

**Looking Wide?  
Imperialism, Internationalism, and the Boy Scout Movement, 1918-1939**

by

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### **Author's Declaration**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## **Abstract**

The Boy Scout Movement is one of the most influential youth movements of the twentieth century. Begun in the context of Edwardian imperialism as a foil to fears of racial decline, the movement's militarism became a liability following the First World War, when Scouting's widespread, trans-national popularity forced it to enter the political sphere that dominates international relations. Based on extensive archival research in both the United Kingdom and Canada, this thesis traces the evolution of the Scout Movement from a British imperial institution into an international brotherhood in the 1920s and 1930s. It reveals a tense relationship between the worldwide membership and the central administration of the movement. Despite efforts by founder Robert Baden-Powell to create an image of unity, Scouting proved ungovernable from a single ideological source, and local conditions dictated the form that it took in each domestic situation. Scouting therefore both deeply influenced, and was influenced by, the cultures and communities into which it was transplanted.

## **Acknowledgements**

I can only express how much I thoroughly enjoyed the challenge, the surprises, and the revelations that came out of researching for this project.

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*“It is curious what can be overlooked by historians and sociologists. Search through the library shelves and you will find endless volumes on the theory and practice of socialism, on trade unionism, and on every aspect of child welfare and education. But you will find almost nothing about youth movements, except the occasional volume of instruction or propaganda. Yet if we are thinking of the real **social** revolution of our century, that is to say, not so much the rise and fall of standards of living, but the most significant changes in **behaviour** – clothing, sex relations, hobbies, sports and holidays – then we have to admit that the youth movements have been the most successful revolutionaries of the lot. But you will hunt high and low for an authoritative work which takes notice of this phenomenon. Because the apologetics of youth movements are callow, their arguments crude, and their practices puerile, they are dismissed or ignored by scholars.”<sup>1</sup>*

- Leslie Paul, *Angry Young Man* (1951)

### **Introduction**

Six decades after Leslie Paul pointed out this gaping hole in academic study that youth movements ought to fill, there are still only a few academics who have taken up the subject. The youth movements of the twentieth century, have remained, for the most part, entrenched in the realm of the amateur historian. These histories, often written by members of the movements themselves, enshrine their organization’s self-fashioned origin myths and campfire lore. Their tone is often more nostalgic than analytical. That is not to say that there is no place for this sort of publication. Recording the popular lore of a movement gives a unique window into of its values and goals: it says quite a lot to interest the academic who cares to examine it.

The trouble is; these works have not often been joined by their academic counterparts. When it comes to the history of even the largest of these movements, the Boys Scouts, and their counterpart the Girl Guides, only a handful of historians have taken up Paul’s challenge. What is more, when they do take it up, it has become common practice to begin with an apology of sorts.

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<sup>1</sup> Leslie Paul. *Angry Young Man* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), 51-52.

There seems to be a need prove that it is a legitimate area of study, and to break the conception that youth movements are below the dignity of history.<sup>2</sup>

How strange that it should be so. The Boy Scouts, after all, are by no means culturally insignificant. The Movement began in 1907, when British war hero Robert Baden-Powell, nicknamed B-P, grew concerned about the deterioration of British youth. In response, he set up a new organization to train youth in good citizenship. His method was to use exciting outdoor activities such as camping and Scouting to attract youth, and through them teach practical life skills as well as instil patriotism. The idea was successful, spreading rapidly through Britain and beyond. By 1967 at least one in three adults in Britain had belonged to either the Boy Scouts or Girl Guides at one time in their life.<sup>3</sup> Today, the Boy Scouts have become a nearly universally recognized cultural icon, existing in 161 countries, with over thirty million members worldwide.<sup>4</sup> Scouts have been presidents, astronauts, kings, United Nations Secretary-Generals, humanitarian activists, CEOs, artists, prime ministers, and more.<sup>5</sup> This is mere surface level analysis, of course, but the salient point is the fact that the Boy Scout Movement has achieved a broad public presence. Scouting's role as a positive youth program has been cemented around the globe.

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<sup>2</sup> The handful of significant studies on the Boy Scout Movement that have been written include: Tim Jeal, *Baden-Powell*. (London: Pimlico, 1989).; Robert H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: the Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement 1890-1918*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).; Timothy Parsons. *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement in British Colonial Africa*. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004).; Michael Rosenthal. *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts and the Imperatives of Empire*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).; John Springhall. *Youth, Empire and Society, British Youth Movements, 1883-1940*. (London: Croom Helm, 1977).; Nelson R. Block and Tammy M. Proctor, *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement's First Century* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009),

<sup>3</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, 13.

<sup>4</sup> World Scout Bureau. *Census*. [http://scout.org/en/about\\_Scouting/facts\\_figures/census](http://scout.org/en/about_Scouting/facts_figures/census) (accessed May 22 2012). Scouting also exists in 26 'territories' under the control of a national organization [such as Gibraltar (UK) or Puerto Rico (USA)]. In 29 further countries, Scouting groups exist but have not yet formed a national organization recognized by the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM). That leaves only six countries without any form of Scouting at all, in most cases due to its being banned by the regime in power.

<sup>5</sup> World Scout Bureau. *Fact Sheet – Famous Scouts*.

[http://scout.org/en/about\\_Scouting/facts\\_figures/fact\\_sheets/fact\\_sheet\\_famous\\_scouts](http://scout.org/en/about_Scouting/facts_figures/fact_sheets/fact_sheet_famous_scouts) (accessed May 22 2012).

So why, then, have the Boy Scouts not attracted significant attention? Perhaps it is because of their role within the juvenile world of children's activities. As a form of playtime, it is easy to dismiss. But it would be a mistake for historians to ignore the significance of this movement, despite it being, as its founder Robert Baden-Powell insisted, just an elaborate game for children.<sup>6</sup> The ideology of the movement at its beginning was set by adults, in the context of Edwardian imperialism and a fear of racial decline. Scouting was thus an attempt to instil the values of the older generation on the younger, as well as attempting to instil middle class values on the working class. Despite being a mere children's game, it reflects the more widespread values and anxieties of its home society at large. This opens up significant questions and areas for research. What adult anxieties were prescribed to the youth? Did Scouting successfully inculcate its prescribed values? This thesis specifically explores Scouting's place in the empire and in international relations, and reveals a tense relationship between the worldwide membership and the central administration of the movement. Although the movement's values and policies were set by the organization's leadership, these were sometimes ignored at the local level, either by the volunteer Scoutmasters or by their youth. Local customs and unique situations around the world altered or shaped how Scouts perceived the directives coming from their leaders. Boy Scout troops, by the nature of the organization, inevitably encountered issues of gender, ethnicity, class, consumerism, religion, nationalism, and internationalism; each in their own right a worthy topic to interest the serious historian.

Scouting is in many ways a sort of barometer for the societies in which it is embedded. In the century it has existed, it has often refined its policies to reflect changes within society at large. When militarism became unpopular in Britain at the end of the First World War, for

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. "Scouting is a Game, Not a Science" in *B-P's Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 135.



example, Scouting adapted to the popular wave of internationalism that was spurred on by years of devastating war, and popularized by Woodrow Wilson.<sup>7</sup> In the 1960's, Scouting trumpeted its environmental focus to match the growing popularity of environmentalism. Internationally, Scouting has even been used as a tool for measuring political freedom. Countries which have banned the Scouting Movement have usually been National Socialist or Communist, while under other authoritarian regimes the movement has often had to strike some sort of compromise to survive.<sup>8</sup> There are only six countries in the world today without Boy Scouts in any form at all: China, North Korea, Myanmar, Laos, Cuba, and Andorra.<sup>9</sup> Five of these six regimes are authoritarian. In most democratic states, meanwhile, Scouting tends to thrive.

While Scouting provides significant opportunities for study, it is not without its difficulties. Its sheer size is problematic. It has local, national, and international forms, each of which cannot be wholly separated from the rest. Any study of Scouting in its broadest sense must inevitably involve some comparative analysis, as the movement, though a single organism, takes different forms from one country to another, or even from one town to the next. Furthermore, ought one study the movement from the top down, or the bottom up? After all, the administration may hold vastly different views than its rank and file members. Both are important, but it is difficult to avoid giving priority to one side or the other if one is to avoid a disjointed analysis. Meanwhile, because of the Boy Scout's success, it is a challenge to not become trapped in the teleology that it was bound to grow from humble beginnings to global success.

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<sup>7</sup> For more on Woodrow Wilson's role in popularizing a new internationalism based on self-determination, see Ezra Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Allen Warren. "Foreword: Understanding Scouting and Guiding After A Hundred Years." in *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement's First Century*. Eds. Nelson R. Block and Tammy M. Proctor. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009.) xviii

<sup>9</sup> World Scout Bureau. *Scouting Elsewhere*. [http://scout.org/en/around\\_the\\_world/countries/Scouting\\_elsewhere](http://scout.org/en/around_the_world/countries/Scouting_elsewhere) (accessed May 22 2012)

Of existing histories of Scouting, most have solved these problems by two methods. First, the majority of works on Scouting focus only on the origins of the movement. Not only is this one of the most interesting time periods for the movement, the origins of Scouting fit perfectly into the common historical narratives of imperial decline and the lead up to World War One. The origin of the movement is also where Scouting's influence was most pronounced, because as a novelty introduced into society its ramifications and intentions are clearest. In subsequent years these trends are much more difficult to discern, because Scouting was diffused across vast cultural and geographic expanses. Changes occurred in some localities and not in others, and at different times, and so on. Studying only the movement's beginnings, then, meant that historians could avoid dealing with the movement's widespread nature, and could focus on its genesis in Great Britain.

Second, focusing on Scouting's origins means that the top down approach is the most prevalent, with its founder, Baden-Powell, and his actions and influences getting the most scholarly attention. The grassroots approach to the subject is left to the wayside.<sup>10</sup>

These methods have their merits, but they leave a lot of room for further study. By focusing only on Scouting's origins, the historiography has largely missed an aspect of the movement that is just as important. This is the fact that its ideology was not stagnant; it changed constantly over time and across geographic expanses, reflecting changes at home in Great Britain and in the international sphere. In this way, Scouting can be seen as an indicator of change in British society and in international relations as a whole.

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<sup>10</sup> For studies which use both of these two approaches, see for example: Robert H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: the Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement 1890-1918*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Michael Rosenthal. *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts and the Imperatives of Empire*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); John Springhall. *Youth, Empire and Society, British Youth Movements, 1883-1940*. (London: Croom Helm, 1977).;

The most thoroughly researched work related to the subject that brings out some of these long term variations in the Boy Scout Movement is Tim Jeal's 1989 biography of Robert Baden-Powell. Jeal does this successfully because he was researching a lifetime, rather than the birth of an organization. In fact, Jeal's work follows in quite a long tradition of biographies of the Boy Scouts' founder: until recent years, any real historical study of Scouting was due to an interest in the man, rather than in his creation. Baden-Powell did lead, after all, an interesting life by any standard, and he was an avid and unapologetic self-promoter. He became a national hero in Great Britain after defending the besieged town of Mafeking for seven months during the Boer War. Author Harold Begbie published the first biography of him at the height of his fame in 1900.<sup>11</sup> Full of praise, and almost hagiographic in tone, Begbie's book was a bestseller. From then on, biographies of Baden-Powell multiplied. Even Winston Churchill wrote a short biography of the man, when he added Baden-Powell to his pantheon of "Great Contemporaries" in 1939.<sup>12</sup> This biographical attention paid to Baden-Powell meant that Scouting received some of the reflected spotlight in these works. Indeed, in Baden-Powell's own autobiography, he separated his life into two parts: his first life in the military, and his second life with the Scouts.<sup>13</sup> But Scouting generated little academic interest itself. The movement institutionalised the hero-worship of its founder, making Baden-Powell an ever increasingly popular figure to study, but it failed to generate any interest in the movement he created.

The first step towards any sort of academic debate in the field came, indirectly, in 1966 with Brian Gardner's book *Mafeking: a Victorian Legend*.<sup>14</sup> Gardner attacked Baden-Powell's reputation as a war hero, and refuted the pro-imperial narrative of the Siege of Mafeking. He

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<sup>11</sup> Harold Begbie, *The Story of Baden-Powell: The Wolf that never Sleeps*. (London: Grant Richards, 1900).

<sup>12</sup> Winston Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*. (London: Collins, 1939), 296-301.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. *Lessons from the Varsity of Life*. (London; C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., 1933).

<sup>14</sup> Brian Gardner, *Mafeking: a Victorian Legend*. (London: Cassell & Co., 1966).

accused Baden-Powell of military incompetence, cruelty, and racism as commander of the besieged town in 1899-1900. Gardner did not address Scouting, however. That was to take another decade. But he did sow an important intellectual seed: Baden-Powell's character was no longer untouchable or above reproach. When a historian did finally begin to write about the origins of the Boy Scout Movement, the book was an unchecked attack on Baden-Powell in the tradition of Gardner. This was Michael Rosenthal's 1984 book *The Character Factory*. It proposed that Baden-Powell intended the Boy Scouts to be a military organization rather than a peaceful one. This was to become the central debate in Scouting historiography.

Rosenthal's core argument was that Scouting was first and foremost intended to be:

a remedy to Britain's moral, physical, and military weakness – conditions that the Boer War seemed to announce...It was not just a question of an efficient army but, more critical, an efficient citizenry. How could Britain hope to compete with the evolving industrial threat of other countries – not to speak of the possible military threats to its empire – with a race of morally and physically inferior men?<sup>15</sup>

Building on this theme, Rosenthal focused on a metaphor Baden-Powell used in a 1909 publication: "Be a brick." If some bricks in the great wall that was the British Empire were to become "rotten," the wall might fall. "Be a brick" meant conformity, discipline, and therefore uniformity: The Scouts were a machine or a "factory" to turn out young men willing to sacrifice their individual goals for the goals of the empire.

Rosenthal certainly makes a strong case. The problem is that it is almost as easy to make the opposite case just as convincingly with the same sources. The following quote, also from 1909, is taken from an article Baden-Powell wrote as advice to the organization's adult volunteers, known as "Scouters". This article seems to suggest the opposite view: that Baden-Powell disliked conformity and the sort of military drill that was used to achieve it. In the article, Baden-Powell argues that camps ought to be small, because the purpose of camping is to get

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<sup>15</sup> Rosenthal. *The Character Factory*. 3-4.

