THE LABOUR IMPERIALISTS: A STUDY OF BRITISH LABOUR PARTY
LEADERSHIP ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EMPIRE
IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

by

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ABSTRACT

The attitudes toward the empire of a small group of Labour Party spokesmen are compared in this thesis. Considered collectively these attitudes suggest that the Labour Party had developed a distinctive form of imperialism which was derived from a reasoned evaluation of the needs and aspirations of the dependent peoples.

The historiography of the Labour Party indicates some Labour interest in the peoples of the empire, but it has not, as yet, systematically examined the collective views of key Labour leaders. It would seem that historians have assumed generally that, except for the Fabian Society, the Labour Party was decidedly anti-imperialistic. Through an examination of the writings of the spokesmen, and by demonstrating to what extent their views were reflected in party policy, the present study attempts to establish that Labour had developed its own form of imperialism.

After an analysis of historiography in the introduction, this thesis explains that Labour imperial attitudes originated in a stream of nineteenth century liberal radicalism rather than in any form of doctrinaire socialism. Chapter three introduces the spokesmen and demonstrates that they were imperialists in that they were willing to retain the empire until certain objectives were achieved. Underlying religious motivations are then discussed. These show a strong desire among Labour leaders to regard the empire as an opportunity to exercise a missionary zeal to elevate humanity intellectually and morally. Trusteeship notions, the heart of Labour imperialism, are then examined. Finally, before concluding, the Labour
philosophy of trusteeship is related to the question of free trade.

Labour imperialism was benevolent, seeking to realize the advantages of empire through a policy of trusteeship which was designed to prepare colonial peoples to engage in a willing partnership. It involved a selection of colonial service personnel, a promotion of race and culture blending, and a development of colonial material resources with minimal disturbance of native social institutions. It was also based on a belief in an extension of domestic social legislation to the colonies. This economically and socially developing empire was to serve as a temporary substitute, and to a large extent, as a model for an ideal world federation to be eventually achieved.

This study shows that Labour leaders were not opposed to empire per se, but against certain contemporary imperial activities which they regarded as indicating the mismanagement of empire. They were paternalistic in their proposed form of dominance, but willing, far more than representatives of other parties, to prepare colonial peoples to develop their abilities to survive independently. In this sense they were democratic idealists. They regarded mutual trust as the only way through which the long-range advantages of empire might be preserved. This study substantiates that influential party leaders largely agreed upon an imperial philosophy that was consistent and continuous since 1900, the year in which the party began as the Labour Representative Committee.
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The British Labour Party was launched as the Labour Representative Committee in 1900, became officially the Labour Party in 1906, and had its first governing experience in 1924. During these years Labour Party spokesmen developed an imperial outlook which was to have global implications; not the least of which was their influence on the creation of the League of Nations. Their ideas inspired labour within the empire. They were to develop a philosophy of imperial trusteeship from which many ideas were to be borrowed by all British governments. Mainly because of their imperial and world outlook, the party was to be enriched by a growing membership of influential defectors from the Liberal Party. Intellectual critics of the imperial and foreign policies of both the Conservative and Liberal parties were to find in the new party an inspiring milieu for the maturation of their views and a welcoming platform for their articulation.

The present study examines the imperial views of a prominent group of Labour Party spokesmen. The many general histories of the Labour Party offer only a few references to the beliefs and attitudes of founding leaders toward the colonies. There are several biographies of individual leaders, but none attempts to compare or synthesize imperial attitudes. The two books which deal directly with Labour views towards the colonies during this period, T.F. Tsiang's Labour and Empire (1923) and S.P. Gupta's Imperialism and the British Labour Movement 1914-1964 (1975) offer an abundance of information about Labour responses in committees and in parliament, but
neither examines the written works of the small group of leaders who formulated the underlying imperial philosophy which contributed much to these responses.

Bernard Porter's *Critics of Empire: British Radical Attitudes to Colonialism in Africa 1895-1914* (1968) is the only work which has identified, and to a certain extent, explored Labour imperialism. Porter has argued that by 1914 the Labour Party had incorporated into its policy a programme of imperial trusteeship called the "Imperial Standard" which had been devised by John Atkinson Hobson and James Ramsay MacDonald. However, Porter does not demonstrate that this programme was a synthesis of views shared by several influential Labour personalities, and omits substantiation of the extent to which it was accepted by the party.

An important reason for the present study is to carry Porter's analysis further. In pursuing this analysis it became increasingly evident that the views of Hobson and MacDonald were not isolated opinions. The "Imperial Standard" was in fact the seam which joined together fabric woven by themselves and others since 1900 when the party had begun as the Labour Representative Committee. They were developing a form of moral imperialism. In its detailed analysis of the needs of trusteeship it differed significantly from other forms of imperialism where such interests were often mentioned only rhetorically.

This thesis will substantiate that Labour leaders had a consistent and continuous imperial philosophy which involved the retention of empire until certain objectives had been achieved. The lack of such a study has caused historians to assume that Labour leaders were unqualifiedly anti-imperialist or indifferent to empire. Thus both Carl F. Brand and A.P. Thornton have written that Labour, by advocating the continuance of empire
when it came to office in 1924, had betrayed a long-standing policy of anti-imperialism. Not realizing that Labour had its own form of imperialism and had consistently accepted the principle of retaining the empire, in 1974 Professor Brand stated:

> In spite of a strong tradition of anti-imperialism, in office the party showed an awareness of the political and economic interdependence of the Empire. Colonial Secretary, J.H. Thomas announced that there was no desire to detract from the greatness of the Empire, which was safe in the hands to which it had been entrusted; he desired to promote its welfare by drawing closer the ties that bound it together. (2)

This thesis will argue that, though there was much opposition to certain kinds of imperialism, there was no "strong tradition of anti-imperialism" among prominent Labour Party leaders. It will also demonstrate that the imperial attitude expressed by Thomas was a reiteration of a well-established Labour position.

A.P. Thornton also believed Labour stood unqualifiedly against imperialism. His *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies* (1959) is intellectual history, encompassing the period treated in this thesis, and stressing an examination of the implications of the moral aspects of imperialism. However, there are few references to the views of Labour leaders, and no mention of a Labour imperial philosophy. To Thornton, Labour stood simply for a principle of self-determination of nations; not excluding the colonies of the empire. Therefore, in explaining why Labour leaders were reluctant to advocate the dissolution of the empire in 1924, he stated that "principles proclaimed by Labour when in opposition were exposed as unsound the moment Labour became responsible for the government of the country and of the British Empire."³ It shall be shown that the "principles proclaimed by Labour" were entirely consistent with the professions of the 1924 government.
The view advanced in this thesis, that Labour had a consistent and continuous form of imperialism, is also contravened by Bernard Semmel's contention that the Fabian Society represented imperial views that were outside of the mainstream of the Labour Party. In *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought 1895-1914* (1960) Semmel charges the Fabian Society with imperialism, militarism, jingoistic nationalism, tariff protectionism and jeering at the ideals of internationalism. Semmel was correct in his assumption that Fabians were imperialists, but wrong to imply that their form of imperialism "jeered at ideals of internationalism," or was simply a reflection of the narrow interests of nationalism. He was also mistaken in assuming that their imperialism was an isolated phenomenon, or that, as we shall see, they were opposed to free trade. The reasons for these misconceptions would seem to be that Professor Semmel has generalized Fabian support for British expansion in South Africa during the Boer War into a permanent Fabian position, and indeed, into an expression of their form of imperialism; a form which Semmel implies was little different from any other based in national chauvinism. Since Labour leaders in general opposed the Boer War, it is true that Fabians were unpopular among them. Some members, including Ramsay MacDonald, resigned when the membership refused to take a stand against the war. However, their resignations were due to the war, not the general Fabian position on imperialism.

This study will demonstrate that the Fabian form of imperialism, as outlined by Bernard Shaw in *Fabianism and the Empire*, was a foundation stone for the subsequent "Imperial Standard" of the Labour Party. Contrary to Professor Semmel, it will show that Fabians advocated an enlightened civilised policy of trusteeship that could help to create the kind of world in which a fulfillment of the ideals of internationalism might be possible.
In this introduction it should also be stated that the fundamental similarity between Fabian imperialism and the imperial attitude of the MacDonald-Hobson school of thought has been noted by William P. Maddox in Foreign Relations in British Labour Politics (1934). However, he left the connection unexplored.

The present study will attempt to clarify and substantiate the positions taken by both Porter and Maddox. Porter recognized the importance of the MacDonald-Hobson attitude, but did not focus on its ramifications. Maddox observed that the MacDonald-Hobson view was close to Shaw's, and that with Shaw's it constituted a Labour school of thought. However, leaving the question unexplored, he also suggested that, as a school of thought, support for the principle of complete national self-determination was "probably dominant". This was probably true for foreign affairs, but not for the empire. This thesis will argue that among prominent Labour leaders, and in Labour Party policy, the MacDonald-Hobson-Shaw view was not only dominant, but was a consistent form of imperialism throughout the early years of the twentieth century.
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5 Ibid., p. 65.


8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., p. 51.
CHAPTER II
THE LIBERAL ORIGINS OF LABOUR IMPERIALISM

The Labour Party was essentially a left-wing liberal movement. Without an appreciation of this fact an understanding of Labour imperialism is not possible. The party did not evolve within the doctrinal limitations of economic socialism. On the contrary, one historian has described it as a "curious mixture of political idealists and hard-headed trade unionists," of "loyal but disheartened Gladstonians" and "convinced socialists."\(^1\) By examining the party's origins this chapter seeks to establish the foundations of Labour imperialism.

The party was initially a loose federation of the Trades Union Congress, the Independent Labour Party, and the Fabian Society. Until 1918 it was not possible to join the party directly. To become a member it was necessary to join an affiliated society, and voting on issues was carried out separately. There was also a "conscience clause" which permitted a member to pursue a policy different from that of the majority.\(^2\) Moreover, until 1918 the party had made no formal commitment to socialistic economic change. The largest component, the T.U.C., was largely made up of supporters of the Liberal Party, and many union leaders were also non-socialists.\(^3\) In fact the socialists of one kind or another represented only a "tiny faction" of the original federation.\(^4\)

When the party began in 1900, it was called the Labour Representative Committee. As its name implied, its purpose was to promote the election to parliament and to pay the salaries of representatives of the working
class. The various groups of which it was comprised had been impelled to come together under the rubric of the L.R.C. because of a reluctance at the constituency caucus level of the Liberal Party to continue to support labour candidates. A precedent for defection from the Liberal Party on this ground had been set by the Independent Labour Party in 1893. Referring to this earlier defection, and giving us some insight into the origins of the Labour Party, Ramsay MacDonald commented in 1895: "We didn't leave the Liberals. They kicked us out and slammed the door in our faces." With the additional defection of the T.U.C. in 1900, either the Liberal Party would have to quickly adapt or a new party would emerge.

A leader such as Ramsay MacDonald regarded himself as fundamentally a liberal whose progressive ideas of humanitarian reform could not be accommodated within the Liberal Party. That his frustrated liberalism was no isolated example may further be borne out by the fact that of the twenty-nine successful candidates of the L.R.C. in 1906, only two claimed to be Marxists and many were only under a "vague Socialist influence." They claimed in most cases to be "devoutly" religious, and were mainly members of Methodist and Congregationalist churches which were organizations known for their support of liberalism. In his autobiography, Philip Snowden, one of the successful candidates, wrote that he himself had never read Marx, and that for every Labour Party member who had been inspired by Marx, a thousand others were more influenced by the Sermon on the Mount. The 1906 election was indeed a victory for "Gladstonians" whether they served under the banners of Liberals or Labourites. However, in 1906 the more "disheartened Gladstonians" were to begin to call themselves the Labour Party.

But what about the "tiny faction" of "convinced socialists" who had spearheaded the beginnings of the party? It is noteworthy, in trying to
understand their socialism, that MacDonald and Snowden were two of these. These socialists who came to the forefront of the Labour Party were themselves essentially liberal thinkers, and all had been former members of the Liberal Party. Although Marx's ideas, with respect to his scientific criticisms of the capitalist system, had undoubtedly influenced them either directly or indirectly, none were or had been avowed Marxists. In fact, the Marxian British Social Democratic Federation, which had more than once held brief membership within the Labour Party, had resigned in each instance in disgust due to the party's lack of willingness to commit itself to the Marxian principle of the class struggle.

Thus far an attempt has been made to demonstrate that the Labour Party began as a dissatisfied faction of Liberals. This point has been emphasized because, as this thesis attempts to show, the imperial attitudes of the party's leaders derived from liberal radicalism. However, certain difficulties must be resolved before arguing this point further. Firstly, that the party's members came from the Liberal Party does not prove that they remained Liberals in their political outlook. For instance, it is usually assumed that a belief in *laissez faire* is a characteristic of Liberalism. We must, therefore, establish to what extent one is permitted to depart from *laissez-faire* principles without losing his essential liberalism. Secondly, how does one reconcile liberalism with imperialism? Indeed, at first sight they appear to be incompatible beliefs.

Before we proceed to identify liberal imperialism, and to argue its affinity with the attitudes of Labour Party leaders, let us first attempt to put into the liberal context the party's attitudes toward *laissez faire*. Initially, it is important to understand that social reform programmes which interfere with the freedom of commercial enterprise were not incompatible
with liberal radicalism. The key to understanding this lies in the fact that Benthamite utilitarianism did not include *laissez faire* as a plank of its programme.\(^{10}\) Benthamites in the 1840s regarded it as a tool for promoting the greatest happiness for the greatest number.\(^{11}\) It was not, therefore, an article of faith for liberal radicals even though defenders of economic liberalism might assume that it was.

In the nineteenth century, people who believed in *laissez faire* often inadvertently departed from it.\(^{12}\) Examples of restrictive legislation promoted by fundamentally *laissez-faire* Liberals include a Public Libraries Act, a Chimney Sweeps Act, and mining safety measures.\(^{13}\) As public awareness of human misery increased, modifications of *laissez-faire* thinking became desirable among humanitarians. Similar modifications would become even more desirable in the latter decades of the nineteenth century in order to deal with the social problems of accelerated urbanization at a time when Britain had lost its preeminence in world trade.

The leadership of the new Labour Party came from among the modifiers of *laissez-faire* thinking. Radicalism had experienced several new influences in addition to Bentham. Charles Darwin and Auguste Comte had inspired the notion of the gradual moral improvement of man by way of environmental amelioration. Their thinking was to have much influence on the Fabian Society.\(^{14}\) John Stuart Mill and Henry George popularized the view that taxation of unearned increments in land did not contravene the liberal belief in the rights of the individual.\(^{15}\) The belief that it was unjust to keep an unearned increment was subsequently applied to industrial and financial wealth as well. Moreover, Marxian ideas were in wide circulation and had more influence on Fabians than apparently they cared to admit.\(^{17}\) However, whereas Marxian thought became the dominant strain of the Social Democratic
Federation of H.M. Hyndman, it remained only one part of the intellectual inheritance of Labour Party leaders. For them Marxism, unorganized Christianity, and a host of radical writers would produce a blend from which eclectic attitudes would be possible.\textsuperscript{18}

No more telling example of liberal humanitarian concerns for the abuses of \textit{laissez faire} can be given than the soul-searchings of John Stuart Mill himself. In arguing for social reform as early as 1852, he concluded that even communism would be preferable to the existing state of inequity:

\begin{quote}
If, therefore, the choice were to be made between Communism, with all its chances, and the present state of society with all its sufferings and injustices; if the institution of private property necessarily carried with it as a consequence that the produce of labour should be apportioned as we now see it, almost in an inverse ratio to that of labour...if this or Communism were the alternative, all the difficulties, great or small, of Communism would be but as dust in the balance. (19)
\end{quote}

Moreover, in his autobiography it is evident that his attitude was changing "so far as regards the ultimate prospects of humanity, to a qualified socialism."\textsuperscript{20}

Mill is very important to our understanding of Labour Party liberalism. Like himself, Labour Party leaders believed that a kind of "qualified" socialism was necessary to bring about the greatest happiness for the greatest number. \textit{Laissez faire} in its pure state had outlived its utility. But neither Mill, nor the Labourite leaders so influenced by him,\textsuperscript{21} were willing to risk the loss of liberal democracy. For example, Sidney Webb, Ramsay MacDonald, and John Stuart Mill all believed that the ideal of a "qualified" socialism had to be attained voluntarily and therefore could not be realized without a prolonged and difficult period of public education.\textsuperscript{22} Without an educated public opinion, socialism could only be imposed by force, and if this were the case, liberalism would be lost. They
were willing to remedy or modify *laissez faire*, but were not willing to surrender it entirely. In Benthamite terms one might argue they were willing to preserve that part of *laissez faire* which still retained utility to promote "pleasure." The party leaders, in effect, wanted what John A. Hobson was to call a "conversion from the negative conception of *laissez faire, laissez aller*, to a positive constructive one."\(^{23}\)

The idea that the edifice of socialism must be understood step by step, not to be imposed but adopted cooperatively, was the essence of the Fabian "gradualism" which came to dominate Labour Party policy. The liberal principle of democracy, so cherished by Mill, was always to remain the highest priority.

An outstanding Fabian and a leading spokesman of the Labour Party, to be more thoroughly introduced shortly, was Sydney Olivier. For greater insight into the relationship between liberalism and the Labour Party, it is worthwhile at this point to consider his article, the "Moral Basis," which was his contribution to the *Fabian Essays* of 1889. Essentially, Olivier argued on behalf of the liberal belief in the rights of the individual. He described socialism as "individualism rationalized, clothed, organized and in its right mind."\(^{24}\) He illustrated this point by contrasting two conditions which he dubbed "personality" and "personalty." The latter referred to one's personal belongings, such as private property, and "personality," in contrast, included one's totality of needs. Disease, crime, and war, for instance, had a way of affecting all classes. It was in the true interest of everyone's individuality to be interested in the fulfillment of the needs of "personality" if real individualism were to be achieved. Moreover, if the property of "personalty" obsessions of the few were contrary to the total interests of society, individuality for the
majority was impossible. Hence, to limit the concept of individualism to freedom of commercial enterprise was a mistaken and obsolete notion. Where was individualism without equality of educational opportunity, without equal opportunities to health, without public libraries or without adequate housing for all?

This attitude was to become the basis of the new liberalism of the Labour Party. Labour Party leaders were essentially liberal radicals who demanded a greater revision of laissez faire than the Liberal Party was prepared to accommodate. At the time of Olivier's writing, many Liberal Party representatives regarded this attitude as threatening; as opening the door to socialism. However, the socialism advocated was little more than that of successful trade unionism, and social reforms which could materialize from progressive taxation. In fact, one I.L.P. founding representative in 1893 was applauded when he described the socialism of trade unionism as sufficient to their needs. This is not to say that there were no schemes of nationalization contemplated, but even in 1918, when the party promised to work toward the "common ownership of the means of production," only coal mines and public utilities were specified.

This kind of revision of laissez faire, that would have been accepted by John Stuart Mill, was to become an important ingredient of Labour imperialism. The social reforms Labour leaders were willing to promote at home in order to raise the local level of humanity were to be translated into trusteeship programmes for the empire. Since they had to be tailored to local circumstances, they would not always be the same reforms, but the same willingness to revise laissez faire would remain as much a dominant feature of imperial as of home policy. It would also remain a flexible liberal policy rooted in liberal radicalism rather than
doctrinaire socialism.

Other aspects of liberalism would appear in Labour imperialism; aspects that were more closely aligned to the classic expression of laissez faire. Such would be the continued adherence to free trade, the encouragement of self-government in the colonies, and the tendency toward democratic idealism. These factors, paradoxically, played a strong role in the imperialism of Labour. How could such an apparent willingness to dispense free things go hand in hand with the dominance inherent in imperialism?

The answer to this question lies in the realization that for liberals military and political powers were not the only tools of dominance. Greater success could be assured by following Bentham's dictum that the "greatest happiness" resided in policies which relied upon personal self-interest for their fulfillment. In advocating the "greatest happiness" and in appealing to the pursuit of self-interest to make it effective, Benthamites did not contemplate the dissolution of either the state or the empire; but rather the consolidation of both by enlightened policy.

