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"Welding into a single unit this vast, varied association of races and peoples": The 1953-54 Royal Tour of the Commonwealth

Abstract

This paper explores the 1953-54 royal tour of Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh. It is divided into two sections: the historical background and the media representation of the royal tour at that time. The establishment of the British Commonwealth of Nations marked the end of the British Empire as a major colonial power. Consequently, the decolonisation process started, and the late “subordinates” left Britain in a weakened position. Besides, the world wars and the death of King George VI shook the country to its core, but the coronation of Elizabeth II and the royal tour finally brought the start of a new, modern age. The royal tour provided the opportunity to draw attention to those members of the union who did not demand independence from Britain but remained loyal to their Queen. These include Bermuda, Jamaica, Australia, Malta, and Gibraltar which stations were also mentioned in the successful Netflix-produced television series *The Crown*.

1. Introduction

The spectacular moment, the coronation of Elizabeth II took place on 2 June 1953. It was the first coronation which was televised in full and almost 30 million people watched it live at their homes. The ceremony was held in Westminster Abbey in London and Princess Elizabeth of York became Queen Elizabeth II, Head of State of the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth realms. Her reign came at a quite stormy period when the process of decolonization and decline had already started within the British Empire. The royal tour can be seen as an opportunity to strengthen the common identity within the Commonwealth of Nations in the 20th century. It was a perfect tool to show that the Commonwealth was a family and that the unity of the organisation was more important than anything else.

We can draw parallels between the intentions and effects behind the royal tour and the television series *The Crown*. Netflix released *The Crown* in November 2016, shortly after several major

events in Britain. On 18 September 2014, a referendum was held on Scottish independence which threatened the unity of Great Britain. Soon after, on 23 June 2016, the Brexit referendum took place in the United Kingdom, determining whether the country should remain a member of the European Union or leave it. The majority voted to leave the EU, initiating the process of withdrawal. After years of negotiations, the United Kingdom officially left the European Union on 31 January 2020.

After the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, the COVID-19 epidemic was another crisis for the country which appears in the study by Laura Clancy and Sara De Benedictis titled “‘I wanted to offer my sympathy ... woman to woman’: Reading *The Crown* during a conjuncture of crisis.”¹ The authors drew a parallel between the release of the fourth season of *The Crown* and the second lockdown of UK during the time of the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic was still a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in 2022, when Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her Platinum Jubilee, the 70th anniversary of her accession to the throne on 6 February. Her reign of 70 years and 214 days was the longest of any British monarch. Elizabeth II died on 8 September 2022.

In the 1950s, the decolonisation process and the reign of a new monarch brought instability and insecurity to the country. In the 20th century, the royal tour was a way of bringing the nation together and unifying them under the Commonwealth of Nations. The Queen’s subjects could experience royal presence personally and newspaper articles written about the event were indirect ways of calling attention to this phenomenon.

In the 2010s and 2020s, Brexit, the COVID-19 epidemic and Queen Elizabeth’s death were all significant events which had negative impacts on the country. In the 21st century, a royal tour of such magnitude was not possible to be arranged due to the age and health issues of the Queen, but another occasion came when there was a need for strengthening the common identity once again as it happened sixty years ago as well. *The Crown* concentrates on the reign of Queen Elizabeth II and focuses on the importance of the British monarchy which has been an important symbol of the nation and constant in British life for centuries.

In my paper, I explore the historical and media background of the royal tour. The historical background gives a general picture from the First World War to the beginning of the royal tour

¹ Laura Clancy, Sara De Benedictis, “‘I wanted to offer my sympathy ... woman to woman’: Reading *The Crown* during a conjuncture of crisis,” *Soundings*. 79 (2021): 122-133.

in which the events leading to the preparations can be observed. In the media background, I examine what kind of language and narratives were used in the newspaper articles of Britain and the Commonwealth countries, especially in Australian and Jamaican ones.

2. Historical Background and Media Representation

2.1. Historical Background

The Great War resulted in 715,000 military deaths, the permanent loss of world market share, high inflation and unemployment, and lower trade for Britain.² All of these factors played a huge role in Britain losing its title as one of the world's greatest economic powers. After the First World War, "there were increasing calls for an end to the ongoing vestiges of subordination to the Mother Country." Canada was the most determined, but New Zealand and Australia were not as willing to end their subordination. Still, the campaign continued and as a result, the British Commonwealth of Nations was established by the Balfour Declaration in 1926. It stated that the members of the British Empire would be called Dominions, and they would be "no longer subordinate to the UK Parliament but rather coordinate."³ According to the Transcript of the Balfour Declaration, The Dominions were to be:

... 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.⁴

In 1931, the Statute of Westminster was the document which laid the foundation for the relationship between the United Kingdom and the members of the Commonwealth. The statute provided that the Dominions could no longer be managed by new laws made by the British Parliament. Hence, the consent of the government of that Dominion was needed for the British Parliament to proceed.⁵

² Nicholas Crafts, "Walking wounded: The British economy in the aftermath of World War I," The Centre for Economic Policy Research, available: <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/walking-wounded-british-economy-aftermath-world-war-i>, access: March 8, 2024.

³ Peter C. Oliver, "Dominion status: History, framework and context," *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 17, 4 (October 2019): 1188.

⁴ "Transcript of the Balfour Declaration 1926 (Imperial Conference)," available: https://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/resources/transcripts/cth11_doc_1926.pdf, access: March 8, 2024.

⁵ Oliver, p.1189.

Not only the Great War but also the Second World War had an impact on the mother country. After 1945, Great Britain drifted into an identity crisis: it started to lose its position as the world's largest empire because its valuable colonies wanted to become independent. Furthermore, although the country ended up being on the winning side of the war, it left it battle-scarred and relatively impoverished.⁶ Several countries gained independence from the United Kingdom or made the first steps to become independent. Behind this, we must consider that the election of 1945 in the United Kingdom resulted in the Labour Party winning. One of the biggest challenges they needed to face was to deal with the British Empire. The time had come when all the colonies could no longer be maintained. However, there was a split within the Labour Party: some wanted to maintain Britain as a great power, while others had a different approach, advocating a more anti-colonial policy.⁷ The latter one was more popular in their circles. Their policy consisted of mainly two principles: maintaining close relations with the white Commonwealth states (Canada, New Zealand) and focusing on partial decolonisation. This form of decolonisation was needed because nationalist movements had surfaced in the Dominions to a greater extent, which made it harder and more expensive to keep up the British rule. Also, that an Empire was still in existence after the war was seen as outmoded by the allies, most importantly the United States. Financially, since Britain had been through the First and Second World Wars, losing more than one million people and the country was in ruins as a consequence of the bombing campaigns by Nazi Germany during the Battle of Britain, it had become impossible to correspond to stationing British forces in different parts of the world. They could not carry out an immediate British withdrawal fearing the loss of economic resources and markets, or the Soviet Union making moves in those territories which they had left behind.⁸

The decolonization of Asia and Africa encompassed several countries and territories, including Transjordan, British India, Myanmar, Ceylon, Mandatory Palestine, and Libya. Transjordan was the first of these to become an independent state recognized by the Treaty of London in 1946. Libya was the final territory to achieve independence before Queen Elizabeth II ascended to the throne. However, in 1947 the most significant moment happened with the partition of British India into two distinct and sovereign dominions: India and Pakistan. It had been Britain's most

⁶ Ruth P. Feingold, "Marketing the Modern Empire: Elizabeth II and the 1953-1954 World Tour." *Antipodes* 23, 2 (2009): 147.