Scouts to love the outdoors, and to give Scouters a chance to teach them initiative, character, and physical and moral training. But:

These objects are to a great extent lost if the camp be a big one. The only discipline that can there be carried out is the collective military form of discipline, which tends to destroy individuality and initiative instead of developing them; and, owing to there being too many boys for the ground, military drill has to take the place of Scouting practices and nature study.<sup>16</sup>

Baden-Powell is arguing in this case that military drill ruins individuality, and men with individuality made better citizens. Indeed, in 1914 he stated even more bluntly: “Drill will never make a citizen, that is fairly obvious.”<sup>17</sup> Baden-Powell, having spent his life in the army and cavalry, may not have been anti-military, but he was anti-militarism (as far as forced conformity and military drill were concerned).<sup>18</sup> Baden-Powell’s contradictory beliefs make Rosenthal’s argument valid but unbalanced, and therefore easy to refute.

Elleke Boehmer points out that Baden-Powell’s contradictory beliefs found their way into the Scout Movement itself through his writing, especially in the Scout handbook, *Scouting for Boys*.<sup>19</sup> Scouting’s philosophies often contradict each other: individuality and conformity co-exist, as do internationalism and patriotic nationalism. Forms of both militarism and pacifism can be found in Scouting methods and ideals. What is more, Boy Scouts played at being grown men, and yet Scouting also helped forestall growing up, offering a form of escapism from the harsh realities of London city life through excursions to the woods. In another odd paradox,

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<sup>16</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. “Object of Camping” in *B-P’s Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 9.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. “Where Drill Fails” in *B-P’s Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 45.

<sup>18</sup> For an in depth study of militarism in Edwardian Britain as it pertains to youth, see Alan Penn, *Targeting Schools: Drill, Militarism and Imperialism*. (London: Woburn Press, 1999). Baden-Powell’s distinction between militarism and militarization is similar to the distinction Helen McCarthy uses between Pacificism and Pacifism. See Helen McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 3.

<sup>19</sup> Elleke Boehmer. “Introduction” in *Scouting for Boys: The Original 1908 Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). xviii

advanced Western “civilization” was to be revived through Scouting by copying and reverting to the customs of Zulu and Native American tribes.<sup>20</sup>

If Rosenthal’s work only showed one side of what was clearly a multifaceted entity, Jeal’s biography, published five years later, took a much more balanced stance. While accepting that Baden-Powell was indeed influenced by the Edwardian insecurities that led up to the First World War, it argues that there was more depth to the development process than that. As a biographer, Jeal traces elements of Scouting back to much earlier periods in Baden-Powell’s life. This is what makes Jeal’s work vastly important, because it points out that the influences and goals of the movement were far more complex than simple militarism. This complexity would later be essential to Scouting’s remarkable ability to grow and adapt to changing social values.

Other important contributors to the literature include John Springhall, who, writing even before Rosenthal (though not as thoroughly), took a similar line, noting that the Scouts aimed for conformity and discipline, in an effort to assuage Edwardian fears of decline. He too, however, was focused only on the origins of Scouting. In 1993, Robert Macdonald tried to expand the study of Scouting, but did so spatially, not temporally. His book *Sons of the Empire* again focused only on the origins of Scouting, but aimed to show how the colonies in the distant frontier far from London played an important role in shaping the Boy Scout Movement.<sup>21</sup>

The first to really take up the challenge of examining the Scout Movement more broadly was Allen Warren. He observed that Scouting was adaptable and fluid. As he notes, “By the time of Baden-Powell’s death in 1941 the imperial element within Scouting and later Guiding had been almost totally transformed.”<sup>22</sup> This transformation was a shift from the domestic and

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.xxvi.

<sup>21</sup> Springhall. *Youth, Empire and Society*; MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire*.

<sup>22</sup> Allen Warren, “Citizens of the Empire: Baden-Powell, Scouts and Guides and an Imperial Ideal, 1900-40” in *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, Ed John Mackenzie. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 250.

defensive to the international. Scouting was still about empire, but it was now about strengthening bonds within it, rather than defending it from threats without.

Scouting in international relations is an area that deserves further attention, not only to show what changes occurred, but why they occurred. In some cases, the Boy Scouts were simply swept along in larger international trends, and had to adapt to survive. In other cases, the Scouting Movement itself drove social change in different parts of the world, playing a role especially in the politics of the empire as it tried to define its role in the changing global situation in the twentieth century. In the forward to *Scouting Frontiers*, a volume of academic articles concerning Scouting and Guiding worldwide, Allen Warren expanded on the challenges, and possibilities, for the historian of Scouting and Guiding:

Our understanding of the movements' growth needs to be less biographical and in that sense, historians and members need to "get away from B-P [Baden-Powell]"...The explanation for both Movements' growth locally and nationally outside the sphere of direct British influence must be found elsewhere. We need to know a great deal more about how the movements were established and acquired an identity in wholly different environments.<sup>23</sup>

Warren's challenge is a call to look at Scouting in different contexts; to see how it reacted to the local situations in various parts of the world, and make some sort of comparative analysis. This thesis aims to, in part, take up that challenge.

I try to present the core ideals and set of cultural notions that those at the center of the Scouting world held, and see how these adapted to different environments and dealt with major crises in international politics. To contain the scope to a manageable amount of material, I have limited the timeframe for the most part to the interwar years. This period represents the beginning and end of an era in the growth of the Boy Scouts. The Boy Scout organization began to evince international leanings with the first world Scout rally, or jamboree, at Olympia in 1920. At the other end, World War Two saw the death of Baden-Powell, who had maintained an active

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<sup>23</sup>Allen Warren. "Foreword" in *Scouting Frontiers*, xiv.

and central role in deciding the direction Scouting would take until the late 1930s. This is an important landmark despite Warren's urging to "get away from B-P," as it is impossible to write him out of the history of Scouting. His word was very nearly law within the movement up until his retirement in 1937, despite claims that it was a democratic organization. As such, he figures heavily in this study.

In the process of demonstrating how Scouting met the challenges it faced internationally, some particular local contexts lend themselves quite well to demonstrating the growing pains that Scouting experienced as it expanded. Focusing on these seemed the best solution to solving the problem of how to unite such varied experiences. This means much material that is fascinating in its own right must unfortunately be left out. This thesis also relies primarily on sources from the top of the organization, rather than from the grassroots. This comes from availability of material rather than a disregard for the actual participant's feelings and notions concerning the subjects at hand. Those accounts which could be found are included where possible when they give a fuller picture of the situation on the ground, balancing the opinions coming from the Movement's leadership with their ramifications for the local communities. Material that demonstrates the dissemination of ideas from Baden-Powell and his administration in London to the local Scouters across the empire and globe abounds; evidence of the next step of inculcation, from the adults to their youth, is less forthcoming. There is certainly room for future study in the area of the experiences of individual youths themselves.

One final note about the limitations of this study is that it focuses almost solely on the Boy Scouts, leaving its sister organization, the Girl Guides, to the side. This is not to detract from the significance of the Girl Guide Movement. In many cases the Girl Guides' transformative role in societies worldwide has been even more influential than their counterpart



for the boys. Unfortunately there is not space in the scope of this thesis to do justice to both; the Girl Guide Movement deserves to be the subject of its own study. In some cases below, particular episodes are noted where there was significant overlap between the two movements, or where the situation could not be fully understood without exploring the Girl Guide's involvement in those particular episodes.

Scouting in international relations is a complex topic. Traces of the militaristic notions held by British society leading up to the First World War were evident in the Scouting Movement long after 1914, despite their attempts to define themselves as "Peace Scouts." That brand was designed to appeal to the widest possible base, in order to increase membership. The origins of the movement are undeniably found in an age where the imperial mindset, and with it, a form of militarism, were part of the mainstream discourse. But Scouting took on a whole new image and purpose in the interwar years in an attempt to stay relevant. Continuing to appear militaristic was a death knell for youth movements in a society recently devastated by the First World War. Internationalism was the new banner which was, to a large degree, unintentionally thrust on Scouting due to its widespread popularity outside Britain itself. The shallow "Peace Scouting" of the early days gave way reluctantly until the Movement clearly saw itself as doing the same work as the League of Nations, just by other means. As war became less appealing, the Boy Scouts shifted their focus to reflect that change. More broadly, as the empire changed in form to meet the realities of the twentieth century, internationalism played an increasing role in Scouting ideology. Though remnants of the patriotic origins of Scouting remained, the focus was now more outward looking.

Of course, it was not an easy process for the Scouts to establish a new role in internationalism. There were cases where Scouting's influence heightened tensions, rather than

built bridges as it intended. This was the case in the Independence Movement in India, for example. Scouting found itself caught up in the rise of fascism on the continent as well. While Scouting's leadership aspired to be a pan-imperial, and later, a truly global, organization, under a central authority, ultimately it was ungovernable as such. *The ideological leadership of the Movement was only as successful at disseminating certain values and principles as the local, domestic situations allowed it to be.* Scouting was a uniformed movement, but not a uniform one. It built only a veneer of unity between its various incarnations throughout the world. This is, in part, the reason Scouting succeeded so well; it was flexible and adaptable to countless situations. It also meant, however, that ultimately the periphery membership had just as much control over the shape of the organization as its imperial and global authorities.

The chapters of this thesis are organized thematically. After looking briefly at some necessary background for Scouting, the first chapter deals with Scouting's embrace of internationalism immediately following the First World War. Internationalism was not a masterstroke strategy by Baden-Powell and the Scouting administration to remain relevant. Instead, internationalism was thrust on Scouting by its unintended popularity outside Great Britain.

Next, we turn to the relationship between the Scout Movement and international organizations, including the Salvation Army and Red Cross, but especially and most importantly the newly created League of Nations. The Scouts branded themselves as a partner in the League of Nations' task of maintaining international peace; they just aimed to do so by other means. This affiliation was claimed informally by the Boy Scouts, and there was little official connection between the two organizations. Curiously, the relationship between these organizations, despite their similar aims, was often troubled, there being a great deal of

contention about how the Scouts ought to interact with such international, but “political,” organizations.

We move next from the realm of the formal international relations to the more grounded reality in localities around the British Empire. Several case studies demonstrate particularly well the difficulties Scouting faced in applying its supposedly universal principles to new environments. Scouting was officially non-political, but it was inevitably caught up in political conflicts. Break off groups from the Scout organization divided along racial lines in South Africa, while in Canada tension existed across linguistic (and religious) divides. Even at home in Britain, Sir Francis Vane’s breakaway group, the British Boy Scouts, informed later policies concerning how to deal with such secessions internationally. Meanwhile, though the Boy Scouts aimed to promote the unity of the Commonwealth and Empire as a whole, the task proved more difficult than anticipated. In India, Baden-Powell’s decisions concerning the Scout Movement there actually damaged relations and alienated many, aiding the cause of the Independence Movement.

On the other hand, the Scouts did try an interesting experiment in the form of a migration scheme, aiding Scouts to settle in new parts of the commonwealth. Meeting with some initial success, the scheme was plagued by the depression of the 1930’s, and more importantly by a gross misunderstanding of both the conditions abroad, and the wants of British youth at home, which ultimately dismantled the program. The migration scheme’s well intentioned but ill-conceived nature will be the focus of the next chapter.

Finally, returning to Europe, the relationship of the Scouting Movement with the fascist powers is a fascinating episode. The Scout Movement made some missteps in dealing with these powerful new regimes, each of which was forming powerful youth movements of their own. The

Italian youth organization, the *Balilla*, was intentionally formed on the Boy Scouts model, and Baden-Powell was consulted by Mussolini concerning the organization. In Germany, Scouting was less well respected, eventually being banned as an illegal spy organization. Baden-Powell's own actions in response paralleled those of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in his attempts at appeasement. Most importantly, though, Scouting's actions in respect to fascist Europe demonstrates a great deal of continuity in policy from the previous decade, where an attempt was made to adapt policy to ensure the greatest possible influence for the Scout Movement.

All of these separate themes collectively reveal the Boy Scout Movement's position in the international sphere during the interwar years. The Boy Scout Movement both influenced, and was influenced by, political and international situations across the globe. While professing to be outside of politics, its widespread, trans-national popularity forced it to enter the political sphere that dominates international relations. This thesis highlights the tension and distinction between the Boy Scouts official policy and administration, and its varied and massive membership. Members only sometimes actually absorbed the values of patriotism and internationalism that the leadership sought to instil, and when they did, it was more often than not because those values already existed in their particular local society, rather than because of a successful effort at re-education by the Boy Scouts.

Above all, the focus of this thesis is the way in which the Scouting Movement reflects the larger picture of international relations in the interwar years. Born as an imperial institution, it spread beyond that intended boundary. This created new challenges and opportunities for the movement to influence both its youth members, the societies in which it operated, and the relationship between those various nations. Ultimately, the Movement proved to be uncontrollable from a single ideological source; local conditions dictated the form Scouting took

in each place. It provided an image of unity, but it was only a mirage. The aspiration of creating a generation that would establish a peaceful world through Scouting was not achieved, because the Movement was not homogenous. It mutated to fit the needs of each situation that arose, despite its supposedly common principles and law. This failure at unity, however, is exactly the reason Scouting so well reveals broader social and political interactions. By looking at how Scouting's principles were interpreted, one can see a clear reflection of the values of each individual society. It is therefore a window into otherwise obscured cultural landscapes.

## **“Country First, Self Second”: Influences and Origins<sup>24</sup>**

The Boy Scouts emerged in 1907 with very few true predecessors. At the same time, however, it repackaged many older social norms and understandings from the Victorian era. Baden-Powell’s creation, drawing on a vast multitude of influences was a clear example of what historian Eric Hobsbawm calls an “invented tradition,” in which one asserts rules “of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.”<sup>25</sup> B-P’s Boy Scouts were to be the successors of their brave forefathers that had set up Britain’s great empire, and of the heroes like Nelson and Wellington who defended it, and even successors to the tradition of chivalry that was supposedly practiced by England’s medieval knightly orders.

Most Edwardian Britons would have approved of these traditional values and principles. Multiple observers called for a rejuvenation of England, and outcries against deterioration, such as Arnold White’s *Efficiency and Empire*, were read with urgent interest.<sup>26</sup> B-P was clearly in full sympathy with these concerns, but the way in which these vague concepts of patriotism and duty took the form of a youth movement, no less a youth movement infused with many other equally important influences parallel to this patriotism, is a fascinating chain of events. It is further complicated in that, despite its conservative roots, the Scouts were often a progressive force in society. Elements of both conservatism and radicalism were enshrined in Scouting’s “laws” by its founder, himself a wonderfully complex character.

