy in the Pacific, for example, where Australasians (from journalists like George Cathcart Craig to politicians like Richard Seddon) simply could not understand why a strong leader like Salisbury was making concessions, and in turn how British leaders struggled to grasp that colonists could disagree with their proposals for any reason other than confusion.¹⁰

Over the 1890s, those mounting frustrations led to an increasing willingness on the part of colonial governments to act directly to secure those external imperial interests. This is

⁹ Meaney, *Search for Security* et al, Tumblin, *The Quest for Security*.

¹⁰ The rich vein of material on colonial participation in South Africa- Wilcox, Robson, McGibbon etc- was also drawn on to show that while the rhetoric around the war mirrored that in England, it did not overlap. For all the great outpouring of imperial patriotism, even the war's supporters often thought it was a distraction from the real interests of the empire in Asia and the Pacific.

patchily covered in the literature because it is constrained by the idea of ‘sub-imperialism.’ That concept covers the idea of quasi-autonomous subjects pursuing expansionist and/or imperialist goals within the framework of a wider empire, even against the wishes of central imperial authorities. Some Australasian activities were sub-imperial; however, too often and (despite the intended meaning of the term when it was coined) it is increasingly used to describe the colonies pursuing their own local or nationalist interest. It is not that New Zealand or Australia did not have their own local interests in, for example, the New Hebrides islands; but those interests were conceptualised as also being the interests of the empire as a whole. That is, these policies were ‘sub-imperial’ in the sense that they were not set or executed by the imperial government, but it is more important to understand that they were often carried out *on behalf* of an imperial government that was seen as being too weak or foolish to protect itself.¹¹

The great internal political challenges of Australasia in the 1890s, Federation and immigration restriction, were both responses to and manifestations of that imperial worldview. Just as Australasian governments were increasingly willing to directly act upon imperial interests externally in the Pacific, they were also intent on changing policy within the empire itself. The debate over literacy tests and immigration restrictions in the late 1890s is often treated as the Colonial Office successfully forcing a compromise upon the recalcitrant colonies; this doctorate argues that in fact the imperial government was conceding to the colonial premise that the racial purity of the Dominions was a more important imperial interest than the free movement of peoples within the empire. That essentially hierarchical view - developed, as noted, before the real adoption of ‘dominion’

¹¹ Luke Trainor’s work on Australia actively pursuing policy in the Pacific is good, but it is hampered by his commitment to an idea of an ‘Anglo-Australian system’ that was essentially co-operative. The dissertation inherits much from Trainor’s *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism*, but has argued that the new Commonwealth’s view of the region was formed by twenty years of failure to work with Britain in the islands, rather than a cosy system of ‘sub-imperialism.’

status as a distinct political form - was also expressed *within* Australasia. In Australia, the ideological pressure to preserve British racial purity and stand secure against foreign interests was a pressure to take part in Federation;¹² in New Zealand that pressure logically led to standing aside from Federation, the best to distance itself from a vulnerable and racially suspect continent.

That *Herald* pamphlet finished by declaring that the British Government would not be able to protect or effectively rule the empire until the Colonial and Foreign Offices shed themselves of their preconceptions. 'They must think Imperially,' it said.¹³ For decades, as seven colonies argued how to organise themselves, how to face the world, how to structure their societies, how to respond to crises of war and great power politics, Australasia had thought imperially. It is time to take those thoughts seriously.

¹² A pressure, but not the only one. The works of Hirst, Irving, La Nauze and Norris all stress the importance of internal economic pressures; this dissertation, by giving more attention to New Zealand (beyond simply asking why it didn't join a la Frederick Wood and Ged Martin) has shone a little more light upon what external (and racial) security pressures affected the process of Federation.

¹³ Anonymous, *British Mismanagement*, p.21

Bibliography

OFFICIAL ARCHIVES

National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, London

Colonial Office (CO), particularly

CO 18- Western Australia

CO 209- New Zealand

CO 418- Australia

CO 537- Confidential Print, General Correspondence

CO 881- Australia, Confidential Print

CO 885- Subjects Affecting Colonies Generally

War Office (WO)

WO 32- Army

Cabinet Office (CAB)

CAB 18/8- 1887 Colonial Conference

CAB 8/9- 1897 Colonial Conference

CAB 37- Photographs of Cabinet Papers

Admiralty (ADM)

ADM 231- Naval Intelligence

Foreign Office (FO), particularly

FO 46- Japan

FO 534- Confidential Print Pacific Islands

FO 58- Pacific Islands

National Archives of Australia, Canberra particularly

A1- Prime Minister's Office

A6- Correspondence, PM/External Affairs

A8- Department of External Affairs

A6662- Miscellaneous Correspondence

CP78/9- Governor-General to Secretary of State for Colonies

Queensland State Archives, Brisbane

COL/A311- Inward Correspondence 1881

S1139- Official Correspondence, Governor's Office

S5322- Outward Correspondence, Chief Secretary's Office

Public Records Office Victoria, Melbourne particularly

VPRS 4652- Secret Papers

VPRS 4651- Miscellaneous Correspondence, Chief Secretary's Department

VPRS 1188- Outward Correspondence, Chief Secretary's Department

New Zealand National Archives, Wellington particularly

16558- Confidential Despatches from Secretary of State for Colonies

8333- Papers Relating to 1902 Imperial Conference (SEDDON1)

