

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of Tlemcen

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

***The Commonwealth of
Nations***

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Presented by:

- Mr. Ahmed Sami Labiad
- Mr. Mohammed Mankouri

Supervised by:

- Dr. Yahia ZEGHOUDI
- Mr. Mohammed KAMECH

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Dedication I

My great thanks go to Allah for enabling me to achieve this work.

I dedicate this work to my parents and my brothers, thanks for being always there for me. The list of my thanks extends to all my friends and classmates and my partner who worked with me well on this mémoire Mr. Mohammed Mankouri and to all those who know me.

Mr. Ahmed Sami Labiad

Dedication II

In the name of the Greatest Creator, most Gracious, most
Merciful

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents in the first place who supported me generously, then to all my friends especially Mr. Rachid, Mr. Abdelkrim, Mr. Abdelmadjid and all the beautiful spirits in my life with my dear colleagues.

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Abstract

There was a very long process from the British Empire to the new Commonwealth of Nations. The British Empire ruled the world for centuries; the kings of this empire were central figures in history itself. The heritage of the British Empire is still alive till now, but in a blink of an eye the empire fell and was replaced at first, by a small organization that grew with time to be nowadays, the Commonwealth of Nations. No one can argue that the Commonwealth is an outstanding organization which inherited some prestige from the British Empire even that prestige was a drop of sea. The historical approach seems more suitable for this memoir which depends on it entirely. Further researches are recommended in the future to understand the adjustments of the commonwealth in the world and its influence.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- ATCM: The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings
- ACU: The Association of Commonwealth Universities
- ANC: African National Congress
- BCATP : the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan
- BOT: British Overseas Territory
- CAP: The Commonwealth Association of Planners
- CCM : the Committee of Commonwealth Membership
- CHOGM: the Commonwealth heads of government meeting
- CMAG : the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group
- CHRI : the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiation
- CIO: Chair-in-Office (Commonwealth)
- EEC: European Economic Community
- EU: European Union
- IAF : Indian Air Force
- G20 : Group of 20
- MENA: Middle East and North Africa
- NATO: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- NP: National Party
- OFS: Orange Free States
- OPEC: Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
- PAF : Pakistani Air Force
- PPP : Pakistan's People Party
- RF : Rhodesian Front
- RPF : Rwandese Patriotic Front

- SC: Security Council
- UDI : Unilateral Declaration of Independence
- UK: United Kingdom
- UNESCO: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- UN: United Nations
- USA: United States of America
- USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- WWI: the First World War
- WWII: the Second World War
- ZANU : Zimbabwe African National Union
- ZAR: (in Dutch: Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek) Southern African Republic

General Introduction

History is written by the victors as former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said as the British Empire was on the verge of downfall, the Commonwealth of Nations came as a consequence. It was constituted under the terms of the London Declaration of 1949; this organization carried the burden of the empire.

Having many tools to expand the knowledge of someone, curiosity can be considered as the most efficient tool. Talking objectively, this paper which is in general about the Commonwealth shows the truth that many people, including scholars, overlook either by underestimating or overestimating it. It was so motivating to have a set of overviews of more than 10 countries and to know the history of each one apart. This gives pleasure to the mind.

The British Empire had colonized many nations over centuries; this means that when these nations got their independence (mainly in the 20th century) Britain was not ready to just let them go. A question imposes itself on the mind whether the Commonwealth is merely a new form of the British Empire or not. To simplify this question we say: Is Britain using Neo-Colonialism through the Commonwealth?

This extended essay depends on the historical approach in addressing the issue of the Commonwealth. It is divided into two chapters; the first chapter is entitled the Road to the Commonwealth. The British Empire and its history was the main subject of the first chapter. It also includes the history of the Commonwealth besides its principles and facts that overshadow the organization. As far as the second chapter is concerned, it is entitled the Commonwealth in the World. This one is dedicated to the role and the status of the Commonwealth of Nations in the world with comparison to other organizations.

Inevitably, a set of difficulties faced this research from the beginning. The use of historical approach can be considered as one obstacle because there were a lot of events related to dates that must be treated carefully and put in a chronological order. The experience of the lack of sources, especially in chapter 2 is another difficulty that must be solved.

Chapter One

The Road to the Commonwealth of Nations

1.1- Introduction

The road towards the commonwealth was long, difficult and full of obstacles. For centuries, the British Empire presided over the world, it stretched from the east to the west of the globe gathering under its crown many nations and races with different cultures and languages. Unlike the others, this empire had all what it takes to remain invincible in the world but when the 19th century came, the dissolution was the fate that awaited the British Empire.

Three essential factors contributed in the emergence of the British Empire throughout history. The first factor is When Magna Carta was introduced in 1215 by King John, the first step towards the empire was established, it was a historic document that regulated the society and restricted the authority of the king. Secondly, the Glorious Revolution of 1688 that put another step to the empire since it strengthened the Parliament and shifted Britain from absolutism of the king towards the constitutional monarchy. The third factor is the Industrial Revolution during the 17th century, this helped Britain to innovate new technologies that allowed it to expand its territories.

Colonialism was the dark spot in almost all empires of the second millennium (mainly Europeans), Britain is not excluded. This form of subjugation took many shapes; it started with the age of discoveries in the 15th century, these explorations fuelled the European expeditions which transformed into colonialism. In 1492 the New World was discovered, this discovery triggered the British colonial Empire (the thirteenth colonies). From the 16th to the 19th centuries, other British colonies were established especially in Asia and Africa.

Almost all the nations that were under colonialism struggled to get their freedom from these imperialistic empires. Britain had to face these enraged nations in order to keep its control over them, but in the 19th century this struggle became more intense and controversial. The rise of the independence movements and anti-imperialism ideology played the major role in decolonization, the British Empire unwillingly found itself giving away the territories that were under its control. After the WWII the glory of the British Empire faded, leaving behind a small trace with its former colonies which is the organization of the Commonwealth of Nations. From one angle, this organization seems as an extension to the British Empire.

1.2-From British Empire to Commonwealth

The world witnessed the emergence of the greatest and the widest empire throughout the history which is the British Empire. From the 16th century till the 20th this empire controlled a quarter of the world's area and 20% of the world's population in 1938, but the empire on which the sun never sets had its downfall in the middle of the 20th century. This led to the birth of new countries that were parts of that empire. These new and independent countries will form a link with the former colonizer that is the British Empire; the name of that form is the Commonwealth of Nations.

1.2.1- Colonial Period

As France and other European empires colonized many countries; and since there was a competition between these two superpowers (France and Britain), Britain did the same and subjugated other countries. This process of British expansion started from the first settlement of Virginia in 1585 to the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997.

America, as far as the history recorded, was the first colony of the British Empire and that was in the late of the 16th century and lasted till the 18th century. This colonization of North America shaped in the thirteen colonies is known in history as the first British Empire, but when the American war of independence erupted between 1775 and 1783 it put an end to the first attempt of British expansion.

As a result of the colonization in Africa slave trade was widely practiced by the Europeans. Although the Portuguese were the first ones who used slaves in their trade, the British did the same and followed their path. The first journeys of slave trade were done by Captain John Hawkins and that was in 1562 during Elizabeth I's reign.¹ For over three centuries of slavery in which the Africans were subjected to all kinds of misery, subjugation and suffering, the British were the most dominant between the 17th century and early 19th century². The slavery confronted by the

¹ The Abolishing Project, http://abolition.e2bn.org/slavery_45.html.15/02/2016, 14:11.

² The National Archive, Britain and the slave trade PDF

“abolitionists” who succeeded in March 25th, 1807 to pass “the abolition of slave trade act” in the Parliament. This was the first step toward the real prohibition of slave trade in the British Empire.

The abolition of slave trade did not mean the end of colonization in Africa, because the Europeans gathered in the so-called “Berlin Conference” (1884-1885) to divide Africa among themselves. Britain did not miss the opportunity to claim more territories across the continent to exploit the rich and vast resources of Africa. The partition granted Britain the control over Egypt and South Africa as main roads to India (since it was the most important ¹colony of the British Empire after the loss of America). In addition to these two countries, Britain had other territories in western, central and eastern Africa.

Concerning the British existence in Asia, India was the milestone of this existence; from 1612 to 1947, during these three centuries the term “British India” was introduced in “the interpretation act” of 1889. India was referred to “*all territories and places within Her Majesty's dominions which are for the time being governed by Her Majesty through the Governor-General of India or through any governor or other officer subordinate to the Governor-General of India.*”⁽³⁾. Many movements of resistance and call for independence arose during this period (here, it is necessary to mention that the Indian Movement for Independence started in the mid-19th century “around 1857”) which led eventually in August 1947 to the Indian independence from Britain. Chronologically, in the First World War, India paid more than 1 million soldiers who lost their lives as a price for siding with the United Kingdom; however, when the Second World War erupted in 1939, Britain, again needed troops to face the great power of Germany; thus, the colonies (mainly India) appeared as a great reserve of manpower, but this time, the Indians required the independence before joining the war. The British viceroy in India Linlithrow, and without consulting the Indian representatives in the Indian National Congress, declared that India would go to war against Germany. This was opposed by the Indians who refused to participate but they were forced to join. This led some figures in the Indian independence movements to side with the axis powers against Britain such as the nationalist Subhas Chandra Bose, who re-organised the Indian

³The Interpretation Act of 1889.

national army. He said in one of his most famous quotes: "We should have but one desire today. The desire to die so India may live". India got its independence officially on 15th of August 1947 but not alone, since one day before that (14th of August); the other part of it (Pakistan) marked its independence too.