It is necessary to look for the origins of Scouting’s competing values in B-P himself, because the original success of the movement was due almost solely to his fame. Every British

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<sup>24</sup> The quotation is from Robert Baden-Powell. *Scouting For Boys: The Original 1908 Edition*. Ed. Elleke Boehmer. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 28.

<sup>25</sup> Eric Hobsbawm. “Introduction: Inventing Traditions” in *The Invention of Tradition*. Eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

<sup>26</sup> Arnold White, *Efficiency and Empire*. G.R. Searle, Ed. (Brighton: The Harvester press, 1973).

boy could relish the chance to emulate the hero they remembered from the war in South Africa, the great general whose pluck and determination brought honour to Britain in an otherwise embarrassing conflict. The Hero of Mafeking that they all knew, however, was just a facade, a mere caricature of a far more well rounded figure. Born in 1857, B-P's career promised from an early age to be successful, though by no means was it destined to be spectacular. The earliest evidence of his understanding of the world around him comes from a note written by him in 1865:

LAWS FOR ME WHEN I AM OLD

I will have the poor people to be as rich as we are, and they ought by rights to be as happy as we are, and all who go across the crossings shall give the poor crossing sweeper some money and you ought to thank God for what he has given us and he made the poor people to be poor and the rich people to be rich and I can tell you how to be good. Now I will tell you. You must pray to God whenever you can but you cannot be good with only praying but you must try very hard to be good.<sup>27</sup>

Aged only eight at the time, B-P clearly wrote this under the careful influence of his mother, Henrietta Grace, who had high standards and ambitions for all of her sons. But the feelings of equality that he expressed were apparently genuine, as looking back on it forty two years later, while writing *Scouting for Boys*, B-P wrote fondly about his childish socialism:

I should have liked to be a socialist at one time to get money more evenly distributed so that there would be no millionaires and no paupers, but everyone pretty well off. When I looked it up in History it proved to be a very old story and one which won't work. It needs such tremendous discipline that it would be something like slavery to everybody.<sup>28</sup>

This passage, though it seems harmless enough, was watered down before publishing.

Furthermore, by the third edition, any reference to socialism, which may have damaged B-P reputation, or worse, branded the Scout organization as a socialist scheme, was altogether removed from the book. Still, it is clear that the influences that found their way into the Scouting Movement were far more varied than a simple militaristic, patriotic support for the old order.

The attempt to break down class barriers manifested itself in the Fourth Scout Law, which

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<sup>27</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Laws for me when I am old" February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1865. Scout Association Archives, London, quoted in Tim Jeal, *Baden-Powell*. (London: Pimlico, 1989), 16.

<sup>28</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, 377.

ordered Scouts to be “a friend to all, and a brother to every other Scout, no matter to what social class the other belongs.” B-P elaborated that “a Scout must never be a SNOB. A snob is one who looks down upon another because he is poorer, or who is poor and resents another because he is rich. A Scout accepts the other man as he finds him, and makes the best of him.”<sup>29</sup> This emphasis on class cooperation extended even to the physical paraphernalia of the movement, the uniform being instituted with the intent that class differences would disappear. Of course, the uniforms cost more than some could afford, so this pleasing ideal was never truly realized.

But idealism, and imaginative twists on reality, were a regular part of B-P’s life. Pushed by his mother to succeed, he learned to promote himself and his adventures in the army by publishing carefully embellished accounts of his campaigns, first in India, and then in West and South Africa. He would continue to write these fanciful accounts most of his life; the height of fancy being his 1915 *My Adventures as a Spy*.<sup>30</sup> This fantastic mix of fact and fiction, told in B-P’s convincingly authoritative style, is full of anecdotes and experiences B-P himself had in the field, always enhanced and embellished purposely for effect. B-P was nothing if not a good storyteller. The book painted B-P as an experienced intelligence agent who had survived harrowing covert expeditions to the continent. In truth, however, B-P’s connections with the Military Intelligence Services were limited at best.<sup>31</sup>

Still, he did know a great deal about campaigning, military scouting, and reconnaissance, and had ample experience in the field. In 1899, he published a bestselling handbook called *Aids to Scouting*, meant for use by the army, which became wildly popular.<sup>32</sup> Returning to England after the Boer War, where he had been organizing the South African Constabulary (from which

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<sup>29</sup> Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, 45.

<sup>30</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, *My Adventures as a Spy*. (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1915).

<sup>31</sup> For an examination of the inaccuracies in *My Adventures as a Spy*, see Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 148-154.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. *Aids to Scouting for NCO’s and Men*. (London: Gale and Polden, 1899).



the Scout uniform was derived in part), B-P was promoted to Inspector General of Cavalry in 1903. Always a fan of interacting with children, he took time out of his cavalry job to inspect groups of cadets and other boys clubs, such as the Christian youth organization known as the Boys Brigade. During this time, he also found that *Aids to Scouting* was just as popular with youth as it was with adults.

While on one of these inspections, B-P had a conversation with the founder of the Boys Brigade, William Smith, a conversation which would become a key moment in Scouting's foundation myth. This one moment cannot really be considered "the origin" of Scouting; it is only a small part of the full story. Scouting had many influences. Ernest Thompson Seton, for example, the founder of a similar youth program in America, was perhaps the most vehement of several people who argued that B-P had stolen their ideas. Seton had a case, too, as B-P did use many of Seton's games in the Scout handbook. But the conversation with Smith is certainly one of the more important occasions in the development of the idea. During their talk, Smith asked B-P for ways in which the Boys Brigade might attract more members, and B-P suggested Scouting. Smith then asked if B-P would think of rewriting a version of *Aids to Scouting*, in a way that would appeal to youth.<sup>33</sup>

The result of this rewriting, *Scouting for Boys*, turned out to be more significant than either of them could have predicted. It came out in six fortnightly parts between January and March 1908, followed by a full edition, released in May of that year. Spurred by the famous name of the author, the skilful marketing of publishing magnate Arthur Pearson, and by the fact that the book played on widespread public anxieties, *Scouting for Boys* quickly took off to become one of the most successful books of the twentieth century. Only the Bible sold better,

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<sup>33</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, 60.

and it was not until 1967 that Pearson's publishing company finally noted a decline in sales.<sup>34</sup> B-P toured constantly the year it was published, giving lectures on the Boy Scout scheme. The book was an odd mix between adventure stories that might be found in boy's magazines, a self-help book, an instruction manual for outdoor living, and a collection of games and activities. The format made it easy for young readers to pick and choose what interested them, and ignore what did not. In fact, the Scouting idea was so popular it outgrew the control of its progenitors. While B-P's fame and Pearson's skilful marketing may have sold the book at first, its continued success came from the youth themselves. There was something about the scheme that actually appealed to them: it was fun! It offered an escape; a chance for adventure. What is more, parents could approve of it because of the moral lessons and citizenship training that came packaged with the fun. Pearson's office was soon overwhelmed with requests for help starting Boy Scout troops. Girls took up Scouting as well, forcing the creation of the Girl Guides, who were put under the leadership of B-P's sister, Agnes. Scouting, completely unintentionally, even began to grow up spontaneously overseas.

This popularity took B-P wholly by surprise. He had originally intended Scouting as a program that would merely supplement the activities of current youth organizations, such as the YMCA or Boys Brigade. He was, after all, still fully employed by the military. Only after seeing the need for a separate organization did he leave his position there, being told by King Edward VII that he could better serve his country through the Scouts than he could in the army.<sup>35</sup>

Convinced, B-P then took up Scouting full time.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 396.

<sup>35</sup> Baden-Powell, *Lessons from the Varsity of Life*, 264.

<sup>36</sup> B-P again offered his services to the military when the First World War broke out, but Lord Kitchener offered the same advice as the King: B-P was more useful to the nation as head of the Boy Scouts. See Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 450.

Such massive growth was not an easy process. Those early years, as mentioned above, are well documented by historians, but two events in that period are particularly salient here because of their ramifications for the internationalism that was to develop later. First, in late 1909, there was a dangerous conflict within the young organization, which almost tore it apart. The man B-P appointed as Commissioner for London, Sir Francis Vane, was a liberal supporter and a dedicated pacifist. Vane was disturbed by the militarism he saw in the Boy Scouts, and, after severe arguments with other members of the administration, was eventually dismissed. Unfortunately for the Scout Association, Vane was popular in London, and organized a protest. He joined, and then led, a breakaway pacifist group known as the British Boy Scouts (BBS). Most of the Scout groups in London left with him, also joining the BBS. It was a disaster for B-P, who was only saved when Vane's financial troubles caused his movement to decline. The reason Vane's actions were significant internationally, however, was because the BBS began to advertise and grow in British dominions overseas, which "impelled B-P to take positive steps for the first time to establish control over the movement in the colonies and dominions."<sup>37</sup>

The second important event of the pre-war period also constituted a dangerous threat to the Scouts. This time, however, the attack came not from pacifists, but from the military. Scouting was unfortunate to have critics on both ends of the spectrum, being both too military in form for some, and yet too distant from the official defence administration for others. There was a real concern that if war was to break out, Scouting would be forced to merge with the cadet corps, and in doing so would disappear entirely into the military system. In 1911, Secretary of State for War, R.B. Haldane, proposed to absorb all the youth movements in Britain into one cadet organization, in what he called a "second line" of national defence.<sup>38</sup> Worse, In South

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<sup>37</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 408.

<sup>38</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, 29.

Africa, Australia, and Canada, cadet training was already mandatory. B-P's response to this threat was to sell Scouting as a useful "pre-cadet program," so as to avoid it being swallowed up by them.<sup>39</sup> He argued that soldiers that were products of the regular cadet programs were "not fighting men, they were parade machines."<sup>40</sup> Scouts, meanwhile, were independent, able to look after themselves without officers, and were trained for any walk of life, not just the military. Furthermore, Scouting, he argued, was not a rival to the cadets but a useful ally in training boys in citizenship. B-P's rebranding of the Scouts in relation to cadets seemed to work, and back home, when war did break out, it became a golden opportunity for the Scouts to show their worth to the empire. Scouts took up posts watching the coast, guarding telegraph lines, working in hospitals, and running messages. An entire chapter of the *Times History of the War* would later be spent on the Boy Scouts role in the war.<sup>41</sup>

But this was to be the last gasp of the old Scouting ideology. During the war, B-P's Scouts fulfilled their purpose to be "bricks in the wall" and hold back the enemy forces pressing the empire from outside. It seemed a success. But by the end of the war, the winds were changing. The cost of the war had been too great. A new mood was sweeping the public, one which no longer tolerated pure jingoistic patriotism. As Noreen Branson puts it, "A new generation was growing up anxious to test the validity of its parent's assumptions."<sup>42</sup> Anti-war sentiments were expressed in popular works through the 1920's, such as *All Quiet on the Western Front*. British parents now preferred leisure activities for their children that presented

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<sup>39</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 448.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Unknown, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1912. Volume 16, MG28 I73, "Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds," Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>41</sup> *The Times History of the War: Volume xxvii*. (London: The Times, 1918), 145-180.

<sup>42</sup> Noreen Branson, *Britain in the Nineteen Twenties*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975), 241.

“fewer quasi-military trappings,” and the Scouts had to change if they were going to survive in the new world order that peace was sure to bring.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Peter Dewey, *War and Progress: Britain 1914-1945*. (London and New York: Longman, 1997), 189.

## **“The Brotherhood of Mankind”: The Road to Olympia, 1920<sup>44</sup>**

Later chapters will establish in more detail the way in which Scouting’s ideology resonated in various situations. This chapter explores the less tangible, but equally important, intellectual changes within the movement. Here, the discussion focuses on ideas: their definition, their expression, and the ways in which they were understood within the movement. In the Boy Scout Organization in the 1920’s and 1930’s, the Movement’s goals, values, and mission were set by a few key players at the top of the organization, notably Baden-Powell and his staff. The interpretation of these goals and values by the multitude of ordinary members of Scouting will be addressed in later chapters.

In looking at the intellectual basis for Scouting’s policies, two concepts in particular come to the forefront. The history of Scouting’s intellectual foundations is entirely caught up in the interaction, and friction, between them. They are, first, imperialism, and second, internationalism. Both became priorities for the movement’s leaders, and the seemingly contradictory nature of the two created challenges for the Scouts, as they were forced to co-exist within one supposedly coherent world view.

Of the two ideas, imperialism had a longer history in the Scouts, being evident from the beginning in 1907. Imperialism can be subdivided in many ways, such as into formal and informal imperialism, or cultural and economic imperialism. For the purposes of this study, I am going to split the term imperialism into two separate entities: chauvinistic imperialism and patriotic imperialism. The difference is in *intent*: chauvinistic imperialism is based on asserting influence over others due to a belief in one’s superiority. Patriotic imperialism, on the other hand, is more like a sort of nationalism, but extended to the empire rather than to a single nation.

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<sup>44</sup> The quotation is from The Spectator “The International Rally of Boy Scouts,” 1920, TC 55, Scout Association Archive, London.

In other words, it is a feeling of pride in being part of the empire, and one welcomes all others within that empire as part of the fold, rather than as subjects to be controlled. The shift from chauvinistic imperialism to patriotic imperialism occurs when partnership surpasses subjugation as the central relationship between the colonist and home country. During the interwar years, patriotic imperialism was most evident between Britain and its commonwealth of self governing Dominions. Patriotic imperialists tended to prioritize the maintenance and stability of the empire over expansion. A patriotic imperialist from England in 1920, for example, could feel pride in being partners in the same project of empire as a man from India, even though politically India's status was inferior.

Internationalism is equally problematic to define, because it exists on a scale: it is possible to be "more international" than someone else, or to become more, or less, international over time. So, at the high end of the scale, "true internationalism" is: The advocacy of cooperation and understanding between *all* nations, *without any conditions or limitations to that statement*. This means, for example, one cannot be selective about which nations they want to cooperate with; it is all encompassing. On the lower end of the scale, meanwhile, advocating a simple bilateral agreement between just two nations, for example, could also be considered internationalism, but in a very limited form. Internationalism can also be measured in degrees of intensity: does a person or organization merely *declare* that it promotes cooperation between nations; or does it *actively pursue* these goals by various means.