8634- Miscellaneous Seddon Papers (SEDDON2)

PRIVATE PAPERS AND ARCHIVES

University of Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library

Joseph Chamberlain Collection

University of Auckland Library, Special Collections

Frederick Moss Papers

Western Pacific High Commission Archives (NB: Most Samoan and Fijian records not present)

National Library of Australia

Barton Papers

Deakin Papers

HANSARD

Commonwealth of Australia

New South Wales

Queensland

South Australia

Victoria

Western Australia

New Zealand

United Kingdom

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

Australia

Intercolonial Convention, 1883: Report of the Proceedings, (Sydney, Thomas Richards: Government Printer, 1883)

Minutes of Proceedings of the Intercolonial Conference held in Melbourne, December 1880, (Melbourne, John Ferres: Government Printer, 1880)

Official Reports of the National Australian Convention Debates, (First Session, Adelaide, 1897)

Official Reports of the National Australian Convention Debates, (Second Session, Sydney, 1897)

Official Reports of the National Australian Convention Debates, (Third Session, Melbourne, 1898)

Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth, 1900

Papers Relating to a Federal Union of the Australian Colonies, (Melbourne, 1862)

Introduction of Japanese into the Northern Territory (Melbourne, 1901)

UK

Agreement Between the United Kingdom and Japan Relative To China and Corea, <https://treaties.fcdo.gov.uk/data/Library2/pdf/1902-TS0003.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2023.

Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between Great Britain and Japan, (1894).

Accessed at Foreign Office Treaty Archive, <http://foto.archivalware.co.uk/data/Library2/pdf/1894-TS0023.pdf>, accessed January 30th, 2023.

New Zealand

Appendixes to the Journal of the House of Representatives

Various, but notably

Report of the Royal Commission on Federation, AJHR, i, a-04, 1901

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

The Advertiser (Adelaide)

The Age (Melbourne)

The Argus (Melbourne)

The Brisbane Courier (Brisbane)

The Bruce Herald (Bruce)

The Bulletin (Sydney)

Fiji Times (Suva)

The Kalgoorlie Miner (Kalgoorlie)

The Manchester Guardian (Manchester)

The New Zealand Herald (Auckland)

The New Zealand Tablet (Dunedin)

New Zealand Times, (Wellington)

Otago Daily Times (Dunedin)

The Press (Christchurch)

Presbyterian Outlook, (Dunedin)

Sydney Morning Herald (Sydney)

The Times (London)

CONTEMPORARY BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

Most period manuscripts were located in the Mitchell Library, New South Wales; the National Library of Australia; and the State Library of Victoria.

Abbott, John, *Tommy Cornstalk: Being Some Account of the Less Notable Features of the South African War from the Point of View of the Australian Ranks*, (London, Longman, 1902)

Anonymous, *British Mismanagement in the Pacific*, (Sydney, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1905)

Anonymous, *Report of public meeting held in the Town Hall, Melbourne on Friday evening, 5th June 1885...* (London, Imperial Federation League, 1885)

Black, George Muir, *Why I am a Republican or Imperial Federation v. Australian Nationalism*. (Sydney, Robert Bear, 1891)

Craig, George Cathcart, *The Federal Defence of Australasia*, (London, William Clowes, 1897)

Cunningham, G. C., 'A Scheme for Imperial Federation: A Senate for the Empire,' (London, Longmans, 1895)

Curzon, George, *Problems of the Far East: Japan, Korea, China*, (London, Longmans, 1896)

Deakin, Alfred, ed., J.A. La Nauze, *The Federal Story*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1963)

Deakin, Alfred, ed., Diane Heriot, *From Our Special Correspondent: Alfred Deakin's Letters to the Morning Post, Volume I: 1900-1901*, (Canberra, Australian Parliamentary Library, 2019).

Deakin, Alfred, *Imperial Federation: an address delivered by the Hon. Alfred Deakin, M.P., at the annual meeting of the Imperial Federation League of Victoria, Town Hall, Melbourne, June 14, 1905*, (Melbourne, Victorian Imperial Federation League, 1905)

Dilke, Charles, *Problems of Greater Britain*, (London, Macmillan, 1890)

Foxall, Edward, (pen-name *Gizen-No-Teki*) *Colorphobia: An Exposure of the White Australia Policy*, (Sydney, R.T. Kelly, 1903)

Froude, James, Rawson, R. W. & Seeley, J. R. (eds.), 'England and Her Colonies: The Five Best Essays on Imperial Federation,' (London, Swann Sonnenschein, 1887)

Froude, James, *Oceana: or, England and her colonies*, (London, Longman, 1886)

Griffith Arthur, Hobson, John, *A Few Facts About the Transvaal*, (Sydney, Worker Trades Union Printery, 1902)

Griffith, Samuel, *Some Conditions of Australian Federation*, (Brisbane, Edmund Gregory, 1896)

Hobson, J.A., *Imperialism: A Study*, (London, James Nisbet, 1902)