⁷ Rhiannon Vickers, "The Attlee governments," in *The Labour Party and the World, Volume 1: The Evolution of Labour's Foreign Policy, 159-191* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 168.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

important territory in the late 19th century. Britain had been dependent on the Indian economy and the trade between the two countries had been essential for the British economy. Also, it was the British Indian army that had helped to protect the empire all around the world. So why would Britain let go of its crown jewel? Firstly, Gandhi's social efforts gave a reason for the Indians to boycott British institutions and products in a non-violent way, which was called the Swadeshi movement. Besides that, Britain had been in a difficult situation because of the effects of the war and there was the Japanese problem: they had been trying to expand their territories in a threatening way. The British colonies of Burma, Malaya and Singapore had already been invaded in 1942.⁹

By the end of the 1940s, in response to India's desire to transition to a constitutional republic while maintaining its membership in the Commonwealth, the London Declaration was issued by the 1949 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference: "The Government of India have ... declared and affirmed India's desire to continue her full membership of the Commonwealth of Nations and 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."¹⁰

1949 marks the start of a new or modern Commonwealth. It might have been only the recognition of India as a unique member, but it paved the way for "the future evolution of the Commonwealth and the constitutional arrangements adopted by its member countries as they achieved independence."¹¹

In the early 1950s, the Commonwealth suffered a great loss with the death of George VI, who reigned as the King of the United Kingdom and the Dominions of the British Commonwealth from 1936 to 1952. At the time of his death, his daughter, Princess Elizabeth was visiting Kenya on 6 February when she received news of her father's sudden death, and she had to realize that it was time for her accession as the new queen of the realm. One year later, Queen Elizabeth II was crowned in Westminster Abbey. The reign of the monarch was to be an era of hope and new beginnings. It was an event which grabbed the attention of the whole world and a perfect opportunity to point out that a new age had come, with Great Britain occupying a central place in it. It was not only a nationalistic occasion, but it also gave British

⁹ David Pierce, "Decolonization and the Collapse of the British Empire." *Inquiries Journal/Student Pulse* 1, 10, (2009), available, <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/a?id=5>, access: March 7, 2024.

¹⁰ "Transcript of the London Declaration 1949," available: <https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-01/London-Declaration%201.pdf?VersionId=SvtHltvsceppiMbSUsX.DvpI0hWMfDky>, access: March 8, 2024.

¹¹ Peter. Marshall, "The Commonwealth at 60," *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 98, 404 (2009): 536.

subjects the chance to get used to the idea of a new international association, the Commonwealth of Nations.¹²

The year 1953 held a special significance, bringing a sense of newness not just to those in Britain but also to the populations of the Dominions and the Dependent Empire. As the previous sovereigns had established and continued the tradition of royal visits, the young Queen Elizabeth III embarked on a six-month royal tour as the head of the British Commonwealth. Accompanied by her husband, Prince Philip, she travelled to various Dominions, including New Zealand, Australia, Gibraltar, Aden, Bermuda, and Malta—locations notable for their association with British overseas military stations during the Second World War.¹³

The royal visit of 1953-54 was strategically timed during a period when there remained a prevailing optimism among people regarding the survival of the Empire despite the early signs of decolonization.¹⁴ This occasion provided a perfect opportunity to reinforce the ideological ties of the empire. During the six months of the royal tour, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh had a tight schedule that consisted of long hours of traveling, making speeches, and attending public engagements in more than ten locations. The royal couple was always in such a hurry that we could call it a “public service marathon.”¹⁵ This event was meaningful for numerous reasons. Firstly, the Queen’s accession was a recent, sudden change for the people of Britain and those of the Commonwealth. It was a highly important opportunity to make her subjects get to know her, thereby she was able to strengthen her position as queen.¹⁶ In her speeches, she highlighted that the Crown was a binding force between her and the subjects: “... the Crown is a human link between all the peoples who owe allegiance to me - an allegiance of mutual love and respect, and never of compulsion.”¹⁷ This approach reflects a “winning hearts and minds” strategy aimed at appealing to the emotions and intelligence of her people, fostering loyalty and support for her reign.

Secondly, Queen Elizabeth was the first reigning monarch to visit Bermuda, Jamaica and Australia which implies that the tour was an excellent way of making the connection stronger

¹² Feingold, p. 148.

¹³ Don Kindell, “British and Other Navies in World War 2 Day-by-Day: Royal, Dominion and Indian Navy Ships, June 1940,” *Naval-History-net*, available: <https://www.naval-history.net/xDKWW2-4006-15RNOverseas-Dominion.htm>, access: March 7, 2024.

¹⁴ Klaus Dodds, David Lambert and Bridget Robison, “Loyalty and Royalty: Gibraltar, the 1953–54 Royal Tour and the Geopolitics of the Iberian Peninsula,” *Twentieth Century British History* 18, 3 (2007): 371.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 372.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ “Farewell speech of the Queen.” *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), April 2, 1954, p. 1.

between the crown and the people of the Commonwealth.¹⁸ Additionally, eight years after the end of World War II, some countries were chosen for the visits which had significantly contributed to Allied success by providing finance, material, soldiers and auxiliaries.¹⁹ It might have been a strategic selection to give some solace and acknowledgement for their efforts. Queen Elizabeth II spent almost two months in Australia which was the longest time she spent in any of the locations. Also, it was Australia where almost 40,000 soldiers had lost their lives during the Second World War.²⁰ After Australia, New Zealand was the second country where the monarch stayed for more than a month. According to Archives New Zealand, there was a total of over 11,000 deaths during the Second World War.²¹ The tour also included poignant gestures of remembrance, such as the unveiling of the Malta Memorial honouring 2,293 airmen who fought in World War II, and a visit to the Tobruk War Cemetery in Libya, where 2,272 soldiers were laid to rest. These actions served to acknowledge and pay tribute to the sacrifices made during the war, further strengthening the ties between the crown and the Commonwealth nations.²²

Table: The locations of the 1953-54 royal tour

1.	24-25 November 1953	Bermuda
2.	25-27 November 1953	Jamaica
3.	29-30 November 1953	Panama
4.	17-19 December 1953	Fiji
5.	19-20 December 1953	Tonga
6.	23 December 1953 – 30 January 1954	New Zealand
7.	3 February - 1 April 1954	Australia
8.	5 April 1954	Cocos Islands

¹⁸ Dodds, Lambert and Robison, p. 373.

¹⁹ St George's Garrison Church, "Contribution of the Commonwealth." St George's Garrison Church. "Contribution of the Commonwealth," available: <https://www.stgeorgeswoolwich.org/garden/contribution-of-the-commonwealth>, access: March 11, 2024.

²⁰ Alex Cousley, Peter Siminski, and Simon Ville, "The Causal Effects of World War II Military Service," IZA Institute of Labor Economics Discussion Paper Series. IZA Discussion Paper No. 9725. 2016, p. 6.

²¹ Archives New Zealand, "World War Two 1939-1945," available: <https://www.archives.govt.nz/research-guidance/research-guides/war-records/world-war-two>, access: March 7, 2024.

²² Commonwealth War Graves Commission, "Tobruk War Cemetery," available: <https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/find-cemeteries-memorials/cemetery-details/2020400/tobruk-war-cemetery/>, access: March 7, 2024.

9.	10-21 April 1954	Ceylon
10.	27 April 1954	Aden
11.	28-30 April 1954	Uganda
12.	3-7 May 1954	Malta
13.	10 May 1954	Gibraltar

2.2. Media representation of the 1953-54 royal tour

The royal visit of 1953-54 was notable for several reasons. It marked the first-ever worldwide voyage by a reigning British monarch and the inaugural visit of a reigning British Queen to her subjects overseas. This historic event occurred during the era of decolonization, emphasizing the significance of bolstering ties among Commonwealth nations and demonstrating the strong unity within the organization. The *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote on 1 April 1954: “Black, white, and brown races in four continents have hailed her as their common Sovereign; colonial dependencies and great self-governing nations alike have proclaimed anew their allegiance to a single Crown. To the world at large, there could be no more convincing demonstration of the reality of the political phenomenon that has come to be known as the Commonwealth of Nations.”²³ The royal tour proved to be an excellent occasion as Queen Elizabeth II had only recently been crowned, navigating the early stages of her reign as she worked to lay the foundations for the future and consolidate her position as a monarch.

