Recherches anglaises et nord-américaines

58 | 2024
Anti-Monarchism in the British Isles and Beyond

The Commonwealth Realms: A Thorn in the Side of the British Monarchy?

Les royaumes du Commonwealth : une épine dans le pied de la monarchie britannique ?

Virginie Roiron

Electronic version
URL: https://journals.openedition.org/ranam/1147
DOI: 10.4000/11uzh
ISSN: 3000-4411

Publisher
Presses universitaires de Strasbourg

Printed version
Date of publication: June 30, 2024
Number of pages: 113-134
ISBN: 979-10-344-0236-6
ISSN: 0557-6989

Electronic reference
Virginie Roiron, "The Commonwealth Realms: A Thorn in the Side of the British Monarchy?", *Recherches anglaises et nord-américaines* [Online], 58 | 2024, Online since 30 June 2024, connection on 08 May 2025. URL: http://journals.openedition.org/ranam/1147 ; DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/11uzh

The text only may be used under licence CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. All other elements (illustrations, imported files) are "All rights reserved", unless otherwise stated.

The Commonwealth Realms: A Thorn in the Side of the British Monarchy?

Virginie Roiron♦

The death of Queen Elizabeth II in September 2022 and the succession of King Charles III have given renewed visibility to the question of the role of the British monarch in the Commonwealth, and more generally, of the relation between the British monarchy and the Commonwealth. Indeed, it was an opportunity for some of the fifteen Commonwealth members which still recognise the British monarch as their head of state (commonly called "Commonwealth realms")[1] to voice their aspiration to change their political regime into a republican one. This also provided an opportunity to observe how confused people's perception of the Commonwealth is all over the world. Some commentators in the press equated the aspiration to become a republic with leaving the Commonwealth altogether. Many others were more nuanced and asked whether such a move, were it to become massive, could weaken the organisation and the monarchy itself.[2] Such conclusions showed the Commonwealth is little known to public opinion, particularly in respect to its relation with the British monarchy, more than seventy years after the London Declaration of 1949 which conferred a new

♦ Virginie Roiron, *Sciences Po Strasbourg*.

1 As of 2023, there are fourteen Commonwealth realms apart from the United Kingdom: eight Caribbean states (Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), three Pacific states (Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu), and three former members of the British Commonwealth (Canada, Australia and New Zealand).

2 To name but a few, ambiguous or inaccurate titles or subtitles like "Countries across the globe have a renewed interest in exiting the Commonwealth as a new monarch takes the reins" (Millar, 2022); "Commonwealth countries at risk of leaving after Queen's death" (Mccabe, 2022); "After Queen's death Commonwealth countries revive debate on monarch as head of state" (Inocencio, 2022), were commonplace in popular media following the death of the Queen, even if they were sometimes more nuanced in the core of the articles themselves or were amended afterwards. This tended to give the impression either that all Commonwealth members were monarchies under Queen Elizabeth II, or that the proclamation of a republic by a Commonwealth realm had an impact of the whole organisation.

role to the monarch and allowed republics to be accepted as full Commonwealth members.

After 1949, the British monarch had to endorse three distinct roles in the Commonwealth: King of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, King of each of the "other realms" of which he was recognised head of state,[3] and Head of the Commonwealth. If the historical construction of the role of the monarch in the Commonwealth has been extensively studied by a number of scholars, and particularly by Philip Murphy in his landmark 2013 work *Monarchy and the End of Empire: The House of Windsor, the British Government and the Post-War Commonwealth*, the question of the articulation of each of these roles, as well as their potential contradiction and their impact on the monarchy itself, has so far been little examined. The question of the succession of Queen Elizabeth II, who embodied and shaped the role of Head of the Commonwealth for seventy years, has given new resonance to this issue. As more Commonwealth realms are today questioning their relation to the British Crown, this article will lay emphasis on the role of the monarch as the Sovereign of the fifteen realms of the Commonwealth in order to understand the impact of this particular status on the monarchy itself. The object of this article is thus to put the association between the monarchy and the modern Commonwealth into historical perspective in order to understand the extent to which the British monarchy has benefited but is also suffering from the ambiguous definition of its role in the organisation.

The Origins of the Distinction between the Role of the Monarch as Head of State in the Realms and His/Her Role as Head of the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth is characterised by the fact that it was an imperial institution that evolved and transformed into an international organisation throughout the decolonisation of the Empire. The Crown as an institution was at the heart of this transition process, which might account for the British monarch's enduring central position in the Commonwealth today.

The Balfour formula of 1926 (formalised in the Statute of Westminster in 1931) enshrined equality of status among the self-governing polities of the British Empire, including Britain, as the basis of their association. It was the

3 In 1949, Commonwealth realms were Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan, Ceylon and the United Kingdom. Following the 1949 London Declaration, India was accepted as a republic, and therefore only had to recognise the King as Head of the Commonwealth, not as its head of state.

result of the Dominions' struggle[4] to reconcile the acknowledgement of their national sovereignty in a changing international system, more and more based on the sovereign nation state, with their belonging to the Empire which defined their cultural identity. Officially abandoning the project of establishing a formal, organic federation or a supranational body uniting the self-governing polities of the Empire, the Balfour formula established that "equality of status, so far as Britain and the Dominions are concerned, is thus the root principle governing our Inter-Imperial Relations" (Inter-Imperial Relations Committee, 1926: 2). Instead of defining what "Dominion status" entailed—which would have implied addressing the difficult question of independent statehood with which the existence of an Empire was hardly compatible—the Balfour formula focused on what the relations between the Dominions and Britain consisted in. Referring to "the group of self-governing communities composed of Great Britain and the Dominions," the Balfour report stated:

> They are autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. (Ibid.)

The Crown thus became the only tangible link that united this increasingly disparate gathering named "the British Commonwealth of Nations," and the last constitutional bond between the self-governing communities of the British Empire. The use of "though" in the formula showed how contradictory the constitutional aspirations of each of the members of the British Commonwealth were, in spite of the common political culture they were willing to acknowledge by sharing the British monarch as their common head of state. Recognising the British monarch as their head of state defined the political regime of each of these communities as constitutional monarchies and parliamentary democracies (the so-called Westminster system). Such insistence on an intangible link instead of a more formal, organic one was best illustrated by the attempt at defining a status for the Crown which would not infringe on the autonomy of each Dominion, and thus not imply any kind of connection between the different members of the British Commonwealth. The Balfour report clarified the relation between the Crown and the Dominions by establishing as a corollary to equality of status that the Governor-General, as the representative of the Crown in the Dominions, "is not the representative or agent of His Majesty's Government in Great Britain or of any Department of that Government" (Inter-Imperial

4 The word "Dominion" was used to refer to the original self-governing colonies of the British Empire, and first members of the British Commonwealth from 1926 on (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the Irish Free State).