The Durham Report was an example of this strategy of appealing to the pursuit of self-interest. L.T. Hobhouse has described it as "the classical exposition of the application of Radical or Benthamist ideas to the Colonial Empire." He argued that the object of promoting responsible government was to keep Canada as a permanent member of the empire by appealing to Canadian self-interest. He demonstrated the strength of his argument by quoting Richard Cobden who, in 1848 on the eve of the authorization of Canadian responsible government, stated:

People tell me I want to abandon our colonies, but I may say, do you intend to hold your colonies by the sword, by armies, and ships of war? That is not a permanent hold upon them. I want to retain them by affections. (28)
In the early twentieth century this liberal method to preserve the empire was to be very much a part of the Labour Party strategy. It was an imperial policy because it involved what was often regarded as the only effective means to retain the empire for all practical purposes. Even Joseph Chamberlain, an ardent imperialist, described the empire as strong although it "hangs together by a thread so slender that even a breath would sever it . . . ." 29

Retaining the colonies "by affections" was to be an important feature in the form of imperialism advocated by Labour in the early twentieth century. But, one might ask, what if the colonies refused to be affectionate? Could Labour leaders really be regarded as imperialists if they had no recourse to a more tangible power than affections? As we shall see, Labour leaders were prepared to use paramount power if their policies were opposed. That in this sense they were imperialists will be demonstrated in the following chapter. However, they favoured more creative forms of dominance; the dominance of ideas that would nullify the necessity to resort to paramount power. These ideas were embodied in the "Imperial Standard" which played a prominent role in Labour imperialism.

The usefulness of an idea as an imperial strategy was not new. For example, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher have argued strongly that in the nineteenth century free trade was a form of British imperialism. 30 Cobden could afford to speak of retaining the colonies by affection because British dominance was assured by trade supremacy. Robinson and Gallagher demonstrated that treaties of free trade gave Britain an imperial sway far beyond the limits of formal empire. 31 For the Labour leaders free trade remained an important tenet of their form of imperialism. But in the twentieth century when Britain no longer ruled commercially, Labour's
dominant idea would be trusteeship. Free trade would be merged into this concept. The policy of ruling by a concept, however, would remain the essence of their dominance.

There were also some similarities between Labour and another form of imperialism that arose from liberalism. This was that of the self-styled Liberal Imperialists, a small group of prominent Liberal leaders including Herbert Asquith, who, between 1895 and 1905 sought national efficiency, and cooperation with the self-governing colonies. Both Labour and Liberal imperialists believed that domestic social reform measures were preferable to a national tariff policy, imperial preference, or a Zollverein. Both held that sympathy must be the basis of understanding between Britain and the self-governing colonies.

On the other hand, they were widely apart in two important ways. The Liberal Imperialists were largely indifferent to the dependent empire and were unwilling to significantly revise laissez faire. Their reforming zeal lacked any notion of colonial trusteeship, or for that matter, any serious interest in what Joseph Chamberlain described as the cultivation of the "undeveloped estates"; a question on which Labour would have differed mainly in terms of methodology. For home policy, Liberal Imperialists gave serious attention to only three reforms: education, temperance and housing. Only the latter significantly challenged the existing social structure by demanding larger powers for local authorities to acquire land. Insofar as industrial reforms were concerned, they gave no more than their approval of trade unionism.

The willingness to not only modify the abuses of laissez faire at home to achieve the greatest happiness for the greatest number, but also to seek social reforms to protect working-class majorities abroad, was a
distinctive feature of Labour policy. This attitude had important implications for the empire. In contrast, neither Liberal Imperialists nor Chamberlainites showed evidence of a real concern for the social or cultural institutions of the native peoples of the dependencies.\textsuperscript{37}

We are prepared to examine the imperialism of the Labour Party now that we have some appreciation of its underlying beliefs. As we shall see, the logic of Olivier's reasoning, that the needs of the individual cannot be considered in isolation from society, was to be extended to the colonies and the world. National needs were no more fulfilled in isolation than were those of the individual. Therefore, to develop the basic unit, the individual, it would be necessary to concern oneself with the "personality" needs of the world. That the prosperity of all nations, a good liberal tenet, was necessary for Britain's prosperity was stated in the 1918 Labour Party policy statement, and party spokesmen were to promote this point of view in practical ways by their contributions to the Labour Organization of the League of Nations. While seeking a "national minimum" for Britain domestically in 1900, Shaw expressed this larger attitude succinctly in stating that the British flag should, "carry with it wherever it flies a factory code and a standard of life secured by a legal minimum wage."\textsuperscript{38}
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4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., pp. 223-4.

6. Ibid., p. 22.


11. Ibid.


13. Ibid., pp. 146-147.


16. Ibid., p. 239.


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For Mill's view see Kaye Lamb, "Genesis," p. 10; for Webb see Mary Mack, "Fabians and Utilitarianism," p. 84 and for MacDonald's view see H. Hessell Tiltman, James Ramsay MacDonald (London: Jarolds, 1929), p. 308.


Ibid., p. 22.


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36 Ibid., pp. 242-250.


38 G.B. Shaw, Fabianism and the Empire: A Manifesto by the Fabian Society (London: Grant Richards, 1900), p. 54.
CHAPTER III
LABOUR IMPERIALISM DEFINED

The Definers

The men who dominated the discussion of Labour Party imperial policy were Ramsay MacDonald, John Hobson, Keir Hardie, Sydney Olivier, Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb, Arthur Henderson, Leonard Woolf and Philip Snowden. The most clearly visible leaders were MacDonald, Hardie, Henderson and Snowden. The views of MacDonald and Hardie, often regarded as sacred, were prominent in imperial as well as in domestic considerations. Henderson and Snowden, themselves with large followings, gave support to these views. Though less visible to the rank and file, Hobson and Olivier strongly influenced party thought. Along with Bernard Shaw they were philosophers, more than politicians. Sidney Webb made important contributions to organizing ideas into policy. Leonard Woolf's writings enriched party notions of trusteeship, and his work as secretary for Labour's imperial affairs committee after World War One, helped to translate such notions into a detailed practical policy.

The fact that the party was new and dedicated to the welfare of the majority gave leaders considerable freedom to express their opinions. They need not protect the imperial vested interests of either commercial or aristocratic elites. Relieved of this encumbrance, they could give reign to their idealism and could advocate an empire relatively free from economic and authoritarian exploitation. This, of course, had to be tempered occasionally when the interests of labour were identifiable in
the minds of the workers with those interests of the established classes. But surprisingly, as we shall see, those occasions were few. Moreover, during these years, between 1900 and 1924, the party was not in power and was therefore under no direct pressure to compromise.

Beginning with Sydney Olivier, let us take a closer look at the leading spokesmen. We have met Olivier already as the author of the "Moral Basis" to Fabian socialism, his contribution to the 1889 Fabian Essays. After completing his formal education at Oxford, he entered the Colonial Office in 1882. His colonial service included Acting Colonial Secretary of British Honduras (1890-1891), Auditor-General of the Leeward Islands (1895-1896), Colonial Secretary of Jamaica (1899-1904), and Governor of Jamaica (1907-1913). He also served as Principal Secretary for the Board of Agriculture from 1913 to 1917 and as Assistant Comptroller and Auditor of the Exchequer from 1917 to 1920. His work, White Capital and Coloured Labour, placed him among the forefront of party commentators. A biographer has accurately stated that Olivier "laid a foundation of thought on which innumerable other workers have subsequently built."² His colonial expertise led to his appointment as Secretary for India in the MacDonald cabinet of 1924.

John A. Hobson was another spokesman whose views pervaded both the domestic and imperial outlook of the Labour Party. His written contributions were extensive. Before becoming a formal member of the party in 1918 he had long been a friend and confederate of Ramsay MacDonald.³ On the trusteeship of tropical colonies and the feasibility of world government, they had worked together as early as the late 1890s when both were leading members of the Rainbow Club and the Ethical Society.⁴ Hobson so influenced his friend that Bernard Porter has suggested that MacDonald's
imperial outlook had its origins in the thought of Hobson.\textsuperscript{5} Hobson's book *Imperialism: A Study* (1902) was particularly important, not the least for its foreshadowing of the League of Nations. H.N. Brailsford wrote that it had a "decisive influence" and inspired several English writers such as Leonard Woolf to "carry his analysis here and there a little farther."\textsuperscript{6}

The fact that Hobson was late in joining the party does not disqualify him as a spokesman, particularly since the Labour Party had embraced his thought and the Liberal Party had not. Moreover, he had for years served on Labour Party committees, and had written pamphlets for the I.L.P.\textsuperscript{7} He was essentially a liberal critic, and has been mentioned in chapter one as an important contributor to the revision of *laissez-faire* principles. However, to illustrate his liberal views, it is noteworthy that in 1922 he said that he never felt at home with trade unionists and "full-blooded socialists."\textsuperscript{8} Yet his ideas were "commonplace" on Labour platforms.\textsuperscript{9} He believed in socialization of key industries\textsuperscript{10} but was too much of a democrat and a liberal to accept any form of doctrinaire socialism.

Bernard Shaw has been selected as a spokesman because it was he who largely articulated the imperial thinking of the Fabian Society. Also, on matters of international thinking, Shaw's writings have emerged in various places including the introductions to Leonard Woolf's war-time works elucidating proposals for a lasting peace. In addition, as shall be evident in the chapter dealing with free trade, Shaw's views on this issue must receive important consideration. However, his most important work in reference to this study is *Fabianism and the Empire* which provided the imperial views of the Society in 1900. Bernard Semmel, as stated in the introduction to this study, has regarded the Fabian imperial position as unrepresentative, but this thesis attempts to show that it was consistent
with party imperial thinking throughout the period under discussion.

Leonard Woolf joined the party through the Fabian Society in 1912. He was well-educated, widely travelled, and had served as a colonial administrator for six years in Ceylon. Like Olivier, he brought on-the-job experience of the colonial field to the party. Fundamentally, his interests were in imperial and foreign questions, so much so that according to Woolf, Sidney Webb regarded him as the Labour Party "expert" on international and imperial affairs. Woolf wrote extensively on imperialism and internationalism. Especially important for this paper is his *Empire and Commerce in Africa* (1920). Woolf was the first of the second wave of liberal intellectuals to join the party and with the help of other newcomers played a strong role in applying the thought of MacDonald and Hobson to questions of policy. In 1915, with the assistance of Sidney Webb and other members of the Fabian Society, he wrote a draft treaty for a peacekeeping organization and two reports on international government which subsequently contributed extensively to the establishment of the League of Nations. In 1917 Woolf became Secretary of the Labour Party Advisory Committee on International and Imperial Relations, and shortly after the war this organization became two committees. Woolf was Secretary of both for the next twenty years.

The reasons for selecting Arthur Henderson are complex. One was his relationship to internationalism, which, with respect to the Labour Party, could never be separated from imperial concerns since the improvement of international living standards was, as we shall see, a necessary objective of Labour Party imperialism. From 1907 onward Henderson served as secretary to the British Section of the Socialist Internationale. As Party secretary in 1917 he wrote *The Aims of Labour* which provided useful information for
this study concerning Labour's attitude to the world. However, of particular importance was Henderson's support for the attitudes and ideas of Ramsay MacDonald. G.D.H. Cole has written that "Henderson himself regarded MacDonald's magnetic qualities as indispensable to the party and, so far from attempting to rival him, gave him every possible support on this ground even in his most equivocal dealings." And in a similar vein Mary Hamilton wrote of the cooperation between Henderson and MacDonald in devising *The Aims of Labour*, which, of course, included the party's attitude toward the colonies.14

As a MacDonald supporter Henderson often acted to unite diverse elements of the party. For example, in 1917 he got MacDonald and the left-wing Liberal newcomers to co-operate with the bulk of the trade unions.15 Henderson himself had once been a Lib-Lab in the trade union movement, was also a Fabian noted for a capacity for "plain talk," and was still known as an active Wesleyan laypreacher.16 Whereas MacDonald was often regarded with suspicion by trade unions, Henderson had their confidence to a far greater extent.17 Finally, he lent useful support on imperial matters in his capacity as party chairman from 1908 to 1910 and from 1914 to 1917.

In these pages Sidney Webb will appear occasionally. His recorded views on imperial questions between 1900 and 1924 would seem to be few. Yet his role as critic and organizer was undoubtedly inestimable. In spite of the fact that Leonard Woolf has stated that Webb told him that colonial affairs were not his subject,18 it is perhaps noteworthy that Webb served for ten years with the Colonial Office19 and he and Sydney Olivier in the 1880's shared the duty of resident clerk.20 In 1915 Webb and Woolf, as cited above, drafted a peace-keeping scheme which will be of importance to this study. Webb wrote the official Labour Party policy statement "Labour
and the New Social Order" in 1918, a document containing the essence of Labour's attitude toward the colonies. And also in 1918, he served on the Advisory Committee for International and Imperial Questions.

Because Philip Snowden was a forefront leader with Hardie, MacDonald and Henderson, it is necessary to note here that his contributions to attitudes towards the colonies were largely limited to concerns related to trade which will be discussed in chapter four. Insofar as he was interested in the empire per se, Snowden's autobiography is perhaps revealing. In it there are few references to the empire, and in his chapter dealing with his travels in Canada, the United States and Australia in 1914, reflections on the colonies are conspicuously absent. Far more interest is shown toward the United States. However, notwithstanding temperamental differences, he was in fundamental agreement with MacDonald's views.

Once regarded as the "embodiment" of the spirit of the I.L.P., J. Keir Hardie was the most respected leader and real founder of the Labour Party. Ill health and impatience with parliamentary procedures caused him gradually to defer leadership to Ramsay MacDonald. Realizing the necessity to compromise, he often defended MacDonald's parliamentary maneuvers against suspicious left-wing critics. Nevertheless, the evidence would suggest that, at least on imperial questions, the fundamental difference between the two men was more a matter of style than of substance.

Hardie's enthusiastic personality and religious zeal inspired his interest in empire. He was an ardent traveller with a keen interest in detail. He had many friends among labour leaders abroad, was a popular delegate at the congresses of the Second International, and wrote several articles placing the British labour movement in an international context.
From July 1907 to April 1908 he took a world tour, and his travels were mainly in the empire. His observations of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India appeared in newspapers, and in a book called *India: Impressions and Suggestions*. Hardie showed more interest in the empire than either Henderson or Snowden. In this interest, he paralleled rather than followed MacDonald.

Hardie and MacDonald were the soul of Labour Party imperialism. Their leadership dominance in terms of offices held, and the extent of their influence over all aspects of the party, needs no recounting here. There were temperamental differences between the two men. Whereas MacDonald examined all sides of an issue in terms of analytical and highly rational byways of thought, Hardie's reactions were often more immediately direct and impetuous. On matters of party organization, as for instance, working closely with the Liberal Party, he and MacDonald at times disagreed, but on imperial matters it would seem they were usually in accord. Neither was willing to give up the empire, but both wanted imperial cooperation to be as voluntary as possible, and both were keenly devoted to policies of trusteeship. Both had travelled widely and attentively within the empire, and had spoken and written extensively about their impressions. It is important to stress the extent of their influence because often too much weight is accorded to defectors from the Liberals who were to join the party in 1918. Of the two men MacDonald was the more prolific writer and had the greater influence on defining a consistent imperial policy. Their views on imperial matters shortly will speak for themselves. Of all spokesmen, in terms of foundation laying, these two were the most important.

This small group of spokesmen, especially MacDonald, Hardie, Shaw, Hobson and Olivier formulated a consistent imperial philosophy for the
Labour Party. It will be demonstrated that many others were influenced by their attitudes, and that the substance of their thought was evident in party policy. Contrary to the beliefs of A.P. Thornton and C.F. Brand who assumed Labour in office in 1924 had betrayed a long tradition of anti-imperialism by not only advocating the retention of empire but also by wanting closer ties, it will be argued that Labour was in effect continuing to pursue an imperial outlook with a consistency initiated as early as 1900.

The Definition

Before the advent of the Labour Party as the Labour Representative Committee in 1900, the primary concerns of the organizations which were to comprise the party were related to the improvement of working class living and working conditions. However, the issue of imperialism was such an important one, particularly prior to and during the Boer War, that it could not be ignored. Responses among Labourites ranged from indifference, hostility to certain imperial activities, and support for imperialism.

The period between 1895 and 1900 was one of mounting severe negative criticism thrust up by the conflict in South Africa. There was much disapproval of exploitation of native and white labour, of alleged financial conspiracies, and of the war as a detraction from domestic social reform. The I.L.P. press was hostile. By vilifying capitalist greed and exploitation in the empire, Hardie as editor of the Labour Leader, the official organ of the I.L.P. press, reinforced the image of the capitalist exploiter at home. Imperial expansion was condemned at annual I.L.P. conferences, but though there were complaints about capitalist exploitation abroad, the I.L.P. minutes record no constructive concern for the colonies.
For the I.L.P., the T.U.C., and the Fabian Society, the first priority was domestic reform. Representing the Fabians at the inaugural I.L.P. conference, Bernard Shaw remarked that Labour need not concern itself with foreign affairs for a long time to come. By 1900, the year the Labour Party was born, Shaw and the Society were to feel differently, but until then issues other than immediate needs, such as domestic wage increases and the eight-hour day, would seem irrelevant. To an anti-imperialism resolution at the 1899 T.U.C. conference it was argued that wages and working conditions were of first priority, and that trade unionists were ill-advised to become a "stalking horse for political issues." In parliament between 1895 and 1900 there were ten Lib-Lab representatives, but though they spoke for the immediate needs of their constituencies, they were silent on matters of imperialism.

The transition from a negative to a positive attitude toward imperial issues occurred gradually, and was in evidence after the election of the twenty-nine L.R.C. candidates in 1906. Along with a small group of Liberal "radicals," they contributed outstandingly to questions of human rights within the empire. Concerning India, for instance, they showed strong interest in averting famines, in spreading primary education, in scientific training in agriculture, in removing censorship from the Indian press, and in developing self-government. With respect to South Africa, Labour M.P.s "were the most forward of those who attacked the colour bar and pleaded for equal treatment for black and white," and the issue of providing protection for native rights in the South African Constitution Bill of 1909 was "very largely their debate." With the intention of proposing a party imperial policy, Ramsay MacDonald presented Labour and the Empire in 1907. Since the creation of the L.R.C. funds were available to
help representatives with travel expenses, and salaries were provided for Members of Parliament. Both Hardie and MacDonald wrote books and articles about their travels in the empire. The prominence of Hardie and MacDonald was in itself an important factor, since they were both intensely interested in the empire and now had a broad platform from which their views might be promulgated. Although indifference changed to concern, hostility toward an imperialism primarily motivated by commercial and military objectives, remained and would remain as a permanent characteristics of the Labour Party. However, as Labour leaders moved from a negative condemnation of government imperial policies to proposals of alternative solutions, they were creating, in effect, their own kind of imperialism.

Before proceeding to examine Labour imperialism it is important to recall that "imperialism" is one of those vague and ambiguous terms which always require amplification or qualification. As has been suggested in chapter one, in essence imperialism refers to one group or polity dominating another. The willingness to dominate, for either harmful or beneficial purposes, is an expression of imperialism.

Many have associated imperialism with a sense of world responsibility. The Romans referred to the Pax Romana and the spread of law and civilisation. The French were spreading equality, fraternity, and liberty, and the British, similar to the Romans, were providing the "Pax Britannica." In the Victorian period and beyond, stories of heroism and idealism involving the "White Man's Burden" were commonplace. In 1908, the Conservative leader Lord Curzon wrote that "In Empire we have found not merely the key to glory and wealth, but the call to duty, and the means of service to mankind." Joseph Chamberlain also referred to developing the colonial "estates" for the benefit of native peoples. And a "true imperialism" in
the words of the Conservative, George Parkin, who was a leading figure in the Canadian imperialist movement, involved a sense of mission to "make this world the home of freedom, of justice, and of peace, and to secure those ends the British Empire was the highest secular instrument the world had ever known." Viewed from this perspective, a nation which was not imperialistic either had little to offer or was immorally ignoring its responsibility.