The royal visit in question was depicted in the first season of the British series *The Crown* in 2016, offering insights into the historical royal tour and its 21st-century filmic representation. The timing of the royal tour coincided with a crucial moment for the Commonwealth, requiring a more unified position among its nations for survival. *The Crown* was produced in the aftermath of the UK’s EU membership referendum, Brexit negotiations, and the European Union Act. Additionally, significant subsequent events included the COVID-19 pandemic and the passing of Queen Elizabeth in 2022 shortly after celebrating her Platinum Jubilee. Both the royal tour and *The Crown* served as powerful tools for navigating crises and strengthening a shared identity.

Prior to her coronation, Princess Elizabeth dedicated her life to the service of the Commonwealth on her 21st birthday through a broadcast from a tour of South Africa in 1947,

²³ “Royal Progress,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 1, 1954, p. 2.

where she claimed: “I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.”²⁴ The princess employs the term “family,” a recurring theme in her subsequent speeches following her coronation and especially during the royal tour. As she said at the State Banquet in the Parliament House of Canberra on 16 February 1954: “Such meetings with peoples of the British Commonwealth of Nations not only give great pleasure to my husband and myself; they also illustrate more fully how close is the association between all members of the family.”²⁵ It was important to emphasize the close ties within the Commonwealth and instead of using the neutral “association” word, the emotionally charged “family” expression can have more impact on people.

The royal tour had two main features, which were reflected in the Australian and British newspapers. “The (second) impression of the Tour is the warm and inspiring demonstration of loyalty it has drawn from every country. Above all, it has been a personal triumph of the highest order for the Queen, but next it has demonstrated to the world as never before the greatness of the institution of the British monarchy.”²⁶ The first feature was the loyalty toward the royal couple and the Crown which can be observed during the royal visit.

Another important feature highlighted is the affection expressed by the citizens of the visited nations:

In a tumultuous overflow of genuine emotion the city (Melbourne) yesterday proclaimed anew its loyalty to the Crown and its deep personal affection for a well-loved monarch... It was the outpouring of a united voice expressed by massed crowds determined to show in every possible way an unbounded devotion to a Queen who has captured their hearts.²⁷

As we can see, loyalty and affection are not only attributed to the people of the Commonwealth countries, but the royal couple also possessed these attributes toward those people who were the reason behind this long journey. Queen Elizabeth II and her consort, Prince Philip made a six-month-long journey away from their children, Princess Anne and Prince Charles (then aged 3 and 5), to embark on their global tour: “There was a tear running down the Queen’s cheek as

²⁴ Queen Elizabeth II., “A speech by the Queen on her 21st Birthday, 1947,” *The Royal Family*, available: <https://www.royal.uk/21st-birthday-speech-21-april-1947>, access: March 7, 2024.

²⁵ “The Queen’s speech at State Banquet,” *The Manchester Guardian*, February 17, 1954, p. 7.

²⁶ “Abiding memories of the royal tour,” *The Daily Telegraph & Morning Post*, May 14, 1954, p. 6.

²⁷ “Hearts aglow in welcome,” *The Age*, February 25, 1954, p. 2.

she drove away from Buckingham Palace... a mother's natural sadness at being separated from her children for six months. Perhaps there is another tear as the Queen hears the beloved chatter and laughter carried to her across the world."²⁸ Leaving their young children for such a long time must have been a difficult decision for the royal couple, especially for the Queen as a mother of two children departing to meet another family, the members of the Commonwealth.

In addition to being separated from her children, Queen Elizabeth II had to face a rather hectic schedule during these months: "Only a woman superbly fit and with exceptional powers of resistance to fatigue could have achieved what the Queen has done. Not an hour's indisposition has varied her programme... here was a woman at the end of six months of constant travel, of days beginning at 8 am. and ending at midnight, of constant handshaking, speeches, stares, and the need almost without cessation to smile and wave."²⁹ Fortunately, the Queen was not alone on this journey: "Wherever she has gone throughout the world, she has lived in a searchlight. The strain on herself and on her consort is beyond all computation, and without his help might well have been excessive."³⁰ Despite all the responsibilities which were to be fulfilled, all the gazing eyes following her each day, the Queen completed the 6-month tour with the help of her husband, Prince Philip.

Due to Britain's evolving global role, the era demanded sacrifices from the royal couple. For the first time, it became apparent that the United Kingdom was no longer the predominant power.³¹ Considering British foreign policy, there was a desire for Britain to maintain a less prominent but still meaningful role. Central to Britain's repositioning was the crucial task of keeping the Commonwealth of Nations united as an economic and political entity, with Britain assuming leadership within this association.³² *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* wrote in their article about the importance of Britain at the end of the Queen's stay in Australia: "The force which binds the Commonwealth is not alone centripetal; the Crown symbolizes the link, but its strength depends as much upon our feeling of unity with Commonwealth peoples as upon their affection for the Mother Country..."³³ Thus, the 1953-54 royal tour proved to be a turning point in Britain's 20th-century history as Prime Minister Winston Churchill had stated in his Parliament speech before the start of the Queen's journey: "Her Majesty's ship, the Gothic, is more spacious and travels faster than the Golden Hind, but it may well be that the journey which

²⁸ "Excited interest in places visited by Queen and Duke." *The Advertiser*, March 18, 1954, p. 31.

²⁹ "Abiding memories," p. 6.

³⁰ "Her Majesty comes home," *The Daily Telegraph & Morning Post*, May 15, 1954, p. 6.

³¹ Vickers, p. 160.

³² *Ibid*, p. 161.

³³ "Royal farewell to Australia," *The Daily Telegraph & Morning Post*, April 1, 1954, p. 6.

the Queen is about to undertake will be no less auspicious and the reassurance she brings back no less bright than when Drake first sailed an English ship around the world.”³⁴ Winston Churchill, being the Prime Minister during the time of the royal tour from 1951 to 1955, made a parallel between the voyage of the *Gothic* and of the *Golden Hind*, highlighting the importance of this journey and being the first to note that it marked the inaugural global voyage by a British Sovereign.

Not only did the Prime Minister recognize the significance of this visit, but Queen Elizabeth II seemed to have been aware of it as well as she explained it during her Christmas Broadcast in 1953:

I set out on this journey to see as much as possible of the people and countries of the Commonwealth and Empire, to learn at first-hand something of their triumphs and difficulties and something of their hopes and fears. At the same time, I want to show that the Crown is not merely an abstract symbol of our unity but a personal and living bond between you and me.³⁵

It is important to mention that the royal tour took place in the early years of the Cold War, which started immediately after the end of World War II. It was a geopolitical struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union and their allies and satellites. In the late 1940s and 1950s, there were foreign policy concerns in the United States about the European colonies which were granted independence. It was a concern if the former European colonial powers were able to use their influence or if a Soviet-supported communist takeover presented a danger in these territories.³⁶ The decolonization process, which was taking place in the Asian and African colonies, mentioned in the first part of the research was part of this concern. In the case of Bermuda and Jamaica, the second destination of the royal tour, if we consider their geographical position, they are closer to the United States than they are to Britain. In the light of the Cold War, they were more exposed to the situation which played out between the United States and the Soviet Union. As a consequence, these two members of the Commonwealth were in need of more attention from Britain in order to consolidate their position in the Commonwealth, which was given by the royal couple who visited them first during the period of the visit: “The

³⁴ “Parliament wishes the Queen safe journey.” *The Daily Telegraph & Morning Post*, November 20, 1953, p. 11.