In the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA), the Ottoman Empire (1229-1923) emerged not only as a powerful empire that can keep full control over those vast and strategic territories in the heart of the world, but also as a stubborn rival to the Europeans including Britain. This situation lasted for centuries but from the beginning of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire started to decline, then, the First World War came in 1914, and worsened the Ottoman Empire's condition which sided with the central powers at that time (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria). Eventually, the Ottoman Empire took the final blow that resulted in its dissolution after losing WWI. The Arabs in the Middle East, who sided themselves with the British against the Ottomans, thought that this decision would be rewarded with the independence, but the betrayal of Sykes-Picot secret agreement between Britain and France in 1916 revealed the true intentions of the partition in the Middle East. Britain controlled Palestine, Transjordan (now Jordan) and Iraq then it created a fake home for the Jews who were expelled from Europe to Palestine (Israel) and became mandates. The other Arab Gulf States were submitted to the British too. In the case of Egypt, it was occupied by the British in 1882 and became a protectorate after many uprisings in the late 1910s; the Egyptians declared their independence and established the Kingdom of Egypt in 1922, despite the refusal of Britain which continued its military presence (Britain used Egypt as a base to conduct its military operations against the axis powers in North Africa during WWII). In the 1950s the nationalist movements rose against the British in Egypt. The Egyptian Revolution of 1952 came and brought Jamal Abdel Nasser to power. He worked hard to expel both the British and the French military existence not only from Egypt but also from all the other Arab nations. In 1956 he nationalized the Suez Canal; this was a heavy blow to Britain and France who joined with Israel in the conspiracy of the Tripartite Aggression against Egypt (Suez crisis).

The role of Britain in the Middle East was fundamental in creating the map of the Arab world of today, and it was fundamental also in creating the conflicts

between the Arabs and Israel, and between Arabs and the Persian country (Iran) since the Iran policy was dominated by Britain in the 19th century, too.

1.2.2- Post Colonial Period

Due to the fact that imposed itself as a result of the Second World War and also the revolutions made by the colonized peoples that emerged in the British colonies as well as in the French ones in order to gain freedom, Britain found itself obliged to give independence to most of its colonies so it could reduce the impact of its economic loss, and that is what happened although the process of independence included conditions that served the ex-colonizer until nowadays.

From all over the five continents, anti-imperialism movements planted the ideas of liberations among the peoples of the world, especially those who were under the colonization. In 1921 the British Empire was in its peak, but after 4 decades it collapsed. Historians gave many logical reasons for this sudden collapse like “nothing lasts forever”, but it is agreed that the Second World War was the key factor of the downfall, not only for the British Empire but also of other European colonizers.

Only 2 years after the end of WWII, the British Empire lost its “jewel” India in 1947. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) emerged as the spiritual father of the independence in India. His charisma and peaceful methods like the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920 brought Britain to defeat, but by paying a heavy price which was the partition of India into two states India and Pakistan. Since the beginning of the 20th century, Britain wanted to divide India ethnically between Muslims and Hindus by using the “divide and conquer policy”, in order to prevent it from joining forces together against the empire. Muslim League (1906) was a political party which represented the Muslims and their interests in India. The league played a major role in creating Pakistan, during the Lahore Resolution in 1940. The Muslims in India wanted the independence; they declared themselves as “a nation within nation” not as minority among the Hindus¹

¹IOSR. Journal of Humanities and Social Science. India-Pakistan, the history of unsolved conflict. p- 103

In August 1942, Gandhi started “Quit India Movement”. He asked the Indians to start a civil disobedience without violence, using strikes and demonstrations as tools in order to gain the independence. This movement was decisive and famous since it was in the middle of the WWII and thanks to it the independence of India became near. In 1946, Britain announced that it would grant independence to India, but the enraged population of Hindus refused the idea of a Muslim independent state. So they started to riot which led to religious conflict. When the partition was accepted in 1947, these riots increased especially in the Punjab province (Pakistan). Some estimations suggest that more than 500.000 lost their lives in this conflict. To sum this part up, it is true that the British existence in the Indian peninsula ended, but what came after it is most crucial in drawing the full picture of the world today.

New bosses for the world appeared after WWII. France and Britain suffered a humiliating defeat by Nazi Germany. This weakened both of them and contributed at the same time to the rise of the new superpowers the United States of America (USA) and the Soviet Union (USSR). These two countries created what was called the Western Bloc and the Eastern Bloc; Britain was part of the Western Bloc headed by the USA. Eventually, the competition between the USA and USSR became more intense. This competition created the Cold War which contributed to accelerating the process of decolonization. Without going to more specific details, the Soviet Union encouraged and supported all the nations that were under the colonial empires (Britain, France, etc.) to seek independence; whereas United States of America took another approach that was more suitable for Britain, this approach is to grant independence to the new struggling nations assuming that these new nations will continue as puppet states to the West.

1.2.3-. The British Overseas Territories

The waves of Independence, especially those of the 20th century, swept through the British colonies one after one. Britain granted independence willingly or unwillingly to its colonies all over the globe; but still, this does not mean that Britain was left alone, because some remnants of the British Empire stuck with it. These remnants are called the British Overseas Territories (BOT).

The BOT can be defined as all the territories under the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom but not part of it. There are now 14 overseas territories scattered around the world in the shape of islands. These territories can be listed as follows: (British Antarctic Territory, Falkland Islands, South Sandwich and the South Georgia Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands, Saint Helena, Saint Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, Cayman Islands, Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Montserrat, Bermuda, British Indian Ocean Territory, Pitcairn Islands and Gibraltar). Each one of these territories has its own history with Britain, but the most notorious and worth mentioning is that the issue of the Falklands and Gibraltar are the most controversial.

- **Falkland Islands**

According to the records, the Falkland Islands or ‘Islas Malvinas’ in Spanish; were discovered by the British in 1690, but one century after this date, the French made their move and established a settlement on the islands (that was in 1764). The French handed over the islands to Spain because the islands were close to Argentina which was at that time an overseas colony of the Spanish empire. This turn of events encouraged the dispute between Spain and Britain. When Argentina (besides other South American countries) got the independence from Spain in 1816 the dispute over the islands shifted towards Britain and Argentina. The tension between these two countries reached its peak in 1982. In the second half of the 20th century, Argentina crawled under the dictatorship of the military junta led at first by general ‘Jorge Rafael Videla’ from 1976 to 1981 then by general ‘Leopoldo Galtieri’ from 1981 to 1982(the dirty war).The economic crisis, low popularity and resentment against the military junta, especially during Leopoldo’s era forced him to take a rash and a reckless decision in order to keep his grasp on power. That decision was the Falkland war. On the 2nd of April, 1982,and under direct commands from General Galtieri, the Argentine Special Forces seized the islands. At first they had some resistance from the small British navy that was in charge of protecting the Falkland, but being outnumbered by the Argentinian forces led to the fall of the islands. Britain under Margaret Thatcher at that time responded by taking a firm resolution to recapture a “part

of the British Empire” and sent the royal navy to do so. The British succeeded in their mission and won the war after 74 days of intense fighting which resulted in more than a 1000 deaths from both sides. The aftermath of the Falkland war was the collapse of the military junta in Argentina in 1983.

- **Gibraltar**

Unlike the other BOT, Gibraltar is close to Britain since it is located in the Mediterranean Sea. Historically, during the Spanish war of recession from 1704 to 1714 the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I sought the English, the Dutch and the Austrians to back his younger son Charles VI to the throne of Spain. In 1713 the Treaty of Utrecht divided the Spanish empire among the European powers. This division granted Britain Gibraltar. Spain tried to recapture Gibraltar in two main occasions, the first is known as the thirteenth siege in 1727 and the second is “the great siege” which lasted 4 years (1779 – 1783) but both attempts were in vain. In the 20th century the monarchy in Spain was abolished in 1931, this led to chaos which eventually led to the rise of the dictatorship under General Francisco Franco who renewed the claim of Gibraltar rock. Some secret documents showed that during WWII, Hitler urged Franco to allow him to seize the rock of Gibraltar in order to besiege the British troops in the Mediterranean Sea and North Africa (Operation Felix), but although Franco was close to the axis powers, he insisted on staying neutral and declined the German plan. In 1969 Franco closed the borders of Spain with Gibraltar in order to disrupt it economically, since Spain’s mainland was the only border crossing with the rock. This situation continued till 1982. The people of Gibraltar played an important role in preserving their sovereignty to Britain and that was through the referendum of 1967 (99% voted for staying with Britain) and the referendum of 2002 when they refused to share sovereignty between Spain and Britain, closing the issue of Gibraltar as a BOT.