Committee, 1926: 3). In other words, the Governor-General was to be considered as a domestic institution in each of the Dominions, and not as the representative of a supranational imperial government. While being the representative of the Crown, he was not the representative of the British monarch in his position as head of state of the United Kingdom.[5] The Crown, which represented the last formal constitutional tie between the various units of the self-governing Empire, was hardly defined in legal terms at all. Even the Statute of Westminster, passed by the British Parliament five years later in 1931, remained very ambiguous as to the status of the Crown when it established that the Crown was "the symbol of the free association of the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations," while still specifying that the members were "united by a common allegiance to the Crown" (Statute of Westminster, 1931: 1). By identifying the Crown as a symbol, the Statute of Westminster further entrenched the notion that allegiance to the Crown was multifaceted. It established that the British Commonwealth would never be an overarching, supranational organization, and that the monarch would not be the vehicle of any kind of organic political union between the United Kingdom and the self-governing territories of the Empire. The sharing of common institutions, built on the same model, was thus supposed to make for the absence of a supranational political structure and to create a community of views and values.

The symbolic role of the monarchy was further entrenched after the Second World War when the notion of "allegiance to the Crown," which defined the regime of Commonwealth states as constitutional monarchies, was removed to accommodate the Indian republic in the new Commonwealth. India would thus no longer owe allegiance to the Crown, but instead express "her acceptance of The King as the symbol of the free association of its independent member nations and as such the Head of the Commonwealth" (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2019: 3). The solution was carefully tailored for India, and by reminding that the basis of the other members' "membership of the Commonwealth is not hereby changed," the declaration specified that it was not supposed to become the norm: the other Commonwealth members remained constitutional monarchies under the British monarch. Like the Balfour formula, the London declaration focused on the role of the British monarchy would play in the Commonwealth, not institutionally, but symbolically. What a "common allegiance to the Crown" actually meant in 1926 was left to each member's interpretation, just as the "acceptance of the King as […] the Head of the Commonwealth" was in 1949. Solving institutional issues with the symbolism carried by the monarchy in the British Constitution

5 The question of whether the Balfour formula entailed the end of the principle of the indivisibility of the Crown fuelled much debate during the inter-war years. The result, only entrenched after WW2, was a de facto division of the Crown, each Dominion claiming the King of England as being also its own King. More on this question in McIntyre, 2009: 232-33.

had the advantage of inclusiveness, thus dispensing the tedious and impossible task of devising a legal formula which would fit every member's national interest (McIntyre, 2009: 232-33).

With all the institutional symbolism and pageantry attached to it, the British monarchy was used to help the transition of the Commonwealth from an imperial institution into an international association of equal members, mainly by leaving aside many unanswered questions. After 1949, the fact remained that the "modern Commonwealth"[6] was composed of members which had little in common except the recognition of a monarch who did not even bear the same significance for all of them. For the United Kingdom, the British monarch represented first and foremost a native institution, and an essential organ of its Constitution. For the Dominions—now called "realms" in the new 1953 royal titles—the British monarch was also the representative of the Crown which was part of their domestic institutions and constitutional procedures, but he/she was in fact represented by a Governor-General, chosen by each local government and not answerable to the British government. For the new Commonwealth republics, the British monarch was accepted as a fully external figure, in the undefined—and inconsistent—role as Head of the Commonwealth, supposed to be the symbol of their willingness to continue cooperation with the United Kingdom and the other former territories of the British Empire beyond independence. The solution that the imperial monarchy provided kept appearances intact, and though his/her role was not defined, the British monarch was confirmed as the head of a transforming imperial gathering and the unifying figure of a postcolonial "family" of nations. Attlee insisted on this point in a letter to Nehru in March 1949:

> I say the King rather than the Crown. […] The Crown is an abstract symbol connoting authority, often connected in the minds of some with an external power. But the real link is a person, the King. At the head of the Commonwealth is a family. This family does in a very real sense symbolise the family nature of the Commonwealth.
>
> (TNA CAB 21/3374, Attlee to Nehru, 20 March 1949)

Attlee's preference for the person of the monarch rather than the Crown as an institution to bind the Commonwealth together as a family has particular resonance today as the role of the monarch in the realms has faced much criticism from republican movements in the last decade. With the London Declaration providing the means to adapt the monarchy as an imperial institution to a changing world order in which the sovereignty of nation states was becoming the

6 The expression "modern Commonwealth" is used by the Commonwealth Secretariat to refer to the change entailed by the London Declaration. 1949 has been recognised as the year when the "modern Commonwealth" was created.

standard, the interest of keeping the monarch's role as head of state in the realms looked more like a colonial oddity, an ill-adapted remnant of imperial relations.

Realms as a Potential Source of Embarrassment for the Monarchy as a British Institution

Even though it was not the intention of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in 1949, dispensing with the obligation of sharing a common institution with the United Kingdom to be a Commonwealth member resulted in making the Balfour formula largely obsolete regarding Commonwealth membership. The role of the monarch as head of state in the realms has been increasingly contested since the 1970s, after more newly independent states opted for republican regimes, and the Commonwealth as an organisation itself became more institutionalised. I will now examine the extent to which having realms in the Commonwealth might prove counterproductive for the monarchy in its refashioned role as Head of a "family of nations," and to some extent, has tended to jeopardise the advantages of the 1949 decision for the monarchy. During the first two decades of the "modern Commonwealth's" existence, when it was little institutionalised,[7] the three roles of the post-imperial monarch, from his/her most domestic, constitutional function in the UK to his/her international status as Head of an international organisation, were blurred and thus allowed multiple interpretations fitting the local interests of each of the members.