³⁵ Queen Elizabeth II, “Christmas Broadcast 1953,” *The Royal Family*, available: <https://www.royal.uk/christmas-broadcast-1953?fbclid=IwAR0F6PbDaydyErF7aAgKhQ9V6wfmQMja1MVxWxGujSgKqopOFDCa0Z6x9iFU>, access: March 7, 2024.

³⁶ Office of the Historian, “Decolonization of Asia and Africa, 1945–1960,” available: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/asia-and-africa>, access: March 7, 2024.

royal visit to Jamaica is expected to be an important occasion at this time because of communist efforts to create unrest in the colonies agitation by many colonials or greater independence.”³⁷ In Jamaica, at the general election held in 1955, there were two major political parties: the People’s National Party (PNP) and the Jamaica Labour Party. In 1952, the purge of the People’s National Party occurred when the radical left was removed from the party. However, there was still a powerful Left presence between 1952 and 1954 which could be observed in the unions at that time like the Sugar and Agricultural Workers Union (SAWU), which was even monitored by the U.S. government, because it was considered to be a communist threat.³⁸

Besides the danger of Soviet influence, Britain had to be on the lookout for the United States as well. During the Second World War, an agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom was signed on 2 September 1940. According to the destroyers-for-bases deal, fifty US Navy destroyers were to be given to the Royal Navy in exchange for land rights on British possessions. Both sides were to benefit from the agreement: Britain needed more destroyers to fight Germany, while the United States wanted to gain bases in the Western Atlantic to defend their shores. But most importantly, their goal was to stop Hitler. As a result of the deal, the fifty destroyers were transferred to the United Kingdom and the United States got bases in Newfoundland, the Bahamas, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Antigua, British Guiana and most importantly in the light of this research: Jamaica and Bermuda. Two of these bases, Newfoundland and Bermuda, were stated as “outright gifts as gestures of goodwill”, and the remaining bases were exchanged for the destroyers. Except for Bermuda and Newfoundland, the compromise was 99-year leases, the longest possible term for a lease of real property.³⁹ Based on the destroyers-for-bases deal, Fort Bell (later called: Kindley Field, Kindley Air Force Base, Naval Air Station Bermuda) was established in 1940 in Bermuda.⁴⁰ It operated as a flying boat base until 1965. In Jamaica, the Vernam Field (later called: Vernam Air Force Base) and a Naval Air Station on Little Goat Island were established. The airfield was closed in 1949 and the seaplane base on

³⁷ “Queen greeted at rum colony” *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, November 25, 1953, p. 2.

³⁸ The Cuban Revolution (1953-59), a Communist effort to overthrow the Government of Cuba was taking place just 150 kilometres away from Jamaica during the time of the royal tour; (see Carlene J. Edie, *NWIG: New West Indian Guide / Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, 71, 1/2 (1997): 139.)

³⁹ Jennifer, C. Rigdon Teter. “Destroyers-for-Bases: A Win-Win for Allied Maritime Superiority.” *Naval History Magazine* 35, no. 2 (April 2021), available: <https://www.usni.org/magazines/naval-history-magazine/2021/april/destroyers-bases-win-win-allied-maritime-superiority>, access: March 7, 2024.

⁴⁰ Charles Hendricks, “Building the Atlantic Bases.” *Army History* no. 26 (1993): 21-22.

Little Goat Island was abandoned by the United States also not long after the Second World War.⁴¹

As the Cold War was ongoing, the Kindley Air Force Base (1948-1970) was still in use and in the possession of the U.S. as an overseas strategic air base. The American strategy in the case of foreign policy was Containment. They aimed to prevent the spread of communism and increase stability after World War II, but they rejected the idea of a preventive war. Overseas bases were perfect tools for keeping their rival, the Soviet Union at bay.⁴²

The main aim of the tour was to show people that Queen Elizabeth was a real person and not just a representative whom they heard about on their radios or read about in newspapers. *The Sydney Morning Herald* summarized the experiences of the royal visit in Australia expressing how the Queen was seen by them: "...the Sovereign can be a warm and vital focus of loyalties, and give a vivid sense of unity to peoples of diverse racial and political background."⁴³ It was significant to highlight the fact that she was their Queen just as much as she was the Queen of the United Kingdom: "Theme which has run throughout the Tour has been the emphasis placed by each country on its personal tie with the Sovereign, the repeated reference to 'our Queen.' It has not been a visit by the Queen but one by the Queen of Fiji, the Queen of Australia, the Queen of Ceylon."⁴⁴ The Queen was a common Sovereign to all her people in the Commonwealth.

Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip departed and waved goodbye to their subjects in London on 23 November 1953.⁴⁵ Since the presence of the monarch for the British people was an integral part of their daily lives, the unprecedented, 6-month absence of their young queen must have been an occurrence which was hard to get used to. As Earl Jowitt reminded the Parliament before the royal tour began: "We in this country have become so accustomed to the presence of the Royal family in our midst that perhaps we hardly realize the intensity of feeling in other

⁴¹ Richard Browne, "History suggests US in control of Jamaican property sought by China - Goat Islands, Vernamfield foreign policy conundrum." *The Gleaner*, September 13, 2013. available: <https://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20130913/business/business5.html>, access: March 8, 2024.

⁴² Kurt Wayne Schake, "Development of SAC Overseas Bases, 1950-1957," in *Strategie Frontier: American Bomber Bases Overseas, 1950-1960* (Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 1998) 59-91. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA353633.pdf>.

⁴³ "Royal Progress," p. 2.

⁴⁴ "Abiding memories," p. 6.

⁴⁵ "The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, watched by millions on television, took off from London Airport...last night on the first stage of their 50,000-mile Commonwealth tour...The Queen's arrival at the airport was delayed because huge crowds gathered on the route from Buckingham Palace, reducing the Royal car to a crawl in Kensington. The Queen ordered that her car should travel slowly to give the people a chance to see her and the Duke before their six-months absence from the country began." "Queen begins world tour," *The Daily Telegraph & Morning Post*, Nov 24, 1953, p. 1.

lands who are longing to greet their Queen in person.”⁴⁶ While the British subjects had opportunities to see their Queen personally, those subjects living far away from Britain got this chance for the first time.

The journey began with Bermuda as the first destination, where the royal couple stayed from 24th to 25th November 1953. The historical ties between England and Bermuda trace back to 1609 when the Sea Venture, an English ship bound for Jamestown, was halted by a storm. This event led to some survivors remaining in Bermuda instead of completing their journey. By 1612, Bermuda had become an English colony, predating the establishment of the first permanent English settlements at Jamestown by five years and Plymouth by eight years.⁴⁷

Queen Elizabeth II was warmly received in Bermuda on 24th November 1953. Following a morning visit to St. George, the first permanent English settlement on the islands, her next destination was Government House in Hamilton. Here, Queen Elizabeth II responded to an address of welcome in the House of Sessions.⁴⁸ In her reply, she expressed gratitude for the loyalty of the Bermudians and conveyed her confidence that this longstanding unit of the Commonwealth would stay as a part of the association, retaining its occupied position.⁴⁹

The visit to the second location, Jamaica, was just as successful as the first.⁵⁰ The royal couple arrived on 25 November 1953, and they stayed until 27 November 1953. One of the most memorable moments of this visit happened during the departure from Port Royal, Kingston, Jamaica when a man performed a “Sir Walter Raleigh Act” in front of the Queen by throwing a

⁴⁶ “Parliament,” p. 11.