When we are looking at internationalism in Scouting, therefore, we are looking for the organization's position on these two scales: its level of extensity (does it include all nations, or only select ones), and its level of intensity of advocacy towards the inclusion of these nations. It will become evident that there is a definite movement up both scales in the first few years after

the end of the First World War, as Scouting adjusted to a changing public mood. At the same time, though more gradually, a shift from chauvinistic imperialism to patriotic imperialism can also be seen through the interwar years. Explaining this change is the purpose of this chapter.

A sense of how the organization was structured will be a useful tool to understand the way this shift towards internationalism and patriotic imperialism occurred within the Scout Movement. The Scouts officially maintained the conviction that they were a “democratic” organization. This by no means meant, however, that officials in high positions at Scout Headquarters were elected. What was meant by “democratic” was a rather warped interpretation of rule by the people: *anyone* could, if they wished, write to B-P or other Scouting officials, and provide their thoughts or offer their services. Undoubtedly B-P was influenced by some of this correspondence, but he also ignored those he disagreed with. Grassroots democracy existed in some forms locally, as Area Commissioners did hold meetings, at which any member of the organization in their area could attend and help in the process of deciding important local matters. Only in a few extraordinary cases, however, with a charismatic local commissioner like Sir Francis Vane had been in London, were these bodies able to exert considerable influence beyond their limited geographic area. Besides this, there was little democratic impulse within the movement. This lack of input from common Scouters was explained away by B-P in a 1917 article: “Thus these officers [Scouters] are not bothered with committee or office work, as is so often the drawback in other societies, but are free to devote the whole of their spare time and energy to the main work, namely, the training of the boy.”<sup>45</sup> This excuse for the undemocratic nature of the movement may have sound and practical benefits, but nonetheless, the result was

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<sup>45</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Decentralization” in *B-P’s Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 67.



that B-P, who was proclaimed in 1920 to be the “Chief Scout of the World,” ruled his movement autocratically.

Admittedly, B-P often acted in a laissez-faire manner despite his authority, allowing a great deal of freedom to the local Scouters, provided that they followed the standards set by him at HQ. But this “hands-off” approach was due more to HQ’s inability to assert direct control because of a lack of resources rather than due to a true laissez-faire ideology. One of the themes that emerge from this study is that maintaining central authority over the Movement was a primary aim of Scouting’s administrators. This goal superseded in many cases even the core principles of internationalism and imperialism in decision making. B-P feared losing control, especially after Sir Francis Vane’s revolt.

B-P’s rule, mirroring the British constitutional monarchy, was checked by a body of “sober second thought,” a national committee. The Committee debated and approved B-P’s wishes, and while there were clashes between this body and B-P, it was not a real voice of the common members. In fact, B-P often complained that the committee was too out of touch, too elderly, and too slow (quite the statement for a man who was active in the Movement until his eighties!).<sup>46</sup> The Committee was appointed, not elected. It was more like a House of Lords than a House of Commons.

Below this level, the Committee appointed Local Commissioners, usually respectable gentlemen with spare time, who could run the Movement in their area on a volunteer basis. These were to represent the concerns of their local area to Headquarters. Finally, on the lowest rung of the organizational ladder, there were the everyday Scouters who ran troops of boys. Even at the troop level there was a strict hierarchy, with Scoutmasters and Assistant Scouters. The boys themselves were divided into Patrol Leaders, Corporals (later Assistant Patrol Leaders),

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<sup>46</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 498-499.

First and Second Class Scouts, and Tenderfoots. The system was supposed to be a practical way of teaching boys leadership, by transferring some of the responsibility from the Scouter to a few deserving boys as Patrol Leaders.

This was the structure of the Scout organization in Britain, and it was copied in many countries around the world. In a process which will be discussed more thoroughly later, they were all put under a World Bureau after 1920. The Bureau's job was to "recognize" and register one national movement per country, and set certain standards for qualification. Beyond that, the World Bureau had little responsibility. The dominions were a special case, and chose to remain under the British Scout Headquarters, which was renamed Imperial Headquarters (IHQ). B-P took this as a promising sign for the empire and its future strength and unity. He appointed a Chief Scout for each dominion, and a carbon copy of the British structure was created in each one. The only exception was that in the dominions, the appointed Chief Scout was a figurehead, while the National Committee, led by a Chief Commissioner, held the real power. Only in Britain did the moral authority of B-P allow the Chief Scout to be an active, policy setting "monarch."

It is clear from the structure of the organization that policy making, though perhaps in a limited way informed by the broader membership, was made at the top, and then disseminated to the members by various means. Reliable means of dissemination were paramount, as there were almost constant changes to the Movement's values and aims. The shift in emphasis towards internationalism did not occur at one specific moment, nor did the definition of what was meant by internationalism stay the same in every situation, changing in both intensity and extensity. I have identified four specific ways in which these changes in ideology manifested themselves, which will be examined in turn. They are:

1. *Scouting for Boys*. The Scout handbook
2. The Scout Law. The law was the ideological core of Scouting.
3. Scout magazines.
4. Post-war initiatives, including world gatherings known as jamborees and the creation of the World Bureau.

The first of these indicators of change, *Scouting for Boys*, went through twenty-two editions before 1944. Each edition contained slight, but sometimes significant, alterations in emphasis. Elleke Boehmer has noted that “B-P worked hard between editions to widen and globalize the text’s cultural and social references, in order that Britain no longer be placed at the centre of the Scouting world.”<sup>47</sup> A prime example of this is an anecdote, from the first edition, in which a British gentleman forces an Indian chief to take off his shoes as a sign of inferiority to the British. The cruel and unmasked chauvinistic imperialism on display in this anecdote would not have sat well in colonial circles; it was dropped from the book as early as the second edition. At this early stage, however, the transition was more of a toning down of chauvinistic imperialism rather than a building up of a new internationalism.

The Scout Law, however, as the central pillar of the Scouting ideal, had even more significant impacts when it was altered. It changed only infrequently, but when it did, it meant a significant shift in aims and values. The Law, though at first glance just a childish mantra for the youth themselves to observe in their petty schoolyard lives, was actually quite important at the administrative level, as it served as a sort of business ethic code or company policy guideline. It went through two significant changes in the early years. One came in 1911, when B-P turned the law, originally of nine parts, into a Decalogue. The tenth and final law he added was to be his favourite: *a Scout is pure in thought, word, and deed*. An honourable sentiment, it in a way summed up the spirit of the other nine laws, but it added little in terms of expanding or shifting

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<sup>47</sup> Elleke Boehmer. “Introduction” in *Scouting for Boys*, xliv.

the movement's focus. It was the second significant change to the Scout Law that was more important to our narrative of developing internationalism. This concerned the Fourth Scout Law, which, as discussed in the previous chapter, was originally aimed at preventing class conflict at home in the highly stratified and class conscious Britain. In 1910, however, B-P changed the emphasis of the law so that, instead of focusing solely on the domestic issue of class, it became the more all-encompassing statement: *A Scout is a friend to all, and a brother to every other Scout, no matter to what **country, class or creed** the other belongs*. It is clear that B-P, even at this early stage, was at least thinking about the possibilities of a global movement. As such, it would be incorrect to say that Scouting hindered or opposed internationalism in favour of its defensive and militant imperial roots. But it would not be a stretch to say that the international outlook was *thrust* on the Scouts. The threat that Vane's BBS posed as a rival in the dominions made it clear that steps had to be taken if Scouting's future were to be secured. Furthermore, it was increasingly obvious that some form of administration and standardization was going to be necessary outside of England, as membership in the movement expanded rapidly worldwide. Unchecked and uncontrolled, the results could be potentially chaotic. The most important of these international branches was the American Scout organization, started in 1910. B-P, like many Britons, was keen to maintain close ties with this growing giant. This new incarnation of the fourth law, then, was not a progressive step, but a necessary adjustment made to reflect the changing situation on the ground. At this early stage, it was merely a recognition that something needed to be done to embrace these foreign Scouts, or else risk losing control over them.

After the Law and the Scout handbook itself, the next most important means by which B-P indicated his intentions for the Movement was through the various Scout magazines. Issued quite frequently, there were various publications, both for Scouts themselves and for their

Scouters. These were mostly produced, at first, by Pearson's publishing company as a moneymaking engine, though B-P requested space in each issue for himself.<sup>48</sup> He used these pages as a personal podium, to preach on issues of the moment, and indicate what course the Scouting community ought to take. By comparing the articles B-P wrote for these magazines over the years, the way his thought process evolved is quite evident.

One of the earliest manifestations of internationalism in B-P's writings is from a December 1911 article:

#### INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD

The different foreign countries – some twelve there are – which have adopted Scouting for their boys are now forming a friendly alliance with us for mutual interchange of views, correspondence, and visits, and thereby to promote a closer feeling of sympathy between the rising generations.

International peace can only be built on one foundation, and that is an international desire for peace on the part of the peoples themselves in such strength as to guide their Governments.

If the price of one Dreadnought were made available to us for developing this international friendliness and comradeship between the rising generations, I believe we in the Scouts would do more towards preventing war than all the Dreadnoughts put together.<sup>49</sup>

Internationalism seems to be prominent in this early piece, but upon closer inspection it presents a very conservative approach to international relations. Several aspects of the article stand out. First of all, it is clear that it was the “foreign countries” which approached the British Scouts to create some sort of interaction, rather than the other way around. B-P's organization was not yet actively seeking to look beyond its own borders. In the cases that it did so, it was merely in trivial form through “pen-pal” correspondence and some limited international travel. Second, of broader contextual significance, the Dreadnought analogy points to the actual understanding B-P had of international relations. When B-P says that “comradeship between the rising generations” would prevent war, it is unclear between which countries that comradeship ought to exist. Does he really mean to make friends with German youth? Unlikely. For the analogy to be exact,

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<sup>48</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 389.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “International Brotherhood” in *B-P's Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 26.

Scouting friendliness would have to be used in the same manner as the Dreadnoughts: these battleships were part of a race to build arms for national defence, and therefore Scout networking must be part of a race to build alliances for national defence. Tellingly, his word choice for these international interactions was “alliance.” B-P was talking about classic coalition building, rather than about a true internationalism.

In June 1913, a second, much longer and more thorough article on international brotherhood appeared in *The Scouter*. B-P wrote it immediately after returning from a world tour, in which he met Scouts from various continents. The article stated that if the sentiment of brotherhood “were only promoted, it would mean an immense deal for the strengthening of the bonds of our Empire, and even beyond that, for the assurance of peace in the world through a better understanding and fellowship between the nations.”<sup>50</sup> By this time, B-P had begun to recognize that Scouting really could be a useful tool to break down borders. The article went on to talk about the problems Scouting could overcome in the various places: Anglo-French antagonism in Canada, Eurasian and White in India, Boer and Briton in South Africa, Irish and English in Britain. But all of these were domestic issues. It was not yet a true internationalism that B-P was envisioning. Furthermore, while he recognized the usefulness of Scouting in promoting unity, he applied it primarily not to the world, but to the empire.

In April, 1914, B-P wrote another article, this time which confirmed more bluntly his actual understanding of international affairs. Entitled *Anti-War, but not, therefore, Anti-Military*, the article does not contain any form of liberal internationalism, but instead advocated a policy grounded in a realist understanding of international relations. The article stated: “you cannot do away with war by abolishing armies; you might as well try to do away with crime by abolishing

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<sup>50</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Overseas Scouts” in *B-P’s Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 32.

the police...Building palaces for peace conferences,” it continued, was not the way to ensure peace.<sup>51</sup> Instead, the Scouts could bring peace by continuing to strengthen their mutual goodwill between nations. But it is clear that the main thrust of his argument was to ensure that Scouts, both in his country, and those allied with Britain, would do their duty and support military rearmament.

Despite the impressive number of times “internationalism” in this embryonic form was mentioned by B-P in the pre-war years, it is clear that it was not yet a priority. It was often only rhetoric, secondary to domestic and imperial aims. The weakness of internationalism as a pillar of the Scout Movement was confirmed when war broke out, at which time B-P wrote to his Scouting audience:

[The outbreak of the war] shows how little are the people of these countries as yet in sufficient mutual sympathy as to render wars impossible between them. This will be so until better understanding is generally established. Let us do what we can through the Scout brotherhood to promote this in the future. For the immediate present we have duties to our country to perform.<sup>52</sup>

The last sentence is the key phrase. Any international bonds that may have been formed were immediately to be thrown aside when faced with war, and replaced with “duty to country”. Instilling an inward looking, defensive nationalism was still the dominant aim and purpose of the Scout Movement at the outbreak of the First World War. Internationalism was only a secondary aim, catered to primarily because of the movement’s global membership. International cooperation would have to wait.

By the end of the war, however, the situation had changed considerably. Anti-militaristic sentiment was dominant in Britain. The very real danger to Scouting if it remained in its militaristic form was evidenced by the decline of other youth movements that failed to change.

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<sup>51</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Anti-War, but not, Therefore, Anti-Military” in *B-P’s Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 49-50.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “The Outbreak of War” in *B-P’s Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 54.

The Church Lads Brigade (CLB), for example, was one of the youth organizations that had accepted Haldane's offer in 1911 to become an officially recognized cadet program. Its ties to the military were a death knell after the war. While comparable, but more pacifist, organizations such as the Boy's Brigade grew exponentially in membership in that time, CLB membership fell. In 1911, it had approximately 36,000 members. By 1925, however, that number had halved, falling to just 18,189.<sup>53</sup> It was clear that the Scouts had to make a change if they were going to avoid the same fate. From this mentality sprang the last of the four indicators of change within the Scout Movement as regards internationalism: its major post war initiatives.

These initiatives, the World Jamboree and World Bureau, were the most obvious manifestation of Scouting's new aims, being both highly visible and novel. They occurred nearly simultaneously, and both were a part of the post-war wave of international sentiment symbolized by the creation of the League of Nations. Administratively, the Scouts took a big step in 1920, by holding its first ever International Scout Conference, with 33 countries represented.<sup>54</sup> At this conference, the Boy Scouts International Bureau was established, with the role of regulating the national Scouting organizations. Interestingly, the Dominions were given the choice to create their own national organization under the World Bureau, or stay under IHQ control. "In giving them this option," B-P wrote, "we followed the precedent of the League of Nations on which the dominions are separately represented."<sup>55</sup> The Dominions' Scouts decided, however, to stay under the jurisdiction of IHQ.<sup>56</sup> Hubert Martin, the former International Commissioner for British

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<sup>53</sup> Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, 139.