By the end of the 1960s however, after the major waves of decolonisation and the normalisation of republican membership, realm status had clearly lost momentum and today, only a minority of Commonwealth members still hold this status. Besides, since 2007, new republics no longer even have to reapply for membership,[8] illustrating that the sharing of a common head of state is no longer fundamental to the link that binds the Commonwealth together as an international organisation. Over the years, having a British monarch as head of state has become more and more difficult to justify and defend in post-colonial nation states, for symbolic, more than legal or institutional, reasons.

7 It was only in 1965 that a Secretariat General was created. Until then, a special unit of the British government serviced the Commonwealth and organised the Prime ministers' meetings. Until 1971, all the Commonwealth summits were organised in London (the Lagos meeting of 1966 standing out as an exception, as a single-issue special meeting on Rhodesia) (Roiron, 2010: 34).

8 "Heads of Government also agreed that, where an existing member changes its formal constitutional status, it should not have to reapply for Commonwealth membership provided that it continues to meet all the criteria for membership" (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2007).

The Ambiguous Constitutional Role of the Monarch

Today the realms look like virtual republics "presided" by a Governor-General whose constitutional powers are defined in the local constitution. In the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, the Prime Minister is required to consult the legislature to appoint the Governor-General. In Papua New Guinea, the Governor-General is elected by the legislature and then appointed by the Monarch. In all the other realms, the choice of the Governor-General is made by the Prime Minister him/herself (Bogdanor, 1995: 276). Besides, the Governor-General acts independently not only from the United Kingdom but also from the monarch. In 1975, the Australian Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, known for his pro-republican ideas, had failed to secure supply from Parliament. As a result, the Governor-General dismissed his government and appointed the leader of the opposition, Malcolm Fraser, as an interim Prime Minister until elections were held. Whitlam protested that the Governor-General had not consulted the Queen before taking such an extreme course of action. Vernon Bogdanor argues that the Governor-General acted constitutionally as the representative of the Crown; he did not have to refer to the Queen herself for his actions (1995: 285). In this respect, the Whitlam incident illustrates the extent to which the powers of the monarch are devolved in each of the realms. The presence of the Governor-General makes it clear that the Queen or King who receives advice from the British government will not be the same person as the one who receives advice from the realms' governments, thus preventing the monarch from receiving conflicting advice from his/her government in London and from his/her governments in the realms (Bogdanor, 1995: 277). The British monarch as a person only receives advice from the British government, and not from the Prime Ministers of the realms, who advise the Governor-General instead. So when a realm opts for republican status, this does not fundamentally change its political status for a more legally "independent" one, as from a constitutional point of view, the institutions are separate. Nonetheless, though the full independence and sovereignty of the realms are not constitutionally and legally questioned, the fact that the monarch is first and foremost Queen or King of the UK raises a symbolic problem which has more to do with culture and identity than with legal matters, and which is liable to put the monarch in awkward situations.

The Whitlam incident mentioned above also illustrates the potential political considerations that were liable to motivate a Governor-General's actions. Philip Murphy, while not contesting the constitutionality of the absence of consultation of the Queen prior to the dismissal, also shows that the Governor-General breached a number of well-established constitutional conventions and that his move might have been politically motivated against a reformist Prime Minister with republican ideas (2013: 149). The way the Governor-General is appointed in the majority of the realms tends to encourage such potential political stances—a

situation which seems less likely to occur in the UK where the monarch is, by tradition and convention established throughout the history of the country, above the political fray (Bogdanor, 1995: 27). The "dignified" dimension of the monarch, one of the two pillars of the English constitution as defined by Bagehot (1873: 44),[9] is thus less obvious in the realms. This is likely to create a distortion in the balance of powers in the realms' constitutions as the Governor-General, who has the power to dissolve Parliament in case of crisis, is politically dependent on the Prime Minister who chooses him or her, and is seldom above party politics (Bogdanor, 1995: 283). While such a situation might also occur in a republic and cause a similar constitutional crisis, it would not besmirch the image of the British monarchy as it is likely to do in the realms. The concern for the image of the British monarch and the potential feedback effect of realm status used as a tool for a smooth transfer of power in newly independent states, on the monarchy itself, both as a British institution and as a Commonwealth one, has been a major factor which contributed to its obsolescence and reappraisal.

African Decolonisation and the Obsolescence of Realm Status in the Commonwealth

The decolonisation of Africa from the end of the 1950s threatened to give way to a new wave of republican constitutions, immediately following the formal process of political independence. The question whether a white King could represent an independent nation that did not define itself as primarily British was raised again at the end of the 1950s. Yet this time the problem was also envisaged by the British government from the other perspective: that the British people at home might dislike policies implemented by a Commonwealth realm's government acting in the name of their Queen. Philip Murphy shows that the Commonwealth Relations Office[10] was unwilling to encourage the newly independent African states to keep the British monarch as their head of state, as they were reluctant to associate the Queen and Crown with potential illiberal regimes (2013: 89). Keeping the monarchy as a British institution intact and unscathed was one of the elements that encouraged the British government to consider republican constitutions as more suitable options for future Commonwealth members than the "Commonwealth realm" one. Murphy also notes that ministers and officials feared that newly independent states might "use the monarchy as a stop-gap

9 More on the notion of "dignity" in the British constitution in Marshall (2021a: 202; 2021b: 207).

10 The Commonwealth Relations Office was created in 1947 to administer the UK's relations with former colonies after they became independent and members of the Commonwealth. Following the decolonisation process, the CRO was merged with the Colonial Office in 1966, and finally with the Foreign Office to create the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1968.

arrangement" (TNA DO 181/136, Sandys to Colonial Office, 14 September 1963, quoted in Murphy, 2013: 91) consisting in them becoming independent as monarchies only to change their constitution into a republican one a few months later. It was argued that this could be interpreted both as a "personal insult" to the Queen—thus destabilising her at home—and as an "anti-British" move (Murphy, 2013: 91). There was therefore some concern in government circles to protect the figure of the Queen and the institution of the monarchy at home. The fact that newly independent states had two occasions to showcase their independence and freedom from imperial ties—one celebrating the transfer of political power to a Constitutional monarchy under the Queen, and the other celebrating the end of the British monarchy and the proclamation of a republic—was likely to do more harm than good to the image of the UK abroad. So many occasions of displaying nationalist, anti-imperial feelings might also have affected the Commonwealth, overshadowing the relative success of Britain's decolonisation policy and questioning the very meaning and relevance of the organisation itself. On the other hand, in Africa, unlike in India, the republican question reflected more than just a change of head of state: what was at stake was removing an imported organisation of political life in newly independent states, which did not correspond to African traditions (Mansergh, 1982: 162).