- Jefferis, James, 'The Federation of the British People: a lecture delivered April 15th, 1901 at the opening of the forty second yearly session of the North Adelaide Young Men's Society,' (Adelaide, Vardon & Pritchard, 1901)
- Jebb, Richard, *Studies in Colonial Nationalism*, (London, E. Arnold, 1905)
- Lane, William, *White or Yellow: A Novel of the Race War of 1908*, (Brisbane, Boomerang, 1888)
- de Lissa, Alfred, *An Empire League*, (Sydney, John Sands, 1905)
- Mahan, Alfred Thayer, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*, (Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1890)
- Morris, Edward E., 'Imperial Federation: A Lecture,' (Melbourne, Victorian Imperial Federation League, 1885)
- Thomson, Robert *Australian Nationalism: An Earnest Appeal to the Sons of Australia in Favour of the Federation and Independence of the Status of Our* (Sydney, Moss Brothers, 1888)
- Trollope, Anthony, *Australia and New Zealand*, (Melbourne, George Robertson, 1873)
- Paterson, A.B, ed., Rosamund Campbell & Philippa Harvie, *Singer of the Bush: Collected Works 1885-1900*, (Sydney, Landsdowne, 1883)
- Paterson, A.B, ed., Rosamund Campbell & Philippa Harvie, *Song of the Pen: Collected Works 1901-1941*, (Sydney, Landsdowne, 1883)
- Pearson, Charles Henry, *National Life and Character: A Forecast*, (London, Macmillan, 1893)
- Pearson, Charles Henry & Strong, H. A., *Reviews and Essays*, (London, Methuen, 1896)
- Reeves, William Pember, *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand*, (London, Grant Richards, 1902)
- Reid, George, *My Reminiscences*, (Melbourne, Cassell, 1917)
- Taylor, Henry D'Esterre, *Imperial Federation and the Imperial Conference of 1902*, (Melbourne, Durford, 1902)
- Seeley, John, *The Expansion of England*, (London, Macmillan, 1883)
- Stout, Robert, *A Colonial View of Federation*, (1887), Foreign and Commonwealth Office Collection, accessed at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/60231292>, 13 May 2019
- Young, Norwood, 'The Material value of the Imperial connection to the Australasian colonies,' in the *United Service Magazine*, no. DCCXLVI, (1891)

Miscellaneous:

- Andree, Richard, Map of 'Australia and New Zealand,' *The Times Atlas*, (London, 1895), reproduced in the David Rumsey Historical Maps Collection, davidrumsey.com
- Letterbook of the Imperial Federation League of Victoria, National Library of Australia

New Zealand Graphic and Ladies' Journal. Scatz fl.1900: How we see it. The Ogre 'Come into these arms'. New Zealand 'Nay sir, those arms bear chains.' *New Zealand Graphic*, October 20, 1900. Vol XXV- No. XVI. Ref: J-040-002. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand

SECONDARY SOURCES

BOOKS

- Agnew, Trevor, & Jenny Sew Hoy, *Merchant, Miner, Mandarin*, (Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 2020)
- Aldrich, Robert, *The French Presence in the South Pacific, 1842-1940*, (London, Macmillan, 1990)
- Anderson, Warwick, *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health, and Racial Destiny in Australia*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2002)
- Ballantyne, Tony, *Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand's Colonial Past*, (Vancouver, University of British Columbia, 2014)
- Ballara, Angela, *Proud to be White: A Survey of Pakeha Prejudice in New Zealand*, (Auckland, Heinemann, 1986)
- Atkinson, David, *The Burden of White Supremacy*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, 2016)
- Bach, John, *The Australia Station: A History of the Royal Navy in the South West Pacific, 1821-1913*, (Sydney, UNSW, 1986)
- Barclay, Glen, *The Empire is Marching: A Study of the Military Effort of the British Empire, 1800-1945*, (London, Wiedenfield & Nicolson, 1976)
- Banivanua-Mar, Tracey, *Violence and Colonial Dialogue: The Australian-Pacific Indentured Labour Trade*, (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2007)
- Behlmer, George K., *Risky Shores: Savagery and Colonialism in the Western Pacific*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2018)
- Belich, James, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo World 1783-1939*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009)
- Belich, James, *Making Peoples: A History of New Zealand: From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1996)
- Belich, James, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2001)
- Bell, Duncan, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of the New World Order, 1860-1900*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2007)
- Beloff, Max, *Britain's Liberal Empire, 1897-1921, 2nd Ed*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987)
- Bentley, Michael, *Lord Salisbury's World*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- Best, Antony, *British Engagement with Japan, 1854-1922: The Origins and Course of an Unlikely Alliance*, (Routledge, Abingdon, 2020)
- Blakeley, Brian, *The Colonial Office: 1868-1902*, (Durham, Duke University Press, 1972)
- Brett, Judith, *The Enigmatic Mr Deakin*, (Melbourne, Text, 2014)