If intentions to assume moral responsibilities toward the world were expressions of imperialism, the Labour Party spokesmen were definitely imperialists. They were keenly interested in actively promoting their values in the colonies, and with some qualifications, were definitely unwilling to relinquish the empire. In 1900, two seminal statements of party imperialism appeared: Bernard Shaw's *Fabianism and the Empire* and Ramsay MacDonald's "The Propaganda of Civilisation." The attitudes and ideas imparted in these writings were mirrored in party imperial writings throughout the time period of this thesis. With the exception of William P. Maddox, in his *Foreign Relations in British Labour Politics* (1934), the relationship of "general agreement" between Shaw and MacDonald has been overlooked by historians. *Fabianism and the Empire* has been regarded as an isolated phenomenon because of its outspoken support of British supremacy in South Africa during the Boer War. This position had caused Ramsay MacDonald to resign from the Society, and had cast an aura of suspicion over the Society in the minds of T.U.C. and I.L.P. leaders. Indeed, the tone of the tract was bellicose, insisting that Britain should rapidly complete her "manifest destiny" in South Africa, and demanding a national efficiency to cope with powers competing to partition the globe. Nevertheless, when stripped of its Boer War integument, it was fundamentally
a very humane document.

Paradoxically the key significance of Fabianism and the Empire to this thesis rests partly in its rejection by other component organizations within the party. It was unacceptable because of its frankly imperialistic message and its support of an unpopular cause from the point of view of many party leaders. Two policies in opposition to the liberal tradition were advocated: militarism and expansionism. Although they pertained directly to South Africa, they were presented in assertive arguments justifying the right of a superior civilisation to influence the destinies of less advanced peoples. Shaw also referred to an international right of travel and trade, a very liberal policy in itself, but he frankly stated that if a nation were incapable of providing a government which could assure such conditions of security as were necessary, a trading nation had the right to intervene and "set one up." That the resources of the world were for the benefit of the human race was one of Shaw's central themes.

However, in its frank and honest recognition and assessment of imperial responsibilities, this work was to present the essential philosophy of Labour Party imperialism as it was to be expressed by the leadership over the years under discussion. Also, in retrospect, appearing in 1900, the year of the party's beginning, it was to represent the initial turning point from a negative to a positive imperial view. In an unrefined and undiplomatic form all other attitudes of party spokesmen were there, as shall be best expressed in comparisons which will appear further below. Its chief argument was that until the time arrived when an ideal internationalism was possible, it would be necessary to have substitutes in the form of "responsible Imperial federations," and that the path of well-being and prosperity for Britain and for the world lay in the spread of
"civilisation." 47

Until one considers Shaw's definition of civilisation, his justification for imperialism seems little different from that of non-socialist imperial idealists. When Parkin referred to the British Empire as the "highest secular instrument" the world had ever known to secure "freedom," "justice" and "peace," Shaw and the other party spokesmen could have heartily agreed. They would have shared the sense of imperial mission, but would have disagreed on the definition of "freedom" and "justice." In arguing against a policy of allowing narrow short-range commercial interests to jeopardize the efficiency of imperial administration, Shaw stated:

> It is not enough for trade to follow the flag when the flag has followed irresponsible explorers who 'purchase' concessions from tribal chiefs who do not know that concessions mean: civilisation must follow the flag. And it is becoming more and more our concern that no flag that does not carry a reasonable standard of life with it shall be the flag of a Great Power. (48)

In the writings of MacDonald, Hobson, Olivier and Woolf, this point of view was to appear frequently as we shall see in the chapter dealing with trusteeship. Typically Shaw's "reasonable standard of life" was to be expressed "by making the British flag carry with it wherever it flies a factory code and a standard of life secured by a legal minimum wage." 49

During the same year, MacDonald expressed a similar point of view, but his style was less assertive. Until he wrote *Labour and the Empire* in 1907, he was unwilling to commit himself directly to an imperial policy. But MacDonald disagreed less with the Fabian message than with its tactlessness. As with Professor Seeley and other nineteenth century imperial thinkers, MacDonald believed imperial unity must be achieved through an appealing and sustaining moral idea. 50 In 1907, MacDonald was to present such an idea in his "Imperial Standard." For pragmatic reasons
it was advisable for him to dissociate himself from the Fabian statement in 1900. Yet he was in essence every bit as much of an imperialist as its author.

MacDonald regarded himself as a propagandist of civilisation. In a lecture delivered to the Ethical Society in 1900, he expressed his attitude toward imperialism in the following terms:

So far as the underlying spirit of Imperialism is a frank acceptance of national duty exercised beyond the nation's political frontiers, so far as it is a claim that a righteous nation is by its nature restless to embark upon crusades of righteousness wherever the world appeals for help, the spirit of Imperialism cannot be condemned. The reforming ardour which compels us to...world statecraft, gushes from springs seated not merely in our nationalism but in our humanity. A nation like an individual must live morally and one of the first essentials of a moral life is a feeling of responsibility... (51)

In this address he was obviously clarifying for his audience the moral aspects of imperial responsibilities. In 1907, he would echo Shaw in spelling out the home requirements to prepare Britain to become the "righteous nation" for embarkation on such a responsible imperial mission. The radical liberalism of home policy was to be expanded to the empire. In 1907 MacDonald would be prepared to speak on behalf of a Labour Party in need of an imperial policy. Like Shaw, he believed that imperial responsibility depended on Britain's capacity to export civilisation. Shaw had stated that the first duty was to establish social reform at home, and MacDonald stressed that more could be done for Africa "by civilising the East end of London than by putting an end for ever to the inequities of the Khalifa in the Soudan." To be an effective missionary for civilisation it was necessary to avoid transferring the less socially beneficial by-products of the industrial revolution. He condemned a prevalent attitude that what happened to native rights was immaterial because their tribal economies were,
like those of Europe, doomed to disruption "by an aggressive assertion of personal right." 53

After the election of 1906, there was room for optimism. The Liberals had introduced many social reforms, and the Labour Party had been baptized with great success at the polls. There was an esprit de corps growing in the party and just as there was a possibility of a positive reversal in traditional home policies, a similar trend could be envisaged for the colonies.

In 1907, MacDonald accepted a logic for the existence of the empire. Both he and Shaw believed that responsible imperial federations were necessary to maintain peace and human progress until a world federation was possible, and MacDonald was beginning to make it clear that the British Empire was needed for this temporary purpose. In referring to the difficulties of disarmament, he stated "an armed Britain is as unlikely to disturb the peace of the world as any other military Power." 54 Referring to the possibility of the self-governing colonies becoming entirely separate nations, he stated that this was undesirable on the grounds that it would increase "the number of possibly militant governments and points of friction . . . whilst the gravity of a serious war as it presents itself to statesmen responsible for an enormous territory would be diminished." 55 He was not opposed to self-governing colonies maintaining their own military establishments, but he was opposed to them achieving complete independence. However, like Shaw, he wanted that dependence to be based on a willing "partnership," and in fact wanted imperial policy to be administered, not therefore by Downing Street, but by Britain and each self-governing state sharing equally and collectively in the responsibilities of the empire. 56 This was not to be achieved through any elaborate imperial federation.
involving a constitutional, military, political, and commercial alliance, but rather by representatives of both parliamentary majorities and minorities of the self-governing colonies getting together on a regular basis to arrive at solutions to problems.\textsuperscript{57} As with the Labour Party official policy statement of 1918, what was sought was "not an Empire in the old sense, but a Britannic Alliance."\textsuperscript{58}

However, this "Britannic Alliance" was to be essentially a redistribution of power to a wider base of command. As we shall see below, power over the dependencies was not to be relinquished until an effective world federation was possible. The "Britannic Alliance" concept was, therefore, as MacDonald had advocated in 1907, to consist of the supervision of the dependencies by a partnership of Britain and the self-governing colonies.\textsuperscript{59} Although this concept of partnership may remind us of the Statute of Westminster of 1931, the similarities were superficial. The self-governing colonies would have the same opportunity for free association,\textsuperscript{60} but in contrast to the Statute of Westminster, if they chose to remain in the commonwealth, they would be obliged to accept extensive responsibilities. MacDonald was so far from accepting the idea of independent nationhood that he totally disapproved of "Imperialists" who contemplated a "group of independent states, each one irresponsible for the policy and actions of the rest."\textsuperscript{61} In effect he desired a "unity more vital than diplomatic and mechanical alliance," one with "a common racial policy . . . a uniform political purpose . . . agreed to by the allied States."\textsuperscript{62}

In essence MacDonald was attempting to devise a solution to arrest the process of imperial decay, already well advanced by growing colonial national aspirations. As with the radical imperialism of Lord Durham, cited earlier in chapter one, MacDonald felt it was necessary to give in order to
retain. What had to be retained as much as possible was the empire. For example, insofar as making separate treaties with other nations was concerned, unless the member state were to quit the empire, MacDonald stated the matter thus:

Under the present circumstances, the authority which makes treaties is the authority which ultimately controls armies. To give any of our Colonies the power to embroil us in war, or to determine our relations with European powers, is to give the first shattering blow to imperial solidarity. (63)

It was clearly not to be a case of each nation by and large going its separate way. MacDonald did not intend to give the empire away any more than did Shaw. But like Shaw, he believed that the empire would not last unless it was founded on a willing partnership. MacDonald stated that the "unity which we seek cannot be imposed." 64 It must come rather "from within," from a "desire already existing." 65 Member nations must be free to quit, but if they remained they must accept certain imperial responsibilities. If those responsibilities were ignored by a self-governing colony, it would be asked to withdraw from the imperial association. However, the partnership should be of such appeal that withdrawal would be regarded as undesirable.

These ideas were part of what MacDonald was to call the "Imperial Standard" which one historian has described as the most constructive original contribution to imperial thought to appear in this period. 66 It involved essentially a code of ethics to be followed collectively by the self-governing colonies. Britain would be equally open to censure for her behaviour since decision-making with respect to the dependencies was to be shared between the self-governing colonies and herself. 67 The "Imperial Standard" embodied attitudes toward trusteeship which were to serve as the basic guideline for the Labour Party's policy of trusteeship. This policy was of such importance that it must be treated as the subject of a separate chapter.
For the present, however, it must be stressed that the "Imperial Standard" was an expression of Labour Party imperialism.

We have seen thus far that both the Fabian Society and Ramsay MacDonald were in favour of retention of the empire, and that both believed it to be necessary as a temporary "substitute for a world federation." However, to what extent was this Labour Party "genuine" imperialism to remain unaffected by commercial interest? The Labour Party spokesmen unanimously disclaimed an imperial policy, which, in effect, elevated commercial profit to the top priority; not because they were against profit per se, but rather that, in their view, a policy of naked material exploitation was against the ultimate general interest. Hobson's under-consumption theory stressed that at home a few had profited materially from the empire, but the vast majority had not benefited, and in war paid a terrible price for the advantages of the few. Moreover, from the standpoint of Olivier's definition of individuality, uncivilized economic imperialism was in opposition to the best interest of individualism.

However, the view that imperial policy must place commerce in a civilised framework did not mean that the party spokesmen held material and commercial advantages in low esteem. Hardie approved of the material interests of the empire, and was not opposed to having an empire, but like Shaw and MacDonald, he was very much against its mismanagement in terms of ignoring the needs of the native peoples. What he opposed most vigorously was an overemphasis on profit and an underemphasis on people. For instance, he recognized India's economic benefits and praised the British Raj for introducing a settled form of government to India, but was ashamed that thirty million had died since its introduction.

Shaw was highly in favour of developing the commercial potentialities
of the empire. But he stressed that the empire must be rescued from private interests. In examining party attitudes toward trusteeship and free trade, we shall see the ways in which commerce was to be put into what Hobson was to call a "sane" and "legitimate" imperialism. MacDonald referred to the "blighting exploitation of the white man's capitalism." Yet he also argued that "Temperate lands have a right to ask from the Tropics some of their desirable productions" and "tribes and nations have no right to peg off parts of the earth . . .".

Shaw put the case bluntly in Fabianism and the Empire, we may recall, by asserting a prerogative to enforce international rights of travel and trade. However, he also stressed that it was of equal importance to achieve a decent standard of living for the inhabitants of such areas.

Nor was Hobson opposed to interfering with native peoples for the sake of "developing alike the material resources of their land and the human resources of their people." He too accepted "force" as sometimes "a prior condition to the operation of educative forces." He explicitly approved of the exploring and developing of "the hidden natural and human resources of the globe." However, to Hobson the problem was, as it was to Shaw, MacDonald and Hardie: one "of safeguards, of motives, and of methods." In his Imperialism: A Study, which will be dealt with more comprehensively in the discussion of trusteeship, Hobson was to explain the conditions necessary for interference into the affairs of "backward" peoples. As early as 1902 he provided the first sketch of the League of Nations mandate system and introduced the concept later known as the "dual mandate" which was to be extended by other Labour Party spokesmen.

In full agreement with the right of justified intervention, Sydney Olivier in 1906 stated that "the proposition that any race has a sacred right
to exclude strangers from the advantages of the territory it occupies, so long as those strangers conduct themselves inoffensively, is indefensible." But certainly, as with the other spokesmen, he opposed a chauvinistic intervention for naked commercial profit. As with all leading party spokesmen, he thought in organic terms. He had argued in the "Moral Basis" in 1889 that individuality without a concern for the totality of "personality" needs was unobtainable. In 1906 he was to apply this argument to Africa. In referring to a right of residence of white colonials he stated significantly:

No one can say that the European has not the right to settle in Africa...and monopoly has no more a divine sanction in savage than in civilised countries. (31)

It is abundantly clear that the Labour Party spokesmen were neither lacking the will nor the inclination to effect an imperial policy which would entail economic advantage or the use of force.

Certain insights into Labour Party spokesmen attitudes are possible through a consideration of their reactions to certain situations. For example, Olivier compared the British policy toward Jamaicans after the revolt against the white landowners' oligarchy in the 1860s, to that of the United States Government toward southern blacks after the Civil War. He pointed out that the southern whites were suddenly confronted with a vast number of blacks who had received democratic rights without gradual prior preparation by way of assimilation or education. These rights were withheld by the southern whites and to justify their intransigence to their own minds, according to Olivier, the whites proceeded to represent the blacks as totally incompetent and uncivilized. To Olivier, this attitude produced a greater alienation than had existed prior to liberation. On the other hand, the British authorities resolved the Jamaican problem of injustice
through formally establishing the island as a Crown Colony, and then proceeding to address the situation by means of prudent administration. The result, in the case of Jamaica, was salubrious since the machinery could be set up for a gradual political and cultural assimilation with due respect for the values of all. Conversely, in the American constitution at that time there was no administrative machinery to cope with the emancipation of the American black.

Olivier's attitude towards these situations seems similar to that of Edmund Burke who George Mellor accredits with implanting the notion of trusteeship within the British empire. Burke asserted that the "commercial connection involved for the stronger of the two parties a moral obligation to ensure, as far as might be, that the weaker party did not suffer from the connection." It is obvious that Olivier would have agreed with Burke on two counts: that there was no freedom without authority, and that the ruler owed something to the ruled. On the basis of his vast administrative experience, Olivier was convinced that colonial problems were matters to be resolved by enlightened and paternalistic administration. He was not opposed to empire. He rather saw it as a necessity. He was opposed to an incompetently managed empire. The problem with the empire was that there were too many incompetent colonial service people who were implying that they were superior without actually being so. He was not opposed to imperial authority. He stated that there was nothing wrong with one's being superior, only in his saying so. He also believed that such provisions as good health service, good roads, and just administration produced loyalty and harmonious development. Like MacDonald and Shaw, he too believed in a benevolent kind of imperialism.

On the other hand Woolf referred to his reason for leaving the
Colonial Service after six years in Ceylon as "personally" not wanting to be "ruler of the ruled." Yet it becomes clear that his reason for feeling this way was more affected by his estimation of his co-rulers than it was a condemnation of imperialism _per se_. As with Olivier, Hardie, MacDonald, Hobson and Shaw, he was disturbed by the low level of education, the insensitivity to native needs, and the isolated existence of the colonial bureaucracy.

In his _Imperialism and Civilisation_, Woolf applauded the lofty imperial ideals stated by the powers in the Berlin Act of 1885, but disapproved of the fact that their promises were broken, that the trust of native peoples had been lost, and that imperialism was disgraced. Yet it was necessary for European governments, as inadequate as they were, to remain in Africa. In 1920, Woolf stated, as Shaw had stated in 1900, and MacDonald in 1907, that European states must remain to protect natives from white minorities. Because the League of Nations appeared in 1920 to be no more fulfilling its lofty pretensions than had the Berlin Congress of 1884-5, it was necessary to still foster a trusteeship attitude among individual nations. Undoubtedly, this meant a continuation of Labour Party imperialism.

However, the purpose of the party's imperialism was certainly not to assume indefinite control. Although MacDonald had stated in _Labour in the Empire_ that India would "always" require an "overauthority" and in his _Awakening of India_ that Britain was the "nurse of India," he did not necessarily mean that this role would always be performed by the British Empire. Hopefully the ideal world federation would continue the task. Meanwhile, an imperialism of trusteeship was required for India and elsewhere
to prepare the peoples of the empire for the civilisation required to eventually achieve a democratically-based ideal internationalism.

By 1917, Arthur Henderson believed this ideal internationalism was nearing realization. Reflecting the hopes of many for the anticipated League of Nations, he asked that after the war the colonies of all nations in tropical Africa be constituted into a single state under an international authority. These were the hopes expressed by Hobson in 1902, but unfortunately they were still premature when Henderson wrote them in 1917. The British Empire was yet to be maintained.

Sidney Webb in 1920 recorded his disillusionment with the League of Nations, and also made clear that in his view the empire must remain. Referring to the League's failure to transfer imperial responsibilities to a world authority he stated that "it is plain that no such League and no such Supernational Authority exists, or has more than begun to be established." Clearly the goal of world federation was regarded as a distant event:

Future generations, abandoning projects of domination over other races and subject peoples, may carry through to completeness the evolution of the British Empire into an Alliance of Free Nations...the process will take a long time; and in the meanwhile adequate provision must be made both for national defence and for the administration of the British Empire. (93)

In 1900 Shaw stated the party's imperial aims rather well in stressing that it was of prime importance to make "our subjects" as "independent of our guidance, and consequently as appreciative of our partnership, as possible." In 1907, in the "Preface for Politicians," an integral introduction to his play John Bull's Other Island he reiterated this aim eloquently in the following words:
Now for England's share of warning. Let her look to her Empire, for unless she makes it such a Federation for civil strength and defence that all free peoples will cling to it voluntarily, it will inevitably become a military tyranny to prevent them from abandoning it; and such a tyranny will drain the English taxpayer of his money more effectively than its worst cruelties can ever drain its victims of their liberty. A political scheme that cannot be carried out except by soldiers will not be a permanent one. (95)

When Labour formed a government in 1924, it was assumed by many that MacDonald and his followers would seek to dissolve the empire. This expectation of anti-imperialism was founded on Labour's long-standing criticism of imperial policy, and, to be discussed below, Labour's pleas for self-determination of nations during the war. It was therefore surprising to many when MacDonald spoke ambiguously of "the confusions of an imperial inheritance," and explained that a transition period must evolve from pre-war imperial policies toward the greater ideal that was eventually to be realized. It was even more surprising when in an "open message" to India, responding to demonstrations of Indian nationalists, MacDonald informed them that their path toward nationhood must be constitutional and they need not expect immediate self-government.

Moreover, many who feared the crumbling of the empire "heaved deep sighs of relief" as they grew familiar with the attitudes of the new Colonial Secretary, J.H. Thomas. For instance, in Jamaica he stated that he was "proud" of the empire and believed that it was a "heritage which must be handed on to those that follow better than we found it." On another occasion he spoke in the spirit of MacDonald in saying:

I know there are many people who assume that Labour leaders are against the development of Empire. It is because I am a Labour man that I believe with all my heart in that great brotherhood of free and democratic peoples which is building up the Empire. (101)

Is this statement contradictory? No, not when we consider the frame of
reference for empire already established in Ramsay MacDonald's "Imperial Standard" which Bernard Porter claimed had become a "firm tenet" of Labour Party policy since 1914.\textsuperscript{102} In essence Thomas was looking to the fulfillment of what MacDonald had described as a "unified political purpose agreed to by allied states."\textsuperscript{103} In 1924 Thomas was encouraging the "free and democratic peoples," in effect the self-governing colonies, to commit themselves to sharing in "building up the Empire" in a manner worthy of responsible trusteeship.