As mentioned before, addressing the issues of the Falklands and Gibraltar was necessary, but this does not mean that Britain had not received other claims of sovereignty from other countries. For example, in the British Indian Ocean

Territory the Republic of Mauritius demanded the sovereignty over “The Chagos Archipelago” from Britain. In addition to this, there is also the dispute in the British Antarctic Territory which is more complicated than the others, since there are two countries claiming the sovereignty with Britain: Argentina and Chile, besides France’s, Australia’s, New Zealand’s and Norway’s claims in the continent. Britain managed to hold its ground and still has the jurisdiction over this territory. In 1959, a treaty was signed between 12 countries, including those who had claims over the Antarctic; they agreed that Antarctica would remain a peaceful place dedicated to exploration, research and exchanging information for the benefit of humanity. The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings (ATCM) is the forum that is responsible for managing and keeping an eye on Antarctica.

1.3- Overview of the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth was founded 60 years ago and it is a remarkable organisation which has an international impact, mainly on its members. The Commonwealth includes 53 independent countries¹, almost all the ones that belonged to the British colonial empire in the past. They are gathered nowadays in the shape of a union. The reasons which made many members of the Commonwealth come under British rule at various times during the colonial period can be summarised in three words: settlement, conquest and cession. As a result of the different circumstances which influence those territories, the administration of such ones evolved in different ways.

After the independence from colonial Britain, India was the main republic among others that decided to stay within the Commonwealth in order to benefit from the advantages of the organization. In 1949, King George VI was chosen as Head of the Commonwealth according to the London Declaration. As he died, Queen Elizabeth II was qualified to take his place with the recognition of the Commonwealth leaders.

¹The official web site of “The British Monarchy” (About the Commonwealth)

<http://www.royal.gov.uk/MonarchAndCommonwealth/TheCommonwealth/TheCommonwealth.aspx>

1.3.1- Definition

The Commonwealth of Nations is known as an international organization shaped from a group of independent states and other political units that lived under the British rule. This organization includes Britain with 53 independent states; they were once colonies that belonged to Britain; so it is considered as a link to the former colonies. It also includes 25 political units represented in the counties and the regions which are under the British protection.

The members of the Commonwealth of Nations constitute about a quarter of the world's population and they also occupy nearly a quarter of the earth's surface. In addition, the members in this organization vary in terms of size and wealth i.e. in this concern; some of these states such as Australia, Britain and Canada are rich industrial countries, each people from every one of such countries is lucky to enjoy and benefit from a high standard of living while India and Pakistan in the Asian continent. Kenya and Nigeria in the African continent are also considered as samples which represent arrear countries that are still on the way of growth, attempting to increase and promote their industries with agriculture in order to develop their economies. In this regard, Bangladesh which is a member of this organization is considered as a poor country in which the percentage of the individual income decreases to a very low level.

India is considered the most populous country of the Commonwealth because the number of its inhabitants is about 1.022.021.000 people while Canada is considered as the largest country of the Commonwealth in terms of geographical area (9,970,610 km²). There are also among the Commonwealth of Nations very small countries such as Saint Kitts and Nevis in which the number of population has fallen to 41.000 people and there are two other states from the smallest countries of the world in the Pacific islands, these two states are Nauru and Tuvalu, each one of them has a special status in terms of the right to membership in the Commonwealth of Nations. Britain is still retaining influence at the level of ruling in a number of these political units at the Commonwealth. In addition, Australia and New Zealand also practice some influence on the governments of these countries.

The countries of the Commonwealth are characterized by a positive tradition; it is the fruitful cooperation between them due to their common history and there is a range of programs which concern development carried out by agencies of the Commonwealth of Nations in member states. For example, there are economic programs and technical assistance provided for the less developed countries in the group. Some agencies tend to develop the close cooperation between these countries in different sectors such as media, satellite communications, education, health and scientific research. The secretariat of the Commonwealth of Nations oversees the leadership, coordination and management of these programs.

A summit takes place from time to time where the Heads of the Commonwealth of Nations meet with each other to exchange views about international issues. In such meetings, the objectives of the common economic development and foreign affairs will be defined and identified. The leaders of the Commonwealth members attempt to coordinate and achieve the set objectives. However, the members are not obliged to implement the policies and decisions which they had reached in those meetings.

1.3.2- Historical Background

The formation of the Commonwealth of Nations states started at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At that time, the meetings were happening between the representatives of the British government and the representatives of the British colonies in what was known as the empire conferences, where all these British colonies owned local governments to manage the internal affairs of the country while Britain was managing their foreign policies and the defence affairs. Most of the British colonies moved during the first decades of the twentieth century towards independence in their foreign policies and their representatives proceeded with the announcement of their whole independence in the colonial conference which was made in 1926. All these countries were described as equal in importance and owe loyalty to Britain and to the British rule, but they are free independent states that joined the Commonwealth of Nations group, then Britain announced a law in the year 1931, which was known as the law of Westminster which recognized the independence of those colonies and made it an equal

matter. The original joint states in the Commonwealth of Nations are: Australia, Britain, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Newfoundland and South Africa.

In 1932, the Commonwealth of Nations established a system of economic exchange between them; it was called: preference to Commonwealth countries. So, Britain was importing goods from the Commonwealth of the other nations without imposing the usual taxes on them. The other states held also trade agreements between them taking into account the common interests. About 40 countries from the British colonies got their independence in the period that was between the 1947 and 1980. Most of the new independent countries participated in the Commonwealth of Nations. Newfoundland joined Canada at the same period to become one of its provinces, and Ireland and South Africa separated from the organization due to differences of opinion between them and the other joint states. Half of the states that participate in the organization became in the mid-sixties of the twentieth century from the countries of the African continent. Britain has completed its plan to terminate the agreements in the trading exchange with the member states in the year 1977; it has already begun to make this plan in 1973 when it entered as a partner in the group of European countries.

It is noticed that the Commonwealth of Nations is changing with the development of the participating countries and the establishment of strong relations with their neighbouring countries, each state according to its region. They no longer look to Britain as a leader of the group, Britain's accession to the group of European countries in 1973 means that it will not look for countries in the Commonwealth of Nations for commercial exchange. So Canada made strong economic relations with the United States of America. On the other part of the world, both of Australia and New Zealand have got strong relations and political acts in the Pacific Ocean and Southeast Asian countries and, moreover, Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore joined the group of Southeast Asian nations. The African states that participate in the organization have also established strong ties with the other states which belong to the same continent. Even the countries of the organization that are located in the region of the Caribbean Sea did so. But, despite these developments, the organization of the Commonwealth of Nations is still active and strong because

there are many links between these countries such as the English language which is widespread; there are also a lot of similar systems such as the educational system, law and the trading system. Hong Kong returned to Chinese sovereignty on the first of July 1997 after its existence under the British protection since 1842.

1.3.3- List of Commonwealth Countries

These members represent the total British colonies and the previous British regions which got their independence and kept at the same time their membership in the Commonwealth of Nations; despite the traditional close cooperation between these countries, each country has the right to draw its foreign policy according to its own interests. Then, all the independent members in the Commonwealth of Nations recognize Britain as a head of this organization, but this presidency is only symbolic which means that it does not carry any authorities or powers on the members and there are fifteen states among these countries in addition to Britain. They are kingdoms recognizing at the same time the Queen of Britain as their president while there is a small group with kings who rule and more than a half of the members of the Commonwealth organization are republics.

There are some regions which are still protected by Britain and administered by members in the Commonwealth of Nations, these regions under British protection. Some of these regions are on their way to independence with self-government while there are other regions which are so small or less inhabited; they want to stay under British protection.

Most areas which are under British protection were integrated to come under the government of the British Crown, this means that the citizens of these areas benefit from the British nationality. These regions were already called: the colonies or the colonies of the British Crown previously. The governor is considered in each one of those regions as the first responsible there once the British government approves his appointment. This governor has all the authorities in those regions. There are legislative councils in these regions in which the governor is granted very limited authorities and some of these regions became completely independent in governance, but most of them are still ruled as parts from the British lands. The

term 'under protection' is also used for other types of political units that include types called: regions under the protection of British Crown, common administration, areas under self-governance and provinces.

1.4. The Principles and Values of the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth of Nations is an organization that gathers many countries within its membership; it is based on a range of principles and values which contributed in bringing many of those countries through the attractiveness of these principles and values, they contributed also in the structure and the power of the Commonwealth as an international organization and as an association that is numerous in its members (53 member states).