⁴⁷ Knispel, Sandra, “A colonial history: Jamestown, Plymouth and, yes, Bermuda,” available: <https://www.rochester.edu/newscenter/a-colonial-history-jamestown-plymouth-and-yes-bermuda-560312/>, access: March 7, 2024.

⁴⁸ “In his address Sir John recalled that the Queen’s father and grandfather had visited Bermuda while serving in the Royal Navy, but said that she was the first reigning sovereign to set foot in the Colony. Expressing Bermuda’s pride at being the oldest British Colony and that its Parliament was second in age only to the Mother Country’s...” “Bermuda’s welcome,” *The Manchester Guardian*, Nov 25, 1953, p. 12.

⁴⁹ “This colony has played a long part in the struggles which have built up the British Commonwealth overseas; and in recent years, in two world wars, Bermudians have proudly stepped into the position they inherit as the oldest unit of the British Commonwealth and have fought side by side with their fellows for its preservation. From these years of strife wider organisations to ensure world peace are emerging in which I am confident Bermuda will play an honourable part while retaining to the full the distinguished position she occupies in the British Commonwealth. That position will, I know, remain unshaken by the storms through which the world is passing.” Ibid.

⁵⁰ “Montego Bay on the morning of November 25, when the BOAC Stratocruiser...lightly down on the runway before the awed gaze of thousands of loyal subjects... (waiting) to welcome their smiling fairytale Queen, on her visit to Jamaica and the West Indies... A flippant newspaperman later remarked to me that one could know “something really had happened” when women stopped talking of their own accord. Apparently the greatest event that had ever taken place in the history of Jamaica was about ‘to happen’, for not a sound could be heard in the sunlit morning.” “There was a spirit of awe....” *The Daily Gleaner*, November 24, 1953, p. 6.

jacket in front of the monarch and dropping on his knees.⁵¹ For Jamaicans, this moment meant something else than for the British based on the letter from Secretary Allman Town of Woodford Park Citizens Association sent to the editor of *The Daily Gleaner*.⁵² It was a highly remarkable and sincere act in the eyes of the Jamaican people.

In *The Crown*, Australia was the next station of the royal tour introduced to the viewers. In terms of time, it was a huge jump from the visitation of Jamaica where they had spent time at the end of November 1953. The royal couple arrived on 3 February 1954 in Sydney, Australia and left the island on 1 April 1954, spending 58 days in Australia. The Australian program was quite heavy as it consisted of long hours of travelling, only a few days free from any engagement, and meeting thousands of people a day for the Queen and the Duke.⁵³ The timing of the royal visit to Australia was deliberate, coinciding with the federal elections scheduled for the end of May 1954. Robert Menzies, Australia's Prime Minister from 1949 to 1963, had travelled to London in 1952 to negotiate the planning of the royal tour. British officials initially considered postponing the tour due to the final stages of construction of the *Britannia*, the new royal yacht. However, Menzies insisted on an earlier visit to align with the elections and even offered £200,000 to use the Gothic liner instead of waiting for the completion of the *Britannia*. Despite being originally a merchant ship, the Gothic was converted to accommodate the needs of the royal passengers.

After an anxious awaiting, Sydney welcomed the Queen and Prince Philip on 3 February 1954. The capital city of the state of New South Wales was excited and quite unrestrained to catch a close glimpse of the newly arrived royals since it had been the first visit by a reigning monarch to Australian soil. Crowds broke through barriers to experience this spectacular event while

⁵¹ "...a man rushed from the crowd behind the ropes and spread his cream linen jacket on the ground in front of the Queen. Brigadier A.C. Jackson, walking behind Her Majesty, quickly grabbed the man by the left shoulder and threw him out of the Queen's path. The man, whose name was Winston, had dropped on his knees in front of the Queen in a 'Sir Walter Raleigh Act'. The Queen and the Duke both smiled at the incident and Winston was led away by a policeman." "Farewell gesture," *The Manchester Guardian*, Nov 28, 1953, p. 1.

⁵² "I remarked the very Saturday evening, when asked by some citizens of my opinion of the matter, that the young man had done it with the best intentions of loyalty, sincerity and patriotism in his own way, and has made history for Jamaica. In my opinion I think in the heart of hearts that her Majesty was pleased of the bold gesture, but of course was not in a position to make any remark then." "Letters to the editor," *The Daily Gleaner*, December 5, 1953, p. 8.

⁵³ During their 58 days in Australia the Queen and the Duke have had only five days free from engagement, and two of these were spent travelling in the Gothic. They have travelled some fifteen thousand miles-between nine thousand and ten thousand by air, more than two thousand by car, 1200 in coastal journeys in the Gothic, and eight hundred by train. During their visit the royal couple have, it is estimated, shaken hands with between three thousand and three thousand five hundred people. The Queen has made 58 speeches, attended six balls and six banquets, taken part in 186 royal processions, and opened or attended six Houses of Parliament." "Australian visit ending," *The Manchester Guardian*, April 1, 1954, p. 7.

risking their health and pushing the police to call for reinforcements.⁵⁴ Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh spent several days and overnights in Sydney during their time in New South Wales: "...it continued and became more enthusiastic after that first day when the people of Sydney took the Royal couple to their hearts, and all but fought each other for the chance to cheer and wave at their Queen and her husband."⁵⁵ While in New South Wales, the royal couple stayed from 3 February to 18 February 1954 in Sydney (See *Appendix*). Travelling between cities and towns, Sydney's Government House served as living quarters for them where they could spend overnights.

On 4 February 1954, Queen Elizabeth II became the first British sovereign to open an Australian Parliament in the Legislative Council Chamber of The Parliament of New South Wales.⁵⁶ It was not the last occasion for Her Majesty to open parliament in Australia in 1954 because she opened parliament in all the states she visited.⁵⁷ After this special in Sydney, New South Wales; the Queen attended the state banquet in Government House where she replied to the State Premier's welcome by talking about how Australia felt home to her and her husband who had also served in the British forces during the Second World War in Australia.⁵⁸ Therefore, it might come as expected that the royal couple visited numerous memorials, and repatriation hospitals and met ex-servicemen and women during their almost two-month visit. These meetings and visitations were related to not only the Second World War, but Queen Elizabeth and her husband also paid tribute to those who had made sacrifices in World War I. For instance, they showed their respect by paying a visit to ANZAC Memorial in Sydney or the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne.⁵⁹ Both memorials had been built in honour of those Australian

⁵⁴ "Mounted police backed their horses into a crowd of 75000 people who broke through crush barriers to see the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh enter a Sydney department store for a State banquet to-night. Police called reinforcements to help them get the crowds back behind the barriers and St John Ambulance men were reported to have treated 180 people who collapsed in the crush. Several people were taken to the hospital." "Barriers fail to hold cheering crowds in Sydney," *The Manchester Guardian*, February 5, 1954, p. 14.

⁵⁵ "Deep, lasting impression of royal tour." *The Advertiser*, March 18, 1954, p. 34.

⁵⁶ Parliament of New South Wales, "Royal tour of Australia, 1954," available: <https://education.parliament.nsw.gov.au/history-article/royal-tour-of-australia-1954/>, access: April 27, 2024.

⁵⁷ "The Queen in her Sovereign power as head of the State, has opened Parliament in every State she has visited. Here she has appeared in her regal majesty, a resplendent figure in the midst of traditional ceremony.... These ceremonies alone have made history in Australia, lending a deeper significance to our Parliamentary system and its relations with the Crown itself." "Deep, lasting impression," p. 34.

⁵⁸ "I have felt very much at home and among my own people from the first moment that I stepped upon Australian soil. And as you know my husband is no stranger to this country: he was here in the war and has great fondness and enthusiasm for Australia and Australians." "The Queen attends State Banquet," *The Manchester Guardian*, February 5, 1954, p. 14.