He was not telling these "free and democratic peoples" that they must follow instructions from Britain. He was rather referring to the full partnership embodied in the concept of the "Imperial Standard." If MacDonald's form of imperialism had insisted upon a deference of the self-governing colonies to the will of Britain, even if such colonies had the freedom to withdraw from the empire, it would be a contradiction to refer to "free and democratic peoples." They could hardly be free, except free to quit, if they accepted a dictated "Imperial Standard." However, when MacDonald stated the way in which the self-governing colonies should cooperate, he was not speaking as a British overseer. He was speaking as MacDonald, the parliamentarian, striving to convince others of what he regarded as a good idea. He was an imperialist because he was unwilling to free the dependent empire until certain conditions had been satisfied, but in promoting the "Imperial Standard," he was a salesman attempting to persuade Britain and the self-governing colonies to buy a concept of full partnership. In 1924 Thomas was representing this product.

In the following chapter the idealism of the Labour imperialists will be better understood as we look at their religious motivations. But
before proceeding to do this, let us examine briefly Labour's reputation of anti-imperialism as it related to the war years.

Anticipating the realization of the ideal world federation in the creation of the League of Nations, Labour joined the Liberals in demanding peace without annexations to arrest the kinds of imperialism they did not like. A sign of reliance on the promise of the League was the inclusion of a disinterested international authority for tropical Africa in Arthur Henderson's *Aims of Labour*. Nevertheless, as it became more obvious that the hopes of ideal internationalism remained unjustified, it became equally clear that the empire must remain in the role of "overauthority." This point may be illustrated by a consideration of attitudes toward India between 1917 and 1920.

From 1917 on, the Labour Party in parliament was foremost in striving to fulfill the demands of Indian nationalists. As we shall see in the chapter on trusteeship all of our leading spokesmen favoured rapid development of India toward becoming an autonomous member of the empire. Because of the slowness of the realization of this objective, and responding to the aspirations of Indian nationalists, MacDonald in 1917 told the House of Commons that he believed the time was ripe to allow India to determine her own destiny. But it is noteworthy that he said this before knowing of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. When in fact the Government of India Act appeared in 1919, he wholeheartedly approved of the degree of progress it represented, and pledged the Labour Party to its support. Furthermore, Leonard Woolf and his Advisory Committee on Imperial and International Questions also gave their approval to the Act, and Sidney Webb declared himself to be entirely in agreement with it. Philip Snowden was also clearly satisfied with the degree of freedom that the Act was
willing to allow. In 1917 he had warned a Lancashire audience that self-government for India might result in having to negotiate with an Indian protective tariff.  

Furthermore, to add to the views of spokesmen cited earlier, there was no promise of immediately relinquishing the dependent empire in either the 1918 policy statement or in the stand taken by the National Executive in 1920. In the 1918 policy statement the party clearly denied "any conception of a selfish or insular 'non-interventionism' unregarding of . . . the moral claims upon us of the non-adult races. . . ."  

And it went on to state that the party was dedicated with respect to each colony to develop the degree of "Democratic Self-Government of which it is capable . . ."  

Even more revealing is the 1920 statement of the National Executive. In response to a branch Labour Party resolution urging a general autonomy congruent with the demands of Ireland, India, and Egypt, and to be included in the 1920 party conference, the National Executive Committee felt obliged to qualify the grounds upon which it would accept the resolution. Their amended version was passed as follows:  

The conference reaffirms its conviction that only on the basis of democratic self-determination with adequate protection for minorities can any stable or satisfying settlement of the world be arrived at; and that the principle is applicable to all peoples that show themselves capable of expressing a common will. (114)  

The revealing phrase demonstrating the continuity of Labour Party imperial policy was, of course, the requirement of capability of "expressing a common will." Such a policy could not yet be applied to India with its religious differences and variety of cultures. Nor could it be applied to Africa since it was believed much of Africa lacked the political development to express a common will.  

From the point of view of the socialist Left, outside of the Labour
Party, and probably from that of some "Little England" voters for the party, MacDonald and his supporters were betraying principles by not freeing the empire. This belief was due to a mistaken idea of those principles. As is being argued in this thesis, on the basis of the evidence, there is no reason to assume that giving away the empire was the Labour Party programme in the first place. The party did, like many Liberals, and with more earnestness, work toward a preparation for Home Rule status, but they did not wish to relinquish the empire any more than Lord Durham wanted to give up British North America when he advocated the provision of Responsible Government.
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16 Hamilton, Fit to Govern, p. 25.


18 Woolf, Downhill, p. 219.


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CHAPTER IV
THE RELIGIOUS MOTIVATION

Religious convictions were of vital importance in forming the attitudes and beliefs of the Labour imperialists. They believed that humanity was progressing at varying stages towards an ideal goal of complete understanding and cooperation. They also believed that the degree of human progress to be expected depended upon enlightened programmes of trusteeship. These beliefs were rooted in their religious convictions. Indeed, atheism, or for that matter, mere lukewarm responses to religion were rare. Only Leonard Woolf was indifferent to religion. Keir Hardie, Arthur Henderson, and Philip Snowden were lay preachers in Christian pulpits. Though they did not profess Christianity, Sydney Olivier, Sidney Webb, John Hobson, Ramsay MacDonald and Bernard Shaw all attributed their motivations to improve the world to their religious beliefs. Since it can be demonstrated that these beliefs had much to do with their attitudes toward colonial trusteeship, which shall be amplified in the following chapter, it is important to understand the nature of their views.

Before this is possible, however, it is helpful to recall that these leaders were liberal radicals, who, in effect, were intellectuals who had been influenced by a wide variety of writings. They were contemporaries to an age in which religious doubts were fostered by revelations of modern science, and especially by the Darwinian theory of evolution. Writers who criticized the Bible, who pointed to its many "absurdities and inconsistencies," were popular.\(^1\) But, as Susan Budd has strongly argued, and
her views apply to our spokesmen, criticism of Biblical premises was a far less compelling reason for leaving conventional Christianity than a sense of moral revulsion against intolerable cruelties and injustices perpetuated by Biblical heroes, whose behaviour seemed to be accepted without question. Many were also opposed to ministers and congregations who refused to consider positive suggestions for social reform. Consequently, the need for moral expression, that could not be satisfied within formalized Christianity, was often rechanneled into secular forms of socialism.

Secular forms of socialism, however, did not satisfy the spiritual needs of many of these liberal intellectuals who often came from strong Evangelical backgrounds. They were equally unable to accept "a religion that contradicted the current doctrines of science or a scientific world view that excluded hope." They were tormented by the idea that their financial security was made possible by the poverty of others. Shaw spoke of a need to regain "our lost honesty" and Beatrice Webb of a "class consciousness of sin." What they desired was a religious hypothesis that was both intellectually and morally satisfying. What was needed was an inspiring teleology.

It would seem that Auguste Comte's philosophical writings contributed much to the needed reconciliation between science and religion. His "Religion of Humanity" enjoyed a general influence among liberal radicals, and it will be shown that his ideas were reflected in the religious thinking of our spokesmen. Beatrice Webb has written that in her "social and intellectual environment . . . August Comte's union of the 'religion of humanity'" was regarded as "the final stage in the development of the human intellect." To many Comte's theory of social evolution was an inspiring
supplement to Darwinism, and, as indicated above in chapter two of this study, Edward Pease had stated that Charles Darwin and Auguste Comte were influences on the attitudes of the early Fabians.

Before demonstrating to what extent Comte's thought was reflected in the religious attitudes of the Labour leaders under discussion, it would be useful, perhaps, to outline the relevant aspects of this thought. Of crucial importance was his view that humanity was progressing at different rates, depending on environment and circumstance, to higher stages of social development. The level at which most progress could be expected he described as the "positivist" stage which was characterized by the seeking and applying of utilitarian propositions in order to realize human progress. Not surprisingly, J.S. Mill was greatly impressed by Comte's Positivism. As with utilitarianism, Comte's philosophy was universal in its application. Social evolution was dependent upon the progress of intellectual development. Consequently, social measures such as those implied in a "national" or "international" minimum were needed to provide the requisite environmental advantages for nurturing humanity towards the fulfillment of evolutionary potentialities.

For Comte there could be no real progress in terms of social evolution without a moral transformation. He argued that society could "only be regenerated by the greater subordination of politics to morals by the moralization of capital." The initial purpose must be to promote "a heartier development of the sympathetic instincts," and this was impossible, he believed, without "the religion of humanity." The will to promote human progress required the primacy of emotion over intellect. Though the intellect was indispensable to human development, and, in fact, the employment of the rational processes was regarded as the supreme characteristic
of the "positivist" stage, the intellect was useless unless it was in the service of the heart. Similarly, Shaw stressed the value of what he called the "moral passion," and argued that in conjunction with this, the intellect was the "noblest of passions." Comte's "Religion of Humanity" gave direction to such passions. It was based on an hypothesis more intellectually palatable, from both a rational and moral point of view, than that of formalized Biblical Christianity. Comte's Grand Etre, the equivalent of the Supreme Being, was neither omniscient nor perfect. It was, in effect, a transcendental embodiment of the collective wisdom of humanity, past, present and future. Thus, he wrote, that even "the least among us can and ought to aspire to maintain and even to improve this Being." To a large extent the attitudes of the Labour leaders toward the colonies were a reflection of this view. What, then, were their attitudes toward religion?

Shaw renounced his atheism in 1896. He was originally one of those liberal intellectuals, mentioned above, who were unable to accept the Bible either on moral or intellectual grounds. In its place in 1896 he adopted what he regarded as the religion of Creative Evolution. Of this, one researcher has written that during the first twenty years of the twentieth century the propagation of Shaw's "own religious views were Shaw's cardinal concerns both in the theatre and from the lecture platform." The Grand Etre at the centre of Shaw's "Creative Evolution" was the "Life Force" which he described as a "great purpose . . . engaged in a continuous struggle to produce something higher and higher . . ." Significantly, Shaw's statement that the "life force" asked each of us to work "for the good of the world society and the whole world, instead of merely looking after personal ends" was similar to Comte's views.
Also in the Webbs there was the sense of self-subordination to something beyond. Beatrice Webb has written that Sidney had "a faith and a hope in the eventual meaning of human life--if not for us, then for those who come after us." Moreover, she described his "faith" as a religion based on a "devotion to a wholly disinterested purpose." Like Comte and Shaw, service to this religion was entirely rational, relying on the scientific method, but the power behind the intellect was, as Beatrice expressed it, an "emotional Will to Believe . . . an Act of Faith."

Sydney Olivier was as interesting example of the conscience-troubled radical who found the Evangelical Christianity of his upbringing unsatisfactory. Referring to Olivier's putting aside of his Christian affiliation, Willard Wolfe has written that the most lasting consequence of his "fall from grace was that it helped to transfer the impulse to self-subordinating service that was so often nurtured in an Evangelical conscience from God to all mankind." Olivier was strongly influenced by both Comtean and utilitarian ideas. Both of these streams blended in his religious beliefs. In a letter to H.G. Wells in 1917 he explained that for the past twenty-four years he had "perceived the fact of God." Olivier's God provided no promise of personal redemption or afterlife for himself, but was of such importance to him that without it he believed he had no more than "chemical or animal energy." He wrote also that his God gave "Providence" for the "spirit" and a "corresponding condition of service" without which there could be no continuance of his "personality." In 1884, thirty-three years before, during the period in which he had rejected his original faith, he wrote that he was "full of desire to investigate all forms of religion and thought and feeling." Such ideas were undoubtedly grist for the mill of anyone with ambitions to assume the trusteeship of civilizations.
Hobson's work also depended upon religious inspiration. Surprisingly, he rejected Comte because he believed him to lack sufficient appreciation of the unity of the universe. Yet, similarly to Comte, Shaw, Olivier and the Webbs, he believed the constant intellectual efforts of humanity were serving "a single collective design." He often quoted Pascal's saying that "the whole succession of men during many ages should be considered as one man, ever living and constantly learning." He also believed that the emotional and the rational were complementary. In answer to the question of what happens when the human race reaches the culmination of rational self-consciousness, Hobson wrote:

May not the whole process of the rationalization of man be regarded as a bringing of the individual man into vital communion of thought and feeling with the thoughts and feelings of the race of humanity, perhaps of the larger organic being of the cosmos. (36)

For Hobson it was impossible for us to have a faith in man's destiny, and the necessary qualified optimism to serve humanity or to "perform great works," unless we had some personified purpose "calling forth our reverence, regard or love." For Hardie the guiding light, inspiring service to humanity, was personified in the image of a socially-conscious Christ. Stanley Pierson has written that Hardie's socialism was a new form of Christian gospel. Almost in Comtean terms, Hardie described his religious attitude as the "spirit of progress" raising men "a stage higher in the evolving of the perfect man . . ." For Hardie socialism was a great moral movement, and the promotion of economic changes were, in his words, only "a mere incident in our great human crusade." As far as he was concerned, his kind of socialism was the embodiment of Christ in the industrial system.

As with the other Labour leaders referred to thus far, Hardie's
beliefs could accommodate other religions within the empire. His religion was flexible and with little doctrinal content. As with most liberal radicals, Hardie tempered his religious attitudes with much secular reading. He was another example of the kind of thinker for whom formalized religion was inadequate. The paradoxical combination of openness of mind coupled with religious zeal, which was so evident in the imperial attitudes of most of our spokesmen, was well illustrated in Hardie's outlook. William Stewart, one of his earliest biographers, wrote that Hardie "was imbued with an imaginative Catholicity of spirit which rendered him responsive to every expression of religious feeling which seemed to him sincere."

To Ramsay MacDonald the religious hypothesis also had great meaning. In him, again, we find dissatisfaction with formalized religion, opposition to dogma, and a desire to identify with the spirit of many religions. He asserted that Protestantism had become "as formal as the religion of Rome," and that the true spirit of religion had gone from the churches to the Ethical movement, in which he and Hobson were active members. David Marquand, his most recent biographer, has written that MacDonald sought "common ground between opposing views" in religion as in politics, and that his religious writings showed a "longing for an exalted communion of feeling." From this it is not difficult to understand MacDonald's meaning when he referred to an empire based on a community of "faith" and "hope" rather than "markets."

Although Leonard Woolf regarded himself as an atheist, it is interesting to note that in 1900 at Cambridge, he wrote an ambitious essay on the history of mysticism in which he admitted the possibility of processes other than the rational for perceiving reality. This, of course, did not make him religious. He did, however, show interest in the comparative
qualities of religious founders such as Christ and Gautama, and measured their value by the yardstick of humanitarian morality. He often referred to the Sermon on the Mount as, at least, a partial recipe for human existence. He was also another example of the liberal intellectual who had rejected formalized Biblical religion on the grounds of its immorality. For instance, he heartily condemned the Jehovah of the Old Testament as "not only irrational, but cruel, vindictive, and uncivilized."

But this condemnation would not preclude the possibility of a religious response along Comtean lines. However, significantly, he rejected Shaw's "Life Force" rather offhandedly as a "characteristic compromise, in deference to the scientific age." Yet, taking the risk of being accused of attempting to put him into a slot to support the argument of the present writer that Labour Party imperial attitudes were rooted in religious inspiration, it is possible that Woolf, in effect, was unknowingly serving a cause beyond himself which others may have described as a religion. For example, although, as we shall see, his passion to bring into being a world peace-keeping organization may not have been unreasonable, his apparent underlying assumption, that one day the human race would reach the point of maturity to make it work effectively, was perhaps unreasonably utopian. It would seem at least possible that others lacking Woolf's rather irrational optimism, perhaps a "faith" that he denied in himself, could not make his dream a reality because they did not share his spiritual drive.

Both Arthur Henderson and Philip Snowden were intensely religious in more conventional terms than most of the other Labour leaders being discussed. There was no rejection of childhood religious belief followed by years of philosophical quandary. There was, however, like Hardie, a strong bias toward the Social Gospel type of Christianity rather than that which
seeks personal salvation through an acceptance of doctrinal beliefs. Both
stressed that religion was not something apart from material life, and that
real Christianity was found in the exercise of Christ's principles to
improve working conditions, and in a sense of cooperation throughout the
world. Characteristic of this idealism expressed by most spokesmen,
Snowden preached that:

The religion of the future will recognise the unity of all men.
It will have for its ideal the complete organic unit of the
whole human race. (52)

It shall be shown that this concept of organic unity, shared by
these leaders, was highly compatible with their trusteeship notions. Such
a unity did not require that each component be exactly the same, but rather
that all parts might work together for the progressive social evolution of
humanity. The grafting of one civilisation onto another, as opposed to
uprooting and replacing, was not philosophically difficult for religious
believers who were uncommitted to the precise doctrinal limitations of any
established religion. In fact, all dogmatism, either economic or religious,
was eschewed because it contributed to a fragmentation which could hinder
the emergence of an all-embracing "common element." In assuming the con-
cept of social evolution, they were obliged to seek to appreciate the value
of all human institutions. This investigative approach was strongly evident
in the Ethical Society to which MacDonald and Hobson belonged. MacDonald
claimed that the Ethical movement enjoyed, what he regarded as the true
spirit of religion, because, it insisted, above all, "that all intellectual
propositions regarding the nature of the good life should be held as an
open question." He and the other Labour leaders being discussed were
profoundly dissatisfied with the contemporary state of humanity, and were
inspired to attempt to do something about it. Their missionary zeal and
intellectual openness was a rare combination. Let us now see how it was expressed in their notion of trusteeship.
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CHAPTER V
THE LABOUR PARTY AND TRUSTEESHIP

The "Imperial Standard" provided for imperial policy the equivalent rallying point, an all-encompassing idea, that the "National Minimum" provided for home policy. In important ways the two concepts were similar. The peoples of underdeveloped nations were in a similar status to unskilled workers in industrialized countries. Neither had the means of protection from the exploitation of capital so as to enable them to obtain their just share of the fruits of their production. In a very real sense labour leaders were in the position of trustees of the estates of these peoples. Trusteeship involves the holding of property for the benefit of another who is unable to manage it for himself, and closely allied to trusteeship is guardianship which includes an active participation for the benefit of the life of the person whose property is held in trust. Implicitly the good guardian is one who most prepares his ward to manage his own destiny. The property of the working man was his just share of the earnings of his production. It was to be realized through receipt of higher wages, of improved working conditions, of health care and numerous other social benefits such as equality of opportunity to be educated. To fulfill the obligations of trusteeship at home the Webbs and others described their objectives as the "National Minimum."¹ For the world an international minimum was the equivalent objective, but its forerunner, so far as the responsibility of its promotion rested with the British Empire, was the "Imperial Standard."
The driving motivation for this idealism was seated in rationalism far more than it was in altruism. To all of the spokesmen the human being was ultimately reasonable and capable of cooperative behaviour once he realized the advantages of cooperation through an appropriate education. Typically, Leonard Woolf referred frequently to a necessity to change "beliefs" and "desires" so that "fear" and "hatred may be replaced by the spirit of the Sermon of the Mount." And Norman Leys, an important member of the Imperial Advisory Committee who mirrored the trusteeship spirit of Labour imperialism, in 1920 "fumed when the Church and its missionaries failed to take the bold stand for African rights which the logic of their doctrine dictated." No "Imperial Standard" would be possible without capable guidance. Therefore the preparation of a competent administration was of fundamental concern.

Shaw demonstrated his faith in the passion of the intellect in 1900 by suggesting that it was possible to create an "aristocracy of capacity" to save the empire. If governments could be rescued from "private interests," from groups of leaders who have "no political ideas, though plenty of commercial ones," the British Empire "wisely governed" would be "invincible." There was far more to fear, he stated, from "mismanagement and disruption from within" than from foreigners attacking the empire.