The principles and values of Commonwealth are characterized by rationality and justice which is one of them by the way. They are inspired from the morals of humanity and they serve the announced aim of the Commonwealth of Nations which is clear as it appears in the name of this organization. These Values and principles represent the positive side of the Commonwealth which reflects them on the union of member states and on its great powers. In this concern, there was a declaration of Commonwealth principles in 1971 (issued at the heads of government meeting in Singapore). It starts with the following introduction:

*The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of independent sovereign states, each responsible for its own policies, consulting and co-operating in the common interests of their peoples and in the promotion of international understanding and world peace.*¹

From the introduction which is above one can extract a kind of general idea regarding these principles. That introduction says at the beginning that the Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of independent sovereign states, which means that each state is free to join the organization or not to join it and even the minor member states, are not colonized. So no country imposes something on anyone of the other members inside the organization. In other words,

¹The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles, 1971 (Issued at the Heads of Government Meeting in Singapore) PDF

there will be no more colonization and every state is self-controlled. It manages its affairs either foreign or internal by itself and there is no intervention from the other countries in this concern which is obvious in the following sentence. This one says that each responsible for its own policies. After that, the introduction shows the general condition and the mission of each state that makes it a member in this organization.

The principles of the Commonwealth of Nations include the promotion of international peace and order according to the Declaration of Principles (1971), so the member states work hand in hand with the United Nations in an attempt to reach the objectives that make the world better than it is, because they believe that peace is essential for the security and prosperity of mankind. This represents the culture and the message of the Commonwealth.

The principles include also the liberty of the individual and equality of rights for all citizens without any aspect of discrimination, the Commonwealth organization tend to realize that because the contrary has a lot of negative impacts, not only on some societies, but also on the whole world because all the human beings live on the same planet and interact with each other's in a way or another, so any mistake may threaten the common felicity.

The Commonwealth organization opposes all forms of domination and racial oppression as its member states clarify and therefore they support the independence and freedom of the occupied nations, the Commonwealth organization stands for the issues of those nations and that will serve well the common interests of the member states because they will have good relations with the new independent nations which make them able to invest in their lands.

Among them, there is also the contribution and assistance in the development of the international trade in order to make it more dynamic and to create equal opportunities for all peoples of the world and as the Commonwealth believes that international cooperation is a good way to avoid war. The organization enhances the different processes of this cooperation, because it opens the doors of tolerance and legitimacy in the transactions.

The means which help the Commonwealth organization achieve its aims that concern its principles can be summarized in 3 words or terms and they constitute its basis, “The association is based on consultation, discussion and co-operation.” The cooperation is not only exclusive for trade for instance, but it also touches other domains, mainly protection, especially for member states, because the association is considered as a political family.

Concerning the values of the Commonwealth of Nations, they do not differ from its principles; they are so similar and they make the organization precious. For a long time ago, many people around the world suffered from discrimination and were considered as inferior races. A big part of member states in the Commonwealth was among that classification, this may assist the attitude of this organization regarding those values towards other weak nations.

The values and principles of the Commonwealth were mentioned in the charter of the commonwealth and they are arranged as follows: democracy, human rights, international peace and security, tolerance, respect and understanding, freedom of expression, separation of powers, rule of law, good governance, sustainable development, protecting the environment, access to health, education, food and shelter, gender equality, importance of young people in the Commonwealth, recognition of the needs of small states, recognition of the needs of vulnerable states and the role of civil society.

These values are nice and wise, but also very important for the human prosperity because they constitute requirements for constructing a civilization, so any civilized nations must embrace these values otherwise they are not civilized. From these values come the objectives and the missions of member states of the Commonwealth organization and, in fact, they are human values considered as the result of positive thinking and historical lessons in life.

The benefits of such values make the situation of the Commonwealth project favorable and, thus, the application of them widely around the world may ensure the concept of the term Commonwealth efficiently, which means a smart success for the founders of this project which is called the Commonwealth of Nations. This success

covers all the member states as a legitimate way to take benefits from the rest of the world.

1.5- Facts about the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth of Nations is an organization that involves many facts; the subjects of these facts tackle various domains such as democracy, governance, economic and social development or they may be simply general facts on the Commonwealth. There are those which are commonly known, but nobody can assure that everything is available to discover. On the other hand, there may be secret facts that are not revealed; this can be a hypothesis. If there are secret facts, then some of them at least may show hidden purposes beyond the foundation of the Commonwealth organization which is not easy to achieve for those who attempt to find a specific truth, but through an analytical study based on careful observations which can be made by any persons who are profoundly interested in such investigation. Some keys of the matter for the least evaluation will be gotten either to support its rightness or else.

1.5.1- The Commonwealth and Canada

Historically, Canada was in the heart of the conflict between two colonizers France and Britain, a part of this country called Quebec is inhabited by people who are originated from France and they still talk French language until nowadays surrounded by the Anglophones who represent mainly the biggest percentage of the Canadian people. That event would pose somehow a problem for the Commonwealth.

In the beginning of the 18th century, the British controlled Western Canada and Nova Scotia; whereas the French had control over the eastern part of Canada. In 1759, France lost its existence in North America during the British conquests. France sided with the United States during the American Revolution; it played a major role in this revolution, since it supported the Americans financially and militarily (France did that to get its revenge from Britain). In 1783, the Treaty of Paris was signed ending the British sovereignty in America. This helped France in multiplying its existence in Canada through immigration. In 1791 the Constitutional

Act was issued in Britain. It reformed the government in Quebec province and divided it into two parts, Lower Canada “Quebec” with French speaking language, and Upper Canada “Ontario” with English speaking language. In 1812, Canada became the theatre of the war between Britain and the USA. The American forces invaded Canada assuming that Britain would use its influence there to launch major attacks on American soil. The war continued till 1814 when the Treaty of Ghent was signed. Following the American Civil War, the province of Canada feared another aggression from the USA; this led the Canadians to march towards the confederation. In 1876, Canada became the first federation in the British Empire. At that time it was divided into 4 provinces: Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Nowadays, Canada expanded to become ten provinces and three territories.

Now moving towards the 20th century when the Commonwealth was created, Canada declared its “first declaration of war” on the third Reich on 10 September 1939 during the WWII. Germany sent its U boats and submarines to operate in Canadian waters; these submarines sank many Canadian ships. Canada helped Britain by hosting the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP); it was a program to train pilots, wireless operators and flight engineers in Canadian soil from 1940 to 1945.

Canada was a founding member of the Commonwealth in 1949. And now it is still contributing in providing this organization with all the necessary aids in order to function. The Canadian contribution to the Commonwealth reached 20 million dollars annually (20.12% the Commonwealth’s second largest donor). Canada’s foreign policy is active within the Commonwealth; it has the credit of the creation of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) in 1995, which keeps an eye on the violations of the Commonwealth’s fundamental political values. In 1973, the second Commonwealth heads of government meeting (CHOGM) was held in Canada; in this meeting the issue of nuclear weapons was discussed affirming that the Commonwealth would continue its efforts to ban these weapons. In this meeting also, the official flag of the Commonwealth was designed by Arnold Smith and Pierre Trudeau who was the Canadian prime minister. Canada hosted another

meeting in 1987; the sanctions against South Africa were at the top of the discussion. Canada supported the sanctions and fought against the apartheid.

1.5.2- The Commonwealth and the United States

The United States was a former British colony and got its independence in the 18th century while the Commonwealth of Nations appeared officially in the 20th. At this time the United States started to become a great power in all domains, so there was no need for that country to join the Commonwealth organization, but it belongs to the English speaking world which is the most common between former British colonies.

The relations between the United States and the United Kingdom may influence the decision of the first whether to join the Commonwealth of Nations which is headed by the British Queen or not, but also the status of the United States in the world and the American intentions towards the Commonwealth organization. Maybe it is not easy for such international power to find itself equal with weak countries in such union.

The United States of America has a smart prospect and many targets; it works on projects at the international level. The Americans attempt to dominate the world politically, economically, militarily, scientifically and culturally. If Britain is the head of the Commonwealth, the United States is the head of the West and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or NATO which includes Great Britain itself.

So, if the Americans feel that their country will lose something or pay a price once it becomes a member in what is called the Commonwealth of Nations, they will of course refuse such suggestion of joining that organization otherwise they may accept if it takes into account their special interests and their big strategic ambitions which is not easy to be realized. If so the Commonwealth itself will perhaps belong to America. *Many Americans think the USA would have to become a monarchy if it joined the Commonwealth, but this is simply not true. India, for example, is not a monarchy but is in the Commonwealth*¹

¹Graeme Shimmin. <https://www.quora.com/Why-isnt-the-United-States-a-member-of-the-Commonwealth-of-Nations>. 26/3/2016, 23:15.

On the other hand, the United States will find itself obliged to offer help for the weak member states of the Commonwealth if once it decides to join that organization and that is what the powerful member states do from time to time committing the conventions of cooperation between the countries in the Commonwealth of Nations, this is one of the conditions that maybe are not desired by the American rulers.