⁵⁹ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, "1954 Royal Visit," available: <https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/protocol-and-international-visits/royal-visits/1954-royal-visit>, access: April 27, 2024.

men and women who had served in the First World War, but later, they functioned as memorials for every Australian who served in any war.

After the state of New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory was the next in the line of destinations. I would like to highlight one specific occurrence from the days spent in Canberra which was the unveiling of the American War Memorial by Queen Elizabeth II. These lines can be read on the surface of the memorial: “In Grateful Remembrance of the vital help given by the United States of America during the War in the Pacific 1941-45.”⁶⁰ After unveiling the memorial, Queen Elizabeth II talked about the relationship between the British and American people, and the “timely and generous aid which flowed from the United States when the battles in the Pacific raged close to the shores.”⁶¹ American troops had already started to arrive at the end of 1941. These troops were stationed in major cities for training or preparing for the Pacific front. A few months later, a supreme commander, General Douglas MacArthur, originally from the United States arrived in Australia from the Philippines in March 1942. After the loss of the Philippines to the Japanese in May 1942, Australia’s security became vital for the United States because the island provided a base which they could use for fighting the Pacific war.⁶² In 1942, Americans set up seven numbered Base Sections of the United States Armed Forces in Australia (USAFIA). The locations of these bases were in Darwin, Townsville, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Sydney.⁶³ For Australia, the United States provided strategic protection but also weapons and American soldiers to help them fight the Japanese. Even after it became obvious that there was no danger of a Japanese invasion anymore, Australia had to take into consideration the advantages of continuing military operations with the US. Thus, the alliance between Australia and the United States was preserved.⁶⁴ This connection remains significantly important to Australia even today.

The second visited state was Tasmania, where the royals stayed from 20 February to 23 February 1954. (See *Appendix*) We can observe the continuing pattern of honouring the veterans and deceased soldiers who served in the First and Second World Wars. On 20 February, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh paid a visit to the patients at Repatriation General Hospital

⁶⁰ “Stars and stripes for royal occasion to-day,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, February 16, 1954, p. 2.

⁶¹ “Australia a ‘promised land’ to British immigrants,” *The Manchester Guardian*, February 17, 1954, p. 7.

⁶² Anzac Portal, “Yanks down under: ‘Over-sexed, over-paid and over here’,” available: <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/world-war-ii-1939-1945/resources/all-australian-homefront-1939-1945/emergency-home-defence/yanks-down-under-over-sexed-over-paid>, access: April 27, 2024.

⁶³ Peter Dunn, “American base sections in Australia during WW2.” *Australia @ war*, available: <https://www.ozatwar.com/ozatwar/basesection.htm>, access: March 7, 2024.

⁶⁴ Anzac Portal.

in Hobart where they were able to spend some valuable time speaking to the veterans of the Second World War.⁶⁵ Directly on the next day, 21 February, the royal couple arrived at the Hobart Cenotaph where Queen Elizabeth performed a wreath-laying and tree-planting ceremony in memory of Tasmanian sacrifices.⁶⁶ Four days were intended for the tour of Tasmania, and two days out of these were planned to integrate the visitation of veterans and memorials as well.

The next state was Victoria, where most cities and towns were visited during the royal tour of Australia (See *Appendix*). The welcome of the capital city, Melbourne, was completely different from the reception in Sydney.⁶⁷ While Sydney had been out of control being the first city ever visited by a reigning British monarch, Melbourne was more controlled and in order.

After Victoria, the fourth visited state was Queensland from March 9 to March 18, 1954 (See *Appendix*). In Queensland, there was a little detour to Broken Hill, which is a city in the far west region of outback New South Wales. One of the most significant moments arrived when the Queen visited the Flying Doctor's broadcasting office there, where she was able to contact those subjects of hers who couldn't see her in person because of their habitation in the outback regions.⁶⁸ John Flynn, "Flynn of the Inland" was the mastermind behind the Flying Doctor Service. This service provided aerial medical care to inland residents and assistance in emergencies. In addition, the Flying Doctor Service opened the way for the establishment of the School of the Air in 1951 which meant that children in remote areas were able to interact

⁶⁵ Patients in the Repatriation General Hospital late this afternoon were elatedly exchanging snippets of conversation they had had with the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. During a 20-minute tour of the hospital the Royal couple had paused at most beds, and at some they had stopped for more than a minute to talk to patients... The Queen and the Duke asked most patients how they were." "Patients at repatriation hospital elated by royal visit," *The Mercury*, February 20, 1954, p. 46.

⁶⁶ "One of the Queen's first acts when she arrives at the Hobart Cenotaph... tomorrow will be to place a wreath at the base of the memorial in tribute to Tasmanian sacrifice in war. Thousands of be-ribboned ex-servicemen and women from all parts of the State, and the windows and children of men who gave their lives in the nation's service will stand silent in their parade ranks as the Queen, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, himself a war veteran, walks from her car to the base of the Cenotaph and pays a Royal tribute." "Queen will pay royal tribute to Tasmanian sacrifice," *The Mercury*, February 20, 1954, p. 42.

⁶⁷ "And the people of Melbourne! They are the same. They gave the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh the handsomest of welcomes as they drove through the city in an open car, but there was never any suggestion of control being lost... The crowds were almost falling over backwards to preserve the best of goon order. It was as if they were saying: 'This will show that harum-scarum lot in Sydney'." "City's greeting was different," *The Age*, February 25, 1954, p. 2.

⁶⁸ "The Queen yesterday met the widow of "Flynn of the Inland" and Her Majesty paid a tribute to the memory of the great Australian. Her Majesty sat in the Flying Doctor's broadcasting office and listened to a flying doctor transceiver network broadcast of welcome on behalf of the outback families... The Queen in her broadcast to 1000 outback families, linked by the flying doctor network, said she had heard of the fortitude, courage, humour, and friendliness of the outback people..." "Queen meets hero's widow," *The Courier-Mail*, March 19, 1954., p. 10.

with other children and their teachers from that moment on.⁶⁹ The broadcast of the Queen to these families proves that outback Australian residents were as important to the royal family as those who lived in Sydney, Melbourne, or Brisbane.

From Victoria, the journey continued in South Australia where physical signs of fatigue were observed on Queen Elizabeth II: “The Queen looked pale and tired on her arrival to-day at Adelaide after a 1000-mile flight from Brisbane, by way of Broken Hill, to start the royal tour of South Australia.”⁷⁰ It should be emphasized that the Queen and Prince Philip had started this royal tour almost four months prior, taking part in several engagements and travelling extensively, which undoubtedly posed health challenges for them. However, there were still Australians in South and Western Australia who had not had the chance to see their Queen. Just before arriving in Adelaide on 18 March, the Queen messaged the outback families from a distance in Broken Hill via the Flying Doctor’s broadcasting office, but outback people even came to Adelaide from afar personally to greet their Queen.⁷¹ This underlines the point that Australians were not satisfied only with a message from their Queen, they wanted to see her with their own eyes.

The last visited state of Australia by Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh was Western Australia. However, the pandemic of infantile paralysis has been present in Australia since the 1940s. In 1953, the number of notifications of the disease had dropped, especially in South Australia, which made it possible for the royal couple to visit. But the number of notifications reached their peak in the middle of March on the continent, right before the visitation of Western Australia.⁷² As a result of the pandemic, there were discussions about the complete cancellation of the Western Australian tour or possible drastic cuts in the program.⁷³ The outcome of these discussions was announced by Prime Minister, Sir Robert Gordon Menzies. It was stated that

⁶⁹ Royal Flying Doctor Service, “John Flynn Biography,” available: <https://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/about-the-rfds/history/john-flynn-bio/>, access: April 27, 2024.