For Shaw wise government consisted of encouraging democratic developments in the dominions, and competent bureaucracies for the dependencies. But before the latter could be achieved democratic education for the home majority was a prerequisite because in democracies the governments which select the colonial service personnel are chosen by the public. Therefore, it was particularly important in what Shaw called "unauthoritarian empires," referring to imperial centres such as the United Kingdom,
where power resided in electoral majorities awaiting sufficient education to use it, to place great emphasis on citizenship responsibility. Public Education was to consist of technical as well as cultural factors since both were required for an efficient management of material and human resources. Shaw argued that it was necessary to bring "the power, the information, and the organization of the Empire to the help of the individual trader." To do this, the colonial service personnel, required also a knowledge of the problems and aspirations of imperial peoples. Without a tactful handling of local situations, development of imperial resources would be impossible.

As we have seen democratic training was an important theme of Labour Party trusteeship at home and abroad. Just as it was necessary for the middle class to obtain political rights to free itself from the interests of the aristocracy, so similarly it was important for the vast majority to obtain political rights to set them on the path of their own development freed from the dominance of class interests. However, the party spokesmen did not think of democracy in only the narrow political sense. They also thought in terms of industrial democracy, which, in its minimum application meant having some authority over the conditions under which one sells one's labour, and in a maximum sense, as with key industries after 1918, it was to include public ownership. Moreover, democracy meant equality of opportunity. Without such equality the empire could not be "rescued from private interest." The spokesmen stressed the disadvantages to imperial rule of unsympathetic colonial officials. Democracy could provide a much deeper pool of talent.

MacDonald stated that "the influence of the Labour Party on imperial politics must be to democratize the personnel of the Imperial machine."
Like Shaw he stressed that as a first requisite, democratic development was necessary at home, and he pointed out that the danger of the present system was that too many colonial officials were people who could not tolerate democratic developments at home, and were therefore using the empire as a last ditch stand to express their authoritarian attitudes.¹² When MacDonald or the other spokesmen referred to authoritarian attitudes, they meant those who were ill-disposed to work for the ideal of democracy, and who regarded native peoples as innately inferior. It is interesting to note that in 1924, as Prime Minister, MacDonald was to select J.H. Thomas, a man without formal education and largely from a trade union background,¹³ to serve as his Colonial Secretary. Perhaps this choice reflected an attitude he expressed in 1911 in saying that to meet the needs of the dependencies a trade union secretary was more relevantly educated for the needed tasks of administration than a graduate of Balliol who had obtained his position in the Colonial Service partly through family connections.¹⁴

Other spokesmen registered similar doubts as to whether the needed reforms were possible without appropriate kinds of personality input. In outlining Labour's aims in 1917 Arthur Henderson wrote:

> Experience has shown us that the great administrative services, swathed in red tape, hampered by tradition, conservative by instinct, saturated with class prejudice, are a more effective check upon the reforming impulse than even a Parliament dominated by aristocratic and capitalist influences. (15)

In a similar vein Hardie complained bitterly of the distinctions made in "urinals" in India. Signs reading, "Men, Females, European Gentlemen" he regarded as sowing the seeds of dissatisfaction. In visiting a public building he was especially disturbed when his Indian hosts and friends were refused admittance.¹⁶ The aloofness and apparent insensitivity of English officialdom in Ceylon was disturbing to Leonard Woolf,¹⁷ and Sydney Olivier
stated that Africa needed officials of "humanitarian and democratic tempera-
ment" more than missionaries, to overcome the colour bar.\textsuperscript{18}

To these spokesmen the preservation of the empire and the future of the human race depended on the success of a process of assimilation. With respect to the fear that "white" European civilisation would be destroyed by native contact, Olivier argued that "Western civilised man whether he be white, coloured, or black" would always predominate as long as he stuck to his "ethical principles."\textsuperscript{19} To Olivier "true" Western civilisation consisted of the accomplishments of ancient Greece, of the Renaissance, of European religious philosophy, and of nineteenth century liberalism. Neither capitalism nor white supremacy, the two aspects of European life most experienced by native peoples of the empire, were ever, from his point of view, "true" characteristics of Western civilisation.\textsuperscript{20} In 1927, referring specifically to South Africa, he warned that if "true" civilisation were not to prevail through some process of assimilation, South African whites would indeed have to protect themselves.\textsuperscript{21} His view then was entirely consistent with his stand in 1906 when in \textit{White Capital and Coloured Labour} he stated that "Race-fusion either by the bodily process of blending by intermarriage, or by some alternative psychical process of establishing sympathetic understanding" was absolutely necessary for a basis of cooperative development.\textsuperscript{22} Always the rationalist, he proceeded to defend his position by explaining that his experiences of West Indian society had led him to conclude that there were many advantages to racial intermarriage. He pointed to the many important jobs and other positive contributions of the coloured society, suggesting strengths to be derived from blending the best of European and native social inheritances. From the point of view of imperial administration, as well as for the future of humanity, he
favoured what he called "Race-fusion."

Woolf also stressed advantages of "fusion of racial stock" to mitigate the deleterious effects of the "clash of civilisation" and to end the "economic exploitation of black by the dominant white." But if the white colonial communities were to recognize that the problem was fundamentally not one of race, but of economic and political disparity, the most practical path of policy for the Labour Party would be to encourage economic and political reforms. This, of course, was the purpose of the "Imperial Standard" and of what Shaw meant when he referred to preparing colonial peoples to be "independent of our guidance." Recognizing this problem, Olivier, in asking the white man to have the confidence to share his abilities, stated that by raising the standards of non-white civilisation, "Race-fusion" would no longer be feared.

Keir Hardie was audaciously vocal on the question of assimilation. In South Africa in 1908, addressing a complaint that coloured labour was supplanting white labour "even in the skilled trades," he advocated the inclusion of non-whites in white trade unions. He later reflected that his words had "produced as much sensation as though I had proposed to cut the throats of every white man in South Africa." Nor had he any sympathy with the colour bar. Unlike the other spokesmen referred to above, Hardie was impervious to the need to defend with rational argument or scientific or pseudo-scientific proof, his belief in racial equality. He simply and straightforwardly debunked such deliberations as nonsense.

It is clearly evident that to implement the proposed "Imperial Standard," assimilation was as important to MacDonald as it was to the other spokesmen. He condemned the alienation of the native peoples of Australia, Canada, and South Africa, and praised the fact that the Maoris
of New Zealand had the franchise, were living alongside, and were inter-
marrying with whites.\textsuperscript{31} Referring to Africa he spoke in general of the
need to reverse the "doctrines of the domineering Imperialist who comes not
to educate and develop but to rule and exploit."\textsuperscript{32} Comparing New Zealand
to South Africa, he stated "it will be a menace to Imperial harmony for
some time to come, because the propinquity of different races and civilisa-
tions in South Africa is to remain and is to be an element in Imperial
policy."\textsuperscript{33}

However, the principal reason for the "Imperial Standard" was not
the assimilation of peoples but to create the world situation in which such
assimilation would be welcomed. Therefore, there was no point in exacer-
bating existing difficulties by allowing narrow commercial interests to
import threatening racial minorities. If one were attempting to talk a
man out of suicide it would hardly be the time to introduce him to more of
life's complexities. The first concern surely would be to equip him to see
the world and his life in it in a more favourable perspective. Thus the
Labour Party spokesmen in general, as shall be clear in examining the
question of the importation of indentured Chinese labour into South Africa
in 1904, were opposed to bringing in groups of people who were not readily
assimilable. In facing the contemporary state of human prejudice, and,
the equally deplorable absence of required economic, educational, and
political development needed to rechannel human progress along pathways of
civilisation, it was highly imprudent to introduce unnecessary factors of
friction. If world harmony was to be forthcoming the international minimum,
on which it was to be based, would be impossible if capitalist interests
were permitted anywhere to break the growing power of the trade union
movements by means of importing workers accustomed to lower living stan-
dards. Typically, Woolf strongly opposed unassimilated minorities everywhere. In considering future relations between the United States and Japan, he argued that the world would be much worse off with three million unassimilated Japanese in California. And in referring to race riots in Vancouver and San Francisco, MacDonald wrote in 1907 that these "were only the outposts of the economic clash which is sure to come between Asia and the rest of the world." Under the "Imperial Standard" he accepted the right of self-governing colonies to have their own immigration policies, but not to keep newcomers in a category of slavery.

In 1904 these attitudes were reflected in Labour Party opposition to the Transvaal Labour Ordinance which allowed importation of indentured Chinese labour to work in the gold mines. The Labour Representative Committee, which perhaps significantly met in MacDonald's flat in Lincoln's Inn, passed a resolution which mirrored a message of Fabianism and the Empire and "The Propaganda of Civilisation." It stated that such issues as "slavery under our flag must always rest with the Home Government because they reflect the principles of British rule and include more than rights under colonial self-government." Clearly the "Imperial Standard," which was not to be enunciated until 1907, was present in these words.

Promotion of the growth of trade unionism in the colonies was another way in which Labour leaders exercised their sense of trusteeship. As long as there existed sources of cheap labour, which could make "sweated methods" of industry profitable, the vested interests of labour movements were in jeopardy. This is one reason why Shaw had demanded that the flag carry a "factory code" and a "minimum wage." In this attitude there was little difference between Labour's foreign and imperial policy.

Referring to the empire, the 1918 policy statement stressed a
desire "to maintain the most intimate relations with the Labour Parties overseas." Similarly, in 1908 Hardie had concluded that it was necessary to promote a cooperative atmosphere between the labour movements of the colonies and the mother country. Calling for a code of "international factory legislation" in 1917, Arthur Henderson stressed the need for a world-wide general improvement in the working conditions of labour. As a main reason for supporting the government's war policy, the Trades Union Congress in 1915 resolved that it was necessary to preserve the trade union movement in the empire, and it was argued that democratic worker movements everywhere would be retarded if Germany were to win the war. In a similar vein the 1917 Labour Party Conference demanded "safeguards for international labour conditions." Moreover, in 1919 the Labour Party Advisory Committee on International Questions, including Leonard Woolf and Sidney Webb, resolved to promote uniform factory legislation, minimum wages, a uniform age for work commencement, and the eight hour day in all the imperial dependencies.

We have seen this concern as it pre-dated the war years, not only in Shaw's attitude in 1900, but in the desires for interracial solidarity of Olivier, MacDonald and Hardie. Olivier showed a strong interest in this direction in stating that the future success of white capital and coloured labour would depend on the progress of "race-fusion," and Hardie spoke similarly in recommending integrated trade unions in South Africa. Although the means may be many and varied the objective was cooperative international trade unionism. Since 1907 the party had been associated with the Socialist Internationale, but due to its refusal to accept the doctrine of the class struggle, it had been only reluctantly admitted by the general membership.
Labour's sense of trusteeship as it pertained to trade unionism was particularly evident with respect to India. Even in the 1890s when labour attitudes toward imperial questions were generally passive, labourites were concerned with Indian factory legislation. In 1911 the annual Labour Party Conference endorsed a policy of seeking to strengthen the Indian Factory Act. For India the I.L.P. Conference of 1918 passed a resolution advocating "immediate legislation to improve hours, wages, and general conditions of workers and the nationalization of land, railways, mines and other large industries." And in 1922, J.H. Thomas, the future Colonial Secretary, but then representing the Trades Union Congress which had been actively engaged in promoting Indian labour legislation, argued that a prudent approach to satisfactory imperial relations with India would be "to give Indian trade unions the same rights as in Britain."

These positions clearly reflected Ramsay MacDonald's long standing fear that the development of capitalism in India would outstrip the progress of factory legislation. As the imperial overseer, Britain, in MacDonald's view, obviously had a responsibility to protect the human resources involved in any colonial transition from a rural to an urban-based economy; if only for the sake of the smoothness of imperial relations. Stressing the necessity of imperial guidance in newspaper articles in 1909, MacDonald compared factory conditions in India to those of Britain, and wrote of the slow growth of Indian trade unionism, and of a necessity to check the "individualism" of Indian factory owners. In the *Awakening of India*, also in 1909, he compared the Indian factory worker's attitude toward trade unionism to that of the English working woman, and argued that neither were as yet sufficiently self-aware, "to act effectively." Similarly, in 1919, fearing capitalistic exploitation of a possible protective tariff, MacDonald stressed that "India ought to prepare itself by dealing with the
human products of the factory system before the Government abandons itself to a policy whose sole object is to extend factories as though they were a sufficient end in themselves."

Recent historiography has indicated that British Labour leaders had an inspiring affect on Canadian labour development. After the election in Britain of twenty-nine L.R.C. candidates in 1906, Ramsay MacDonald visited Winnipeg and urged workers to follow the example of their comrades in the United Kingdom, and the response was such that many Canadian labour representatives expressed a desire to copy the British Labour Party.

Arthur Puttee, leader of the Canadian Independent Labour Party and editor of The Voice, a highly influential Canadian labour journal in the early years of the twentieth century, stated that "the emergence of the British Labour Party had marked the breaking of a new day for the toiler, the aged, and the industrially oppressed." After coming under the influence of Ramsay MacDonald and Keir Hardie in 1902, Puttee strove throughout his career to establish a Canadian Labour party to be based on the British model.

Puttee frequently printed articles on the developments of the British Labour Party and from 1907 onward he lavished high praise on Keir Hardie who he described as "the head of British democracy and the most conspicuous personality of the whole English speaking labour movement." M.J. Caldwell, the future leader of the national Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, also pointed out that the Canadian Independent Labour Party, the forerunner of the C.C.F., had been greatly influenced by the Fabian Society. Also, Kenneth Morgan in his life of Keir Hardie has stated that Hardie's blend of "social justice" and "pacifism" had a "lasting impact" on J.S. Woodsworth and that Hardie's three visits to Canada were "landmarks in the history of the Canadian labour movement."
Ramsay MacDonald believed a friendly cooperation of Labour Parties within the empire was particularly valuable as "an essential first step to a genuine Imperial unity." Although there were industrial and geographical differences "in spirit the Labour Parties within the Empire are the same and their representatives are received with fraternal greeting by all other Labour Parties." This growing rapport provided a basis for the proposed "Imperial Standard."

But how were the differences in outlook among Labour Parties to be accommodated? Australia was an interesting case in point because the Australian Labour Party strongly sponsored two policies which seemed contrary to the whole imperial programme of our British Labour spokesmen: those of tariff protection and restrictive immigration. With respect to the former, MacDonald believed that it was understandable for emerging nations to desire to protect their infant industries, especially if such protection were for the purpose of keeping up "a high standard of working-class income." On the other hand, he disapproved of Australia's immigration laws, regarding them as irritants to world peace. For example, as they pertained to Japan, he commented: "Should ever we find ourselves at war with Japan one is justified in hazarding a guess that it will be Australia that has dragged us into it owing to her immigration laws or her determination not to treat the yellow man on an equality [sic] with the white." Yet, at the same time, and specifically applicable to the "Imperial Standard," he believed each self-governing component of the empire should be entitled to its own immigration policy, but "ill usage" or "differential treatment as wage-earners" of accepted immigrants was not to be tolerated. In keeping with the Labour Party statement regarding the Transvaal Ordinance, he stated in 1907: "The States can exclude Chinamen
if they like, but if they admit them, they must not hold them as slaves.”

As discussed above in connection with feelings toward racial integration, unassimilated minorities represented an even greater danger than prevailing racist attitudes. Racist attitudes might be expected to disappear gradually as humanity became more secure, but they could only be exacerbated by increasing the record of direct exploitation and discrimination. If ideal race relations were not immediately possible, at least the basis could be provided for giving them more chance of being so in the future. Gradualism was, after all, the policy of the British Labour Party.

The impact of the party was apparently less profound on Australia than it was on Canada. Perhaps the reasons for this were that the Australian Labour Party had earlier beginnings, had formed national governments, and had been the official opposition long before British Labour was to be similarly influential on British politics. According to L.F. Crisp in his *The Australian Labour Party 1901-1951* the influence of the Webbs, of Ramsay MacDonald and of Keir Hardie in their visits to Australia had no lasting result and provided little inspiration. Nevertheless, Crisp does point out that many Australian Labour Party members were influenced by writers from the United States and Britain, and that the Fabian Society tracts on domestic problems had a large readership.

Now that we have some understanding of the party's notion of trusteeship as it embraced colonial labour movements, it follows that one role of a reformed colonial service would be to encourage such movements. In the dependencies such encouragement could be directly applied. In fact, to do so was necessary if the empire were to survive. There could be no effective sense of voluntary partnership unless "imperial life" was permitted to share the inheritance of what Olivier had described as "Western
civilised man," and successful trade unionism could lay the basis for this kind of assimilation. Just as national solidarity to develop an efficient willing partnership at home was impossible without a "national minimum," imperial solidarity was similarly impossible without such a policy extension to the colonies.

However, the spread of trade unionism throughout the empire was not in itself a panacea to solve all the problems associated with the so-called "clash of civilisation." In the "Propaganda of Civilisation" MacDonald had said that the purpose of education was not to remake the pupil, but to assist him to develop his own personality. Similarly an attitude of imperial trusteeship required a respect for the sympathies and aspirations of dependent peoples. For civilisations to blend rather than "clash" such considerations were of utmost importance. In their willingness to understand the needs of the dependent peoples, the Labour imperialists were outstanding.

As was suggested in our discussion of the religious motivation, the Labour leaders were acutely sensitive to questions of cultural relativity. Policies of most British governments in the twentieth century have been influenced by ideas of trusteeship developed by party spokesmen. To understand the importance of Labour's contribution a comparative perspective is useful. H.C.G. Mathews has stressed that the self-styled Liberal Imperialists of the turn of the century were interested almost exclusively in the "white" self-governing colonies. R.V. Kubicek has pointed out that Joseph Chamberlain's colonial policy largely ignored the views of anthropological societies and that "such groups as the Aborigines Protection Society failed to enjoy the same degree of support in Westminster and Whitehall they had had in mid-century ... And Bernard Porter has
argued that Liberal Party colonial policy, over the years under discussion, was limited to providing steps toward self-government for India and South Africa. On the other hand, significantly, the progressive ideas of trusteeship discussed by radicals, who devised an "Ethical imperial ideology" in the nineties, were in part to be "grafted onto the Labour Party," and this function was to be performed "chiefly by MacDonald." This radical policy, grafted "chiefly" by MacDonald, appreciated the relationship of one culture to another. It was pragmatic, far-seeing and humanitarian; pragmatic and far-seeing because it anticipated an effective and harmonious means to retain the empire. It came from those who had not ignored the findings of groups who studied cultures other than their own. While members of the Ethical movement in the 1890s Hobson and MacDonald had come to the conclusion that civilisations assumed many forms. From this it followed that the most prudent imperial policy would seek to achieve, wherever possible, a harmonious blending.

If civilisations were to blend for the betterment of all, it was crucial to make sure that what was blending was actually civilisations. MacDonald, Hobson, Shaw, Olivier and Hardie all argued that, in effect, the dominant experience of European civilisation for most Asiatics and Africans was not Western culture, but Western technology. If this were to continue with its accompanying characteristic of running roughshod over native institutions, the results would be disastrous.