Thus the British government—whose concern it was to protect the institution of the British monarchy—had a shared interest with the newly independent African states—which expected more from political independence than a transfer of power within a one-size-fit-all institution that defined the organisation of their political life—in rejecting realm status both as a transition tool to independence, and as a criterion for Commonwealth membership. Such an evolution stood as a complete reversal of the spirit in which the London Declaration was conceived in 1949, when the Indian case was supposed to be the exception, not the new rule.

Current Trends: Realms as the Monarchy's Guilty Colonial Conscience

Apart from the "historical" Commonwealth members (Canada, Australia, New Zealand) which were settlement colonies and whose connection to British institutions seemed more obvious, all the other Commonwealth states that remained realms for a significant time after independence figure among the Commonwealth's smallest states and, for the bulk of them, they became independent quite late in the decolonisation process (most of them in the 1970s). The reason why they chose the realm option upon independence can be explained by their own particular history within the British Empire. Regarding the Caribbean states like Jamaica or Trinidad and Tobago, their long "association with British forms of administration" (Murphy, 2013: 94), dating back to the

17th century, was enough for their nationalist leaders in the 1950s and 60s to consider that they had had reached sufficient political qualification to deserve a similar status to that of Canada or Australia (O'Brien, 2018: 961). At that time, realm status was still considered by these nations as superior to the constitutional engineering that was being carried out in newly independent African states. O'Brien underlines the specificity of Caribbean nationalism as anti-colonial but not anti-imperial, which explains why they felt closer to the "old" Dominions than to African nationalism (2018: 965). There was also a sense that keeping the British monarch as head of state would protect their institutions. John Darwin further argues that as colonies of former slave extraction, "the West Indians had no indigenous pre-colonial past to evoke, although images of Africa exercised a powerful fascination in the home of Garveyism. Language, tradition, sport and new patterns of post-war migration drew them toward Britain. Here the Crown was not a symbol of alien domination but a popular institution: the Queen remained head of state in the independent islands" (1988: 220).

Regarding the Pacific states, since independence was not the result of a pressing demand from the local populations but mainly happened upon the initiative of the United Kingdom (Rodd, 2010: 173), keeping the Queen as head of state was seen as a way of ensuring some institutional continuity and stability. In the Caribbean as in the Pacific, the new states all had in common the fact of being small and geopolitically vulnerable in the international system. In this perspective, keeping the British monarch was not only a way of protecting their political institutions at home, i.e. "an opportunity to entrench political liberalism by adopting a parliamentary system of government as the blueprint for independence" (O'Brien, 2018: 967). It was also presented as a way of involving the United Kingdom in the protection of their "fragile" sovereignty from encroachment by a more powerful neighbour, as was the case of Belize, among other examples.[11]

Realm Status as "Independence Minus"

If upon independence, becoming a realm might have had some meaning in terms of closer association with the UK, territorial integrity and sovereignty, or even institutional continuity, these considerations lost much of their relevance from the 1970s onwards when a number of events in the realms showed that being a realm was neither a guarantee of territorial integrity, nor a guarantee against regime change. The most telling example is that of Grenada where in

11 Belize (formerly British Honduras) became independent on 21 September 1981 as a Commonwealth realm and not a republic for fear that Britain would be less concerned if its territory was invaded by neighbouring Guatemala (O'Brien, 2018: 973). Belize is currently one of the Caribbean states whose Prime Minister announced that it was likely to become the next realm to transition to republican status (Laughland, 2023).

1979, the Queen shortly became the monarch of an overtly communist regime which had overthrown the former Westminster-like parliamentary regime in a coup, and which finally ended up being invaded by the United States in 1983 upon the invitation of a score of other Commonwealth states in the region.

The sense of belonging to a single community was less and less matched with political reality, as British governments themselves took some political distance from the 1970s on, mainly due to entry in the EEC, loss of economic clout and strategic reappraisal of commitments "East of Suez".[12] Another factor weakening the unity of the Commonwealth, linked to the transnational circulation of ideas, is the focus of the Commonwealth as an organisation on the racist regimes inherited from colonisation (Rhodesia and South Africa). Political upheaval among Black or First Nation communities also dented the foundations of the system.

In the oldest realms, the debate on the monarchy has focused on the notion of "national identity" (McIntyre, 2010: 190) but also on the question of political emancipation. In a speech at the House of Representatives in 1995, Paul Keating, the Labour and pro-republican Prime Minister of Australia considered that the British monarch was a "remote and inadequate" symbol of the nation:

> An Australian Head of State can embody our modern aspirations—our cultural diversity, our evolving partnerships with Asia and the Pacific, our quest for reconciliation with Aboriginal Australians, our ambition to create a society in which women have equal opportunity, equal representation and equal rights. (Keating, 1995)

Keating thus expressed the stake of becoming a republic in terms of identity and the representation of Australia as a nation. If becoming a republic is meant to reflect Australia's modernity, the corollary is that the monarchy is holding Australia back, and preventing it from moving forward on a number of issues of crucial importance to a postcolonial nation that is more and more diverse and less British. During an interview after the Queen's death, he argued that becoming a republic would make it easier for Australia to define an independent foreign policy and identity in its own geopolitical environment.

> The thing is that I believe that if we were to, in a post-Cold War world, take our place appropriately in East Asia, we needed to find our security in Asia, not from Asia, that is by trying to hold hands with great powers. Then you can hardly lift your head and say, 'By the way, our head of state is the monarch of Great Britain'.
>
> (Dodds, Curran, 2022: 16)

12 More on the UK's retreat from East of Suez in Dockrill, 2002.

Keating considered that given Australia's geographical position and interests, having the British monarch as head of state was sending the wrong message as to the independence of Australia as an actor and partner in its own geopolitical environment—particularly regarding Australia's relations with China—and tended to associate Australia with the UK's foreign policy, or to reduce it to a mere pawn in the UK's strategy in the Asia-Pacific region. He went as far as saying that "Charles III, King of Australia, is a constitutional aberration" (Ibid.: 18).