<sup>54</sup> The Girl Guides actually were ahead of the Boy Scouts in this, setting up their Guide International Council in February 1919. See Tammy Proctor. *On My Honour: Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain*. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2002), 133.

<sup>55</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Unknown, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1929. TC 24, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>56</sup> Canadian Scouting remained under Imperial Headquarters until 1946, when it became its own independent national organization.



Scouting, was elected as the Bureau's first director.<sup>57</sup> Two years later, in 1922, an International Committee was elected at the Second International Scout Conference, and the Bureau became a fully functional organization.<sup>58</sup> Scouting was officially becoming an international actor.

Most authors see the decision to make internationalism a core pillar of the Scouting Movement after the end of World War One as a sort of master strategy to remain relevant in the new post war world.<sup>59</sup> With hindsight, it is easy to see the changes Scouting made as wise decisions made by a heroic B-P. Unfortunately, that would be a false understanding of the situation. Although internationalism was now to become, unlike the prewar period, an actual central aim of the movement, it did not become so easily. It was, once again, thrust on the ambivalent Scout organization. It would be wonderful to be able to say that internationalism in Scouting predated the "Wilsonian moment;" that somehow internationalism was possible in the idealist world of the child through Scouting before it was possible in the world of the adult at the League of Nations. But that is not the case. Scouting's policy makers were very much in the adult world, and were rather slow to take up internationalism. Progressive initiatives such as the World Bureau were tempered by one last gasp of the old Scouting ideology, when, as late as 1922, a scheme was being implemented in Scouting that was, in principle, almost identical to the character building, loyalty inducing, Scouting of the pre-war years. This scheme was the overtly imperial Rover program, which was intended for older boys. Begun in 1918, its handbook was published in 1922. Called *Rovering to Success*, the book was almost a step backwards in time, out of touch with the post-war mood. This senior branch of the Scout Movement, B-P wrote, was

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<sup>57</sup> Proctor, *On My Honour*, 134.

<sup>58</sup> World Scout Bureau. *Scouting – 100 Years old in 2007*.

[http://scout.org/en/about\\_Scouting/facts\\_figures/history/Scouting\\_100\\_years\\_old\\_in\\_2007](http://scout.org/en/about_Scouting/facts_figures/history/Scouting_100_years_old_in_2007) (accessed May 31, 2012)

<sup>59</sup> See for example, Parsons, *Race, Resistance and the Boy Scout Movement*, 54-55, 62. To be fair to Parsons, the rest of his work is an exemplary study, exploring the relationship between official and non-official Scouts in British colonial Africa.

“framed to meet the views of educationists desiring an extension of the school age for technical training, and of the military authorities for compulsory cadet training. It is one which possibly may commend itself also in the overseas Dominions as well as at home to run side by side with the cadet system.”<sup>60</sup> The association with the cadets implies that B-P clearly had not yet been fully convinced that the Movement was in need of a change away from militarism altogether.

That is not to say that B-P was *forced* to champion the cause of peace; he too had witnessed the horrors of the war while in France in 1915. But for him, peace still lay in the defensive security of the empire, and only secondarily in liberal internationalist projects. The driving force behind the Scouts’ shift to internationalism lay elsewhere. In some ways, it was almost accidental.

The best example of this “accidental internationalism” can be seen in the First International Jamboree, held at the Olympia exhibition centre in London, at the same time as the First International Scout Conference, in 1920. Eight thousand boys from around the world gathered in the hall, the floor of which had been covered with turf on which Scouts pitched their tents, and participated in demonstrations and events for a full week of summer fun. Games and competitions were tempered with formal ceremonies and presentations. London newspapers covered the event with daily stories, drawing crowds of Londoners to visit, to see what all of the hubbub was about. Most were thoroughly impressed with the theatrics. “Most real of all” effused *The Times*, “was the great moment when the Chief Scout charged the boys to keep the peace, which their brother Scouts had bought with their lives, to make the world worthy of those who had fallen. ‘Will you do this thing?’ he cried; and the reply came from thousands of throats, ‘I

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<sup>60</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to A.G. Wade, July 22, 1915. No. 9, Add. MS. 50255A, “Wade Papers,” British Library, London.

will do my best.”<sup>61</sup> Besides this majestic call-and-answer ceremony which closed out the rally on the last day, the jamboree program involved a flurry of activity, including a ritualistic snake dance based on Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*, displays of firefighting and first aid, singing, and cycling. Also included were competitions in tug of war, hurdle racing, and bugling. Dignitaries such as the Duke of Connaught and Princess Mary attended, alongside Robert Cecil, Chairman of the League of Nations Union (LNU), who opened the event. As *The Spectator* implied, the jamboree had a high purpose:

First and foremost it stands for universal brotherhood and the upholding of the dignity and authority of government expressed in law and order – a Scout promises on his honour to do his best to do his duty to God and the King. The brotherhood of mankind – expressed in action by the feeding of the hungry, visiting the sick, the helping of those in distress... [and] the wonderful tonic of the Scout smile.<sup>62</sup>

As far as putting on a show was concerned, the Jamboree was a spectacular success for international Scouting. Held at Olympia, the connection with another great international gathering, the Olympics, was not by chance. The symbolism of this great show was planned to present to the world a vision of unity and brotherhood. B-P. In the build up to the jamboree, B-P wrote publicly in *the Scouter*:

Even if the jamboree did nothing towards enthusing the boys, towards educating the public, or towards bringing help to the Scoutmasters, yet it would be worthwhile if through bringing together the representatives of foreign countries on the one ideal of good citizenship, it should have promoted the spirit of fraternity and mutual goodwill without which the formal league of nations can only be an empty shell.<sup>63</sup>

This confident, unrepentant internationalism was only a public facade, however. Private correspondences and reports show that the international nature of the jamboree was quite unintentional and even unexpected. On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, in a letter to Robert Cecil requesting he open the Jamboree, B-P registered his surprise at the Jamboree’s size: “The Boy Scout Jamboree next week at Olympia is turning out to be a bigger international meeting than we had anticipated.

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<sup>61</sup> “The Jamboree” *The Times*, August 9, 1920, 11.

<sup>62</sup> The Spectator “The International Rally of Boy Scouts” 1920, TC 55, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Baden-Powell “Automatic Internationality” in *B-P’s Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 94.

Some 26 foreign countries are now sending representative parties.”<sup>64</sup> Despite being caught off guard, B-P was able to turn this enthusiasm into a spectacular show of internationalism. But the Jamboree had gone far beyond its original scope. Indeed, at first B-P had been hesitant, unsure about the wisdom of inviting foreigners. He laid out his reservations to the Committee in 1920:

1. Personally speaking I never intended it to be more than our after-the-war jamboree – and a resumption of our usual biennial inspiring show.
2. Inviting foreigners to attend it came as a second thought
3. The committee only advanced money for our own show and the charter would not allow it for foreigners
4. We have advertized that any proceeds are to go to our own endowment fund – not to an international one.
5. If it is an international show it would be insulting the other nations not to have asked their opinion. An international committee should manage it...
6. We have made the foreigners our guests because it is our show – otherwise they would have come on their own (and would not necessarily have had it in London).

For the above reasons I think we should explain that we only call it “international” in the sense that we invite all Scouts to attend – and that as an outcome we shall hope for a real international one within the next few years.<sup>65</sup>

Clearly, the Jamboree was a turning point. It is obvious from this memo that B-P was initially forced into making it an international event. However, the last sentence suggests that, upon seeing its success internationally, he accepted the idea wholeheartedly. Indeed, he would come to champion that cause, making the jamboree his “weapon,” as Tim Jeal calls it, in his crusade for peace.<sup>66</sup> Soon, world jamborees became central to the Boy Scout program, running every four years, similar in form and symbolism to the Olympics.

While B-P preached brotherhood from his pulpit at the Jamboree, the actual young attendees of the Jamboree had mixed feelings about their foreign brothers. B-P, writing to the Boy Scouts of America after Olympia, recounted a story where he had asked a young British Scout who he liked best of all the visiting nations at the Jamboree. The young boy answered “the Americans”:

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<sup>64</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Robert Cecil, July, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1920. TC 55, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>65</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, 1920. TC 55. Scout Association Archive, London

<sup>66</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 511.

because, well, they weren't foreigners. They were just ourselves.' Yet for the first day or two the British boys kept more distance between themselves and the Americans than they did with other nations. There was a different feeling about them, it was deeper than the mere surface courtesy meted to others; in their slow British way our boys were sizing up these lads of the same tongue and the same characteristics. On the third day the ice melted away, admiration came and it began respect, and thence friendship grew – it grew fast and strong. Today the Boy Scouts of America are looked on as brothers by the Boy Scouts of Britain...but I believe that the jamboree went one step further in bringing together, on a common platform, the younger generation, the future citizens of both countries. It is now up to us, if you on your side of the ocean are as willing as we on this side, to keep that good feeling alive by practical endeavour.<sup>67</sup>

This account makes the transatlantic relationship seem quite amiable and heart-warming.

Another young British participant, however, remembered things slightly differently:

The Americans had come over intent upon carrying off every competitions they were eligible for...but the Americans did not do so well as they were fully convinced they would, and when competition after competition was wrested from them, they allowed their chagrin to become too obvious.

The climax came when Scotland won a tug-of-war final that America had already counted as hers. Feelings ran high, and it was rumoured that the Scottish Lines would be raided that night, and tents let down upon the sleepers.<sup>68</sup>

The expected “attack” never materialized, but this reflection shows that some of the more high-minded of the jamboree’s aims may not have reached every youth in the way B-P hoped.

Still, the jamboree is important because it represents the moment that internationalism in Scouting finally came into its own. Prior to this, internationalism in Scouting had been sort of a hodgepodge of ideals, called upon when it was convenient or advantageous. But the jamboree made a strong impression on B-P, enough to be a turning point of sorts. From 1920 on, internationalism became a core value of Scouting.

It did not do so at the expense of empire, however. In fact, the First World Jamboree’s most immediate impact on B-P was the realization that, since the world jamboree was so successful in bringing together foreigners, a similar rally might be equally successful in uniting the empire’s colonies and dominions. He proposed the idea of an imperial rally to the IHQ High Commissioner in 1922:

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<sup>67</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. “Impressions on Jamboree for publication in Boy Scouts of America Yearbook.” TC 55, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>68</sup> Alan Mackay. *The Reminiscences of a Scottish Scout, 1912-1923*. (India: 1931), 27.

The Boy Scout Jamboree in 1920 was originally planned merely for the Boy Scouts of the United Kingdom, but overseas states and foreign countries desired to send contingents and automatically it developed into a most successful international meeting. The results have been remarkable in producing a new and widespread spirit of brotherhood and mutual goodwill. With this experience to go upon we could make a big thing of an empire jamboree as suggested, such as would have far reaching effects in the future.<sup>69</sup>

The Imperial Jamboree was held in August 1924 at Wembley Stadium in London, and was attended by over 12,000 Scouts from around the empire. Held under the auspices of the British Empire Exhibition taking place that year, it was an imperial display of the highest proportions. Events included a historical pageant of Canada, and other such pageants from the far corners of the empire. Imperialist poet Rudyard Kipling attended for a day, to see how his literature had been incorporated into the Movement. More significantly, the Prince of Wales himself attended. He addressed the Jamboree, joined in a campfire, and even stayed overnight under canvas.<sup>70</sup>

When the Imperial display at Wembley was finished, many of the contingents, who had come a long way to England, continued on to Denmark, where the Second World Jamboree was being held the next week. Since contingents could come for both events, the Imperial Jamboree had the effect of vastly increasing the variety and number of long distance travellers to Denmark's World Jamboree. This is exactly as B-P envisioned it. He would have found it fitting that the Imperial Jamboree was used as a stepping stone to reach the World Jamboree, because in his understanding of international relations, the empire was a stepping stone towards global governance. After Wembley, he wrote to *The Times*:

The British Commonwealth of states is a great Brotherland...There lies before us yet a wider Brotherland even than this empire of ours. There are other motherlands besides Great Britain; there is France: there is America and Holland and Denmark – indeed every civilized country in the world. All these have their sons. These are sons of the One Father and therefore the world itself is a Brotherland...it is for this reason that our empire jamboree, big though it has been in its results and its possibilities, is only a step in progression to the greater rally, with its still more far reaching possibilities, of the nations at Copenhagen.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to High Commissioner. December 30, 1922. TC 55, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>70</sup> R. H. Kiernan, *Baden-Powell*, (New York: Argosy-Antiquarian Ltd, 1970.) Quoted in 'The Boy Scouts Imperial jamboree, 1924.' *Pine Tree Web* <http://www.pinetreeweb.com/1924-imperial.htm>. (accessed August 8th, 2012)

<sup>71</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. "Impressions on the Jamboree for Publication in The Times." 1924. TC 55, Scout Association Archive, London.

B-P clearly understood the empire as one of several spheres of influence, among whom the world was divided. If each of these spheres could cooperate, they would create a more effective form of global governance. BP wrote the fullest expression of this vision in 1939, as a sort of lament, and broadcast to Copenhagen and Berlin:

Nations are grouped generally according to race, and if those which are racially connected were to form groups of states united in comradeship it would be a step gained... We have already the United States of North America, those of Latin America, the British Commonwealth of states and so on. If all such groups cultivate more friendship and mutual cooperation and less of rivalry and suspicion (as very many are actually doing) we shall only have one more step to attain and that is the closer relationship of these various groups about the world.<sup>72</sup>

The idea of regional building blocks contributing towards global governance was ultimately downplayed in the United Nations system, which emphasized the sovereignty of individual nation states. Regional organizations nonetheless remain significant. The salient point for the history of Scouting, however, is that fact that this perspective made it possible for B-P's to envision imperialists and internationalists as working towards the same goal, rather than as opposing forces. Working towards uniting the empire, then, as the Boy Scouts were intended to do, was actually ultimately also seen as working towards uniting the globe, through its various regional blocs.