To Hobson, in consideration of India, the price of imperial insensitivity meant increasing resentment and depriving future generations from sharing the best of "Western-Indian" culture. Any imperial policy failing to recognise this danger was unenlightened for it "may even be true that the maintenance of these younger and more unstable civilisations,"
such as that of Great Britain, may "depend upon unlocking the treasure-house of the wisdom of the East."\textsuperscript{79} This did not mean that Britain had nothing to offer, merely that there had to be a relationship of mutual respect and an exchange of ideas. For Hobson the "close persistent interactive contact of mind with mind" was the only method by which that "mission of civilisation . . . is capable of fulfilment."\textsuperscript{80}

Writing in a similar vein and stressing the necessity to graft rather than uproot, MacDonald wrote in the "Propaganda of Civilisation":

\begin{quote}
The educationalist does not begin to operate on a featureless nothing, but on something which offers resistance if led in certain directions and encouragement if led in others. So with the propaganda of civilisation. (81)
\end{quote}

And in 1910 he argued on behalf of India that a lack of "sympathetic imagination" was the "source of most of our failures."\textsuperscript{82} As one example of this he pointed to the practice of reconstructing ancient buildings rather than preserving and renovating them along native lines. As another he cited social disruptions caused by imposing landlords on communal villages.\textsuperscript{83} In Fiji he was appalled to see native children marching to the tune of Bonnie Dundee.\textsuperscript{84} The destruction of culture, however kindly effected, he believed more harmful than the introduction of physical diseases.\textsuperscript{85} Like Hobson, he spoke of the price the future must pay for such insensitivity.\textsuperscript{86}

In Sydney Olivier the prescribed "sympathetic imagination" and the meeting of "mind with mind" was amply illustrated. We have noted already in chapter two the view of his biographer that his \textit{White Capital and Coloured Labour} had "laid the foundation of thought on which innumerable workers have subsequently built."\textsuperscript{87} This comment written in 1924 gives us some idea of Olivier's effect on others. What, therefore, was the message of his book?
The work was a comparative study of the relationships of black Africans to their white employers in the West Indies, Africa and the United States. By examining varying environmental differences, Olivier exposed as prejudices white employer attitudes toward black intelligence, character, and alleged idleness. These prejudices were traced empirically to apparent causes by juxtaposing both black and white points of view, with much due consideration for exceptions, and by explaining how these prejudices were culturally induced. For instance, in describing the attitudes of whites toward black employees, he compared attitudes toward servants at home, and observed that "virtue" from the employer's perspective was often measured solely in terms of job performance. He argued that this narrow view of human character must always exist "whenever any class of human beings is criticized by the standard of servile virtues."

This analysis of native attitudes toward work did not mean that he was defending laziness. On the contrary, he explained that there were tactful means to obtain the cooperation of black employees. He argued that their experience of slavery, coupled with limited material needs, made them reluctant to work on a regulated basis. Thereby, he drew a marked contrast between their disposition toward receiving wages and that of their British counterparts. By further analysis he showed that African experience had been communal and familial, even in the situation of slavery. Hence, it was necessary for the prudent employer to provide a similar "social impulse" as motivation. In this one example out of many possible, it may be seen that Olivier was convinced that the key to "industrial harmony" between what he called "white capital" and "coloured labour" could be established only by "human understanding and sympathy." Essentially, like Hobson and MacDonald, Olivier argued that colonial administrative policies were doomed
to failure if they ignored the idiosyncrasies of native cultures.

Leonard Woolf's attitude was similar to that of Hobson, MacDonald and Olivier. As Secretary of the Labour Party Advisory Committee on Imperial Affairs, he strove to provide insightful suggestions for solving trusteeship problems. In a similar vein to the other spokesmen, in 1920 he wrote that "the only hope for Africa lies in a return to the communal system, developed, improved, and organized by European states." He was fully aware of the dangers of aloofness, where there was, as Hobson put it "no persistent interactive contact of mind with mind." In his autobiography, Woolf referred disparagingly to the ignorance of colonial officials. A persistent theme of his fictional writings was the portrayal of white men living alienated lives, insulated from native cultures.

Keir Hardie's passion for racial and social equality has been already discussed. It reflected his sense of a common humanity and a desire to break down barriers in the way of human understanding. In From Serfdom to Socialism he argued in 1907 that although races were not alike, they were all equal. For him the proper role for humanity was to cooperate "for the elevation of the human race" by "making full allowance for the differences of environment, of tradition, and of evolution." He realized fully that discovering what was common to all required relating to cultures other than one's own. In his India: Impressions and Suggestions he respected India's contributions to art, literature, religion and science and stressed that "We are apt to forget that civilisation had blossomed in India ere its rudiments had begun to sprout in Europe." He was keen to put human values into a relative perspective, as exemplified by his attitude towards Benares: "Benares is the holy city of Hinduism. What Jerusalem is to the Hebrew, and Mecca to the Moslem, that is Benares to the Hindu." On one level his book
is a fascinating travelogue. One shares the enthusiasm of a keenly interested tourist with a strong desire to understand all that he saw.

However, the main argument of Hardie's book on India was that it was unwise to ignore the "Home Rule" aspirations of educated Indians. They were, after all, the largest body equipped to understand not only the disadvantages, but also the advantages of belonging to the British Empire. In many of them there was the necessary blending of Eastern and Western civilisations to a far greater degree than among the colonial officials.

In agreement with the other spokesmen he concluded that the rulers were not relating to the problems of the ruled. In tune with Shaw's ideal of a "willing partnership" as the only modus vivendi to preserve the empire, Hardie wrote:

A sympathetic interpretation of the facts will bind the people more closely to us and lead to their becoming a loyal self-governing part of the Empire. Repression will only intensify their determination to secure self-government, and may lead finally to the loss of what has been described as the brightest jewel of the British Crown. It is for statesmen to choose which path they will follow. (98)

We have seen that the Labour imperialists thought within an evolutionary frame of reference. This led to the belief that human progress could be expected from all civilisations, and that cultural diversity contributed to such progress. Nevertheless, from this vantage point it was also inferred that certain civilisations had less evolutionary development than others. Therefore, Hardie could argue that Indians deserved more self-government than "half-developed savages." MacDonald's hierarchical attitude was equally evident when he wrote that "The lowest barbarian has his civilisation. He may be called a child, but he is a child with a social inheritance . . . not a thing to be bent at will." Woolf frequently used the phrase "non adult," and Hobson referred to "dealing with countries
occupied by 'lower' or unprogressive peoples. In referring to the evolutionary progress of Jamaicans, Olivier wrote "The civilisation and morality of the Jamaican negro are not high, but he is on a markedly different level from his grandfather, the plantation slave, and his great grandfather the African savage. Also, the term "non adult" appeared in the clauses relating to trusteeship in the official party policy statement of 1918, and it is noteworthy that up to World War One the Webbs still regarded the East Indians as a "non adult race." Moreover, in an official Labour Party statement of 1918, with respect to tropical Africa, it was stated that "Nobody contends that the black races can govern themselves. They can only make it known that the particular government under which they have been living is bad in some or all respects, and indicate the specific evils from which they desire liberation."

At first sight such attitudes might imply a degree of racial prejudice toward black Africans. However, on the basis of the evidence it would seem a charge of cultural bias is rather more accurate than one of racial prejudice since there was no suggestion of innate African inferiority, or the view that a person's worth was to be measured by the colour of his skin. In accordance with the evolutionary views to which the spokesmen subscribed, those who were not as yet adult were capable of becoming so if the ameliorating environment were provided. That this must be so conformed to their religious hypothesis and was evident in the eagerness of the spokesmen to promote human progress by blending civilisations, and it was pointedly evident in Olivier's definition of the "Western civilised man" as being "white, coloured, or black." However, since in the view of Labour leaders, many African blacks were regarded as unprogressive in the development of political institutions, it was felt that they needed a greater degree of
trusteeship to develop their capacities for increased self-government.

The belief in the importance of a feeling for cultural relativism was also evident in the attitudes of our Labour leaders towards Christian missionaries. To what extent did these Labour leaders feel there was a similarity of purpose between Christian missionaries and themselves? Or, on the other hand, to what extent did they see them as cultural imperialists, diametrically opposed to what they themselves regarded as more enlightened objectives?

On the whole Hobson believed missionaries were well intentioned but ineffectual. He gave credit to their humanitarian motives, but believed their view, that religion was a "portable commodity" was mistaken and rooted in an ignorance of "psychology" and "history." To him missionaries inadvertently played a large role in justifying the more selfish kinds of imperialism by lending a disguise of righteousness to power politics, militarism and commercial greed. He thought also that in some places competition among denominations for influence, enlisting secular assistance for such purposes, had eroded "spiritual forces," leaving an atmosphere of suspicion and hostility. In discussing India, he described the efforts of missionaries to make converts as almost a total failure. He attributed the immediate cause of this to Indian resentment against cultural imperialism. Nor surprisingly, much of this lack of success was blamed on British aloofness. It would be difficult to seem anything but an alien interference, he argued, in an atmosphere produced by British officials who were "rarely born in India, have seldom any perfect understanding of the languages of the people, form a close 'caste,' never mingling in free social intercourse with those whom they govern . . ." It would seem to Hobson that what missionaries had to offer was marred by this condition, no matter how well-
intentioned they were.

Hardie's writings tell us little of his opinion of missionaries. However, a point he recorded concerning a discussion he had as a guest of a Christian missionary in India might provide some idea of his view. After Hardie had advanced the opinion that Indians were better off before the British Raj, the missionary replied that this was untrue in the case of pariahs. To prove his point he called in several to get their opinion. Hardie records that unanimously they claimed their lot was worse than formerly because of restricted land use. He regarded the incident as particularly instructive because it illustrated to his mind how "A man may spend a lifetime in India and yet overlook some of the most obvious facts connected with the life of the people." For one so interested in cultural and religious variety, it would be highly unlikely that Hardie would approve of missionaries who were unaware of the values of others. Indeed, such missionaries would increase friction between civilisations.

MacDonald was far less pessimistic than Hobson about the impact of Christianity on India. He approved highly of missionary schools and the "medical mission." The effects of Christian missionaries were not to be measured in individual conversions, which he admitted were very few, but rather in the "change of the mental points of view of the people." He believed the promotion of such a change was the foremost policy of many missionaries. He argued that Christian ethical attitudes concerning equality and justice were gradually liberalizing the caste system, bringing the outcast into the pale of the political community, and contributing towards the emancipation of women. He was pleased with Christianity as a quality of Western civilisation "engrafting itself upon the active life of the country, upon the minds of the people, influencing them insensibly,
Nevertheless, like Hobson, MacDonald wanted no more than "engrafting" of one civilisation onto another, and said that at "the root of most of our mistakes is the assumption that India should copy us."  

Olivier attempted to provide a kind of balance sheet of the negative and positive contributions of Christian missionary work. Although he admired the intentions of the missionary school of thought which advocated the exclusion of white secular influence, he thought it mistaken on grounds, as we have noted in chapter two, that no area should be closed to the world as long as intruders behaved in a civilised manner. He also disapproved of the soul-saving kind of missionary activity which disregarded the material welfare of the native, and like Hobson, he believed missionaries unintentionally aided selfish secular purposes, resulting in the enslavement of both "body and mind." On the other hand, in defence of missionaries, he pointed out that most would have agreed that the influence of white men seeking "profit" was "largely demoralising." He praised the beneficial effects of the sense of "identical justice" between black and white which was imparted by Evangelical Christianity, and agreed with educational efforts to promote improving standards of civilised behaviour. Essentially he held that much depended on the individual missionary, on his humanitarian qualities, and on his ability to relate to the culture with which he was working. However, his estimate of the number who could conduct themselves in such an enlightened manner was less than encouraging, as was illustrated in the following rather ambivalent comparative assessment of the effects of secular commercial interests with those of missionaries:

Unfortunately, the work of both is in its characteristic manner destructive of the form of life that has nurtured the race... if the native, under the teaching of Christianity, abandons
polygamy, his social system is disturbed by the creation of a class of homeless women. If he abandons his tribe to work in the white centres of industry not only is his contribution towards the support of ineffectives withdrawn from it, but he forfeits that claim himself, and has the prospect of destitution before him in his old age. (123)

But it was clear that to Olivier the harm done by missionaries is minimal compared to that of "White Capital." He concludes:

If the missionary contact has failed to effect all it aimed at it has at any rate not furnished him with new vices. This the town civilisation of mining centres abundantly does. (124)

However, if would seem Leonard Woolf was the least sympathetic toward missionaries. He tended to classify them as narrow-mindedly incapable of understanding native cultures, and inadvertently allied to capitalist interests. This latter was particularly galling when missionary societies were manipulated by capitalist interests to support expansionist designs. He cited a case of what he believed to be collusion between the British East Africa Company and the Church Missionary Society to engineer a favourable public opinion to obtain support for a government bill which would guarantee a railway project in Uganda.

Shaw, who had much to say about religion, had little apparently to say about missionaries. However, he did write that "devoted missionaries" were among the "extraordinary men" along with inventors, explorers, chemists and mathematicians, who, without commercial interests themselves, provided the conditions to make capitalists rich.

It is perhaps fair to say that collectively the spokesmen had mixed feelings concerning the value of missionaries. On the one hand, missionaries were well-intentioned and non-commercial in their interests. Very often they played the role of helping to blend civilisations, the success of which depended largely on the breadth of understanding of individual
missionaries. On the other hand, they often tended inadvertently to add a sugar coating to imperialism of the kind most disliked by the spokesmen. Furthermore, doctrinal commitment gave some missionary activity a rigidity in dealing with over civilisations. In other words, it often lacked the eclecticism necessary for merging the best of civilisations. Since the blending of the best attributes of all human religious and secular culture was desired by the spokesmen, one might infer that the cultural imperialism of the more doctrinal forms of Christianity was received with suspicion.

The sense of cultural relativity was indeed a prominent distinction of the leading Labour Party spokesmen. In the earlier part of the period under discussion, this distinctive attitude was strongly expressed by Shaw, Hardie, MacDonald and Olivier, but as time passed the foundation they established attracted more newcomers from the left-wing of the Liberal Party. These were intellectuals interested in internationalism who could no longer identify with what they regarded as the illiberalism of their own party. They were men who believed world peace to be dependent on an ability to relate empathetically to other civilisations. They were to gravitate to Ramsay MacDonald in 1915 in the Union of Democratic Control, and before the war had ended many would join the Labour Party.

This new wave of left-wing liberals, throwing in their lot with the Labour Party, had begun as early as 1910. Noel Buxton, one of the new M.P.s in 1910, regarded the Labour Party as the purest and best expression of the Liberal tradition. He wrote that "all" the Liberal M.P.s of the group with which he associated were "sympathetic with Ramsay MacDonald, who had just become Labour Leader," and that he (Buxton) and the others "were naturally disapproved of by the mass of Liberal members, many of whom appeared to us little distinguishable from the Tories." And it is also
noteworthy in this connection that as early as 1906 Hardie enjoyed compatibility on several issues with the small group of Liberal Party "social radicals" in parliament.130

In essence, Labour Party trusteeship called for a disinterested approach to the development of the dependent empire. What was wanted was a broad policy which could encompass the larger long-ranged interests of humanity. In keeping with this aim, as discussed in chapter three, it was also permissible to develop the material resources of the imperial possessions.131 To accomplish this, trusteeship in practice would have to be very tactful. In 1902 Hobson outlined an ideal "enlightened" imperialism. He believed it required "a body genuinely representative of civilisation."132 It is perhaps useful to quote at length the essential part of his argument in favour of this kind of imperialism because it embodies the core philosophy of Labour Party imperialism as it pertained to trusteeship:

If we or any other nation really undertook the care and education of a "lower race" as a trust, how should we set about the execution of the trust? By studying the religious, political and other social institutions and habits of the people, and by endeavouring to penetrate into their present mind and capacities of adaptation, by learning their language and their history, we should seek to place them in the natural history of man; by similar close attention to the country in which they live, and not to its agricultural and mining resources alone, we should get a real grip on their environment. Then, carefully approaching them so as to gain what confidence we could for friendly motives, and openly discouraging any premature private attempts of exploiting companies to work mines or secure concessions, or otherwise to impair our disinterested conduct, we should endeavour to assume the position of advisors. (133)

It is evident that a kind of partnership with the native peoples in the development of their resources was desired, and that such a partnership to be effective required an attitude which could be understood by the native to mean that the European was as interested in human as he was in material resources. In 1916 in his book The New Protectionism Hobson urged
a "more constructive positive" kind of "laissez faire" for the colonies, one that was modified to protect the human life involved in economic transactions. 

There, of course, was nothing new in this. As we have seen, Mill, Olivier, and Hobson himself had long before effected this bridge between liberalism and moderate socialism, but Hobson had translated it also into imperial philosophy. With respect to imperial dependencies, Hobson in 1902 described this reformed liberalism in the following manner:

Unless we are prepared to reaffirm in the case of nations, as the all-sufficient guide of conduct, that doctrine of "enlightened selfishness" which has been almost universally abandoned in the case of individuals, and to insist that the unchecked self-assertion of each nation, following the line of its own private present interest, is the best guarantee of the general progress of humanity, we must set up, as a supreme standard of moral appeal, some conception of the welfare of humanity regarded as an organic unity. (135)

Even at this time Hobson was arguing on behalf of what was later to be the League of Nations. He pointed out, after doubting the possibility of an imperial power being disinterested enough to perform the task of imperial trusteeship, that a "first essential" of trusteeship was "that the trustee represent fairly all of the interested parties, and is responsible to some judicial body for the faithful fulfillment of the terms of trust." 136

The idea of an international body for trusteeship was not new to MacDonald or Hobson. Both had discussed and written about such questions while participating in the Rainbow Circle and the Ethical Society in the late 1890s. Mirroring their attitudes of that time, so evident in Hobson's work of 1902, MacDonald in 1917 proposed an international control commission for tropical Africa and defended its utility in the following way:

If it were to be necessary to organize the tropical products so that the outside world might secure a proper distribution of them, this International body would help to carry out the agreement. In short, it would hold tropical Africa in trust for the world with no unnecessary interference with the natives. (137)
In a similar manner in 1917, Arthur Henderson was to include this proposal for a disinterested international authority for tropical Africa in *The Aims of Labour*. He stated that the colonies of tropical Africa should be "constituted an independent African state, the administration of which should be placed in the hands of an International commission acting under the direction of the proposed League of Nations." 138

As we have seen in this chapter and in chapter three where Labour Party imperialism was defined, all of the party spokesmen favoured the exploitation of the world's resources as long as the world's people were respected and provided with what might be regarded as some kind of international minimum. Therefore, the best expression of their imperialism could come from a League of Nations working to put into effect the international minimum. In the meantime, and until such an organization could be ideally established, "responsible imperial federations" were necessary substitutes. Hobson was not sure that such responsibility was possible in imperial dealings with native peoples, but Hobson was a theoretician rather than a politician, and therefore did not have to compromise. Not until the League of Nations seemed on the verge of reality, did he totally but reluctantly throw in his lot with the Labour Party. 139 That the party was willing to concede British imperial dependencies to an ideally constituted international authority does not lessen the argument that its spokesmen were imperialists. It merely indicates the most beneficial consequences of their imperialistic aims.

The attitude of the party spokesmen that there must be a balance between the interests of the world and of those of the native peoples was in 1922 to become officially known as the "Dual Mandate." Lord Lugard, the famous administrator of Nigeria, described in *The Dual Mandate in British
Tropical Africa how he felt it should work, and how he had attempted to put it into effect. Apparently assuming that the Labour Party was entirely opposed to imperialism, even if it were of the responsible kind, many reviewers of Lugard's book concluded that the "Dual Mandate was an overwhelming negation of Labour views." However, as we have seen, this was certainly not the case. Undoubtedly to the surprise of many, Woolf wrote that "Lugard having, like Balaam, come to curse the Labour Party for its ideas, was forced in many cases to bless it by adopting them." The attitude of reviewers is perhaps not so surprising when one considers the amount of condemnation of economic imperialism continually hurled at governments by Labour Party spokesmen. In any case it was not the imperialism of the "Dual Mandate" kind that was condemned, and certainly not, upon close examination, imperialism per se.

In 1918, shortly after the Labour Party policy statement had disclaimed "any conception of a selfish and insular non-interventionalism," Sidney Webb, the writer of the policy statement, asked Leonard Woolf to form an advisory committee for international and imperial affairs. In 1919 this organization was divided into two committees, respectively dealing with international and imperial matters, and Woolf was to remain as secretary of both for the next twenty years. The main reason for the establishment of the committees, as stated by Webb, was to assist in preparing the Labour Party for the responsibility of office. The ideas produced by the Imperial Advisory Committee have continued to influence trusteeship attitudes of most British governments in this century.

These committees did not represent new policy on the part of the Labour Party. They were rather, in effect, an organized expression of a long-standing attitude, that of the party leaders discussed in this study.
The terms of reference for the Imperial Advisory Committee stated that the "government of crown colonies and dependencies, with special reference to Africa and the treatment of natives" must be of prime concern.\textsuperscript{147} Also of high importance were "such questions as the future of Equatorial Africa and the disposal and allocation of its vital raw products."\textsuperscript{148} Obviously, the purpose of the Imperial Advisory Committee was to endeavour to put into effect the idealism of the "dual mandate."