There was therefore a shift in the representation of being a constitutional monarchy under the British monarch: from a sign of political maturity, it gradually became, from the 1970s onwards, a sign of political immaturity, a system tailored for nations that were afraid of the consequences of full independence from the United Kingdom. In 2016, the then leader of New Zealand's Labour Party, Andrew Little, asked the following questions: "Do we still want to have our head of state living in London? Or do we want to do something else? Stand on our own two feet?" (Price, 2016). Thus even among the "historic" realms, the question of the monarchy has become a contentious topic, which has to do with the representation and projection of the nation's identity, domestically and internationally, and that has been expressed in terms of sovereignty, in the same way as in the Caribbean realms. Barbados's move to republican status[13] was presented in the Throne speech pronounced by Dame Sandra Mason on 15 September 2020 as Barbados taking "the next logical step toward full sovereignty," later echoed by the NACLA Report on the Americas as "Barbados breaks free" (Ramsay, 2022), as if the independence of Barbados as a realm for 55 years had been incomplete. The image of the monarchy as an imperial institution that, instead of embodying political emancipation, is rather a way of perpetrating an asymmetrical relation reminiscent of colonial subjection, was further expressed by Velma McClymont, a Jamaican-born British writer and academic who told *The Guardian*:

> My grandparents could trace generations back to slavery, but they died believing Jamaica was fully independent. Imagine, 60 years later and it's still an extension of the British empire. It's an infant colony, not standing alone. (Hall, Gentleman, 2022)

In addition to the issue of political independence, she underlines the question of the colonial legacy represented by the monarchy in terms of the perpetuation of global racial inequalities.

13 Barbados is the last realm that proclaimed a republic, in 2021.

The Monarchy as a Symbol of Colonial Legacy

In many realms, republican claims have been related to issues of racial justice. This is particularly the case in the Caribbean, where republicanism has prospered on the global popularity of the Black Lives Matter movement and the claims for reparations for slavery. Republican aspirations have also, and perhaps in a more problematic way for the monarchy as a British institution, been fuelled by the Windrush scandal which, more than a decade after the Macpherson report of 1999,[14] brought to the fore the issue of "institutional racism" in the United Kingdom. According to Guy Hewitt, a former Barbados High Commissioner to London, "the Windrush scandal and the Black Lives Matter movement have altered perceptions of the colonial 'mother country'" (2020). The reparation movement for slavery has gained tremendous momentum in the last decade in the Caribbean (Hall, Gentleman, 2022), starting with the regional organisation CARICOM issuing its 2014 ten-point plan for reparatory justice and asking for reparation for slavery to European countries. The plan holds that the development of European colonial nations occurred to the detriment of Caribbean people and that they are partly responsible for the region's underdevelopment (Guyana Chronicle, 2020). Mia Mottley, the Barbadian Prime Minister who initiated constitutional reform for Barbados to become a republic, was chairperson of the CARICOM's Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee on Reparations in 2020. In the Throne speech she wrote for the then Governor-General Sandra Mason in 2020, she mentioned that the move was motivated by the need "to fully leave our colonial past behind" (Mason, 2020).

Furthermore, according to Professor Carolyn Cooper, having the "Queen of England" [sic] as head of state "diminishes our claim for reparations. Seeking reparations from your head of state is ludicrous; the reparations imperative is organically related to fracturing the ties with the British monarchy" (White, 2021). In this context, the monarchy is seen as standing in the way of decolonial justice at the international level. The monarch cannot indeed make apologies in his/her quality of head of state of the realm asking for reparation to the United Kingdom because he/she is also the head of state of the United Kingdom and as such, can only speak on the advice of the British Prime Minister. This is a matter for international settlement between the UK and the realms concerned, that the presence of the monarch as the constitutional head of state in each of the parties hampers.

14 The Macpherson report, published in 1999, was the result of an enquiry on the investigation of a black teenager's murder by a group of white young people. "The Macpherson report found that racism was an important factor in the failure of the Metropolitan police investigation into Stephen Lawrence's murder. It concluded that the problems it found amounted to 'institutional racism' and highlighted racism at both individual and institutional level" (Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2021).

Reflecting on the failed 1999 referendum in Australia Paul Keating said:

> I think the royal family would have been so glad for the referendum to have passed. […] The French had a revolution for their Republic. The Americans had a revolution for their Republic. We could not even pinch ours off Queen Elizabeth II, who didn't want it. (Laughs) We couldn't take the title, even if the monarch was happy to give it. In fact, I wouldn't be at all be surprised if King Charles III, the King of Australia, doesn't volunteer to give it to us, to renounce the monarchy's claim on Australia. (Dodds, Curran, 2022: 17)

Keating deplored the fact that Australians did not take the opportunity to vote in favour of becoming a republic in 1999, arguing that even the monarch would be "happy" to be removed. The monarchy has long been faced with the fact that, although belonging to the Commonwealth, populations in the former Dominions felt less and less British and thus no longer recognised themselves in the monarch. As early as in 1969, during a visit in Canada, the Duke of Edinburgh told Canadians that the monarchy "exists in the interest of the people," and "if at any stage people feel that it has no further part to play, then for goodness' sake let's end the thing on amicable terms without having a row about it" (Miller, 1974: 421). The Palace itself has no qualms against realms becoming republics, as long as it is done in a smooth and uncontentious way that is not likely to damage the image of the monarchy as an institution, inside or outside the United Kingdom.

The issue for the monarchy is that the transition to a republic has to come from the population, not the monarch himself, and under many realms' constitutions, the change of regime can only be effected through a referendum. This is the case in Jamaica for example, where such a reform would need both cross-party consensus, as a two-third majority in the two houses is required, and the organisation of a referendum, making the perspective of constitutional evolution very hazardous, and even more likely to exacerbate resentment against the monarchy. Since 1970, referendums organised to abolish the monarchy in the realms have always been lost (O'Brien, 2022): this was the case in Australia in 1999, St Vincent and the Grenadines in 2009, and Tuvalu in 1986 and 2018. When he visited the Bahamas in March 2022, Prince William told his hosts that he would welcome any decision the Bahamas would take in the future regarding their constitutional status. Though this can be regarded as a way of jumping before being pushed after an overall difficult visit in Caribbean realms,[15] William's speech, following that of his father during the Barbadian celebrations in November 2021, tends to confirm Keating's claim that the royal family themselves are not necessarily keen on keeping the monarchy in the realms, not least because

15 William had been bluntly told in Jamaica: "we intend to be an independent republic" (White, 2022).

it casts a shadow on the institution's image on the international scene, and in the Commonwealth in particular. It is also bound to provide arguments to anti-monarchists in the UK itself, and thus to shatter the legitimacy of the institution at home, particularly among minorities in an increasingly multi-racial British society.