The matter of recognizing the Queen of the United Kingdom as the Head of the Commonwealth is made by the Americans as an excuse to justify their choice of not joining that organization although they know that they can be easily accepted in the Commonwealth because historically speaking the Americans fought against the British monarchy to be free in a republic state. “All Commonwealth nations must recognize Queen Elizabeth II as the Head of the Commonwealth.”¹

However, there are voices and opinions that call the United States of America to join the Commonwealth of Nations, some views claim that it would be a necessity because this will greatly contribute in the development, success and strength of the Commonwealth organization and will make the United States near the other Anglophone powers which facilitates the dealing between them with other reasons.

*“It is time for the United States to join the Commonwealth. Membership in the Commonwealth would facilitate the kind of globalization that is in the American national interest, and it would serve as a hedge against the emergence of a less benign international order based on civilizational power politics. In return, United States membership would offer the Commonwealth a much-needed shot in the armin terms of resources and ideas that could transform it from a persistent underachiever into a leading model of trans-civilizational co-operation.”*²

¹Why Can't The USA Compete In The Commonwealth Games? (And Other Burning Questions), The United States “once fell under the rule of the British Empire,” too. Why isn't it part of the Commonwealth?<https://www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/news/why-cant-the-usa-compete-in-the-commonwealth-games-and-other-burning-questions/>

² Time for America to Join the Commonwealth by Sharp, Paul, ACADEMIC JOURNAL ARTICLE, *International Journal*, Article excerpt, <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-376072591/time-for-america-to-join-the-commonwealth>

1.5.3-The commonwealth and South Africa

In 1961, South Africa became a republic and withdrew its membership from the Commonwealth of Nations; to fathom the reasons of this decision, an overview of South Africa's history is necessary.

South Africa was invaded by the Europeans in the late of the 18th century. The Portuguese were the first to discover this area (Vasco Da Gama's exploration of the Cape of Good Hope in 1479). Then, the Dutch came and settled in it. At that time part of South Africa went under the name of 'the cape colony'. When the Dutch became weak, the British feared that France will fill the vacuum, so they decided to annex the cape in 1806. In 1815 the cape became officially a colony of the British Empire; this allowed Britain to relocate many people into the cape especially in 1820. The tribes in cape, mainly the Zulu were forced to gather in one colony called Natal that happened after losing the Anglo-Zulu war in 1879. The Boers, who were the descendants of the Dutch established what is known as the Boers republics, the Orange Free states and the Southern African Republic ZAR which became after the second Boer war known as "Transvaal colony". The second Boer war¹ ended in 1902, Britain emerged victorious from it and the treaty of Vereeniging was signed which granted the British Empire the authority over ZAR and Orange Free State.

The British imperial parliament legislated South Africa act in 1909, it was a decision to unify the four states (the cape colony, natal, Transvaal and Orange Free State) in one unity called the Union of South Africa which is considered as the predecessor of the modern south Africa. From its creation in 1910 to 1948, the union of South Africa became a dominion of the British crown and a member of the commonwealth of nations, making it participate beside Britain in both the first and the second world wars.

The apartheid system was practiced in South Africa from the beginning, but it reached its peak when the national party (NP) came to power in 1948. In 1960s, the apartheid system became controversial when the government suppressed forcibly the movements of anti-apartheid, massacred 69 demonstrators in Sharpeville and imprisoned the leaders of the African national congress (ANC). Two decades after

¹ The second Boer war is a war fought between Britain and the Boers republics from 1899 to 1902.

the WWII, the national party in South Africa announced that a referendum should be held in the union to transform it into a republic, 52% of the white South Africans voted for the republic, it was enough to win the referendum for the national party's leader and the prime minister 'Hendrik Verwoerd' who went to Britain to ask the permission of remaining in the commonwealth after becoming a republic. The other African nations joined by Canada and India refused South Africa to stay as a member in the commonwealth because of the apartheid, The values and principles of the commonwealth did not accept such a system that based on the segregation and racialism. In May 1961, southern Africa government withdrew from the commonwealth.

The apartheid continued in the next 30 years. In the 1970s, many organizations like the United Nations (UN) and the OPEC imposed sanctions related with arms and oil embargo on the government of South Africa, but it was not enough to end the apartheid. By 1985, the economic situation in South Africa was dire and grim, the debts raised and the stock exchange closed, the European Union (the European community at that time) and USA combined their efforts and enforced other economic sanctions. In October of the same year (1985), the commonwealth agreed to impose sanctions too, these sanctions put in execution in 1986 after a government review meeting of the members of the commonwealth. The sanctions worsened the economic situations in South Africa very badly; the white minority was shrinking whereas the majority of blacks became unemployed. In a nutshell, the people in South Africa realized that something had to change. When F.W. de Klerk won the election of 1989, he promised that South Africa will be a non-racist state, and then he unbanned the ANC and released its leaders, who were serving the life imprisonment sentence like Nelson Mandela, Klerk also start the democratization in South Africa, in 1992 he asked the white people to vote in a referendum of whether the apartheid should end or no, 68% of the white voted for the end of the apartheid. South Africa witnessed the first democratic and multiracial elections in 1994. When Nelson Mandela became the president, He asked for South Africa to rejoin the Commonwealth of Nations which happened in the same year.

1.6- European Union and the Commonwealth

In the second half of the twentieth century and after two destructive wars, Europe went to the unification; it started as an idea then developed till 1993 when the Europeans achieved their goal which was the European Union (EU). Britain accessed the European Community (which became later the EU) in January 1973. The status of Britain in the EU was questionable and it is still like that; a series of referendums took place in the UK to decide whether Britain would stay in the EU or withdraw from it like “The United Kingdom EEC referendum of 1975” when the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson adopted the “Yes Campaign” to stay in the common market. Margaret Thatcher who came into the office in 1979 was in favor of staying in the European Economic Community. She said: “If we wish to give our children maximum peace and security in a very uncertain world, our best course of action is to stay in the common market”¹.

When David Cameron became Prime Minister, he promised that he would negotiate the status of Britain in the European Union. In 2015, he was re-elected Prime Minister again. As he promised, a referendum would be held in 2017 to decide the fate of Britain in the EU. The people who are eligible to vote in this referendum are the UK’s people and Gibraltar since it is a BOT in Europe.

The Commonwealth of Nations is an ancient organization in terms of its foundation, but the European Union with its unified currency is not so, and due to the relations that exist between the countries in common concerning trade, security, scientific research and so on, the European Union decided to work with the Commonwealth of Nations as a recognized international bloc as the English speaking world. Britain found itself obliged to deal with the European Union as a new fact, especially when it appeared for the first time; however, the interests of the countries may vary and differ sometimes which leads to the movement of hidden conflicts that can be analyzed and discussed even if they stay hidden and do not emerge clearly.

¹Mrs. Thatcher speaking in the House of Commons, 8 April 1975. Yes to Europe: The Conservative Guide for the 1975 Referendum Campaign, http://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/1/1/639fb9e5-ca77-4653-8870-6cfd7f0782c6/publishable_en.pdf

It seems that Britain is the only European country that is a member in the Commonwealth, and it is of course the most important one which is not the same for other countries of Europe; such as France, because this does not belong to the English speaking world that was or still is under the British sovereignty. The attitude of Europe is not supportive in favor of the Commonwealth especially when it comes to France that was always known historically as a concurrent for Britain on five continents, so it is not easy for the French and the Germans for instance to accept being with the Commonwealth unless it does not take into account their interests, they see that the European Union is better for them because at least it recognizes their various languages against the English language and the American culture supported by the globalization which attempt to impose themselves and dominate the world step by step.

On the other hand, Europe has indeed free relations with the member states of the Commonwealth organization starting from Britain itself like any other countries of the world in the context of friendship and partnership as usual knowing that France for instance is the head of the international organization that gathers the most of the francophone nations and does not concern the English speaking world at all. The Commonwealth of Nations with its member states attempt to be attractive in order to get new followers, but the rest of the world including Europe was inspired by the idea that was behind the emergence of this organization. As a result, many superpowers like Russia created their own commonwealth, therefore they prefer of course to be leaders of organizations that serve their deep necessities and interests in a direct way than to be present in an organization which is not of their owns and yet serves indirectly the interests of one competitive superpower in the first-class even if it does not seem to be like that. The spread of English language threatens their languages and this is a very important delicate subject that prevents and makes them dealing carefully with the Commonwealth phenomenon. The European Union plays a double role; it takes benefits from the cooperation with the Commonwealth countries on a way and it represents a means of protection at the same time as a whole against the Anglophone challenge on another way because it helps its member states to impose themselves efficiently on the world stage.

1.7- Conclusion

To sum up all what has been said in this chapter, the Commonwealth, according to some historians, is merely an extension of the former British Empire. The imperial colonization era of Britain, which lasted for centuries marked enormous and big events in history that influenced the modern world. The Commonwealth was succeeded by the decolonization movements that struck the world in the first half of the twentieth century. It was founded in 1949. Actually, the term Commonwealth appeared for the first time in 1931 during the Westminster Statute, when Britain simplified the relationship with its dominions.