On these committees there was a strong presence of the Liberal Party intellectuals who had defected to the Labour Party during the war. Many were those Liberals mentioned above who had been attracted to MacDonald and Hardie long before the war. Among the long standing committee members who were former Liberals were such people as Charles Roden Buxton, Noel Buxton, Arthur Ponsonby and Phillip Noel-Baker; all of whom were well travelled and brought to the committees a wealth of educational experiences.

An important role of the committees was to educate Members of Parliament on matters concerning foreign and imperial policy. Referring to those who attended the meetings, Leonard Woolf has written that many were to become "real experts."\textsuperscript{149} From these committees information was circulated to the National Executive Committee and the Parliamentary Labour Party. In referring to the Advisory Committees, the American historian, Carl Brand, has stated that their contribution was unique among political parties, and that they put international questions on a solid "study foundation" as differentiated from mere "emotional attitudes."\textsuperscript{150}

Two of the most important names on the Imperial Advisory Committee were Norman Leys and McGregor Ross\textsuperscript{151} who had wide practical experience in Kenya with the Colonial Service. In referring to policies pursued by the Labour Party and adopted by other governments, Woolf remarked that
"Africans and African independence" owed "much" to these men. From 1905 to 1913 Leys had served as a medical officer. Ross had served as an engineer on the Uganda Railway from 1900 to 1905 and from 1905 to 1922 was Director of Public Works for Kenya. Since 1918 both men contributed through their writings, informing the party of conditions they had personally experienced, and Leys, a former Fabian, also began in 1917 to regularly write articles for the I.L.P. journals.

What was particularly relevant about the ideas of these men, as suggested above, was the consistency of their thinking with that of the leading spokesmen. Natives were viewed in relative terms as unskilled labour in a primitive state of industrial organization. To ensure their loyalty to the Crown, competent administration was required; a kind which would not sacrifice African interests to European interests. Disregard of native opinion was certain to invite rebellion. Taking the long-range view, they warned that if contemporary policies were not reversed "our children" would pay the price for such insensitivity and incompetence. Similarly, referring to Asia, Woolf stated:

Unless Europe does its best to help Asia to pass from imperialist subjection to complete independence without resistance and friction, the world may find itself faced with a conflict and outburst of nationalism compared with which the Great War was the mildest of evils. (157)

And also, consistent with the thinking of our spokesmen, in 1923 Ross and Leys stressed the dangers of Kenyan white settlers having increased powers over the "African wards of the imperial trust."158

Many times in these pages it has been suggested that the aims of the imperialism of the Labour Party could have been largely fulfilled by an effective world federation. To achieve this objective the party contributed significantly to the founding of the League of Nations. In 1927, H.N. Brails-
ford, a long standing leading figure of the I.L.P. succinctly expressed the importance of the League to the Labour Party by drawing a parallel to Mirabeau's comment with respect to the value of the Third Estate: "It was nothing, it must be everything."\textsuperscript{159}

Although the League mandate system was in some ways to be a perpetuation of the old negative imperialism wrapped in new robes of trusteeship rhetoric, and a tremendous disappointment to the Labour Party spokesmen, it was nevertheless an institution from which ideas of international humanitarianism might "permeate" the world's peoples until they were mature enough to use them to advantage. The word "permeate" is appropriate here since to be purely an educational body was always the stated purpose of the Fabian Society.\textsuperscript{160}

During 1917 and 1918 committees in several nations devised plans for an international peace organization. However, the first and most comprehensive was produced by the Fabian Society.\textsuperscript{161} We may also recall here the earlier hopes for world federation of MacDonald, Hobson and Shaw. As early as 1915 Sidney Webb and Leonard Woolf had completed a draft treaty,\textsuperscript{162} and Woolf had written two lengthy reports, outlining the questions to be thrashed out, both of which were to be published in 1916 as his \textit{International Government}. In 1917 the draft treaty was published by the Fabian Society along with other plans from non-Labour organizations in a volume edited by Woolf and entitled \textit{The Framework for a Lasting Peace}. In a 1971 introduction to this work, S.J. Stearns has written that the Fabian programme was the "most substantial and carefully worked out of the programs" and that its publication along with the other plans was part of the Society's "sustained programme to educate the public (and the Foreign Office) about the necessity of creating such a league."\textsuperscript{163} Also with respect to the Fabian Society programme, F.P.
Walters, former Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Nations, stated that it "anticipated and explains practically all the main features which were later embodied in the Covenant."\(^{164}\)

Moreover, in the 1917 "Memorandum on War Aims" written by Arthur Henderson, with the assistance of Ramsay MacDonald and Sidney Webb, almost all of what were later to be known as the "Fourteen Points" were anticipated and discussed in detail.\(^{165}\) It is also interesting to note that Henry Pelling has stated that the trade union movement gave the document an "overwhelming endorsement."\(^{166}\) Furthermore, he has suggested that both Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson were influenced by the thinking of the Labour Party through "various agents" who had been reporting to them opinion in Britain.\(^{167}\)

This chapter has endeavoured to present various aspects of the Labour Party sense of imperial trusteeship. It has been demonstrated that attitudes of party spokesmen to the empire and to the world were largely an extension of home policy. As they demanded awareness of the needs of the majority in Britain so they urged a similar sensitivity toward the colonial majorities. Far from doctrinaire socialists, they remind us more of Robert Owen attempting to convince the established classes that it was within their best interests to improve the lives and working conditions of the underprivileged. Throughout their recommendations there was an abiding faith in the potentialities of human reasonableness.

An important ingredient of trusteeship both at home and in the empire was the continued adherence to a policy of free trade. This question of free trade versus protection was of great importance during the period under discussion. Here was an issue related to imperialism which affected the national majority often in very direct ways. To what extent did the party
spokesmen betray the kinds of idealistic speculations, which could be afforded while out of office, when they were confronted with an immediate threat of colonial tariffs and low-priced labour?
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CHAPTER VI
LABOUR IMPERIALISM AND FREE TRADE

The Robinson and Gallagher thesis that in the nineteenth century the promotion of free trade was a form of British imperialism was reviewed in chapter two. It was pointed out that in the twentieth century Labour imperialists promoted trusteeship in a similar manner. Power need not be measured only in terms of formal dominance. "Mind to mind" trusteeship programmes resulting in a "willing partnership" could well produce closer and, perhaps, more dominant ties between Britain and the empire. British governments in the nineteenth century limited their reliance on free trade imperialism to only those areas in which they could ensure dominance. Similarly, the Labour imperialists were hesitant to accelerate the realization of complete self-government until the objectives of trusteeship had been achieved or were well in progress. When this occurred, as with free trade imperialism in the nineteenth century, formal dominance would no longer be necessary.

However, unlike the imperialism of free trade, the imperialism of Labour regarded trade security as secondary to fulfilling the objective of an enlightened cooperative international humanity through the social reforms involved in trusteeship. Achievement of these reforms was to result in an ideal world democracy in which people would voluntarily appreciate the advantages of cooperation. In their insistence upon their concept of enlightenment, our Labour leaders were imperialists. This was the imperialism of the Labour Party, and if it led to the dissolution of the empire into an ideal international federation that could protect the interests of world
labour, so much the better, since the objective of Labour imperialism would then be achieved.

The kind of world desired by the Labour imperialists still required free trade. Through the eloquence of Richard Cobden and John Bright free trade had long been identified with international humanitarianism. In referring to the right travel and trade, there was more than a little of this attitude in Shaw and the others when they claimed that the earth belonged to all. If poverty was a cause of war, international prosperity should encourage peace. International markets could stimulate international employment. Specialization in manufacturing meant lower prices. And an interdependence among nations as opposed to self-sufficiency meant human communications with the hope of improving understanding and good will.

However, economic depression and the loss of the competitive edge in world markets had severely challenged the complacent idealism of this outlook. In answer to fears of competition from emerging powers which seemed bent on imperial expansion, and in response to the erection of international tariff barriers, the British became involved in a great debate over national efficiency.\(^3\) Inspired by this defensive atmosphere, considerations of tariff protection were popularized. For Labour free trade remained a consistent and continuous policy.

In the Parliamentary Labour Party, in the Trades Union Congress and in the annual Labour Party conferences, free trade was consistently supported by "overwhelming majorities" throughout the period under discussion.\(^4\) The reasons for this support were varied and sometimes complex. Many given were typical of the Liberal Party. Among the more mundane was the fear of unemployment. It was believed that though some trades might benefit from protective tariffs, they would do so only at the expense of others. A major
consideration was the fear of rising living costs. The traditional fear of the "dear loaf" and the appeal of the "free breakfast table" had not lost their power. Also it was believed that the main beneficiaries of tariffs would be the rich. However, along with these concerns there was still the liberal idealism of mid-Victorian times.

Free trade to the Labour imperialists was merely a necessary condition for progress. From their point of view what was really required for national efficiency was the same as what was needed for world efficiency: an intensive programme of industrial and social reform. As both Shaw and MacDonald had stressed, if the home base were ignored, there would be no worthwhile imperialism to export.

The problem of Britain was not her policy of free trade, but her inability to compete due to inefficiency. In response to the Liberal Party criticism that protective tariffs encouraged trusts, MacDonald argued that trusts in themselves were not the problem, but rather that they were owned and controlled privately for the purpose of making profit. He spoke of a strong admiration for the collectivized industrial efficiency of the American trusts, saw them as the way of the future, and hoped as they emerged in Britain they would through public ownership. However, lest one might think his sympathies extended to protectionism, he argued that real protection was not to be found in the protection of tariffs, but in the "Protection of Socialism," which he described as "Factory Laws, Fair Wage resolutions" and "Trade Unionism itself." This was MacDonald's attitude in 1903 and 1904 when the Conservatives had used tariff reform as part of their election platform. His argument that real protection rested in reform rather than tariffs was to remain essentially the same in the election campaign of 1923.
Hardie in 1903 insisted that there should be no following "on the heels of the Cobden Club." Although he agreed that free trade was a necessary condition for international good will, and that Chamberlain's proposal of tariff reform would "add enormously to the cost of living along with increasing unemployment," he felt that what was really needed was "a constructive industrial policy." Both he and MacDonald argued that British inefficiencies were rooted in the English "caste" system which prevented a cooperative working relationship between capital and labour. Free trade, therefore, must be accompanied by social reform.

Both Arthur Henderson and Phillip Snowden assessed the problem similarly. In 1904 Henderson argued that the general welfare of both manufacturer and worker would be enhanced by a reduction of railway rates and a decrease in mining royalties which were charged by private landlords. Snowden in 1906, assumed a slightly different but related position, in urging that excess profits from rent, railway rates, and mining royalties should be rechanneled into social reform. It was not until after 1918 that the party would be sufficiently socialistic to adopt as a policy the nationalization of mines and railways.

In advocating social reform as an accompaniment to a continuance of free trade, party spokesmen often reflected Hobson's position, that the taproot of economic imperialism, as opposed to an imperialism of trusteeship, grew out of insufficient capital investment at home. Higher wages and living standards could have absorbed much investment capital, and meeting consumer demand resultant from improved wages could have absorbed much of the remainder. However, lacking such outlets for surplus capital, investors sought reliable opportunities in the colonies. According to this theory, governments were used to secure and protect these colonial markets.
To Hobson, imperialistic rivalry was the main cause of war, a cause that could be eliminated by the investment of accumulated profits at home. An important corollary of this teaching was the party policy of promoting trade unionism throughout the empire. Obviously Hobson too was in favour of social reform as opposed to tariff reform, but he added a further dimension which was frequently reflected in the thinking of Labour Party spokesmen. He argued that protective tariffs were a capitalist means to finance the colonial infrastructure necessary for the cultivation of the "estates" to which Chamberlain referred. Since a direct income tax for such purposes of economic imperialism might prove politically embarrassing and meet with public rejection, it was necessary for capitalist governments to resort to tariff reform. Protective tariffs to Hobson were, therefore, the hand-maidens of imperialism, and were designed to protect a commercially dominant elite with which the interests of the Labour Party were obviously incompatible.

In effect, Hobson had argued that protective tariffs were part of a rich man's game, a game he could play with the surplus value of the wages of the people. With these illgotten gains the monied classes could sit at the gaming table of economic imperialism. The game was to get as many colonies as possible, and play them for all they were worth. Protective tariffs would reduce the world's common people to mere chips on the global board.

On the other hand, as we have seen, the vested interest of labour was preparation for democratic responsibility. The "caste differences" to which MacDonald referred, had to be bridged, not widened. "Labour's aim is to establish democratic control over all the machinery of state" wrote Henderson in 1918. The faith, perhaps unjustifiable, was that democracies, through a more general public involvement, would provide the limiting control to
check the minority ambitions of economic imperialists. To create a united "world democracy," as the only hope for peace, was the aim of the Labour Party.

Though protective tariffs were anathema to Hobson, it has been also abundantly established that when he considered the dependent colonies, most aspects of Liberal Manchester economics were equally reprehensible. This, of course, was an extension of the radicalism of home policy. Hobson was against both the authoritarian economic imperialism implied in the Chamberlain school and the unchecked commercial enterprises tolerated by the Liberal Party's *laissez-faire* attitude. In his work called *The New Protectionism*, written in 1916, he proceeded to define the problem in the following terms:

If the Free Trade policy is to fulfill its mission as a civilizing, pacifying agency, it must adapt itself to the larger needs of this modern situation. Free Trade is indeed the nucleus of the larger constructive economic internationalism; but it needs a conversion from the negative conception of *laissez faire*, *laissez aller*, to a positive constructive one. The required policy must direct itself to secure economic liberty and equality not for trade alone, but for the capital, the enterprise, and the labour, which are required to do the work of development in all the backward countries of the earth...This fuller doctrine of the Open Door, or equality of economic opportunity, cannot, however, be applied without definite co-operative action on the part of nations and their Governments. (16)

In advocating an international control commission for tropical African colonies a few months later, MacDonald similarly urged that the proposed commission "have no power to exclude any nation from legitimate trade, or to give preference to any."17 This was regarded as necessary so that the commission might exclude "monopolist financial interests."18 Such exclusion was needed to help the commission to "hold tropical Africa in trust for the world with no unnecessary interference with the natives."19

The Fabian Society spokesman, Bernard Shaw, was equal to Hobson in his criticism of standard *laissez-faire* practice, and although he was clearly in favour of retaining free trade, as shall be demonstrated below, his
remarks were so ambiguous that one historian, Bernard Semmel, assumed he favoured protectionism. Semmel's reasoning was partly based on the following argument. In *Fabianism and the Empire*, Shaw urged the British to "invest capital and organize industry at home," and stated that it was no longer prudent to leave their fate to "the hazards of commercial speculation." If the present trend of inefficiency and dependency on her empire were to continue, the British, as the wealthy ancient Romans before them, would have to provide bread and circuses to prevent revolution. However, this would not occur, he stressed, unless they were "still too stupid and selfish for Socialism, which, with regard to any particular industry, or to all industry, is the true alternative to Free Trade."  

Taken out of context, as it would seem Semmel has done, Shaw appears to be against free trade. However, it is evident, making allowances for Shavian irony, that he was expressing essentially the same view as was expressed by other spokesmen, that free trade was insufficient without social reform. That Semmel was wrong and that Shaw was largely in agreement with Hobson and the other party spokesmen was more clearly evident in the larger context of *Fabianism and the Empire*, in which, speaking specifically under the heading of "Free Trade," Shaw had stated that "the decision should as far as it rests with England, and lies between Free Trade and Import Duties, be firmly in favour of Free Trade."  

Moreover, in defence of free trade Shaw argued that a more suitable form of protection than tariffs would be "to guide and develop export trade on the one hand, and on the other to nationalize such necessary trades as agriculture, engineering etcetera if the course of free trade threatens to take them abroad." And furthermore, Shaw argued that foreign competition had the desirable effect of driving employers from the "sweating-den method,
which is wasteful and cruel, into the regulated factory method which is cheaper and better, though it requires abler directors and larger capitals."\(25\)

The view that increased efficiency was preferable to tariffs was reiterated again in *Fabianism and the Fiscal Question: An Alternative Policy* which was the Society's response to Joseph Chamberlain's 1904 "Tariff Reform" campaign. Arguing that there was "no end to the reforms by which the threatened tariff could be put off by a really active positive--not negative--Opposition,"\(26\) Shaw called for technical schools,\(27\) scientific agriculture,\(28\) an "Imperial fleet administered by an Imperial Shipping Board,"\(29\) and the nationalization of the coal and railway industries.\(30\) In stressing the importance of efficient land transportation, he stated that the nationalization of railways was "an obvious and immediate measure compared with which a tariff is the most far-fetched of fantasies."\(31\) Obviously, tariffs were no substitute for social reform.

On the other hand, like Hardie, Shaw was against any slavish following of the Cobden Club. He was annoyed at Labourites who supported free trade without insisting upon the degree of socialism outlined above.\(32\) The liberal idealism of Cobden was highly valued, but in practice Cobdenism had to be updated. In expressing the requirements for a revised free trade policy, the following words of Shaw illustrate again the consistent liberal position of our spokesmen:

Free trade has its heroic side; Cobden was something more than a mouthpiece of the sordid manufacturing interests of the forties; and his doctrine is as applicable to the new conditions as to the old, though it makes much greater demands on the national mind and character, and has no such overwhelming backing of immediate commercial interests. (33)

The "greater demands" on "mind" and "character" were, of course, the intellectual and moral capacity to realize that the true path of self-interest
was through cooperation. Without such realization, any "opposition" to tariff protection could be no more than "negative."

Like MacDonald, Hardie, Snowden and Henderson, Shaw and the Fabians were arguing that free trade in itself was no panacea. In fact it would seem they were the first party representatives to announce that true protection resided in socialistic reforms. However, again it must be stressed that the failure of Bernard Semmel to see their attitude as Labour Party policy was due to an overfocussing on a temporary issue. Part of the misunderstanding of Shaw is due to his, and the majority of the Fabians', hesitation to oppose Britain's Boer War policy. MacDonald had resigned from the Society over this issue and it appears to have engendered a good deal of estrangement. Fabianism and the Empire coming as it did on the heels of this rift, and reflecting a bellicose attitude toward the pursuit of the war, rather well illustrated by Shaw's demand that Britain complete her "manifest destiny" in South Africa, was certainly indicative of a temporary gulf between the thinking of the Fabian Society and other Labour Party organizations and spokesmen.

The gulf, however, was not over the issue of free trade, but it did represent a temporary difference in attitude toward the empire. At that time leaders such as MacDonald and Hardie had not as yet devised a positive imperial policy. The "Imperial Standard" and its implications of imperial responsibility were yet to come. And at that time most I.L.P. and T.U.C. leaders, including MacDonald and Hardie, opposed the government's war policy mainly because they believed the war had been inspired by capitalists. On the other hand, forefront Fabians such as the Webbs and Shaw were associating themselves with the Liberal Imperialists. Therefore, the Society, even though its policy was obviously one of distributing socialist
legislation throughout the empire, appeared to be entering the camp of the military and economic imperialists. This also implied that they were departing from democratic approaches. Yet a closer reading of Fabianism and the Empire, as we have seen, reveals that Shaw, like MacDonald and Hardie subsequently, wanted the peoples of the empire to be prepared for independence and for willing partnership. It is perhaps not inappropriate to restate that even in 1900 Shaw had urged that:

In fact our first duty to our subjects is to make them independent of our guidance, and consequently as appreciative of our partnership, as possible. (38)

It is not surprising that later historians have failed to recognize a continuum between the Fabian Society stand in 1900 and the eventual general position of the Labour Party as a whole. These temporary attitudinal differences discussed above, have obscured the essential consistency of the Labour Party's underlying imperial philosophy.

It is perhaps also interesting to note that a similar rift was to occur within the Labour Party with the advent of World War One. It was between those who believed a military approach was needed to protect values and those, led by MacDonald and Hardie, who believed this to be a mistaken policy. As the war went on, their positions were resolved, apparently partly due to a realization that what they were fighting for was not be achieved by the old-line parties. Even though there were some temporary differences as to means, there was certainly none with respect to the ends desired.