While the episode of African decolonisation contributed to represent realm status as "independence minus," the influence of transnational black consciousness movements castigated the monarchy as an imported, racist institution, by which the white King or Queen of the former imperial power reigned over black masses. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's royal tour in the Caribbean to celebrate the Queen's platinum jubilee in March 2022 happened in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement and the global campaign for the recognition of colonialism and slavery, expressed, among others, through the toppling or defacing of statues—including a statue of Queen Elizabeth II in Canada in 2021 (BBC, 2 July 2021). Pictures of William and Kate on the royal open-top Land Rover waving to crowds in Jamaica or shaking hands with children behind a wire fence exacerbated the feeling that the monarchy contributed to perpetuating colonial and racial inequalities, and had a disastrous effect on the image of the monarchy throughout the world.

Consequences on the Commonwealth

As BBC journalist James Landale concluded his analysis of Barbados's announced republican reform in 2020, "if […] the removal of the Queen as head of state is placed on a par with, say, the removal of a statue of a slave trader, then that could pose difficult questions for both the British royal family and the Commonwealth" (2020). As the King of the United Kingdom was accepted as the symbolic head and gathering figure of the "Commonwealth family" by member states in 1949, and confirmed in 2018 when it was decided that Charles would succeed his mother in this non-hereditary function, republican claims in the realms are likely to make his legitimacy and the sustainability of this position more fragile. There is some danger for the British monarch to be first and foremost identified as British, as the King of the United Kingdom and as a white person. The headship of the Commonwealth has given him a more international and inclusive dimension as the "father" of a diverse family of nations, which reverberates positively on the legitimacy of the monarchy as the head of a growingly multinational society at home. Being the head of state in the realms in an age of global decolonial reckoning thus threatens to undermine the advantages that the monarchy has been able to draw from the position of the King or Queen as Head of the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth has evolved into an international organisation of independent states, the majority of which are now republics. During her long

reign, Queen Elizabeth II deeply invested the role of Head of the Commonwealth and contributed to tie it not just to her person but to the British monarchy. The celebrations in Barbados in November 2021 showed how consensual and routinised the process of becoming a republic was in the Commonwealth, contrasting with the anti-monarchist decolonial rhetoric in which republican claims are expressed. Not only was Prince Charles invited to the celebrations (the first time the British monarch—in this case, her son as her representative—had attended such celebrations), but he was also decorated with the Order of Freedom of Barbados (Sarkari, 2021) to underline the continued good relationships between the country and the United Kingdom (Said-Moorehouse, Foster, 2021), as well as—and maybe more importantly—with the Head of the Commonwealth. Being invited to the celebrations gave the monarchy an opportunity to show that the monarch as a person was concerned about the legacy of slavery (Davies, 2021) and to some extent contributed to dissociating him/her from the criticism levelled against the Crown as an institution in the realm. As such, Barbados's transition to a republic, while entrenching the lack of legitimacy of the monarchy in the realms, rather strengthened Charles's legitimacy as future Head of the Commonwealth, by sending the population of Barbados the message that there remained some elements of continuity through Barbados's membership of the Commonwealth, then headed by the Queen. The initiatives taken by the new King since his succession in September 2022 regarding the recognition of slavery have shown that he intends to commit himself to his role as Head of the Commonwealth, and make the issue of the legacy of slavery and claims for reparation a Commonwealth issue. At the 2022 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, he directly tackled the issue of the history of the Commonwealth, related to that of his own family and of the Empire.

> It seems to me that there are lessons in this for our Commonwealth family. For while we strive together for peace, prosperity and democracy I want to acknowledge that the roots of our contemporary association run deep into the most painful period of our history. I cannot describe the depths of my personal sorrow at the suffering of so many, as I continue to deepen my own understanding of slavery's enduring impact. If we are to forge a common future that benefits all our citizens, we too must find new ways to acknowledge our past. Quite simply, this is a conversation whose time has come.
>
> (Prince Charles, 2022)

He called on member states to use the Commonwealth as a forum to tackle these issues in the Commonwealth way, i.e. dialogue and informal exchanges of views. He also announced he would support an independent inquiry into the British monarchy and the slave trade (BBC News, 2023). Such initiative might not

stop Commonwealth realms from becoming republics—and as formerly seen, it is certainly not the objective of the monarchy to deter the realms from such a move. But this might mitigate the damage that the decolonial rhetoric of republican claims in the realms might wield on the Commonwealth as an international organisation which recognises the British monarch as its symbolic Head.

Conclusion

The existence of the Commonwealth realms is more and more presented as an anomaly, half a century after the decolonisation of the Empire. It tends to put the British monarchy in an awkward situation, by exposing it to deep criticism and castigating it as the remnant of a colonial institution. The impression given by Charles's or William's recent speeches on slavery and the legacy of colonialism, and the fact that the royals themselves adopt a relatively relaxed attitude towards republican claims in the realms, sound as many attempts at dissociating the constitutional issue from the decolonial rhetoric in which republican claims are expressed. The specific position of the British monarch as the "direct" head of the state of the UK and "indirect" head of state of the realms makes it impossible for him to formally apologise without involving the British government or without its approval, which tends to further convey an image of the monarchy as a foreign institution in the realms. On the other hand, according to the constitutions of the realms, regime change is for the people or its representatives to decide, not the monarch, which is likely to embroil the monarchy as a stake in local party politics and further exacerbate rejection and criticism.