⁷⁰ “South Australian tour begins.” *The Manchester Guardian*, March 19, 1954, p. 9.

⁷¹ “Hundreds of thousands of people from the outback-among them aborigines who have travelled more than a thousand miles from Central Australia-had come to Adelaide to greet the royal couple.” “South Australian,” p. 9.

⁷² M. J. Freyche and A. M. Payne, “Poliomyelitis in 1954,” *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 15. 1-2 (1956): 82-83, available: <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/265661/PMC2538162.pdf?sequence=1>, access: April 27, 2024.

⁷³ “Government and Royal Household officials here discussed into the night possible drastic cuts in Queen Elizabeth’s tour of Western Australia, where more than 250 people are suffering from infantile paralysis... At one stage, it was learned, the officials were urged to cancel the tour completely-but the suggestion was strongly opposed by the State Government and others.” “Drastic cuts in royal tour?” *The Manchester Guardian*, March 20, 1954, p. 1.

heavy precautions were to be taken, but the program would not be cancelled.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, it was not easy in the case of huge, overly excited crowds to abide by the safety measures when it was their first time to meet their Queen on Australian soil.⁷⁵ Despite the varied precautions which made it difficult for the Queen and her husband to get closer to the Australian people, they still tried their best to adapt to the situation and show themselves to their loyal subjects who had waited for them.⁷⁶ Physical closeness and handshakes were not approved because of the danger of infection, but Western Australians still got a chance to see their Queen just like those who had been in New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia before.

The royal tour of Australia ended on 1 April 1954 with the visitation of Fremantle but it left a deep impression in the hearts of the citizens of Australia as the Queen was seen in a different light suddenly: "...to millions of Australians the Queen is no longer a somewhat mythical person to whom we owe vague allegiance, but a live, young, and friendly Queen who fitted naturally into the Australian scene."⁷⁷ For Australians, it was not only an abstract picture of their Queen in their heads anymore, but their monarch became a real, tangible person right in front of their eyes.

One month later, after visiting the Cocos Islands, Ceylon, Aden, and Uganda, the royal couple's next destination was Malta. However, the Queen and Prince Philip spent some time in Tobruk, a port city in Libya, between their departure from Uganda on 30 April and their arrival in Malta on 3 May 1954. The reason behind their detour might have been meeting their children,

⁷⁴ "The Prime Minister, Mr Menzies, said here to-night that 'every precaution short of cancellation' was being taken to safeguard Queen Elizabeth from the risk of poliomyelitis during the royal tour of Western Australia beginning on Friday. He added that the outbreak in that State has been described as a major epidemic... The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will use the Royal Yacht Gothic as their headquarters during the visit. Crew and naval personnel will not be allowed ashore except on duty. All meals for the royal couple and their household will be from food prepared in the Gothic. Indoor functions will be limited to formal events such as an Executive Council meeting. The royal couple's attendance at other indoor functions-such as a church service or a parliamentary dinner-is cancelled. Where possible alternative arrangements will be made. Handshakes will be barred... In Adelaide yesterday the Queen and the Duke both received further injections of gamma globulin, the anti-polio serum, at Government House." "Royal tour changes," *The Manchester Guardian*, March 23, 1954, p. 1.

⁷⁵ "At Perth Airport and earlier, when their aircraft touched at Kalgoorlie, the Queen did not shake hands with any Western Australians. But the anti-polio precautions were treated lightly, and many of those presented to her came within inches of her." "Perth welcomes the Queen," *The Manchester Guardian*, March 27, 1954, p. 1.

⁷⁶ "Its expression triumphed over the precautions which had to be taken in Western Australia because of the epidemic of polio-myelitis. These measures imposed no feeling of restraint or awkwardness which was not immediately dispelled by the grace with which the Queen adapted herself to an unprecedented situation. If a few hundred people were denied the privilege of a handshake, her thoughtfulness ensured that many thousands more should have the pleasure of seeing her on extended drives." "Royal farewell to Australia," p. 6.

⁷⁷ "Gains and lessons of sovereign's first visit," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 1, 1954, p. 2.

Prince Charles and Princess Anne after being apart from them for five months.⁷⁸ The royal children travelled by and it was the Royal Yacht Britannia's maiden voyage departing on 14 April and arriving on 22 April 1954.⁷⁹ Prince Charles and Princess Anne arrived in Malta on 23 April where they spent eight days before reuniting with their parents on 1 May 1954.⁸⁰ The previously mentioned pattern of the visitation and inauguration of memorials continued in Tobruk, Libya even though it was the place where a mother and father finally rejoined with their children whom they had not seen for several months. Thus, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh visited Tobruk War Cemetery on 1 May 1954 where Queen Elizabeth II commemorated almost 3,000 people who were victims of the battle during the Second World War's North Africa campaign.⁸¹ A part of Libya was occupied by the British during the Second World War, hence the connection between Libya and Britain.⁸² For eight years, Libya was under British occupation partially, and this occupation ceased only two years before the beginning of the royal tour. Even though Libya was not part of the Commonwealth countries, the royal couple still made a stop during their journey from Uganda to Malta.

Only two days passed after the visitation of Tobruk War Cemetery, and Queen Elizabeth once again was at another location of a memorial. This time, she unveiled the Malta Memorial, dedicated to the 2,300 people who had fought in Maltese skies during the Second World War.⁸³ Malta was a location for the Queen which was already close to her heart as she and her husband had lived on the island between 1949 and 1951 before her coronation. During this period, Prince

⁷⁸ "Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh left here this evening for Tobruk to meet their children, Prince Charles and Princess Anne, for the first time since the royal tour began five months ago." "Reunion at Tobruk," *The Manchester Guardian*, May 1, 1954, p. 1.

⁷⁹ "The new Royal Yacht Britannia... will leave England on her first long voyage next Thursday... The Britannia is due to leave Tobruk for Malta and Gibraltar on May 1 on the way back to England." "New Yacht will meet the Queen," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 10, 1954, p. 13.

⁸⁰ "Prince Charles and Princess Anne spent all to-day aboard the Royal Yacht Britannia after their arrival this morning for an eight-day visit to Malta. They are on their way to meet Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh in Tobruk on May 1." "Malta greets royal children," *The Manchester Guardian*, April 23, 1954, p. 1.

⁸¹ Commonwealth War Grave Commissions. "A look back at the Queen's royal visits to CWGC sites," available: <https://www.cwgc.org/our-work/blog/a-look-back-at-the-queen-s-royal-visits-to-cwgc-sites/>, access: March 7, 2024.

⁸² From the 1910s, there had been colonial intentions from the side of Italy to occupy Libyan territories, but they struggled to break oppression. Between the two World Wars, there were economic reasons behind Italian farmers and their families moving to Libyan territories. Some enormous investments were made to create a functioning agriculture and infrastructure there, yet these plans were shattered in 1943 when German and Italian troops were defeated and Libya was occupied partly by the British, partly by the French. The British Military Administration (BMA) was established in the coastal provinces and their governance remained until 1951 when Libya was granted independence, and the United Kingdom of Libya was established.

Kása Bálint, "The history of Libya and its peoples: The road to an exploitable vulnerability," *International Relations Quarterly* 12. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 2021): 1-13, available: https://unipub.lib.uni-corvinus.hu/6641/1/dke_45_a_ir_Kasa-Balint_TheHistory_of_Libya_and_its_peoples.pdf, access: April 27, 2024.

⁸³ Commonwealth War Grave Commissions, "A look back."