- Bridge, Carl, *Manning Clark: Essays on his Place in History*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1994)
- Bridge, Carl, & Fedorowich, Kent, *The British World: Diaspora, Culture, and Identity*, (London, Taylor and Francis, 2005)
- Brooking, Tom, *Richard Seddon: King of God's Own*, (Auckland, Penguin, 2014)
- Burdon, R.M., *King Dick: A biography of Richard John Seddon*, (Christchurch, Whitcombe and Tombs, 1955)
- Cavanagh, Edward, Veracini, Lorenzo, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, (Routledge, Abingdon, 2016)
- Caprio, Mark & Koichirō, Matsuda, *Japan and the Pacific, 1540-1920*, (Aldershot, Routledge, 2006)
- Colley, Linda, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, (London, Pimlico, 2003)
- Constantine, Stephen and Harper, Marjory *Migration and Empire*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010)
- Cronin, Kathryn, Evans, Raymond & Saunders, Kay, *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland*, 3rd edition (St Lucia, University of Queensland, 1993)
- Darwin, John, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System, 1830-1970*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- Denoon, Donald & Mein Smith, Philippa, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000)
- van Dijk, Cees, *Pacific Strife: The Great Powers and their Political and Economic Rivalries in Asia and the Western Pacific, 1870-1914*, (Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, 2015)
- Docker, John, *The Nervous Nineties: Australian Cultural Life in the 1890s*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1991)
- Eldred-Grigg, Stevan & Dazheng, Zeng, *White Ghosts, Yellow Peril: China and New Zealand 1790-1950*, (Dunedin, Otago University Press, 2014)
- O'Farrell, Patrick, *The Irish in Australia*, (Sydney, University of New South Wales Press, 1987)
- Field, Laurie, *The Forgotten War: Australia and the Boer War*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1979)
- Firth, Stewart, *New Guinea under the Germans*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1982)
- Fitzgerald, John, *Big White Lie: Chinese Australians in White Australia*, (Sydney, UNSW, 2007)
- Fong, Ng, *The Chinese in New Zealand: A Study in Assimilation*, (Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1959)
- Frei, Henry, *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia: From the Sixteenth Century to World War II*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1991)

- Gallagher, John, Robinson, Ronald, with Denny, Alice, *Africa and the Victorians*, (London, Macmillan, 2015)
- Glass, Margaret, *Charles Cameron Kingston: Federation Father* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1997)
- Gordon, Donald, *The Dominion Partnership in Imperial Defence, 1870-1914*, (Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1965)
- Greif, Stuart William, *The Overseas Chinese in New Zealand*, (Singapore, Asia Pacific Press, 1974)
- Grenville, J.A.S., *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy: The Close of the Nineteenth Century*, (London, Athlone, 1964)
- Grey, Jeffrey, *A Military History of Australia*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008)
- Griffiths, John, *Imperial Culture in Antipodean Cities, 1880-1939*, (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)
- Hall, Dianne & Malcolm, Elizabeth, *A New History of the Irish in Australia*, (Sydney, UNSW Press, 2018)
- Hancock, W.K., *Australia*, (London, Ernest Benn, 1930)
- Heere, Cees, *Empire Ascendent: The British World, Race and the Rise of Japan, 1894-1914*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020)
- Hirst, John, *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Constitution*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Hirst, John, *Australian History in Seven Questions*, (Collingwood, Black Inc. Books, 2014)
- Huck, Arthur, *The Chinese in Australia*, (Croydon, Longman, 1968)
- Hutchinson, Sam, *Settlers, War and Empire in the Press: Unsettling News in Australia and Britain, 1863-1902* (Wellington, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)
- Huttenback, R.A., *Racism and Empire: White Settlers and Colored Immigrants in the British Self-Governing Colonies 1830-1910*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1976)
- Hyam, Ronald, *Elgin and Churchill at the Colonial Office, 1905-1908: The Watershed of the Empire-Commonwealth*, (London, 1968)
- Inglis, K. S., *The Rehearsal: Australians in the Sudan, 1885*, (Sydney, Kevin Weldon, 1985)
- Irving, Helen, *To Constitute A Nation: A Cultural History of Australia's Constitution*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- Jones, Timothy, *The Chinese in the Northern Territory (3rd Ed)*, (Darwin, Charles Darwin University Press, 2005)
- Judd, Denis, *Radical Joe: A Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, (Cardiff, University of Wales, 1993)
- Kendle, John Edward, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences: A Study in Imperial Organisation*, (London, Longmans, 1967)

- Kennedy, Paul, *The Samoan Tangle: A Study in Anglo-German-American Relations, 1878-1900*, (Dublin, Irish University Press, 1974)
- Kennedy, Paul, *The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy, 1865-1980*, (London, Allen & Unwin, 1981).
- Kennedy, Paul, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, (London, Allen Lane, 1976)
- Kennedy, Paul, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, (London, Fontana, 1988)
- King, Michael, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, (Auckland, Penguin, 2005)
- Kubicek, Robert, *The Administration of Imperialism: Joseph Chamberlain at the Colonial Office*, (Durham, Duke University Press, 1969)
- Kuo, Mei-Fen, *Making Chinese Australia: Urban Elites, Newspaper and the Formation of Chinese-Australian Identity, 1892-1912*, (Melbourne, Monash University Publishing, 2013)
- Lake, Marilyn & Reynolds, Henry, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008)
- Lawson, Sylvia, *The Archibald Paradox: A Strange Case of Authorship*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1983)
- La Nauze, J. A., *The Making of the Australian Constitution*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1972)
- Lissington, M.P., *New Zealand and Japan, 1900-1941*, (Wellington, Government Printer, 1972)
- Low, D.A., *Keith Hancock: The Legacies of a Historian*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1997)
- Lowry, Donal, ed., *The South African War Reappraised*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000)
- Macintyre, Stuart, *A Concise History of Australia, 3rd Edition*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- Macintyre, Stuart, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries*, (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1991)
- Magee, Gary, & Thompson, Andrew, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of Power, Goods and Capital in the British World, c.1850-1914*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010)
- Marder, Arthur, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power: A History of British Naval Policy in the Pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905*, (London, Frank Cass, 1964)
- Markus, Andrew, *Fear and Hatred: Purifying Australia and California 1850-1901*, (Sydney, Hale & Iremonger, 1979)
- Martens, Jeremy, *Empire and Asian Migration, Sovereignty, Immigration Restriction and Protest in the British Settler Colonies, 1888-1907*, (Perth, University of Western Australia, 2018)