Since the 1960s and African decolonisation, and the parallel development of the role of the Queen as Head of the multiracial international organisation of the Commonwealth, republicanism in the former colonies has not been considered as a challenge for the monarchy. As surprising as it might seem, it was even encouraged during the decolonisation process, as the establishment of republics instead of realms was seen as a way of protecting the institution at home, while also making things clearer in the Commonwealth by drawing a line between the monarch's role in domestic and international affairs, and as a result strengthening the legitimacy of the British King as Head of the Commonwealth. The status of the monarch as head of state in a score of Commonwealth members tends to jeopardise the latter's position as Head of the Commonwealth by conveying an image of the monarch as the representative of an outdated institution with a responsibility in slavery, and a living testimony to continuing inequalities, and particularly racial inequality, in the realms' societies. And yet, the ill-defined position of Head of the Commonwealth, which Queen Elizabeth II shaped throughout her long reign, has become far more important for the monarchy than its position in the realms as, in the spirit of the 1949 Declaration, it has

perpetuated the monarchy's international dimension. The association of the monarchy with the legacy of colonialism, and its identification as a prominently white or British institution in the debates on regime change in the realms might undermine the position of the King as the chosen Head of the organisation, which on the contrary, tends to confer to him, as a person, the image of a consensual, inclusive and non-racist "father" of a community of nations and nationalities, not only internationally but also domestically. As a feedback effect of its ambiguous constitutional and symbolic position in the realms, the monarchy might also find itself weakened at home in the UK, particularly among minorities, where the decolonial rhetoric resonates with global, transnational movements for decolonial justice. It remains to be seen whether the new monarch will manage to navigate the current storm in the realms without jeopardising the legitimacy of a British King being Head of the Commonwealth, particularly when the question of his own succession comes.

References

Academic

- BAGEHOT, W. (1873): *The English Constitution*, (2nd edition) Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press.
- BLISS, J.M. (ed.) (1996): *Canadian History Documents*, 1763-1996, Toronto, Ryerson Press.
- BOGDANOR, V. (1995): *The Monarchy and the Constitution*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- BRECHER, M. (1974): "India's decision to remain in the Commonwealth," *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 12.1: 60-90.
- BRECHER, M. (1974): "India's decision to remain in the Commonwealth: A supplementary note," *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 12.2: 228-230.
- CANNADINE, D. (2001): *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire*, London, Penguin Books.
- DARWIN, J. (1988): *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World*, London, Basingstoke, Macmillan.
- DARWIN, J. (2009): *The Empire Project: The Rise of Fall of the British World System, 1830-1970*, Cambridge University Press.
- DOCKRILL, S. (2002): *Britain's Retreat from the East of Suez: the choice between Europe and the world*, London, Palgrave Macmillan.
- HYAM, R. (2006): *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonization, 1918-1968*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- JOHNSON, H. (1999): "The British Caribbean from Demobilization to Constitutional Decolonization," in BROWN J. & W. ROGER LOUIS (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol.4: *The Twentieth Century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 597-622.

•LLOYD, L. (1997): "Britain and the Transformation from Empire to Commonwealth," *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 86: 333-60.
•MARSHALL, C. (2021a): *Political Deference in a Democratic Age: British Politics and the Constitution from the Eighteenth Century to Brexit*, London, Palgrave Macmillan.
•MARSHALL, C. (2021b): "The English Constitution (1867) de Walter Bagehot (1826-1877): un 'miroir aux princes' ou un prince dans le miroir?," *Revue française d'histoire des idées politiques* 53: 199-224.
•MANSERGH, N. (1982): *The Commonwealth Experience*, vol. 2: *From British to Multi-Racial Commonwealth*, Basingstoke, London, Macmillan.
•MCINTYRE, D. (1991): *The Significance of the Commonwealth, 1965-90*, London, Basingstoke, Macmillan.
•MCINTYRE, D. (2009): *The Britannic Vision: Historians and the Making of the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1907-1948*, London, Palgrave Macmillan.
•MCINTYRE, D. (2010): "Commonwealth Oceania," in MAYALL J. (ed.), *The Contemporary Commonwealth: An Assessment, 1965-2009*, Abingdon Oxon, Routledge, p. 172-189.
•MILLER, J.D.B. (1974): *Survey of Commonwealth Affairs: Problems of Expansion and Attrition, 1953-1969*, London, New York, Toronto, Oxford University Press.
•MURPHY, P. (2013): *Monarchy and the End of Empire: The House of Windsor, the British Government and the Post-War Commonwealth*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
•MURPHY, P. (2021): "UK legislation and the transition to a republic in Barbados," *The Visible Crown project*, 19 October 2021, https://www.visiblecrown.com/uk-legislation-and-the-transition-to-a-republic-by-barbados (accessed 3 July 2023).
•O'BRIEN, D. (2018): "The Post-colonial Constitutional Order of the Commonwealth Caribbean: The Endurance of the Crown and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 46.5: 958-983.
•O'BRIEN, D. (2022): "Jamaica's Long and Winding Road to Becoming a Republic," *ConstitutionNet*, *International IDEA*, 30 June 2022, https://constitutionnet.org/news/jamaicas-long-and-winding-road-becoming-republic (accessed 18 August 2023).
•PIMLOTT, B. ([1996] 2001): *The Queen: Elizabeth II and the Monarchy*, London, Harper Collins.
•RUSH, A.S. (2011): *Bonds of Empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonization*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
•RODD, A. (2010): "Le désengagement britannique dans le Pacifique : aspects et conséquences," *Cahiers Charles V* 49: 161-189.
•ROIRON, V. (2010): "De Londres à Singapour : la longue marche du Commonwealth vers l'institutionnalisation," *Cahiers Charles V* 49: 31-56.

•SMITH, A., SANGER, C. (1981): *Stitches in Time: The Commonwealth in World Politics*, Don Mills, Ontario, General Publishing Co.
•SMITH, David E. (1999): *The Republican Option in Canada, Past and Present*, Toronto, London, University of Toronto Press.