Thus far it has been established that free trade was regarded as a necessary condition for progress. Considering colonial reaction to Chamberlain's proposal for an imperial Zollverein, free trade had a particularly important relevance to Labour Party imperialism. It shall be shown below
that even colonial advocates of imperial unity were reluctant to engage in formal commitments that might inhibit colonial nationalistic tendencies. In effect, free trade was a necessary condition to continue the desired harmonious development between trade unionism in the mother country and the colonies. Moreover, as we have seen the ideal was to establish a "Britannic Alliance" based on the best of British political principles within a context of international democratic socialism free from any taint of military or economic imperialism. The guideline or cement for imperial union was to be the code of ethics embodied in MacDonald's "Imperial Standard." Consequently the immediate value of protective tariffs had to be measured against this long term imperial ideal. It was in this light that Chamberlain's proposals were weighed and considered. To give strength to his cause, MacDonald attacked tariffs on practical grounds.

In both the *Zollverein and British Industry* (1903) and in *Labour and the Empire*, MacDonald took the position that imperial self-sufficiency was highly impractical. It was impractical on economic, psychological, and on moral grounds. He urged that Canada, Australia, New Zealand and probably soon South Africa and India were all, in effect, individual nations whose protectionist predilections were as real as those of Germany or the United States. He could not accept the position of what he dubbed the "Tariff Imperialists," that tariff union would prevent conflicts over trade disputes.

Even if such an arrangement were advisable the intellectual and emotional climate of the self-governing and the near self-governing colonies could lead only to a sense of being coerced by the Mother Country. The colonies, like Britain, were already conducting considerable trade outside of the empire. Canada, for instance, traded much with the United States. Moreover, the amount of trade within the empire, MacDonald stated, did not
Colonial nationalism was not interested in imperial self-sufficiency. Though New Zealand and Australia were willing to negotiate preference on a reciprocal basis, it was only to a point that would still give the colonial producer a decisive advantage. With respect to tariff advantages provided by Canada to Britain since 1897, MacDonald pointed out that both Canadian trade union organizations and manufacturers' associations were continually passing resolutions demanding that the British industrialists should be unable to compete with Canadian manufacturers. Moreover, in Australia, the Australian Labour Party was in the forefront of the demand for protective tariffs. One might infer from the point of view of British Labour Party imperialism that a British tariff policy opposed to the attitudes of Canadian and Australian movements could lead only to a frustration of the British Labour Party's missionary purpose.

In his travels in Canada in 1906 MacDonald found most Canadians to be "frankly protectionists." His view, incidentally, is well supported in a 1952 unpublished Ph.D thesis entitled "The Imperial Federation Movement in Canada." The author, G.R. MacLean, wrote that the most popular scheme of the federationists was a system of imperial trade which might retain the principle of protection in Canada while providing preference for Canadian goods in Britain. From a reading of this thesis it is also interesting to note the great hesitancy, even on the part of Canadian Chamberlain sympathizers, to accept the restrictions of an organic empire. This finding is also supported in a more recent work, *The Sense of Power* by Carl Berger, in which he illustrates clearly that the leading Canadian imperialist spokesmen were extremely wary of any permanent inflexible structure related to trade or defence which might threaten Canadian autonomy.
Some leading Liberal Party spokesmen shared the view that to stress tariff union would contribute to imperial disunity. Lord Rosebery, the leader of the Liberal Imperialists, stated in 1903 that he would be willing to consider any proposal for "cementing" and "uniting" the empire, but he did not regard tariffs as such a proposal. He argued further that if the empire were to have a lasting value it must be founded not on tariffs but on a "union of sympathy." Haldane, another leading Liberal Imperialist, had also stated in 1903 that in his view tariff reform would "seriously endanger the stability of the Empire." In a similar vein Ramsay MacDonald wrote in 1911 that the "unity of the dominions composing the Empire" must rest not on "markets" but on "faith" and "hope."

Thus far this chapter has treated the period up to the war years. It has endeavoured to explain the underlying point of view of our spokesmen toward this question of free trade and its implications for Labour's imperial programmes. However, since the issue of protection versus free trade was revived again during the war years, it is possible to obtain some information pertaining to the extent to which the views of the leading spokesmen were prevalent within the party in general. Of course it is difficult to ascertain the thought of the majority of the rank and file, but from committee reports and conference resolutions some understanding is possible.

To what extent did the trade union leaders support the higher idealism of free trade? Even though a few iron and steel industry union leaders, persons who might be expected to support tariffs to protect their industry's employment, showed sympathy toward a powerful Conservative lobby, the vast majority were opposed to protective tariffs. Passed unanimously at the 1917 Labour Party Annual Conference was Philip Snowden's resolution that "What was required was a policy of free trade for every country with safe-
guards for maintenance of international labour conditions fixed by international trade union agreement." Moreover, echoing Hobson in the Annual Conference of 1918 much discussion ensued concerning an alleged need to weaken the drive to export capital.57

More in keeping with Hobson's concern for the welfare of the whole human race was the comment of W. Mullin, the trade union representative on the Empire Cotton Growing Committee, who condemned manufacturers for wanting their cotton at non-competitive prices without concerning themselves about the plight of the growers.58 Perhaps surprising, considering the industry he represented, Owen Coyle, leader of the Amalgamated Society of Steel and Ironworkers, informed a parliamentary committee investigating the feasibility of protective tariffs, that if the post-war world was not to have free trade "all the blood and treasure that has been spent has been in vain, and the war is a failure."59 Furthermore, the majority of the iron and steel union leaders questioned stated that investment in scientific research and public ownership was the needed alternative to protective tariffs.60

To the leading Labour Party spokesmen free trade was necessary for the self-realization of the dependencies. For the "dual mandate" to function two conditions were required: disinterested authority and a firm policy of free trade, and the former seemed impossible without the latter. A policy of protective tariffs might degenerate into the dominance of native peoples by chartered companies, leaving such peoples without the ability to get the best price for their products, and excluding them from a fullsome identification with the world. Therefore, the so-called "non-adult" peoples had to be protected from impersonal, powerful, private organizations motivated mainly by profit. By leaving tropical development in their hands no trusteeship was possible simply because the raison d'être of such organizations was
endemically the antithesis of any broad notion of trusteeship.

Moreover, protective tariffs, capitalist trusts, and capitalistic monopolies were dubbed the villainous trilogy of economic and military imperialism, and such trusts and monopolies were claimed to be fathered by protective tariffs. Trusts in themselves were not at fault as MacDonald explained, but rather the fact that they were owned and controlled privately and irresponsibly. This situation had to be halted to fulfill, if one likes, the classic liberal ideal of international peace and prosperity. The antidote to poverty and war, it was believed by the Labour Party spokesmen, was democratic control of the world's resources by the world's people.

Freeing the world of poverty and war was not an entirely altruistic aim of the Labour Party. Considering the extent to which wars affected the working-class, it was a vested interest to prevent war. It was also a vested interest to stop the competition of cheap labour. This is well illustrated by the following comments of George N. Barnes, twice leader of the Labour Party during the years under discussion. Speaking on behalf of the League of Nations Labour Organization in 1920, he stated that protective tariffs were not the answer to the problem of capitalist investment abroad of profits accrued at home. He explained that capitalist investment would always occur in places where labour was cheap and trade unionism weak. The problem, therefore, of the Labour Organization, he continued, was to "abolish cheap labour altogether." In connection with their attitude toward the protective tariff issue, this argument expressed by Barnes is an epitomization of Labour Party imperialism. It captures Olivier's definition of individuality in 1889, Shaw's demand for the British flag to carry a "Factory Code and a Minimum Wage" in 1900, Hobson's 1916 demand for a "fuller" laissez faire, Henderson's 1917 "world democracy," and, of course,
the attitude expressed in the 1918 policy statement, that one nation's prosperity is dependent on that of all nations.

In summation, this chapter has attempted to illustrate another aspect of the fundamental liberal radicalism of our party spokesmen. So far from departing from Cobdenite idealism concerning the role of free trade in promoting international peace and prosperity, they were in effect striving to fulfill its promise by tailoring it to changing circumstances. We may recall that for Jeremy Bentham *laissez faire* was an implement, not a first principle, for achieving the "greatest happiness." Thus in the 1840s Cobden's stress on the free trade aspect of *laissez faire* seemed useful to achieve the desired end. In 1904, as we have seen, Shaw argued that Cobden's "doctrine" was as "applicable to the new conditions as to the old," but it then required "greater demands on the national mind and character." If Cobden's humanitarian idealism was to be realized, social reforms were needed both at home and abroad. Free trade without accompanying socialistic measures had lost its utilitarian value. The fact that this was recognized by Labour leaders was undoubtedly one of the reasons why Noel Buxton believed Labour to be the purest expression of liberalism.
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CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION

This thesis has dealt with the attitudes to the colonies of a small group of Labour Party leaders in the early twentieth century. It has argued that their attitudes were a manifestation of a stream of late-Victorian liberal radicalism at the leadership level of a new political party. In a very real sense their views represented a will to extend to the colonies the kinds of humanitarian considerations that were given to domestic policy. Both imperial and domestic programmes for Labour leaders involved a trusteeship of relatively dependent peoples. In both cases guardianship was required to further what these leaders regarded as evolutionary progress. The raison d'être of the Labour Party was the improvement of the living and working conditions of ordinary people. Not surprisingly, there were similarities between home and colonial programmes.

From the standpoint of uninhibited policy-making, it must be admitted, the Labour imperialists were in an enviable position. They were essentially opposition critics who, as such, were relatively free from charges of betraying their idealism. It is true that Labour was in office for nine months in 1924, but in such a minority position that the implementation of policy was impossible. As G.D.H. Cole has stated, the party had to "choose between refusing office and taking it under conditions which made it utterly impossible to carry out any sort of socialist policy, even of the mildest." Furthermore, the party had the added advantage of representing neither commercial nor aristocratic elites, and, as a new party was uncommitted to
defending past errors.

It must also be admitted that Labour imperial theory, as long as Labour did not have the responsibility of governing, was conveniently suited to pursue home working-class interests without going against principles of imperial trusteeship. For example, Philip Snowden, in defence of Lancashire workers in 1912 could support a proposal to provide a loan for cotton growing enterprises in East Africa. If necessary, this could be justified on the grounds that the Labour imperialists were clearly in favour of developing colonial resources. However, if such developments clashed with the civilisations of the native inhabitants, Labour with impugnity was then free to criticize. If Labour had been in office, the potential for a clash between home and imperial programmes was possible in such situations.

To suggest that Labour leaders were in a position in which accountability was unnecessary is not to imply that they were insincere or hypocritical. It is noteworthy that the MacDonald government of 1929, when Labour was much stronger in parliament than in 1924, remained true to the earlier convictions of the Labour imperialists. In The Commonwealth of Nations: Origins and Impact 1869-1971 (1977) W.D. McIntyre has pointed out that Sidney Webb, who in 1929 was secretary of state for both dominions and colonies, gave "full support to the exponents of trusteeship." Although his trusteeship intentions were frustrated by the circumstances of the depression, Webb "succeeded in blocking schemes of settler control in East Africa." It would seem that, at least in imperial policy, Labour had passed a test of accountability.

In the introductory chapter of this study, we saw that the MacDonald government of 1924 was accused of departing from Labour philosophy by pursuing a policy of continuance of empire. This study has shown that MacDonald
and his colleagues were neither betraying their principles nor giving way to political necessity. They were critics of certain imperial activities, but were themselves imperialists, advocating a creative form of imperialism involving trusteeship.

To the Labour imperialists the management of the empire was a necessary responsibility. Wisely administered it provided a unique opportunity to contribute toward their ideal of human moral and intellectual progress. The Labour imperialists were conscious of what they regarded as the long-range interests of humanity. They were convinced that tactless interference with native religious, political, economic and other social institutions could only result in an accumulation of hostility which could render a cooperative development of humanity impossible. They believed that the survival of the empire depended upon the rechanneling of hostility into affection. The empire represented much of the globe. As an example for good or ill, it could be of tremendous importance. If discriminatory measures and white supremacist attitudes prevailed, there was little hope for a "willing partnership."

The Labour imperialists were similar to Lord Durham and other mid-nineteenth century radicals in their approach to imperial management. To their minds authoritarian reaction to colonial aspirations for self-realization meant eventually losing the empire entirely. Durham was content to rule indirectly by means of partnership. Cobden stressed that he wanted to keep the colonies by "affections," rather than by the "sword." These radicals were responding to what they regarded as the political realities of their time.

For the Labour imperialists the old radical approach to empire had to be updated from the time of Durham and Cobden. The advancing industrial
revolution was creating world conditions which had hitherto existed to a far lesser degree. Both in the colonies and at home industrialization was spawning situations of human social dislocation which were deeply affecting urban and agricultural modes of existence. A growing public awareness was spreading the rumblings of dissatisfaction. Whether for strategic or humanitarian reasons, or a combination of both, wise administrators sought solutions to problems of sanitation, health, housing, unemployment and working conditions. Given these problems the Labour imperialists believed that imperial progress, as well as the progress of humanity, required more than a gradual dispensation of colonial self-government to fundamentally British settlement areas. Preparation for self-government in all colonies was necessary, but along with it, and in preparation for it, the abuses of too much *laissez faire* had to be removed. The trusteeship of Labour, whether at home or in the colonies, was designed to meet this purpose.

The attitude of the Labour imperialists cannot be understood without appreciating their concept of democracy. In these pages we have seen frequent criticism of authoritarian beliefs and practices. Yet the Labour spokesmen under discussion were themselves not free from these attitudes. Notwithstanding their benevolence, they were unwilling, except on their own terms, to free the dependent empire. Keenly devoted to preparing colonial peoples to be independent of their guidance, they were reluctant to grant self-government until trusteeship objectives had been achieved. As we have seen, they thought in social evolutionary terms, and regarded many peoples as "non-adults." They believed that the earth belonged to all, and that no group had the right to "peg-off" its portion as if it were on the moon, depriving themselves of world association and others from the advantages of their resources. Rather arrogantly, they believed intervention was justifiable as
long as it was accompanied by a programme of trusteeship. As a tool of education, if all else failed, they were prepared to use force. They were convinced it was their prerogative to blend civilisations. Finally, they obviously assumed that, if provided, the "best" traditions of "Western civilised man" would predominate.

If democracy meant non-intervention into the lives of others, they were not democrats. They regarded non-intervention as irresponsible. They believed that non-intervention would never produce democracy. Democracy represented an ideal that could be achieved only if people were prepared for it. The Labour imperialists, therefore, could justify intervention on the grounds that they were preparing others to be independent of their guidance. Those imperialists who failed to do this, they regarded as authoritarian. Such were commercial and aristocratic elites which, to the Labour imperialists, were impervious to the problems and aspirations of colonial peoples.

Freeing colonial peoples without prior preparation for democratic responsibility was not, therefore, a gesture of democracy as much as it was a furthering of a policy of unmodified laissez faire. These spokesmen feared the effects in the colonies of unrestrained individualism just as they feared them at home. Colonial workers had to be protected by parliamentary institutions in which a "common will" could be identified. They also had to be protected by the establishment of trade unions and by appropriate education. Without these institutions, either at home or in the colonies, poverty and ignorance would be perpetuated, and the service to the ideal of "creative evolution" to raise man "higher and higher" would be ignored.

The ultimate objective was voluntary cooperation throughout humanity. Those who failed to conceive of this ideal and who did little to promote its realization, the Labour imperialists regarded as authoritarian. To
accept a status quo which kept a so-called "non-adult" people in a perpetual state of inferiority was, in their view, authoritarian. Withholding the means of emancipation from home or colonial majorities was equally authoritarian. This is what MacDonald indicated when he stated that the role of Labour was to "democratize the personnel of the imperial machine." He did not say that the empire was to be dissolved by Labour, but rather democratized. It was, therefore, essential that the personnel operating the "imperial machine" must share the democratic ideal so that it might gradually be realized. Those who did not share this ideal, and who were unwilling to work toward it, were regarded as authoritarian.

In their desire to promote humanitarian social reform programmes throughout the entire empire, the Labour leaders differed significantly from the Liberal Imperialist, the Liberals in general, and the Conservatives. Perhaps the differences would be less evident if Joseph Chamberlain's enthusiasm for social reform, as exemplified in the 1870s and 1880s in his "Radical" and "Unauthorized" programmes, had been wholeheartedly shared and vigorously pursued into the twentieth century, and extended to considerations of the peoples of the dependencies. However, Chamberlain showed far more interest in the economic cultivation of the "undeveloped estates" than in the psychological and social needs of colonized peoples. Though the Liberal Imperialists indicated little concern for economic imperialism, including Chamberlain's "estates policy," their imperial interests, as had been noted above, were largely limited to areas of "white settlement." The Liberals, in general, continued their interest in the promotion of measures of self-government, but, except for a few radicals, they lacked a serious concern for what MacDonald called "Imperial life."

The commitment to the "Imperial Standard" was decidedly the outstand-
ing distinction of the Labour Party imperial outlook. MacDonald defined and gave leadership to the concept. His definition, in effect, knitted together a Labour version of imperial trusteeship which had been developing since 1900, the year of the party's inception as the Labour Representative Committee. Shaw's *Fabianism and the Empire* and MacDonald's "The Propaganda of Civilisation" had begun the evolution of a party imperial policy which was expanded, enriched and refined by all Labour leaders discussed in this study. This philosophy was to be reflected in subsequent Labour policy statements, in the parliamentary efforts of Labour M.P.s to protect native peoples, in the attraction of still more Liberal radicals to the party, in the pursuit of a world peace-keeping organization, and in the activities of the post-war advisory committees on international and imperial affairs. As Bernard Porter has written in *Critics of Empire*, by 1914 "the Imperial Standard--however ineffective--had become a firm tenet of Labour Party policy."  

It might be argued that those called here the Labour imperialists were not, in fact, imperialists because their ultimate goal was to dissolve the empire into a world federation. However, there was no opposition to the empire *per se*, but rather to what was conceived as the mismanagement of it. The fact is that Labour was only willing to put the empire under the jurisdiction of an international organization if such a body could guarantee the incorporation of Labour's imperial objectives. Since the Labour imperialists identified the security of British labour with that of world labour, a League of Nations such as they desired might be regarded as an expansion of their imperial programmes. If the management of empire could have been transferred to a world organization, Labour's reason for empire would have disappeared. Such an ideal community required much preparation. In the service of this social evolutionary purpose, the British Empire, "wisely
governed," and acting as a temporary substitute, represented a great opportunity for carrying out the civilising mission of stimulating international peace by means of nurturing sympathetic understanding. Mere acquiescence to colonial demands for self-government, without due consideration of long-ranged effects, was, therefore, regarded as irresponsible non-interventionalism. In fact, as we have seen, all beliefs, attitudes, or policies which exacerbated "clashes of civilisation," including economic schemes without respect for existing institutions, were regarded as imprudent.

The Labour leaders wanted an expansion of imperial administration along collegial lines. Highest authority would reside in a "willing partnership" of the self-governing communities. The administrative guideline would be the "Imperial Standard." Enlightened trusteeship policies would lead gradually to the expansion of the number of autonomous communities to include all of the parts of the empire. Upon maturation each colony would have the option to remain or secede, but if it chose to remain it would have to share the responsibilities of imperial administration, and to maintain the code of ethics embodied in the "Imperial Standard."

In an age of cynicism and disillusionment, such as the present, it is obviously difficult to assess the value of the work of those who espoused idealistic causes in an age of relative optimism. In this century several factors have frustrated the aspirations of the Labour imperialists; not the least of which have been the growing dominance of commercial culture and the advent of nuclear power. In many the latter has produced a sense of helplessness and the former a feeling that nothing matters beyond material goods anyway. Perhaps the greatest difficulty has been an increasing decline of faith in human progress since World War One. As we have seen, this faith was strong in the Labour imperialists. In the early twentieth century it
was still possible to believe that the spread of public education might result in a more enlightened humanity. The kind of education needed to achieve this result was one that could prepare people for human cooperation. As yet it has not been tried.
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