- Martin, Ged, *Australia, New Zealand and Federation*, (London, King's College London, 2001)
- Mair, L.P, *Australia in New Guinea*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1970)
- Mitcham, John, *Race and Imperial Defence in the British World*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016).
- McGibbon, Ian, *Blue-Water Rationale: The Naval Defence of New Zealand, 1914-1942*, (Wellington, Government Printer, 1981)
- McGibbon, Ian, *The Path to Gallipoli: Defending New Zealand, 1840-1915*, (Wellington, GP Books, 1991)
- McMinn, W.G., *A Constitutional History of Australia*, (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1979)
- McMinn, W.G., *Nationalism and Federalism in Australia*, (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1994)
- McQueen, Humphrey, *A New Britannia*, (Melbourne, Penguin, 1970)
- Meaney, Neville, *The Search for Security in the Pacific, 1901-1914*, (Sydney, Sydney University Press, 2009)
- Miller, Stephen, *Volunteers on the Veld: Britain's Citizen-Soldiers and the South African War, 1899-1902*, (Norman, University of Oklahoma, 2007)
- Mountford, Benjamin, *Britain, China and Colonial Australia*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016)
- Nish, Ian, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires*, (London, Athlone, 1966)
- Nish, Ian, *Alliance in Decline: A Study of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1908-1923*, (London, Athlone, 1972)
- Norris, Ronald, *The Emergent Commonwealth- Australian Federation: Expectations and Fulfilment 1889-1910*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1975)
- Ohff, Hans-Jürgen, *Disastrous Ventures: German and British Enterprises in East New Guinea up to 1914*, (Melbourne, Plenum Publishing, 2015)
- Oliver, Pam, *Empty North: The Japanese Presence and Australian Reaction, 1860-1942*, (Darwin, Charles Darwin University Press, 2006)
- Oliver, W.H., *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 1st Edition (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981)
- Otte, T.G, *The China Question*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007)
- Pascoe, Rob, *The Manufacture of Australian History*, (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1979)
- Porter, Bernard, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004)
- Powell, Enoch, *Joseph Chamberlain*, (London, Thames & Hudson, 1977)

- Preston, Richard, *Canada and Imperial Defence: A Study of the Origins of the British Commonwealth's Defence Organisation, 1867-1919*, (Durham, Duke University Press, 1967)
- Rice, Geoffrey, *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd Edition, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992)
- Rickard, John, *H.B. Higgins: The Rebel as Judge*, (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1984)
- Robson, Nigel, *Our First Foreign War: The Impact of the South African War 1899-1902 on New Zealand*, (Auckland, Massey University Press, 2021)
- Roberts, Andrew, *Salisbury: Victorian Titan*, (London, Wiedenfield & Nicolson, 1999)
- Ross, Angus, *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1964)
- Scarr, Deryck, *Fragments of Empire: A History of the Western Pacific High Commission, 1877-1914*, (Canberra, ANU, 1967)
- Schake, Kori, *Safe Passage: The Transition from British to American Hegemony*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017)
- Schreuder, D.M, *The Scramble for Southern Africa, 1877-1895*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- Simmel, Bernard, *Liberalism & Naval Strategy: Ideology, Interest and Sea Power during the Pax Britannica*, (Boston, 1986)
- Sinclair, Keith, *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity*, (Wellington, Allen & Unwin, 1986)
- Sinclair, Keith, *A History of New Zealand*, (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1959)
- Sinclair, Keith, *Imperial Federation: A Study of New Zealand Policy and Opinion, 1880-1914*, (London, Athlone, 1955)
- Sissons, David, & Stockwin, Arthur, Tamura, Keiko (eds.), *Bridging Australia and Japan: Volume 1: The Writings of David Sissons*, (Canberra, ANU, 2016)
- Smith, Ian R., *The Origins of the South African War*, (New York, Longman, 2006)
- Steele, David, *Lord Salisbury: A Political Biography* (London, UCL, 1999)
- Swinfen, D.B., *Imperial Control of Colonial Legislation: A Study of British Policy towards Colonial Legislative Powers*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1970)
- Thompson, Roger, *Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: the Expansionist Era, 1820-1920*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1980)
- Thornton, A.P., *The Imperial Idea & Its Enemies, A Study in British Power* 2nd ed, (London, Macmillan, 1985)
- Trainor, Luke, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism: Manipulation, conflict and compromise in the late nineteenth century*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1994)
- Tumblin, Jesse, *The Quest for Security: Sovereignty, Race and the Defence of the British Empire*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019)