Press/media

•BBC (2021): "Statues of Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II torn down in Canada," *BBC News*, 2 July 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-57693683 (accessed 18 August 2023).
•DAVIES, C. (2021): "Praise for Prince Charles after 'historic' slavery condemnation," *The Guardian*, 30 November 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/nov/30/praise-for-prince-charles-after-historic-slavery-condemnation-barbados (accessed 18 August 2023).
•DYMOND, J. (2022): "Prince William and Kate: The PR missteps that overshadowed a royal tour," *BBC News*, 25 March 2022, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60870417 (accessed 20 August 2023).
•HALL, R., GENTLEMAN, A. (2022): "'Perfect storm': Royals misjudged Caribbean tour, say critics," *The Guardian*, 25 March 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/25/william-and-kate-caribbean-tour-slavery-reparations-royals (accessed 17 July 2023).
•HEWITT, G. (2020): "Long live Barbados as a republic, soon to be free of tarnished 'global Britain'," *The Guardian*, 22 September 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/sep/22/barbados-republic-free-tarnished-global-britain-queen-windrush-scandal (accessed 18 August 2023).
•GUYANA CHRONICLE STAFF REPORTER (2020): "CARICOM calls for 'Reparations Summit' with Europe," *Guyana Chronicle*, 7 July 2020, https://guyanachronicle.com/2020/07/07/caricom-calls-for-reparations-summit-with-europe/ (accessed 18 August 2023).
•INOCENCIO, R. (2022): "After queen's death, Commonwealth countries revive debate on monarch as head of state," *CBS News*, 12 November 2022, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/commonwealth-countries-revive-debate-british-monarch-head-of-state-republic/ (accessed 15 April 2023).
•LANDALE, J. (2020): "Barbados to remove Queen Elizabeth as head of state," *BBC News*, 16 September 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-54174794 (accessed 18 August 2023).
•LAUGHLAND, O. (2023): "Belize likely to become republic, says PM as he criticises Rishi Sunak," *The Guardian*, 4 May 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/may/04/belize-likely-to-become-republic-says-pm-johnny-briceno-as-he-criticises-rishi-sunak (accessed 31 August 2023).
•MAURO, E., SHELDON, M. (2023): "Jamaica working on split with monarchy as Charles's coronation looms," *CBC News*, 4 May 2023, https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/charles-coronation-jamaica-split-1.6830598 (accessed 18 August 2023).

•MCCABE, S. (2022): "Commonwealth countries at risk of leaving after Queen's death mapped—'the Final Step!'," *The Daily Express*, 27 September 2022, https://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/1672219/commonwealth-countries-king-charles-iii-queen-elizabeth-iii-spt (accessed 7 June 2023).
•MILLAR, W. (2022): "King Charles III coronation: Which Commonwealth countries are thinking about becoming a republic," *The Edinburgh Evening News*, 14 September 2022, https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/read-this/commonwealth-which-nations-could-leave-after-king-charles-coronation-3840160 (accessed 15 April 2023).
•PRICE, R. (2016): "Andrew Little: Republic first, and then we can have a flag debate," *Stuff*, 24 March 2016, https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/78264015/andrew-little-republic-first-and-then-we-can-have-a-flag-debate (accessed 18 August 2023).
•RAMSAY, A. (2022): "Barbados Breaks Free," NACLA Report on the Americas, 54:2, pp.137-141, DOI: 10.1080/10714839.2022.2084974 (accessed 17 July 2023).
•SAID-MOORHOUSE, L., FOSTER, M. (2021): "Barbadians Celebrate the Birth of a Republic and Bid Farewell to the Queen," *CNN*, 30 November 2021, https://edition.cnn.com/2021/11/29/americas/barbados-bids-farewell-to-queen-intl-cmd/index.html (accessed 18 August 2023).
•SARKARI, K. (2021): "Prince Charles receives Barbados' highest honour during ceremony marking country's transition to a republic," *9Honey*, November 2021, https://honey.nine.com.au/royals/prince-charles-barbados-republic-ceremony-queen-elizabeth-message/84b1ba21-d960-46df-bce3-f00b57b87835 (accessed 18 August 2023).
•WHITE, N. (2021): "Jamaica opposition leader says Queen should be removed as head of state for island 'to be truly independent'," *The Independent*, 13 July 2021, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/jamaica-queen-independence-reparation-monarchy-b1881189.html (accessed 18 August 2023).
•WHITE, N. (2022): "Jamaican prime minister tells Prince William: 'We intend to be an independent republic'," *The Independent*, 23 March 2022, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/jamaica-republic-prince-william-kate-visit-b2042465.html (accessed 18 August 2023).

Primary Sources

•Commons Home Affairs Committee (2021): *The Macpherson Report, Twenty-Two Years On, Report of the Home Affairs Committee*, 30 July 2021, https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmhaff/139/13903.htm#_idTextAnchor000 (accessed 3 August 2023).
•Commonwealth Secretariat (2019): *Commonwealth Declarations*, London, Commonwealth Secretariat.
•Commonwealth Secretariat (2018): "CHOGM 2018, Leaders' Statement," 20 April 2018, https://thecommonwealth.org/news/commonwealth-heads-government-meeting-2018-leaders-statement (accessed 12 May 2023).

• Commonwealth Secretariat (2007): *Joining the Commonwealth*, November 2007, https://thecommonwealth.org/about/joining (accessed 12 May 2023).
• DODDS, S., CURRAN J. (2022): "Australia and China: a Conversation with Paul Keating," *La Trobe University*, Sydney, 12 October 2022, http://www.paulkeating.net.au/persistent/catalogue_files/products/20221012latrobekeatingcurranchinafinal.pdf (accessed 12 July 2023).
• Inter-imperial Relations Committee (1926): *Report, Proceedings and Memoranda*, ("The Balfour Report"), E.19, November 1926, https://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item-sdid-95.html (accessed 12 May 2023).
• KEATING, P. (1995): "An Australian Republic; the Way forward," *House of Representatives*, 7 June 1995, http://www.paulkeating.net.au/shop/item/an-australian-republic-the-way-forward---7-june-1995 (accessed 6 June 2023).
• MASON, S. (2020): "Speech from the Throne," 15 September 2020, https://www.barbadosparliament.com/document/show (accessed 18 August 2023).
• The Prince of Wales (2022): "HRH The Prince of Wales' Opening Speech for CHOGM 2022," 24 June 2022, https://thecommonwealth.org/news/chogm-2022-opening-ceremony-speech-prince-wales (accessed 18 August 2023).
• *The Statute of Westminster, An Act to give effect to certain resolutions passed by Imperial Conferences held in the years 1926 and 1930*, 22 Geo 5, Chapter 4, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 11 December 1931, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/22-23/4/contents, (accessed 12 May 2023).