The period immediately following the First World War, highlighted by the Olympia Jamboree and the creation of the World Bureau, were formative years for the Scout organization. At first, Scouting, rather than being progressive, actually dragged its heels, only changing just enough to maintain its prominence and relevance. By 1931, however, the change was complete. "The days are long over," wrote B-P, "when Scouting was looked upon as a useful game for keeping English boys out of mischief."<sup>73</sup> The Movement now had two great purposes set before

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<sup>72</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. "Why did God send the War?" August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1939. TC 83, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>73</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. "International Scouting" in *B-P's Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 138.

it; to strengthen the benevolent bonds of empire, and through this, to secure the goodwill of all peoples of all nations. These two entities, one imperial and one global, became the yardsticks with which progress measured. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the movement, B-P took stock of Scouting's history so far, detailing Scouting's success and growth by these two levels of measurement, giving Scouting's membership numbers, first in the empire, and then worldwide.<sup>74</sup> None of this dual purpose, which now became so central, was evident in the pre-war years. Imperialism had been there from the start, but internationalism only manifested itself in a sort of hodgepodge muddle of ideals, to be admired but only pursued if convenient.

The early interwar period, however, saw the crystallization of a coherent international outlook in Scouting circles, established by the administration and disseminated to the wider membership through its various means of communication. As with so many other aspects of the Movement, B-P had to find a way to reconcile two seemingly contrary concepts, imperialism and internationalism, both of which he had come to feel represented the aims and values of the Movement. His solution was to make the one a building block towards the other; to make imperialism a step on the road to international cooperation. It was not a perfect match, unfortunately, but B-P was unperturbed by inconsistencies in his worldview, being, as Allen Warren has argued, "not a systematic thinker."<sup>75</sup> Through the rest of the twenties and thirties, international Scouting struggled to navigate a path which wove these strands together, to bring them into accord with one another rather than in opposition. The next two chapters focus, approximately, on these two streams in turn. First, internationalism in Scouting's relationship

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<sup>74</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. "Our Twenty-Fifth Anniversary" in *B-P's Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 155.

<sup>75</sup> "Powell, Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-, first Baron Baden-Powell (1857–1941)," Allen Warren in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30520> (accessed July 23, 2012).



with the League of Nations, and then imperialism in the various issues of the commonwealth and colonies.

## **The Soul of the League: Scouting's Crusade for Peace**

*Peace: "It has been formulated by our legislators, but it cannot have complete success until it possesses a soul – that is the spirit of the people...Fortunately the lesson of the war among the nations has been reflected in a minor degree in the Boy Scout Movement...We have seen with our own eyes the international development of our brotherhood and we have realized that the true spirit of Scout comradeship inspires it, a spirit which recognizes no difference of country, creed, colour or class, a spirit which may continually contribute to the soul of the League of Nations."*<sup>76</sup>

- Robert Baden-Powell, *The Jamboree Scout* (1921)

The League of Nations quickly formed the hub of international relations. It was clear in 1919 that this was to be a new instrument of foreign policy, but there was significant debate about how it was to be used. Did the new institution have the power necessary to arrange international cooperation, as envisioned by Woodrow Wilson and Jan Smuts, or was the League a new forum for the old power politics of the great powers? The British Government certainly believed the League was merely a sort of revamped and enlarged version of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Concert of Europe.<sup>77</sup> In either case, whether perceived as a liberal internationalist institution, or as a realist tool, the League took on a great deal of importance. The Scouts, having established international cooperation as an important goal intellectually, were quick to attach themselves to this rising star.

Relations with the League, however, were not always easy. International relations are a form of politics, and Scouting had a very strict policy against any sort of political involvement. By "non-political," they meant that they did not discriminate against or support any political party or faction. Communism, was the exception, being openly criticized in Scouting publications. Non-partisanship was as much a core tenet of Scouting as internationalism, and a significant degree of tension, therefore, was created between these two. The Scouts wished to be both non-political and pro-internationalist. Any sort of official affiliation with the League was

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<sup>76</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. "Article for the Jamboree Scout," 1921. TC 21, Scout Association Archive, London

<sup>77</sup> Ruth Beatrice Henig, *The League of Nations.* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1973), 7.

out of the question, but at the same time Scouting wanted to associate themselves with the League in people's minds. After seeing the demise of the CLB, they were attempting to change their image quickly from militarist to internationalist, and the quickest way to do that was by association with the peace process represented by the League. Relations between Scouting and the League of Nations in this period were informed always by an attempt to strike a balance between these two opposing aims, to be both distant from, and yet on board with, the official project of internationalism.

The earliest hint of a relationship between the Boy Scouts and the future League of Nations came while the war was still being fought. Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley, a prominent clergyman, previously involved in conservation in the Lakelands, was central in planning celebrations for armistice.<sup>78</sup> He had strong beliefs about the way peace ought to be maintained, and Baden-Powell was evidently impressed by his proposals. On August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1918, he wrote to Rawnsley:

I have read with much interest what you have said about the League of Nations and that it should begin in the schools by linking up the younger generation in all the different countries. I hope you will have observed that that is what we are already doing in the Boy Scouts and Girl Guide movements which have now been started in most foreign countries and we are encouraging in every way close touch and personal sympathy between them all by interchange of correspondence which we hope later on will develop into interchange of visits. So we have some of your ideas on a practical footing and I hope it will meet with your approval.<sup>79</sup>

This letter is reminiscent of B-P's writings from his younger days in the military, in which he was a master of self promotion. In this case, he turned those skills towards promoting and advertising the Boy Scouts. Having Rawnsley on board with the idea of the Scouts as peace builders, before the war was even at an end, would have been a powerful endorsement.

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<sup>78</sup> "Rawnsley, Hardwicke Drummond (1851–1920)," Graham Murphy in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37884> (accessed July 23, 2012).

<sup>79</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Hardwicke Rawnsley, August 1, 1918. TC 29, Scout Association Archive, London.

Evidently, B-P's solicitation and publicizing worked. By the next February, when the Paris Peace Conference had been convened, and the League of Nations was actually in the planning stages, it was the League's planners who would reach out to the Boy Scouts, rather than the other way round. The League's Educational Committee, for example, wrote to B-P in hopes that his Boy Scout organization could assist in achieving the Committee's aims.<sup>80</sup>

B-P was rather slow to respond, and it would be mere guesswork to explain why, but he did reply in August with a sincere wish for cooperation. No tangible interaction, however, came of this correspondence, perhaps because of B-P's delayed response. But a loose relationship between the League and the Scouts began to grow. League representatives, for example, attended most of the Scouts' World Jamborees as observers.<sup>81</sup> In 1926 Katharine Furse, who was Hubert Martin's equivalent for the Girl Guides, represented the Scout and Guide Movements on the League of Nations Advisory Committee on the Protection of Children.<sup>82</sup> B-P himself also remained within the circle of those concerned with international education, as he attended a Congress of Moral Education at Geneva in 1922, after which he corresponded briefly with a Mr. Folkema about a scheme for international literature which was anti-war.<sup>83</sup> In an interview from the same period, he demonstrates that he was personally interested in peace inducing education:

A passionate desire to see a League of Nations a success must be fostered in the young, so that antiwar spirit may be one of the dominant characteristics of the next and succeeding generations. This great idea I think ought to be encouraged to grow up in the spirit of the people if the official League of Nations is to be successful. Already I believe there has been sown in the Boy Scout Movement seeds which will go a long way to make for better feeling between the white races of the world and the coloured...<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Lyttelton to Robert Baden-Powell, February 25, 1919. TC 29, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>81</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to The Carnegie Institute for the Promotion of International Peace, July 27, 1932. TC 24, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>82</sup> "The Scout Movement and the League of Nations." Minutes of the 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Boy Scouts of Canada. November 3, 1925. Volume 2, MG28 I73, "Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds," Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>83</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Mr. Folkema, August 5, 1922. TC 29, Scout Association Archives, London.

<sup>84</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "How to Help the League of Nations (Interview)" Undated. TC 29, Scout Association Archive, London.

In usual B-P fashion, support for the League's initiatives is tied up in this interview with a not-so-subtle advertisement for the Boy Scout's own work in the field. Even more significantly, B-P separates the pacifist "spirit of the people" from the "official" League of Nations. He is very careful to assert the Scout's independence in their efforts at peace. Remaining an autonomous organization had been a priority since 1908, first distancing itself from the military cadets, and in this case, from the League.

This did not mean that the Scouts would ignore an opportunity to use the League to strengthen their visibility and authority. The chance to do just that came in 1923, and this would be the high point of Scouting's initiatives at the League. This was also a significant moment because, for the first time, it was a major initiative spearheaded not by the ever-present B-P, but by the head of the relatively new International Bureau, Hubert Martin. The initiative was to convince the Council of the League of Nations to pass a resolution which urged governments to facilitate travel for Scout Troops. Martin managed to get support from the very top, as the League's Secretary-General, Eric Drummond, approved of the resolution, with one caveat: it would be "more effective to get a resolution passed by the Assembly of the League, rather than by the Council."<sup>85</sup> Drummond's advice was followed, and the resolution was drafted and presented to the Assembly that September. Martin spent the week of the meeting rushing around to scavenge up support for the resolution, writing to B-P on the 24<sup>th</sup>:

Urgent. I attach a copy of the resolution now before the League of Nations. It passed its first reading on Friday and is expected to come up for final consideration this week. I have written and telegraphed to all Scout Associations in Europe asking them to get their national delegates to the League of Nations to support it. I suggest you telegraph to Lord Robert Cecil, Societe des Nations, Geneva, asking him to support it.<sup>86</sup>

The solicitation paid off, and the resolution passed the next week. The assembly, however, altered the wording of the resolution during the process. The draft of the resolution had read very

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<sup>85</sup> Phillip Baker to Hubert Martin, January 3, 1923. TC 29, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>86</sup> Hubert Martin to Robert Baden-Powell, September 24, 1923. TC 29, Scout Association Archive, London.

much like one of B-P's articles, publicizing the Scouts' outstanding work in "rendering very real and valuable services in the cause of world peace."<sup>87</sup> It asked member states to give travelling Scouts any help as may be necessary when abroad. The final resolution shifted the focus away from Scouting somewhat. It is reproduced here in full:

The assembly,  
considering the importance of encouraging contact between the younger generations of different nationalities,  
invites the governments of the states members of the League of Nations to grant all possible facilities for travel by land or by water:  
(a) To groups of students at higher or secondary educational institutions,  
(b) To groups of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides  
Belonging to a registered national association of all states members of the League, when such groups are travelling from the territory of one state member of the League either through or to the territory of another state member.<sup>88</sup>

The changes are significant. Not only was the high praise of the Scout Organization removed from the text, it made the Scouts only one of several groups to benefit from the resolution, rather than highlighting the Scouts themselves. The actual practical use of the resolution stayed the same as it was in the draft, i.e. travel for Scout troops would be facilitated, but the form of the resolution was significantly altered. The goal of the original draft was *to aid the Scouts*; the goal of the final resolution was *to aid the cause of contact between youth*, using schools and the Scouts as *tools to this end*. The League had tacitly put the Scouts in their place. Education was certainly important, but the Boy Scouts were still just one youth organization among many.

This did not put off B-P. He continued to promote the Scouts as an organization that was doing just as much, if not *more*, work towards world peace than the official League. Less than a year after the resolution passed, he was proclaiming that the Scout Movement itself was a "Junior League of Nations."<sup>89</sup> The Scouts would use that name as a brand, with or without actual

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> "Final Resolution of the fourth assembly of the League of Nation: Travelling facilities for groups of students, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides." September 28, 1923. TC 29, Scout Association Archives, London.

<sup>89</sup> "A Junior League of Nations." *American Boys Life Magazine*. September 1924.

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=rqodgqdfHaMC&pg=PA3&lpg=PA3&dq=league+of+nations++boy+scouts&sour>

League support. Indeed, B-P's articles for *The Scouter* became even *more* blunt, not less, in their attempt to demonstrate that Scouting was just as invaluable as the League itself. This excerpt from January 1924 is representative:

The other day I was speaking with an official of the League of Nations, and I asked him, 'How is the old League getting on?' His reply was, 'All right, but it can never fully function until the time arrives when its members are men who have been trained as Boy Scouts.'

This answer took me rather aback, and I said, 'Do you mean that they should go into camp and cook their own grub?' He said, 'No, not that; but the only school I know of that teaches service as the first rule of life is the Boy Scout Movement.'

'The League should not be a mere committee of representatives of different countries, each watching the interests of his own particular nation, but rather a 'combine' of experts in consultation to bring about the good of mankind.'

So here we have another tribute that should inspire our work, since it indicates that we are already on the right track.<sup>90</sup>

Whether or not this conversation with the unnamed League official happened exactly as recorded here, it is clear that B-P was hoping to use the League ideal to promote his own organization, despite the lack of any official ties to the League itself.

Almost as importantly, and more revealingly about the nature of Scouting's contrary wishes for both international prominence and non involvement in political issues, is the Scout Association's relationship with the British advocacy group for the League, the League of Nations Union (LNU). The LNU was formed in late 1918, after the merger of two older organizations, the League of Nations Society and the League of Free Nations Association. Liberal politician Edward Grey was its first president, with Robert Cecil, an influential conservative, as chairman of the Executive Committee. The Union also courted Labour supporters, and those without any party ties. In doing so, they gained a degree of authority and respectability from all section of society. They were able to claim, like the Scouts, that they were non-political. The Union's main aim was, according to its constitution, "to secure the whole-hearted acceptance by the British

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ce=bl&ots=lcY8-Off\_5&sig=aYGqgh8VyK44VcEs4RcGpiQYi2E&hl=en&sa=X&ei=qrcyT4zeM-nr0gGcq8DLBw&ved=0CDMQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=league%20of%20nations%20%20boy%20scouts&f=false (Accessed June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012.)

<sup>90</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. "Service" in *B-P's Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 108.

people of the “League of Nations” as the Guardian of international Right, the organ of International Co-operation, the final arbiter in International Differences, and the supreme instrument for removing injustices which may threaten the Peace of the World.”<sup>91</sup> As Helen McCarthy notes, the broad nature of this goal gave the Union a large degree of “ideological flexibility,” allowing it to be acceptable across the political spectrum. It did not specify *how* the League would do these things, just that the British people should *support it* in doing them. This way, those who saw the League as secondary to old style diplomacy could still support it, as could those on the other end who saw the League as a step towards a world government, a “parliament of man,” and wanted to reform it until it became such a parliament. Both realists and liberal internationalists could find common cause with the Union.<sup>92</sup>

B-P, as a public figure and head of a vast, non-partisan organization, would have been seen by LNU officials as an ideal ally in their cause. The Boy Scouts already had a vast publication system in place for disseminating ideas to youth and their families, one which the LNU might perhaps take advantage of to distribute their own pamphlets. As such, Cecil corresponded often with B-P, discussing various means of co-operation between the two organizations. As early as 1919 B-P felt obliged to apologize when he missed an LNU meeting, telling the Lord Mayor of London:

“I am anxious to do anything to make the League a living force. I think it will be satisfactory to you to know that through the Boy Scouts and Girl Guide movement we have already instituted a practical step in the direction of no. 4 of you published methods, viz.: the training of young citizens of the different countries to think in terms of peace and goodwill towards each other, so that the League of Nations shall, in the next generation, be a bond between peoples rather than a pact between governments.”<sup>93</sup>

The two organizations seemed a perfect match for partnership: they were non-partisan, international (but both with British roots), and vying always for an increase in membership.