Philip served as a naval officer of the Mediterranean Fleet. The Royal Yacht Britannia entered Grand Harbour in Valetta, Malta on 3 May 1954.⁸⁴ After the welcome, Prime Minister George Borg Oliver gave his address of welcome in the Governor's palace.⁸⁵ In her reply, Queen Elizabeth II called attention to Malta's important role among the Commonwealth countries and its sacrifices during the Second World War.

The last station of the royal tour was Gibraltar where Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip arrived on 10 May 1954 before their journey back to Britain. Although the royals spent only one day in Gibraltar, a great deal of preparations were required for the visit. Rumours had surfaced in Spanish newspapers in February whether the planned Gibraltar tour would be cancelled.⁸⁶ It was followed by the news of anonymous letters containing threats sent to Australian Prime Minister Clement Attlee, Edward Clement Davies, leader of the British Liberal Party at the time and to newspapers as well. The threats were directed against Queen Elizabeth in case she visited Gibraltar.⁸⁷ Despite the risk, the tour would proceed as scheduled only with changes in the security measures which mostly affected Spanish people.⁸⁸ Behind this, we can point out the relationship between Spain and Britain which had started in the 18th century when Gibraltar was captured by British and Dutch forces in 1704. There were several Spanish attempts to retrieve it, but all failed. Ultimately, under the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713,

⁸⁴ "Monday, May 3, 1954... the Royal Yacht Britannia entered Grand Harbour, escorted by Royal Navy warships as sirens blared and brass bands played. A 21-gun royal salute roared throughout the harbour." "Queen Elizabeth's stays in Malta over the years," *Times of Malta*, November 15, 2015, available: <https://timesofmalta.com/article/Queen-Elizabeth-s-stays-in-Malta-over-the-years.592305>, access: April 27, 2024.

⁸⁵ "At the Governor's Palace, Prime Minister George Borg Olivier, in his address of welcome to the recently crowned Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, said: 'Today you come to us as our beloved Sovereign whose coronation not long ago was celebrated with great rejoicing by the inhabitants of all towns and villages – so well known to Your Majesty – of this small but important member of the British Commonwealth of nations.' In her reply the Queen said that 'though among the smallest in size, Malta takes an honoured place among the countries we have visited. Indeed, throughout all the nations of the Commonwealth and of the whole world, the memory of her heroic stand during the war is still fresh'." Ibid.

⁸⁶ "Spanish newspapers revived their discussion of the Gibraltar issue to-day against a background of continuing report that Queen Elizabeth would cancel her proposed visit there at the last moment." "A contentious rock," *The Manchester Guardian*, February 22, 1954, p. 5.

⁸⁷ "Letters sent to Mr Attlee and Mr Clement Davies, as well as to newspapers, containing threats against the Queen if she visits Gibraltar, were being examined yesterday in an effort to discover whether they were the work of a crank or a hoaxer." "Anonymous threats to the Queen," *The Manchester Guardian*, March 19, 1954, p. 9.

⁸⁸ "The most stringent security measures since the war are now being imposed in Gibraltar, where Queen Elizabeth will arrive on Monday. Early to-day twelve thousand Spaniards who cross the border into Gibraltar daily to work in the dockyards and hotels were closely examined. All their identity papers and other documents were checked before they were allowed to enter. Every night troops, with Alsatian dogs, are patrolling the shores of the Colony, while R.A.F. launches are circling steadily offshore to prevent any possible illicit entry. Searchlights illuminate the letters "E.R." twenty feet high at the top of the Rock, which are visible far into Spain. From to-night until Wednesday most Spanish workers will not be allowed to go to Gibraltar to work. This is the usual procedure during holidays." "Security measures in Gibraltar," *The Manchester Guardian*, May 8, 1954, p. 5.

Gibraltar was ceded to Britain.⁸⁹ The pursuit of Gibraltar was still an important issue even after 200 years later. Francisco Franco, who ruled over Spain from 1939 to 1975, wanted to overturn the British occupation of Gibraltar.⁹⁰ A British royal visit was not appreciated by the Spanish government because it would affect the population of Gibraltar.⁹¹ As it was previously mentioned, the visited subjects could express their loyalty and appreciation to their monarch which Spain wanted to avoid because it would have strengthened the ties between Gibraltar and Britain. Therefore, a campaign started against the Royal visit which included protests by students and Franco supporters. Besides, the print-based media was used for anti-Royal Tour newspaper campaigns.⁹² The attempts were in vain because the visit to Gibraltar turned out to be as successful as the other locations.⁹³ Despite the population being small in numbers, the celebration which awaited the royal couple was huge. After spending one day in Gibraltar, it was finally time to end the royal tour and begin their journey back to London.⁹⁴ Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh spent six months away from their family, place of living and British subjects. The royal couple with their two children, Prince Anne and Prince Charles, returned from their Commonwealth tour on 15 May 1954.

3. Conclusion

The present research aimed to introduce the historical background and the media narratives of the 1953-54 Commonwealth tour. I have concluded that the royal tour could have been a response to the decolonisation process given by the British Conservative Party. The purpose of the visit was to strengthen the unity within the Commonwealth of Nations and prevent any attempts at influencing and disintegrating the association. Based on the research of the

⁸⁹ Gibraltar National Museum, "A brief history of Gibraltar," available: <https://www.gibmuseum.gi/our-history/brief-history-of-gibraltar>, access: June 20, 2024.

⁹⁰ Klaus Dodds, David Lambert and Bridget Robison, "Loyalty and Royalty: Gibraltar, the 1953–54 Royal Tour and the Geopolitics of the Iberian Peninsula," *Twentieth Century British History* 18, 3 (2007): 371.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 383.

⁹² Ibid., p. 385.

⁹³ "Throughout the day, as the Royal car passed back and forth through the narrow streets, the Queen must have had the impression that the population of the town equalled that of a big city. Every one of the 2400 population, from the tiniest bemedaled child to the oldest pensioner, raced from point to point to seize every opportunity of seeing the Royal visitors, and cheering anew. Like a stage army, the same faces have been appearing again and again." "Queen in Gibraltar," *The Daily Telegraph & Morning Post*, May 11, 1954, p. 10.

⁹⁴ "Queen is on the last lap of her globe-encircling tour. The Royal Yacht Britannia sailed from Gibraltar this afternoon speeded by the thunder of saluting guns and a deafening farewell of cheers, ships' sirens and the music of bands." "The Queen sets sail on last lap for home," *The Daily Telegraph & Morning Post*, May 12, 1954, p. 1.

newspaper articles, Queen Elizabeth was not regarded in the same way in the British media as she was in the Australian and Jamaican papers. In the British articles, the Queen is seen as a representative, a tool to reinforce people's loyalty to the crown, the Australian and Jamaican articles do not see her as a symbol, but as a person, a personality. In British articles, minute-by-minute descriptions of events are more common, giving the reader an objective view of what is happening. In Australian and Jamaican articles, the focus is less on events and more on the comments and feelings of ordinary people. The reason for the differences is that this was a momentous occasion for Australia and Jamaica, as it was the first time a British monarch had visited them. In contrast, for the British, the royal couple is an integral part of their everyday life. A common point I discovered was the role of the family motif in both the British, Australian and Jamaican articles. In several speeches during the visit, the Queen emphasised that the Commonwealth was like a family and that its members were like relatives.

In terms of directions for future research, further work would include the analysis of *The Crown* series which portrays this specific royal tour in the eighth episode of its first season. I would observe what aspects of the royal tour were thought to be important enough for the writers to show to the audience and which occurrences were left out of the display. In the 21st century, media platforms have changed: our society prefers moving pictures rather than newspapers and it might allow us to see how the same event was portrayed in the press several decades ago and on a streaming service today.

In addition, I would examine whether *The Crown* can be seen as a response to the crises of imperial unity in the 2010s. Answering this question would be beyond the scope of the current study, but it points me in the direction of further research.

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