- Walker, David, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia, 1850-1939*, (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1999)
- Ward, J.M., *Empire in the Antipodes: The British in Australia, 1840-1860*, (London, Arnold, 1966)
- Ward, J.M., *British Policy in the South Pacific, 1796-1893*, (Sydney, Australasian Publishing Company, 1948)
- Ward, J.M., *Colonial Self-Government: The British Experience 1769-1856*, (Toronto, Toronto University Press, 1976)
- Ward, Russel, *The Australian Legend*, (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1958)
- Wilcox, Craig, *Australia's Boer War: The War in South Africa 1899-1902*, (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 2002)
- Willard, Myra, *History of the White Australia Policy to 1920*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1923)
- Wilson, Keith, *The International Impact of the Boer War*, (Chesham, Acumen, 2001)

THESES

PhD Theses

- Curthoys, Anne, 'Race and Ethnicity: a study of the response of British colonists to Aborigines, Chinese, and non-British Europeans in New South Wales, 1856-1881', (Macquarie University, 1973)
- Melhuish Kathleen, 'Australia and British Imperial Policy: Colonial Autonomy and the Imperial Idea, 1885-1902,' (University of Sydney, 1965)
- Takeda, Isami, 'Australia-Japan Relations in the Era of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1896-1911,' (University of Sydney, 1981)
- Wilcox, Craig, 'Australia's Citizen Army, 1889-1914' (Australian National University, 1993)

Masters Theses

- Hoare, Nicholas, 'Critics of Empire: Domestic Opposition to New Zealand's Pacific Empire, 1883-1948', (Victoria University of Wellington, 2014)
- Murfey, Guy, 'Fighting for the Unity of the Empire,' (University of New South Wales, 2017)

JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Anderson, Warwick, 'Racial Conceptions in the Global South', *Isis*, 105:4, (2014) pp. 782-792
- Aroney, Nicholas 'A Commonwealth of Commonwealths': Late Nineteenth-Century Conceptions of Federalism and Their Impact on Australian Federation, 1890–1901,' *Journal of Legal History*, 23:3, (2002) pp. 253-290
- Atkinson, Alan, 'Federation, Democracy and the Struggle Against a Single Australia', *Australian Historical Studies*, 44:2, (2013) pp. 262-279
- Atkinson, David, 'The White Australia Policy, the British Empire and the World, *Purdue University Department of History Faculty Publications*, 9-2015 pp. 1-27
- Barrat, Glynn, 'The Enemy that never was: the New Zealand 'Russian Scare' of 1870-1885,' *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, No. 1 (1976), pp. 13-33
- Bergant, Alexis, "'The Scum of France:.' Australian Anxieties towards French Convicts in the Nineteenth Century,' *Australian Historical Studies*, 49:2 (2018), pp. 150-166
- Bright, Rachel, & Dilley, Andrew, 'Historiographical Review: After the British World,' *The Historical Journal*, 60:2, (2017) pp. 547-568
- Canuel, Hugues, 'From a Prestige Fleet to the Jeune École: French Naval Policy and Strategy under the Second Empire and the Early Third Republic, (1852-1914),' *Naval War College Review*, 71:1 (2018) pp. 93-118
- Chavura, Stephen A. & Melleuish, Gregory, 'Conservative Instinct in Australian political thought: The Federation debates, 1890-1898', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 50:3, (2015) pp. 513-528
- Chang, Kornel, 'Circulating Race and Empire: Transnational Labour Activism and the Politics of Anti-Asian Agitation in the Anglo-American Pacific World, 1880-1910,' *Journal of American History*, 96:3 (2009), pp. 678-701
- Coleman, Deborah, & Nair, Sashi, 'Alfred Deakin's "Austral-Asia" and the Making of "History for the Future,"' *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture*, 64:2 (2017) pp. 136-146
- Coleman, William, 'Federation Without Affirmation,' *Agenda: A Journal of Policy Analysis and Reform*, 27:1, (2020) pp. 87-104
- Connolly, CN., 'Class, birthplace, loyalty: Australian attitudes to the Boer War', *Historical Studies*, 18:71 (1978) pp. 201-232
- Connolly, CN., Manufacturing 'spontaneity': the Australian offers of troops for the Boer War. *Historical Studies*, 18:70 (1978) pp. 106-117
- Davison, Graeme, 'Rethinking the Australian Legend,' *Australian Historical Studies*, 43:3, pp. 429-451
- Denoon, Donald, 'Remembering Australasia: A Repressed Memory,' *Australian Historical Studies*, 34:122 (2003), pp. 290-304
- Denoon, Donald, 'The Isolation of Australian History,' *Australian Historical Studies* 22:87 (1986), pp. 252-260