For Britain, the Commonwealth was a substitute and the last resort to regain its position in the world after losing the equality with the new superpowers that appeared after WWII. The emergence of the USA and the USSR did not only endanger the role of the Britain in the world, but also contributed to the fall of the British Empire, especially the USSR which worked very hard in supporting the independence movements.

Nowadays, the Commonwealth is playing a very important role in making the decisions in the world as it represents a certain power that is equal to other powers. Notably, almost all the members of the Commonwealth have the similar features of the parliament beside other common systems such as the judicial system.

The Commonwealth shares the same commitment toward the promotion of its values that surround democracy in general and it attempts to spread it around the world. Despite some obstacles that appeared in the way of these values like what happened in South Africa represented in the apartheid system (withdrawal of South Africa). The attitude of European Union toward the Commonwealth is also a part of a puzzle that overshadows Britain's future since the position of Britain in the EU is questionable.

Chapter Two

*The Commonwealth of Nations in the
World*

2.1. Introduction

After many years from its establishment, the Commonwealth found itself facing great challenges with the coming of the 21st century. In this new era, the nations around the world felt the spread of Globalization, mainly due to the development of technology which contributes practically in its growth. The leaders decided to deal with this phenomenon in a way that takes into account their interests, so the Commonwealth tends to support Globalization to go hand in hand with it. This matter includes the status of the English language which is spreading to knock the doors of the non-speaking English world; people find themselves in need to master that language as it becomes global through scientific studies, technology and culture. Thanks to what is mentioned above, the Commonwealth profits in the opportunity to empower its influence in the world. It investigates in its geopolitics and its internal institutions. In its attempt, the Commonwealth collided with another organization which came in the second class after it. This organization is the Francophone Organization that aims to conserve and protect the French language. The Commonwealth achieved good areas of success, but it has problems within it like the matters of India with Pakistan and Bangladesh then in Africa the issues of Nigeria, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. It is not hidden that the weak and poor member states might be seen as a burden for the leaders, mainly because they depend on the helps of their powerful siblings to satisfy their own peoples. This is considered as a heavy undesired fact, it can disrupt the development and the advance of their organization. On the other hand, there are issues of democracy and human rights which are essential elements in the list of the principles and the values of the Commonwealth. This organization attempts to spread them around the world and considers that from its duties, but a number of countries outside it look to the initiative suspiciously. This chapter talks finally about the membership criteria.

2.2. Commonwealth in the 21st Century

Unlike before, the world in the 21st century changed; it is moving rapidly, what was impossible before became possible today. These changes affect almost everything including, the people's way of thinking. For that reason, new governmental methods were developed in order to adjust the modern institutions to modern societies. The United Nations, for example, saw the need to reform its institutions like the Security Council in 2000. The Commonwealth, like others, found itself obliged to keep pace with the new world order. The new world order, as it seems, may refer to the establishment of one totalitarian government of the world known as the conspiracy theory, or from a political angle, it is simply defined as a major change in the world. It appeared after the end of the cold war in the 1990s.

In the 21st century, the Commonwealth continues to support the purposes of the United Nations; the cooperation between the two organizations gives birth to fruitful results for both of them. As mentioned above, the Commonwealth too was affected by the alterations of the 21st century, not only the spread of English language around the globe could be considered as one of these changes, but also the development of cooperation between the Commonwealth members and the rest of the world. In this new century, an international economic crisis appeared (the financial crisis of 2007-2008) and threatened the destiny of many societies, particularly the communities of the poor and weak countries.

Some of these countries inside the Commonwealth depend on their organization to face this crisis, but the leaders and the strong members had their own problems that prevent them from helping their siblings in the Commonwealth. There is not only the international economic crisis, but also competitions of high level with other developed countries like Japan especially in terms of technology. The powers of the Commonwealth found themselves then in an awkward situation because of the great achievements of their opponents like Japan as mentioned above. The shortage of capital due the international economic crisis is a big problem for the powers of the Commonwealth, in addition to the increase of their people's needs and the wars which ties them up from surpassing their world competitors.

2.2.1. Globalization and Commonwealth

To understand how globalization is being forced through the Commonwealth it is a must to understand what globalization itself is. The British sociologist Anthony Giddens defined globalization as, “*Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa*”¹. In the 21st century globalization integrated the world in one culture, one policy, one economy and even one languagebody; America is the role model of that integration since its culture is growing to influence the world; for some theorists, Globalization is only a mirror of Americanization.

Britain after WWII became an orbit to America; this made the British way of thinking similar to the American one, from this it is certain that Britain wants to export this way of thinking (culture, lifestyle, politics, language, etc.) to its former colonies or the Commonwealth countries, so this organization became in a way or another a tool to spread or to enforce the concepts and the perceptions of Globalization. The spoken language in most of the Commonwealth’s members is English (although it does not have an official status); this may give the impression that the people of these countries are being linked culturally with Britain since the language affects directly the culture.

The enforcement of Globalization through the Commonwealth becameapparent year after year although it seems like no one pays attention to this phenomenon. The observers covered how the Commonwealth can be used as an efficient keyof globalization ideals. The Commonwealth is full of appropriate conditions to help in the realization of any plan in favor of British interests, either on the level of culture and language or the level of economy and politics. Britain and its Anglophone allies in both inside and outside the Commonwealth have worked for many years to direct the comforts of the other members of this organization towards the plan that serves at least the spread of English language in a way that protects their own benefits among those interests.

¹Giddens, Anthony. (1991). *the Consequences of Modernity* Cambridge: Polity Press. p. 64

2.2.2. Spread of Language through the Commonwealth

The English language went so far from its original country due to many reasons; colonization could be the most important one. Thus, in most of the Commonwealth countries English is spoken as a first or second language. This status allowed English to sink deeply in the educational and administrative systems of the Commonwealth countries. The English language in many occasions, spread to the world through the Commonwealth. A better example of this spread can be given in terms of culture e.g. the English masterpieces in different domains (novels, movies, songs, play, etc.). All these works contributed in empowering the position of English. This language is considered as the nerve of the Commonwealth because it facilitates the communication between its members and it is a cause of their unification. They find a certain benefit in the actual status of English which imposes itself on the world as an international language that must be commonly used. This fact can oblige the nations that do not belong to the English speaking world as the former French colonies, for instance, to deal with the Commonwealth member states in English language, whether they like it or not.

Anglophone peoples may also take out their own varied cultural products from the local level to make them international through English, which adds another benefit for them. So English serves them in a positive way, although it is not the native language for most of those nations, like the Indians who export their cinema to the world.

Such benefits encourage the former English colonies to either support the spread of English language more and more or at least accept this fact even though it represents a language of colonization for them, but the advantage comes first. In addition, almost all former colonies of any ancient colonial force tend to conserve its own language grudgingly, because it seems to be easier for many persons, at least among their peoples to learn what they consider as their first foreign language or second native language that is already known on their territories, than learning other ones which are completely unknown for them, like Russian or Japanese language for the African nations.

2.3. Influence of Commonwealth in the World

The Commonwealth started a long time ago as an organization. It represents a big political and economic power because it includes many countries between developed and less advanced, but each one has something either resources or working-hands or science and industry. By the unification of all the Commonwealth member states, the Commonwealth would be guaranteed and it can be used as a strong weapon through smart exploitation. The united countries may take benefits from that unification. They may direct the different dealings into the interests of the Commonwealth as a whole which serves their own interests at the same time in a way or another. Therefore, the Commonwealth has an efficient influence in the world due to its power in various domains, but also the use of that power.

The Commonwealth of Nations imposes itself by the amount of its member states and the control of different geographical and strategic places around the world. They are dominated somehow by this organization in addition to the maritime and land roads used in trade. It is necessary to mention that any country outside the Commonwealth will find itself obliged to deal with at least one member state even if they had strained relationships.

Internationally, Britain is one of the five permanent countries that have the right of Veto in the Security Council. This allows it to defend the interests of the Commonwealth's countries as it is tied to this organization. Therefore, the influence of the Commonwealth can be seen from the influence of Britain itself.

As it is considered a set of united countries, the Commonwealth represents an international and important power that cannot be ignored. Even though the Commonwealth contains a certain number of weak member states, its leaders are remarkably advanced and have an excellent status with a great reputation on the world stage, mainly Britain.

2.3.1. Geopolitics of the Commonwealth

Undoubtedly, the Commonwealth takes benefits from its geography; these benefits include nearly all domains (political, economic and militarily, etc.). For example, the BOTs are located in strategic geographical positions (like Gibraltar and the Falkland). This gives Britain and through it the Commonwealth a trump card in dire situations. Some experts believe that economy is the engine of politics not the other way round, especially in the 21st century where countries are governed by big companies that have a saying in sketching the foreign policy of any country. Among the most important things that should be known about the geopolitical status of the Commonwealth is that the surrounding countries are quite influenced by the changes that happen inside the space of the Commonwealth. The countries of the Commonwealth can satisfy themselves by the interesting dealings with the surrounding states through the common matters regarding economy and culture.