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<sup>91</sup>McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations*,3.

<sup>92</sup> McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations*, 3.

<sup>93</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to the Lord Mayor of London, September 23, 1919. TC 29, Scout Association Archive, London.



Indeed, it seemed as if that partnership would come to fruition, as Cecil opened the Scouts' world jamboree in 1920, and B-P wrote often describing how the Scouts' aims were in accordance with those of the League.

The first sign of trouble, however, came in early 1921. It began as a minor incident, in which a London Scoutmaster had discouraged his youth from joining a junior branch of the LNU. When Robert Cecil complained, B-P answered tactfully, but nonetheless refused to intervene.<sup>94</sup> Despite Cecil's willingness to help the Scouts, B-P was incredibly reluctant to return the favour. He was wary of getting too close to the LNU. It was, despite its claim of neutrality, sometimes too "political" for his liking. And perhaps B-P was not wrong in this belief. Martin Ceadel has observed that "Cecil wanted the LNU to press successive British governments to be more supportive of the League of Nations even at the risk of being thought "political". In 1922, for example, he persuaded the LNU to oppose Lloyd George's proposed bilateral pact with France, as a relapse into the old diplomacy, and to support a strengthening of the League's security provisions through a draft treaty of mutual assistance instead."<sup>95</sup> B-P would have found these initiatives inappropriate for a supposedly non-partisan organization, and distanced himself from the LNU for several years afterwards.

It was not until 1928 that Cecil tried again to woo B-P on board with the LNU. This time, he played on B-P's vanity, offering him the position of Vice-President. At first, B-P rejected it outright, citing occurrences where League advocacy groups in other countries had become involved "politically." Cecil response was sympathetic but resolute: having B-P on board, after all, would be a big boost to the Union:

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<sup>94</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Robert Cecil, April 22, 1921. TC 29, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>95</sup> "Cecil, (Edgar Algernon) Robert Gascoyne- [Lord Robert Cecil], Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (1864–1958)," Martin Ceadel in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32335> (accessed July 23, 2012).

I am sure I do not wish to press you in any way to do anything which you think would be inconsistent with your great work for the Boy Scouts. I will only say that the LNU is not regarded I think by anyone as being in any degree responsible for the action of the League of Nations Societies in other countries; any more than the freemasons here are responsible for the revolutionary activities of the Grand Orient and other continental lodges.<sup>96</sup>

But B-P again refused. Matters would have been left that way, had it not been for the interference of Hubert Martin, who by this time was beginning to have quite a significant degree of authority within the movement, being one of the few who could rival B-P in influence. It is perhaps not a coincidence that the Scouts' shift from an imperial to an international movement coincided with a shift in power from B-P's Imperial Headquarters to the International Bureau under Martin's leadership. Martin acted most often in an advisory role, allowing the final decisions to be made by the Chief Scout. In this case, he did exactly that. Martin managed to convince B-P to accept a Vice Presidency of the LNU, but he did so by playing off of B-P's own concerns about political involvement: "I have thought this over carefully" he wrote "and, in view of our recent agreement with the Union, I think it would be policy for you to accept. There is the additional consideration that it will give us some hold over them because if they should start any political hanky-panky again you could threaten to resign!"<sup>97</sup> This argument convinced B-P, and he finally accepted, joining the LNU on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1929. This did not bring any sort of closer relationship between the LNU and the Boy Scouts, though, because it was essentially an honorary position. But Cecil finally had his objective; B-P's famous name was now in league with the Union.

The tenuous relationship between the League of Nations, the LNU, and the Scouts is telling of the ideological aims of the Boy Scout's administrators, especially Chief Scout B-P and the rising power Hubert Martin. As the previous chapter suggested, B-P was very much a realist. For him, international politics was about the great powers: empires and regional blocs. The

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<sup>96</sup> Robert Cecil to Robert Baden-Powell, June 24, 1928. TC 29, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>97</sup> Hubert Martin to Robert Baden-Powell, September 3, 1929. TC 29, Scout Association Archive, London.

League was certainly a commendable effort at peace. Indeed, it could well be that this new forum could become the organization needed to bring these powers into agreement with one another. But it was never going to work as a world government, as far as B-P was concerned. He opposed the dangerous pacifism expounded by some, saying: “Patriotism has been condemned by writers like Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells who seem to want to jump straight to internationalism regardless of whether the foundation exists of a national spirit to begin with. But such foundation is essential.”<sup>98</sup> These idealist dreams were both irresponsible and overly optimistic: one needed to “Be Prepared,” after all. As the 1930’s progressed, B-P became more and more emphatic about the need to rearm, both militarily and, as he wrote to *The Times*, morally.<sup>99</sup>

Set alongside these clearly realist understandings of the way international relations worked, it is odd that B-P would think of something so ephemeral and idealist as creating bonds of friendship between youth as being a “practical” step towards peace. And yet, this is exactly what he proposed, repeating in his writings that “inculcating in the rising generation mutual goodwill” was the most “practical step” towards peace; that it would be “the spirit of the people, the soul of the League.” These airy, abstract, utopian, thoughts somehow sat comfortably alongside a belief that armies were necessary for peace.

By arguing that the League was bound to fail without the more important work that the Scouts’ were doing (creating a spirit of goodwill), B-P was able to justify the Scouts’ continued autonomous existence. Keeping control over the Scout Movement had always been important to him, ever since the threat posed by the army cadets and Francis Vane’s BBS before World War One. He would not risk uniting too closely with the LNU because of this wish for independence. Creating a mutual spirit of goodwill, then, was something the Scouts could contribute without

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<sup>98</sup> Robert Baden-Powell (Broadcast from Toronto), May 16, 1935. TC 49, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>99</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Moral Rearmament” *The Times*, October 31, 1938.

interference from the official organizations like the League. B-P's quixotic aims, then, make sense as an attempt to distance himself, and his organization, from officially being put under control of the League or the LNU. The fear of losing autonomy outweighed the necessity of a coherent ideology. Martin, too, understood the importance of independence, but he was more interested in getting it through official channels: for him the League was a tool through which the Scouts could gain respect and prominence. The same, too, would come of B-P taking a high position in the LNU, as Martin advised him to do.

The Scouts' had good reason to fear official affiliation with other organizations. The Red Cross and the Scouts had joined forces, for example, but came into conflict over petty details. The Red Cross wanted a separate uniform for the Red Cross Scouts, but IHQ instead decided that they would simply have a distinctive badge, rather than an entirely separate uniform. The Red Cross, in turn, forced the Scouts to change their new ambulance badge, which pictured a red cross on a white background, a symbol which legally belonged to the Red Cross Society. The badge was changed to a white cross on a green background.<sup>100</sup>

A more severe conflict arose with the Salvation Army. In 1919, when discussing affiliation, both sides had complaints. General Bramwell Booth of the Salvation Army charged the Scouts with militarism, saying he saw a troop of boys carrying rifles. The Scouts, on the other hand, disliked the idea of having Salvation Army boys dressed like Scouts while "begging" for money; it ruined the Scouting image. Scouts were not supposed to beg, but rather be thrifty and find other ways to raise funds.<sup>101</sup> In the end, it was the boys who made themselves heard, and fixed the unhealthy relationship between the two organizations, as an internal report from 1925 shows:

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<sup>100</sup> TC 29, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>101</sup> General Booth and Robert Baden-Powell (interview), March 31, 1919. TC 29, Scout Association Archive, London.

The salvation army Scouts in some places feelings hurt that although called Scouts they have no part in Scout rallies, civic service, guards of honour, camps, exhibitions of work, sports, hikes, etc., and as a consequence they are tempted to leave the salvation Scouts and join the Boy Scouts, 'to be in the real thing' as it was expressed to me." Best solution would be "a system of cooperation very much on the lines of that existing between the YMCA and the Boy Scouts."<sup>102</sup>

The YMCA-Scout affiliation was perhaps the most successful of all these relationships. The YMCA Scouts had their own badge with Scout uniform and their own commissioner, who was recognized by the Boy Scouts Association. Officers could train at Gilwell Park like any other Scoutmaster, and YMCA Scouts could attend rallies. The report suggested that the Salvation Army ought to do the same.

Ambitions for a strong, autonomous Scout organization aside, the puzzle still exists as to how B-P's realist and idealist visions coexisted. It is possible that one was a true belief, and the other was just a ploy or cover, used to promote the Scouts and to change their image. But this interpretation gives B-P too much credit: internationalism was *not* a brilliant plan dreamed up by B-P to save the Scouts' image; it came upon the Scouts from outside forces. B-P had been altogether surprised by the international excitement at Olympia, and only later did he embrace it, upon seeing its usefulness and success. So B-P's wishful development of a peaceful spirit was not just a clever cover. He actually believed it was a practical goal to educated youth in all countries to oppose war and to feel connected to all other humans, regardless of country. Another explanation is necessary.

As mentioned above, Allen Warren suggests that the contradictions in B-P's worldview are a result of him being "not a systematic thinker." It would not have bothered him that the two beliefs did not fit together. He was able to compartmentalize them, making it possible to be both a realist and idealist at once. But perhaps this, too, is a misrepresentation of B-P's ideology. One of B-P's publications from his younger days gives a clue to how these two opposing ideas could

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<sup>102</sup> "Report on Salvation Army Scouts." 1925. TC 29, Scout Association Archive, London.

work together. This was *The Matabele Campaign*, published in 1897. It recorded his role in putting down a rebellion of the Ndebele while serving in the army in South Africa. In it, he describes how he felt the “native” population ought to be controlled: “However good they may be, they must, as a people, be ruled with a hand of iron in a velvet glove; and if they writhe under it, and don’t understand the force of it, it is of no use to add more padding – you must take off the glove for a moment and show them the hand. They will then understand and obey.”<sup>103</sup> This sentiment was expressed in a context of imperial expansion and subjugation. But the same metaphor can be used to explain B-P’s understanding of international relations years later. The benevolent spirit of Scouting was the velvet glove, extended in friendship across borders, while the British Empire, which still maintained its military force, was the iron fist to be used if necessary. When put this way, B-P’s thinking *was* a coherent, if not necessarily enlightened, understanding, employing both the carrot and the stick, so to speak, to ensure cooperation.

In the end, the conclusions that can be drawn from the Boy Scout’s relationship with the League of Nations, the LNU, and other international NGOs such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, fall into three parts. First, Scouting’s supreme concern in this period was its own independence. It wanted to ensure it entered the postwar period on a strong footing, and on its own terms. The second significant feature is what the organization chose to do with its new found authority and respectability: it began to champion internationalism as never before, but in a way that was decidedly separate from the “official” international institutions. Finally, it is clear that internationalism, though now a priority, was not the *only* priority. A more realist view of the world existed in the mind of B-P, who, despite Herbert Martin’s increasing influence, was still “the Chief” when it came to deciding policy. Duty to king and country, as it had since 1907, still held an important place in the canon of duties and values promoted by the Scout Movement. In

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<sup>103</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. *The Matabele Campaign*. (London: Methuen and Co, 1897), 30.

the late thirties, this would come to the forefront, as the threats from continental Europe became more obvious. Then, as will be shown later, duty to country would be central to the debate around appeasement and rearmament. In the meantime, however, loyalty to the king would show up in another sphere that was not altogether forgotten: the empire. The Boy Scouts would not be able to escape the tensions that arose with the changing face of the empire in the 1920's and 30's, and, in some cases, would be itself the mover of events.

## Altercations and Adaptations: Scouting around the Empire

*“My own belief is that we are seeing only the beginning of the Empire coming into its full strength and power as a beneficent organization for ensuring peace in the world...[The British States] will be a commonwealth of federal nations distributed over every part of the globe and having a joint power such as never before existed in history. But it is a power of which the races of the world need have no fear. It will be a power for the peace and prosperity of all.”<sup>104</sup>*

- Robert Baden-Powell, *The Scouter*, (1926)

This is a powerful vision. A great and benevolent empire which has raised its colonies from their low beginnings into civilized, self-governing nations, each of which now lives in harmony with and in loyalty to the mother country. In 1926 this was not such an outlandish prediction for some, because it seemed to be coming true. The settlement colonies had already reached the desired state, being both self-governing and loyal to the king. Had they not all come to Britain’s aid when she called to her daughters in the Great War? Other colonies were surely soon to join this commonwealth on an equal footing, given time.

When one looks more closely, however, details and disturbances that seemed minor from above become much more obvious, and tell a very different story. The empire was a disturbed place, even in the “civilized” dominions. The Boy Scout Movement, having spread to all of these places, reflected such uncertainty. This chapter demonstrates how Scouting reacted to, and in some cases caused, these disturbances, by examining various case studies that best reveal the way Scouting acted within the framework of the empire. In some cases, the Scout Movement helped bind the colonies to the “civilized” world. In others, Scouting was a revolutionary medium. Equality was decreed by the Fourth Scout Law, and this could be subversive on the frontiers of the empire. The Second Scout Law too was contentious. It declared that a Scout was loyal, but *to whom* that loyalty was owed was sometimes interpreted far differently than the loyalty to the British crown that Baden-Powell intended. B-P never imagined, as Timothy

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<sup>104</sup> Robert Baden-Powell. “Duty to the King” in *B-P’s Outlook*. Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979, 116-117.



Parsons has observed, that the colonies “would seize on [the Scout laws] to challenge racial segregation and demand equal status within the empire.”<sup>105</sup> But that is exactly what happened. In each dominion and colony, the Scouts were forced to deal with the multi-ethnic nature of the empire: It was, no matter what B-P’s great imperial vision might suggest, neither a united nor a uniform entity.