- Fairbairn, Miles, 'What Best Explains the Discrimination Against the Chinese in New Zealand, 1860s-1950s?' *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, 2:3 (2004), pp. 65-85
- Fieldhouse, D.K., 'New Zealand, Fiji and the Colonial Office' *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*, 8:30 (1958) pp. 113-130
- Frei, Henry, 'Japan Discovers Australia: The Emergence of Australia in the Japanese World-View, 1540s-1900', *Monumenta Nipponica*, 39:1 (Spring, 1984), pp. 58-81
- Huttenback, R.A., 'The British Empire as a "White Man's Country"- Racial Attitudes and Immigration Legislation in the Colonies of White Settlement.', *Journal of British Studies*, 13:1, 1973 pp. 108-137
- Huttenback, R.A., 'Racism and Imperialism in the Antipodes' *American University Fieldstaff Reports, Southeast Asia Series*, 19:2, (1971) pp. 1-15
- Lake, Marilyn 'White Man Under Siege', *History Workshop Journal*, 58:1, (2004), pp. 41-62
- Lake, Marilyn, 'British World or New World? Anglo-Saxonism and Australian Engagement with America,' *History Australia*, 10:3, (2013) pp. 36-50
- Lake, Marilyn & Pratt, Vanessa, "'Blood Brothers,'" Racial Identification and the Right to Rule: The Australian Response to the Spanish-American War,' in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 54:1 (2008), pp. 16-27
- Loveridge, Steven, 'The "Other" on the Other Side of the Ditch' The Conception of New Zealand's Disassociation from Australia,' in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 44:1, (2016) pp. 70-94
- McPhee, Justin T, 'Creeping Suspicions: Antecedents of Australia's Foreign Intelligence Activities,' *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 32:1, (2019), pp. 120-145
- Mountford, Benjamin 'Colonial Australia, the 1887 Colonial Conference, and the Struggle for Imperial Unity,' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 47:5, (2019) 912-942
- Meaney, Neville, 'Britishness and Australian Identity: The Problem of Nationalism in Australian History and Historiography' *Australian Historical Studies*, 32:116, (2001) pp. 76-90
- Meaney, Neville, 'The Problem of Nationalism and Transnationalism in Australian History: A Reply to Marilyn Lake and Christopher Waters,' *History Australia*, 12:2 (2015), pp. 209-231
- Mein Smith, Philippa, 'Mapping Australasia', *History Compass*, 7:9, pp. 1099-1022
- Mein Smith, Philippa 'New Zealand federation commissioners in Australia: one past, two historiographies,' *Australian Historical Studies*, 34:122, (2003), pp. 305-325
- Nielson, Briony, "'Moral Rubbish in Close Proximity": Penal Colonisation and Strategies of Distance in Australia and New Zealand, c.1853-1897,' *International Review of Social History*, 64:3 (2019), pp. 451-471

- Seymour, John, 'The Colonial Naval Defence Act 1865 and its Impact in Australia', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 107:4, (2021) pp. 435-452
- Tasker, Meg 'Two Versions of Colonial Nationalism: The Australian 'Review of Reviews' v. the Sydney 'Bulletin.'" *Victorian Periodicals Review*, (Winter, 2004), 37:4, pp. 111-122
- Tate, Merze, 'The Myth of Hawaii's Swing towards Australasia and Canada,' *Pacific Historical Review*, 33:3 (1964), pp. 273-293
- Taylor, G.P., 'New Zealand, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the 1908 Visit of the American Fleet', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 15:1 (1969), pp. 55-76
- Teaiwa, Katerina, 'Ruining Pacific Islands; Australia's Phosphate Imperialism' *Australian Historical Studies*, 46:3, (2015) pp. 374-391
- Verracini, Lorenzo, 'Emphatically Not a White Man's Colony,' *The Journal of Pacific History*, 43:2 (2008), pp. 189-205
- Walker, David, 'Shooting Mabel: Warrior Masculinity and Asian Invasion,' *History Australia*, 2:3, (2005), pp. 89.1-89.11
- Waters, Christopher, 'Nationalism, Britishness and Australian History: The Meaney Thesis Revisited', *History Australia*, 10:3, (2013) pp. 12-22
- Wood, F. 'Why did New Zealand not join the Australian Commonwealth in 1900-1901?' *New Zealand Journal of History*, 2:2, (1968), pp. 115-129

CHAPTERS IN AN EDITED VOLUME

(Chapter indented, book beneath)

- Grey, Jeffrey, 'Defending the Dominion, 1901-1918'
- Attard, Bernard, & Bridge, Carl, *Between Empire and Nation: Australia's External Relations from Federation to the Second World War*, (Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2000)
- Irving, Helen, 'Making the Federal Commonwealth'
- Bashford, Alison & Macintyre, Stuart, *The Cambridge History of Australia, vol 1*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013)
- Trainor, Luke 'The Imperial Federation League in Britain and Australia, c. 1884-1900'
- Bosco, Andrea & May, Alex, *The Round Table: The Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy*, (London, Lothian Foundation, 1997)
- Salesa, Damon 'New Zealand's Pacific' *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, (Melbourne, 2009)
- Byrnes, Giselle ed., *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009)
- Clarke, Stephen, 'Desperately Seeking Service: The Australasian Commandants and the War'
- MacGibbon, Ian, 'The Origins of New Zealand's South African War Contribution'
- Crawford, John, & McGibbon, Ian, eds., *One Flag, One Queen, One Tongue: New Zealand, the British Empire and the South African War*, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2003)
- Johnston, Anna 'Travelling the Tasman world: travel writing and narratives of transit'
- Colebourne, Catherine & Pickles, Katie, eds., *New Zealand's Empire*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press 2016)
- Boucher, Leigh, 'Trans/national history and disciplinary amnesia: historicising White Australia at two *finis de siecles*.'
- Carey Jane, & McLissky Clare, (eds.), *Creating White Australia*, (Sydney, Sydney University Press, 2009)
- Meaney, Neville, 'The Problem of Greater Britain and Australia's Strategic Crisis, 1905-1914.'
- Curran, James, & Ward, Stuart, eds., *Australia and the Wider World: Selected Essays of Neville Meaney* (Sydney, Sydney University Press, 2013)
- David Dutton, 'A British Outpost in the Pacific.'
- Goldworthy, ed., David, *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement With Asia, vol 1*, (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2001)