According to statistics, the commonwealth represents more than 25% of global economy. In Malta meeting 2005, the CHOGM agreed on the process of commonwealth free trade to take out the economic barriers and obstacles between the members, this step considered as a push towards stronger economic political combination of allies that will steer up the geopolitical influences of the organization too.

As a matter of fact, the strategic situation of the Commonwealth as separate countries plays a precious role in its political and economic transactions because it makes the members of the organization able to control many important roads and regions around the world. For example, the geo-political position of Pakistan is crucial since it is considered a bridge between two giants: China and India. The multiplicity of the Commonwealth members with their own wealth, resources and power complement each other's interests

2.3.2. Institutions

The structure of Commonwealth is similar to most of other international organizations (like the UNESCO, NATO...etc.). The symbolic figurehead of the Commonwealth is the Queen of the United Kingdom (Elizabeth II) who has the title of the Head of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth secretariat (established in 1965) is considered as the main agency inside the organization, the secretary-general and his assistant (Commonwealth deputysecretary-general) are in the authority of the agency. The secretariat has many important duties, mainly facilitating the cooperation between the members, and it has also a role outside the Commonwealth since it is an observer in the United Nation's General Assembly. As far as the Committee or Commonwealth Membership is concerned, it has the validity to recommend and encourage other countries to join the Commonwealth. There is also in the structure of the organization what is known as the Commonwealth Chair-in-Office (CIO) which is a position in the organization appointed in Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

As mentioned beforehand, there is a network that consists of more than 80 sub-organizations, associations and institutions inside the Commonwealth. They have different purposes and objectives in many fields. The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) is one of the oldest associations inside the Commonwealth. It was established in 1913. ACU serves the purpose of promoting high education through collective work of more than 500 universities across the Commonwealth. It also helps students in their academic research by exchanging experiences through scholarships and other methods. The Commonwealth family includes also the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP) which plays a major role in developing the New Urban Planning to restructure cities around the world.

2.4. Commonwealth and the Francophone Organization

The historical rivalry between France and Britain remained even after the dissolution of these two empires during the decolonization period. The French decided to establish an equal organization to the British Commonwealth. In March 1970, the convention of the Francophone organization was signed in Niamey the capital of Niger. Nowadays, there are 57 members in this organization, mainly former French colonies.

These two organizations represent more than one hundred developing countries; this can be seen as a powerful and influential congregation that will definitely change the center of decision in the world. Of course, that will not happen unless these two organizations choose to unify and cooperate on high levels. It seems that a seed of this cooperation started to grow through the dialogues that were initiated between the Commonwealth and the Francophone in G20 (group of the twenty). The latest was in 2015 when the two secretary-generals met and shared mutual ambitions and perspectives of these two organizations.

The language and culture are both subjects of challenge between the Commonwealth and the Francophone Organization. Both France and Britain have ulterior motives to increase their domination at the level of language and culture. The two countries found themselves in a competitive situation, but it seems that English language and culture (through the American culture) are winning and, thus, Britain gains advantages in terms of linguistic and cultural dominance on the world stage.

The Francophone Organization attempts to ameliorate the status of the French language and its culture. Although English is taking the spotlights, it seems that the decision makers in the other trench (France) achieved some success, that appears mainly in the fact that French is the second international language in the Olympic games, an official language of work in the United Nations and as a language of human sciences (history and anthropology).

2.5. Problems of Commonwealth

It is plain to see that the commonwealth has its own problems that need solutions; the problems of the Commonwealth can be generalized in the issues of human rights violations like racial attitudes and the internal conflicts like civil wars inside the commonwealth countries. Addressing these two issues does not exclude the idea that there are other problems in the way of the Commonwealth. In terms of power, wealth and prestige, the Commonwealth members are not equal; yet, as a matter of foundation, it is an organization based on equality of all the members. For some observers, this equality might be questionable since Britain has the share of the lion in sketching the policy of the Commonwealth.

Concerning the conflicts, the Commonwealth member states face serious dilemmas that influence the interests and the future of the organization negatively. To have a concrete evidence of these dilemmas, civil wars, for example, had devastated countries inside the Commonwealth, leaving behind humanitarian disasters especially in Africa (Nigeria, Rhodesia, Rwanda, etc.) ; whereas, for other members the mutual hostilities and even wars shattered the trust among these nations (India vs. Pakistan). The violations of human rights form another problem that threatens the reputation of the Commonwealth. Many non-governmental organizations such as Human Rights Watch accuse some members inside the Commonwealth of breaching some rights; the notable thing is that these violations are not exclusive only to the poor or small members with a history of dictatorships, but also to the developed and democratic countries.

2.5.1. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh

The relation between India and Pakistan makes the best example of the conflicts inside the Commonwealth since both countries are members in this organization. India's partition in 1947 created a divided Pakistan, one in the west, the other in the east with India between them. For Pakistan to maintain the sovereignty over its eastern part (1000 miles away from the mainland) was difficult. In 1965 the second war between Pakistan and India erupted after that of Kashmir war in 1947.

The war was a symbol² of the cold war. The two blocs interfered in ending it in a stalemate. In 1958 Pakistan witnessed the first in a series of military coups. General Yahya Khan staged the second coup d'état in 1969 and became the president of Pakistan. He promised that a general election would be held in both parts of Pakistan. Awami League, which was an influential political party in East Pakistan won the election only in the east, whereas, the socialist Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won in West Pakistan; this created a deadlock for all parties. In March 1971, East Pakistan declared the independence from West Pakistan and changed the name of East Pakistan to Bangladesh. General Yahya Khan initiated a military operation called the 'searchlight' against the Bengali nationalist movement in Bangladesh and took over again the eastern part.

The operation soon transformed into the Bangladesh war of liberation in which the Bengalis created their own army (Mukti Bahini). Pakistan's armed forces carried a series of massacres against the civilians, and some estimated that more than three million people lost their lives. India, publically, supported the Bengali uprisings with arms and troops. Pakistan feared that India would inevitably enter the war beside the Bangladesh forces. So in December 1971 the Pakistani Air Force (PAF) launched airstrikes against the installations and radars of the Indian Air Force (IAF); this ignited the Indo-Pakistani war. Pakistan was overwhelmed and outnumbered by the Indian and Bangladesh forces. After two weeks of intensive battles, Pakistan surrendered and withdrew its forces from Bangladesh which

² A.Z Hilali. Cold war politics of superpowers in southasia PDF.

became independent in 1971 and joined the Commonwealth in 1972. The Indo-Pakistani conflict created a problem to the Commonwealth and still, in 1999 other skirmishes erupted between these two countries. The Commonwealth presence in this conflict is virtually non-existent.

2.5.2. Nigeria, Rwanda and Zimbabwe

Nigeria proclaimed its independence from the British rule in October 1960 and joined the Commonwealth in the same year. The country chose to become a federal republic. Soon after that the political unrest and instability started to root in the country which led eventually to a military coup and counter coup d'état in 1966. In the southeast of Nigeria, the Igbo people announced the secession due to ethnic and economic reasons in addition to political persecution from the north; they created a new state named Biafra in 1967. The federal government refused this announcement and attempted to recapture its sovereignty using force. This was the beginning of the brutal civil war that lasted till 1970. The military junta dictatorship continued to rule after the civil war without any interventions from the Commonwealth, but in 1995 the Nigerian regime, in a controversial event, executed 9 human rights activists including the Nigerian writer Ken Saro-Wiwa who opposed the oil industry in the Niger-delta region. Following these executions, the Commonwealth decided to suspend Nigeria from the organization and imposed an arms embargo on the country. The British Prime Minister John Major described the executions as a judicial murder and said: "I do not see how Nigeria can stay in the Commonwealth until they return to democratic government."³

Concerning Rwanda, this small central African country joined the Commonwealth in 2008 although it does not have any historical ties with British Empire. Germany was the colonizer of Rwanda at the end of 19th century, and then it became a Belgian League of Nations mandate. After a long strife the country acclaimed its independence in 1961. Rwanda is a tribal country, the Hutu forms 85% of population followed by the Tutsi 14% of population. After the independence the Hutu controlled Rwanda and started a systematic persecution

³ Britain's PM, John Major. The Guardian Newspaper 11 November 1995

against the Tutsi who took refuge in Uganda. In 1990, these refugees gathered in Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) and came back and invaded parts of Rwanda following this instability. Both sides (the Hutus and Tutsi) were responsible of a series of massacres which led to the Rwandan genocide of 1994 when more than 800.000 people lost their lives. After the genocide the power shifted toward the Tutsi in Rwanda. The RPF accused France of helping the Hutu and supplying them with arms during the genocide. From 1994 Rwanda's relations with France have been strained till now. Some observers believe that the decision of Rwanda to join the Commonwealth and to abandon teaching French language in schools is to get revenge from France.