- Hadach, Gerd, 'Defining Separate Spheres: German Rule and Colonial Law in Micronesia,'
- Hierry, Herman & Mackenzie, John, *European Impact and Pacific Influence: British and German Colonial Policy in the Pacific Islands and the Indigenous Response* (London, Tauris, 1997)
- Murphy, Nigel, 'Maoriland' and 'Yellow Peril': Discourse of Maori and Chinese in the Formation of New Zealand's 1890-1914'
- Ip, Manying, *The Dragon and the Taniwha: Maori and Chinese in New Zealand*, (Auckland, Auckland UP, 2009)
- Bolton, Geoffrey & Waterston, Duncan, 'Queensland,'
- Irving, Helen, 'New South Wales'
- Irving, Helen, *The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- Moore, Clive, 'Labour, Indenture and Historiography in the Pacific'
- Lal, Brij V., *Pacific Islands History: Journeys and Transformations*, (Canberra, Journal of Pacific History, 1992)
- Laracy, Hugh, 'Insular Eminence: Cardinal Moran and the Pacific Islands'
- Laracy, Hugh, *Waitriama and Co: Further Pacific Islands Portraits*, (Canberra, ANU, 2013)
- Farrell, Brian, 'Coalition of the usually willing: the dominions and imperial defence, 1856-1919,'
- Otte, T.G., 'The Foreign Office and the Defence of Empire, 1856-1914'
- Kennedy, Greg, *Imperial Defence: The Old World Order, 1856-1956*, (London, Routledge, 2008)
- Borrie, W.D., 'British Immigration to Australia'
- Inglis, K.S, 'The Imperial Connection: Telegraphic Communication between England and Australia, 1872-1902'
- Madden, A.F & Morris-Jones, W.H, *Australia and Britain: Studies in a Changing Relationship*, (London, Fran Cass, 1980)
- Massov, Alexander 'War Scares and Growing Russophobia in Australia, 1875-1903'
- Massov, Alexander, McNair, John, & Poole, Thomas *Encounters Under the Southern Cross: Two Centuries of Russian-Australian Relations, 1807-2007*, (Belair, Crawford, 2007)
- Farrell, Sean Irish Rebel, 'Imperial Reformer: Charles Gavan Duffy and Australian Federation'
- McMahon, Timothy G, de Nie, Michael, & Townend, Paul, eds., *Ireland in an Imperial World: Citizenship, Opportunism and Subversion* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017)
- Thomas, Julian, 'Keith Hancock: Professing the Profession'

- Macintyre, Stuart & Thomas, Julian, eds., *The Discovery of Australian History, 1890-1939*, (Melbourne, MUP 1995)
- Bolton, Geoffrey, 'Federated Australia: Republic of the Southern Seas or New Britannia?'
- Moses John A., & Pugsley, Christopher, (eds.), *The German Empire and Britain's Pacific Dominions 1871-1919*, (Claremont, Regina, 2000)
- Trainor, Luke, 'Building Nations: Australia and New Zealand'
- Omissi, David & Thompson, David, *The Impact of the South African War*, (Basingstoke, Houndmills, 2002)
- Dalziel, Raewyn, 'Southern Islands: New Zealand and Polynesia'
- Porter, Andrew, *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III, the Nineteenth Century*' (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999)
- Hirama, Yoichi, 'Japanese naval assistance and its effect on Australian-Japanese relations,'
- Neilson, Keith, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and British Strategic Foreign Policy, 1902-1914.'
- O'Brien, Phillips Payson, (ed.), *The Anglo Japanese Alliance, 1902-1922*, (London, RoutledgeCurzon, 2004)
- Hirst, John, 'Empire, State, Nation'
- Ward, Stuart, 'Security: Defending Australia's Empire'
- Schreuder, Deryck & Ward, Stuart, *Australia's Empire*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Arnold, Rollo, 'The Australasian Peoples and their World, 1888-1915'
- Sinclair, Keith, 'Why New Zealanders are Not Australians'
- Sinclair, Keith, *Tasman Relations*, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1987)
- Overlack, Peter, "'A vigorous offensive': core aspects of Australian maritime defence concerns before 1914.,'
- Stevens, David & Royce, John, *Southern Trident: Strategy, History, and the Rise of Australian Naval Power*, (Crows Nest, Allen & Unwin, 2001)
- Walker, David, 'Rising Suns'
- Walker, David, & Sobocinska, Agnieszka, *Australia's Asia: From yellow peril to Asian century*, (Perth, University of Western Australia Press, 2012)
- Belich, James, 'Colonisation and History in New Zealand,'
- Macintyre, Stuart, 'Australia and the Empire',
- Winks, Robin, *Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume V: Historiography*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999)

Henshaw, Peter, 'The Origins of the South African War'

Wilson, Keith, *The International Impact of the Boer War*, (Chesham, Acumen, 2001)

FILM

Breaker Morant, dir. Bruce Beresford, 1980.