Last but not least, Zimbabwe was known as Southern Rhodesia during the British colonial era. The case of Zimbabwe is much similar to the case of South Africa; the white colonists headed by Ian Smith issued the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain in 1965. The white minority represented in a political party called Rhodesian Front (RF) created a racial system in the country. Britain and the Commonwealth refused the UDI and imposed financial sanctions on the Rhodesian government and urged the United Nations to do so. In the following years, three forces, the Rhodesian government (led by Ian Smith), Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army fought each other in what is known as the Bush War which lasted till 1979. The British government with support of other Commonwealth countries attempted to put an end to the guerrilla war by hosting the Lancaster House Agreement which brought all the warring parties to negotiations. This agreement led to the ceasefire and scheduled an election in 1980. The patriotic Front or ZANU led by Robert Mugabe won the election and announced the official independence of a new state going by the name of Zimbabwe. In the same year Zimbabwe joined the commonwealth. As other new African independent states, the dictatorship engulfed Zimbabwe with Robert Mugabe as the de facto dictator. On October 1991, the Commonwealth of Nations in their 12th CHOGM adopted the Harare declaration which regulated some important matters like membership criteria and democracy devotion. After the presidential election in Zimbabwe in 2002, the commonwealth

accused Mugabe of violating the Harare Declaration by finding a flaw in the election. Later on, a decision was taken to suspend Zimbabwe 1 year from the Commonwealth. Outraged by this decision which was maintained for another year, Robert Mugabe in 2003 decided to quit the Commonwealth permanently.

2.5.3. Democracy and Human Rights Issues

The promotion of democracy and liberties take a high priority not only among the Commonwealth community but also outside the organization. Democracy is a key factor in establishing prosperous societies though it is concerned with the political field more than any other domain. So far, the issue of democracy in the Commonwealth coincided with the existence of non-democratic regimes inside the organization. There was an era when almost half of the members were ruled by one party system. This system was based on absolute control over governments and their affairs from one political source which makes democracy in a paradox. The Commonwealth is an observer during any regular election in member states; this task facilitates the process of supervising and recommending the appropriate measures to advocate democracy. It is worth mentioning that the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) has the right to suspend any member caught in the act of violating a democratic process in general.

The Commonwealth monitors the status of human rights through the Non-Governmental Organization named the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI). Every two years, this organization reports directly to CHOGM and discloses anything that can be seen as mistreatment or violation against humans liberties in general. Nowadays, human rights are threatened due to the wars and the increase of violence in the world as it is seen. This is why the Commonwealth attempts to make efforts in order to protect peace in the world through its institutions and all the possible means that can be used at this level such as culture.

It is so important for the Commonwealth to spread and encourage democracy around the world, because when democracy takes place in all the countries then peoples or nations feel equality. This is one of the objectives of the

Commonwealth and it is related to the human rights. In addition, the work that aims to realize peace and democracy internationally, but firstly at the level of the member may bring fruitful advantages to the organization, because its help will be needed by the United Nations and, thus, it will be recognized not only by institutions, but also by people.

2.6. Membership Criteria

In the fifteenth meeting of CHOGM which took place in Edinburgh (1997), the Heads of Government decided that in order to become a member of the Commonwealth, any country should have had a constitutional association with an existing Commonwealth member state and that it should comply with Commonwealth values, principles and priorities as set out in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991⁴. An example can be seen in the case of Rwanda which joined after studying its application CHOGM in November 2009. Membership criteria of the Commonwealth dated back to 1931 in what is known as Westminster status. The former Canadian Prime Minister Louis Stephen St. Laurent was the founder and the author of the London Declaration which is considered as the source and reference document of membership criteria.

As a matter of fact, the Commonwealth may stretch in the future to include other countries which have not necessarily a link with the former British Empire, this fact has already occurred in the case of Mozambique which joined in 1995 without having any historical background with the British Empire. Some leaks were disclosed after the Committee of Commonwealth Membership (CCM) report of 2007 (Kampala Review). These leaks suggested that new countries showed the desire to join the Commonwealth like Madagascar, Algeria and Yemen.

The membership criteria can be summarized as follows⁵:

- An applicant country should have had a historic constitutional association with one member and should accept Commonwealth norms and conventions

⁴ Commonwealth Network, <http://www.commonwealthofnations.org/commonwealth/commonwealth-membership/membership-criteria/> 17/04/2016

⁵ http://everything.explained.today/Commonwealth_of_Nations_membership_criteria/ 10/05/2016

- Democracy and democratic processes, fair elections, etc. are necessary.
- An applicant country should accept and comply with Commonwealth fundamental values, principles, etc.
- Applications should be considered on a case-by-case basis (in exceptional circumstances).

2.7. Conclusion

The status of the Commonwealth can be considered as one of the most respectable status among other international organizations. But some big problems happen between the member countries can blacken that reputation. That is what makes its supervisors including the first one (the United Kingdom of Britain) try to reorganize its structure. The Commonwealth is totally obliged to find the appropriate and the urgent solutions to satisfy the member states, that is why it might take the appropriate and the right path in attempting to enlarge its authority's circle.

.On the other hand, the leaders of the Commonwealth that aim to spread democracy and human rights around the world; as much as possible, found themselves in an inevitable showdown with the progressive powers in addition to the weak states in which a part of the latest is ruled by non-democratic regimes whereas most of them all consider the initiative of the organization as an indirect interference in their affairs under the cover of those values and principles elevated as resonant slogans, this is due to many reasons, for instance, not only to the colonial past of the United Kingdom, but also its status as an imperialist power since a long time ago until nowadays.

This challenge complicates the mission of the Commonwealth; it makes the member states in need to ameliorate the image and the reputation of the political intentions that might be behind the initiative of their organization. In other words, to prove their innocence, so they start by themselves in order to become good models of democratic countries. In fact, their membership in the Commonwealth obliges them to be committed to its values and principles at first, this act would influence

the nations of the globe which pushes them to manage against all forms of injustice and deprivation.

General Conclusion

From what has been seen and said, the Commonwealth of Nations is an organization that represents an international force demographically and geo-strategically. The United States of America though it was an important colony to the British Empire, it is not a part of the Commonwealth, unlike India which chose to be a part on its own free will.

To answer the question that has been asked on whether the Commonwealth was used as a new and indirect colonial method (what is called Neo-Colonialism through the Commonwealth). For some people who look suspiciously into the issue that the Queen of Britain is the Head of the Commonwealth, they argue that this position even if it was a symbolic one it represents the colonial ideologies and the long hidden intentions of the United Kingdom clearly. On the other hand, there are other people who believe that Britain had no control whatsoever on the Commonwealth and the member states whether that control was direct or indirect.

For those who perceive the organization as a tool of subjugation and domination imposed on the former British colonies. They construct their perspective on behalf of those who suffered from the British colonial era (the old generation) and this stance is based on emotions. The Commonwealth for them is an undesired continuation of the British Empire. Whereas; those who use realistic arguments about the issue of Neo-Colonialism. They tend to separate completely between the Commonwealth and the British Empire in order to benefit economically from the old colonizer which is still representing a major influential power nowadays.

Appendix

Commonwealth member states

Country	Date	Status
Antigua and Barbuda	1981	Realm
Australia	1931	Realm
The Bahamas	1973	Realm
Bangladesh	1972	Republic
Barbados	1966	Realm
Belize	1981	Realm
Botswana	1966	Republic
Brunei	1984	Monarchy
Cameroon	1995	Republic
Canada	1931	Realm
Cyprus	1961	Republic
Dominica	1978	Republic
Fiji	1970 (re-joined in 1997 after 10 year lapse)	Republic
Ghana	1957	Republic
Grenada	1974	Realm
Guyana	1966	Republic
India	1947	Republic
Jamaica	1962	Realm
Kenya	1963	Republic
Kiribati	1979	Republic
Lesotho	1966	Monarchy
Malawi	1964	Republic
Malaysia	1957	Monarchy
The Maldives	1982	Republic

Malta	1964	Republic
Mauritius	1968	Republic
Mozambique	1995	Republic
Namibia	1990	Republic
Nauru	1968	Republic
New Zealand	1931	Realm
Nigeria	1960	Republic
Pakistan	1947	Republic
Papua New Guinea	1975	Realm
Rwanda	2009	Republic
St. Christopher and Nevis	1983	Realm
St. Lucia	1979	Realm
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1979	Realm
Samoa	1970	Republic
Seychelles	1976	Republic
Sierra Leone	1961	Republic
Singapore	1965	Republic
Solomon Islands	1978	Realm
South Africa	1931	Republic
Sri Lanka	1948	Republic
Swaziland	1968	Monarchy
Tanzania	1961	Republic
Tonga	1970	Monarchy
Trinidad and Tobago	1962	Republic
Tuvalu	1978	Realm
United Kingdom		Realm
Uganda	1962	Republic
Vanuatu	1980	Republic
Zambia	1964	Republic

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