Three localities will be examined here. The first is Canada, which adopted Scouting as early as 1908. It was also, unfortunately, one of the earliest to be a nuisance for IHQ. The overarching theme that emerges here is one of nation building: isolationism, issues of unity, and anti-Americanism all show up in early forms in the interwar years in Canada. The Scouts were seen, for the most part, as a tool with which to unite the country, French and English, and to protect it from the American threat, by tying it directly to the old country.

The next two areas, India and South Africa, had even more significant ramifications. Having served in both these places, B-P had developed a great personal attachment to each, and as such he made it a special priority to ensure that the Scout Movement was set on firm ground in each of them. South Africa, first, had two key difficulties. The first was the deep rooted racial prejudice that made integration difficult between those of European descent and the native Africans. In this case, Scouting actually played a progressive role, facilitating, to some degree, equality in an otherwise divided society. South Africa also faced political tensions, still evident even three decades after the Boer War, between the British and Dutch populations there. Here, the Scouts had to navigate a fine balance, downplaying the Britishness of the movement in order for it to be accepted by Afrikaners, while facing competition from a Boer copycat movement, the *Voortrekkers*.

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<sup>105</sup> Timothy Parsons, “The Limits of Sisterhood: the Evolution of the Girl Guide Movement in Kenya.” in *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement’s First Century*. Eds. Nelson R. Block and Tammy M. Proctor. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 143-144.

In India, ethnicity was again a dividing line, though the main thrust of the issue for the Boy Scouts there was how to maintain control of the movement. With such huge numbers of boys, organization was a daunting task, and there was always a fear that Scouts would be “tricked” into becoming “political” by joining the independence movement. Interestingly, the Scouts found a surprise ally in Annie Besant, one of the leaders of the Indian Home Rule Movement; strange bedfellows indeed. Despite B-P’s deep interest in making sure things worked out well in India, however, his refusal to support the independence movement and his wish to maintain autonomy over the Indian Scouts caused more harm than good. The record across the empire was thus mixed, progressive in some cases and harmful and backward in others. The specifics of each situation made for very different results in different parts of B-P’s supposedly great and united empire. Scouting’s flexibility made it successful in both the international and domestic spheres. It could be shaped to fit the needs of almost any group or location, either as a conservative force or as a revolutionary one. Its core values remained the same, but could be interpreted or emphasized in different ways. In this way we begin to see differences, highlighted under the guise of unity. It was in Canada, first, that this disunity in the Scout Movement showed itself.

In his closing remarks at the First World Jamboree in Olympia in 1920, B-P expressed regret that two contingents, Canada and New-Zealand, had been unable to attend due to difficulties with after-war transport.<sup>106</sup> In fact, Canada had not come on purpose. The dominion’s Scout organization had an organizational structure similar to that of the UK, led in the 1920s by Chief Commissioner Dr. James Robertson. Robertson would come into conflict with B-P over the sort of activities Scouts ought to be involved in, beginning with the jamboree.

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<sup>106</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, Closing Words printed in *The United Empire*” August 7, 1920. TC 55, Scout Association Archive, London.

It was Robertson who was responsible for Canada's absence at Olympia, citing cost and lack of "educational or stimulating value" as the reasons for not going.<sup>107</sup> The issue was left for several years, and the excuse of difficult transportation stood firm, but the conflict re-emerged when a second jamboree was announced for 1924. Angrily, Robertson issued a memorandum on the subject of jamborees, to be circulated to the other dominions. In it, he explained the true reasons Canada did not attend the jamboree, and they most certainly were not mere transportation issues. First, he believed the jamboree was an unnecessarily extravagant display, one which seemed to strain relations between IHQ and the Boy Scouts of America. It was also costly, stripping IHQ of over 14,000 pounds.<sup>108</sup> Robertson was also resentful of the fact that Canada's absence was lamented, as if Canada's Scouts "had neglected an opportunity or duty," and he refused to accept "anything that looks like blame for our abstention from participating."<sup>109</sup>

Clearly, Robertson's understanding of what went on at Olympia was vastly different from B-P's. Robertson, seeing this "extravagant display," associated it with military parades and shows of force, rather than a gathering of peaceful intentions. Robertson was not alone in this criticism of jamborees. Back in England, B-P would receive an accusatory letter in 1933 concerning Scout jamborees from the British Antiwar Movement, declaring that:

The jamboree did not represent the coming together of a movement struggling against war, but of youth under the leadership of men preparing the youth for war. Did your jamboree protest against the Japanese Boy Scouts who actively assisted the brutal war on china? Did it protest against the 'Hitlerrising'[sic] of the German Boy Scouts, which you as Chief Scout support? It did not! We can see that the jamboree was not for peace.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Minutes of the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Boy Scouts of Canada. February 27, 1920. Volume 1, MG28 I73, "Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds," Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>108</sup> James Robertson. "Memorandum on Jamborees, presented to the Canadian General Council of the Boy Scouts Association." 1923. TC 9, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> National Council of the British Antiwar Movement to Robert Baden-Powell, August 31, 1933. TC 24, Scout Association Archive, London.

B-P scrawled “No Answer” across this letter, and reported that “knowing the source as definitely communist, I sent no reply.”<sup>111</sup> Indeed, the British Antiwar Movement had not done its research very well, as its accusation that B-P was Chief Scout over the German Boy Scouts was entirely false. Despite many attempts, the International Bureau had never registered an official Scout organization in Germany, and would not do so until after World War Two. The British Antiwar Movement’s critique, then, was easy to discount because of its questionable source, and because by 1933 the Scouts and their jamborees were well established.

Not so in 1923. Robertson’s challenge was a real threat. It is interesting that the two should be so at odds, as B-P and Robertson were clearly both pushing for a more peaceful organization. For B-P, the way to do that was to bring together youth from around the world for a celebration; for Robertson, that same gathering was militaristic and imperial in form. To try and save the situation, B-P wrote to his friend Lord Byng, “Bungo,” Canada’s appointed Chief Scout and Governor General. He complained to Byng that although Robertson’s accusations about the cost of the jamboree were true (the British Scouts were in debt for a decade afterwards), this did not affect Canada in any way.<sup>112</sup> Byng, unfortunately, was a mere figurehead in the Canadian Movement, and could do little to stop Robertson. Earlier that year, B-P had tried to enlist Byng to sack Robertson, writing: “I have realized how much is possible if we had a Chief Commissioner full of keenness and go to give a lead to the rest. I fear that Robertson is too old and has his interest divided in other directions to an extent that militates against his giving that lead.”<sup>113</sup> Byng, however, could do little to wrest power from the obstinate Robertson, both on that occasion and in the matter of the jamboree.

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<sup>111</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Mrs. Elsam, 1933. TC 24, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>112</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Lord Byng, October 30, 1923. TC 9, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>113</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Lord Byng, May 13, 1923. TC 9, Scout Association Archive, London.

In the end, B-P had to write pleadingly to Robertson himself, begging him not to send the memorandum on to the other dominions. If he must send it, B-P asked, at least reword it to make it less controversial. The jamboree, after all, and the Boy Scouts in general, were supposed to be about goodwill and harmony, but the memorandum, he said, would spread only disunity.<sup>114</sup> It is unclear whether this plea succeeded, but there is no more mention of the controversy, and the 1924 jamboree went off without a hitch. It was not until 1929, however, that the Canadian Committee felt comfortable sending a contingent to these international events. By then, Robertson's influence had diminished. He passed away soon after.

Aside from the battle over the international jamborees, Canadian Scouting was primarily concerned with domestic matters, especially Canada's perennial problem of establishing a national identity. Canada's identity was to be preserved through two means. One was to promote English-French unity, the other was to prevent too much unity (read "cultural assimilation") with America to the south.

Unlike the big push against American cultural assimilation in the 1960's, which attempted to assert a uniquely Canadian culture, this earlier form of resistance was an attempt to ensure that Canada resisted American influences and remained a "British" society first and foremost. Canada was, after all, supposed to be a part of the "British world" or "Greater Britain," a concept that emphasized a sort of cultural community among the constituent parts of the empire, ties strengthened by the mass migration of British immigrants.<sup>115</sup> The idea of a "British world" was frequently used from the late nineteenth century up until the 1950s, and Baden-

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<sup>114</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to James Robertson. TC 9, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>115</sup> Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich, "Mapping the British World" in *British World: Diaspora, Culture, and Identity*. Eds. Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich (London; Frank Class Publishers, 2003), 3.

Powell would certainly fall into the category of those who understood the empire in this way.<sup>116</sup>

“Canada, as the largest and most prominent of the self-governing colonies (or dominions as they came to be called officially in 1907), was clearly part of this British World, a world held together more by a sense of belonging to a shared British culture than by ties of commerce and trade.”<sup>117</sup>

But Canadians were not simply an extension or carbon copy of Britain, they wanted to create a “better Britain.”<sup>118</sup> To do so, however, they had to ensure they avoided damaging American influences.

The first hint of the Americanization of Canadian Scouting arose in western Canada, while B-P was visiting in 1923, around the same time B-P was trying to sack Robertson. He wrote:

I found some apprehension over the increasing Americanization of the press and of local customs, etc. It was hoped here that the spread of Scouting might serve to counteract that tendency. But I could not help noticing that in the interval since my earlier visits to Canada a certain amount of Americanization has crept into the movement itself, e.g. in one centre I see they have adopted the American date for annual observance as ‘Scouts day’ in February in place of our universal day elsewhere of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April.<sup>119</sup>

The Boy Scouts, as a British invention, were seen as a possible foil to American cultural influences. Indeed, B-P and his Boy Scouts have been described as the “epitome of the British World’s virtues and glories.”<sup>120</sup> Scouting supposedly instilled good values from the Home Country, and built real character, not just the shallow trappings of civilization that America had to offer. On the other hand, as B-P notes, even at this early stage it was not possible to ignore America. British customs were being left to the wayside. Despite B-P’s lament over this, it is interesting that what B-P calls the “universal day,” April 23<sup>rd</sup>, is St. George’s day in England.

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<sup>116</sup> Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis, “Introduction” in *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*. Ed. Phillip Buckner. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 6.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>119</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to James Robertson, May 9, 1923. TC 9, Scout Association Archives, London.

<sup>120</sup> Patricia Dirks, “Canada’s Boys: An Imperial or National Asset? Response to Baden-Powell’s Boy Scout Movement in Pre-War Canada.” In *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*. Ed. Phillip Buckner. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 124.

America's celebration in February, then, is in fact more truly "universal", in the sense that it is not tied to one nation's customs or patriotic celebrations. The February date eventually won out, being celebrated at present every February 22<sup>nd</sup> by Canadian Scouts, which is the birth date of both Robert B-P and his wife, Olave, who ran the Girl Guides.

The issue of Americanization came up again during 1934-5, when B-P visited Canada on another world tour. By this time, Robertson had been replaced by the more amicable John Stiles, who was much more inclined to support B-P and IHQ back in England. It seems, however, that Stiles was alone in this view, the rest of the Canadian administration being more inclined to keep their distance and associate with the American organization instead. In an effort to counteract the American influence on the Canadian committee, Stiles requested an official be sent from IHQ to help. B-P agreed. It is worth noting that the official was paid out of the Whitehead Fund, a fund which had been set up to support Scouting and the maintenance of the empire.<sup>121</sup> This implies that B-P's goal in keeping American influence out of Canada was tied to an imperial motivation.

As mentioned above, English Canada's identity was British. B-P saw Canadians as equal to the English, a part of the "British World". Torontonians were just as British as Londoners were. The Scouts, he hoped, would help maintain that relationship, though the threat posed by America was disturbing. And there were other threats as well. Americans at least were Anglo-Saxon in origin; but settlers from Eastern Europe and elsewhere were arriving in Canada, and had to be changed to fit the mould. B-P encouraged the Canadian Scout organization to "teach

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<sup>121</sup> Robert Baden-Powell "World Tour Suggestions to Imperial Headquarters." 1935. TC 35, Scout Association Archive, London.

them to play our games: it would not then be long before they would become Canadianized.”<sup>122</sup>

In an article about his world tour for *The Times*, B-P discussed this process:

A considerable portion of those boys and girls [at rallies on the tour] were not of British origin but were foreign elements becoming Canadianized. This was particularly noticeable in the jubilee celebrations...[where] Ukrainian settlers formed an imposing procession of their own, with children in front followed by their women and then by the men, in orderly formation, eager to show their loyalty to the throne. A further development of this feeling was widely shown when at Quebec his eminence the archbishop, Cardinal Villeneuve brought about the affiliation of the French Canadian Roman Catholic Scouts with the parent Scout Association of Canada.<sup>123</sup>

B-P defines the process of being “Canadianized” as “eagerness to show loyalty to the throne.” To be Canadian was to be British. Even French Canadians, whose presence, unlike recent immigrants, actually predated English Canada, were to become British if they were to be defined as true Canadians. B-P very clearly still had a vision of Canada as an imperial holding of the British crown. It was, though, it must be stressed, “patriotic imperialism,” as he felt that Canadians were just as valuable as English, and in some ways were superior. This is clear in an article by B-P for the Hudson Bay Company’s publication, *The Beaver*, in which he described the former Scouts who had taken on apprenticeships with the company as idols for English boys to look up to:

You fellows up there on the far off frontier of the empire, living a man’s life of hard fare and hard work, are the admiration of your younger brothers at home. You are heroes to them and what you do and say they like to imitate. So I pass on to them what I learn of your doings both from your own letters to me and from the reports of your officers in the company...<sup>124</sup>

B-P’s admiration for the frontiersman was strong, and this was an inspiration for much of the ideology of the Scout movement, as Robert MacDonald has observed.<sup>125</sup> Canada, with its wide open spaces, represented that frontier spirit to him, despite the reality that this outdoor life was

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<sup>122</sup> “Address by Sir Robert Baden-Powell.” Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian General Council of the Boy Scouts of Canada. March 28, 1923. Volume 1, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>123</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Scouting Round the World for publication in *The Times*.” 1935. TC 39, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>124</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Letter for publication in the Hudson Bay Company’s *The Beaver*.” November 3, 1933. TC 39, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>125</sup> See MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire*.



quickly becoming a thing of the past by the twentieth century. This spirit was one which he felt city boys in London would certainly benefit from. These mythical Canadian frontiersmen were important partners in the project of empire. French Canada, however, was a stumbling block to that united image. Outreach to French Canadians began in 1921, when it was decided to begin translating some Scouting publications into French. For the most part, however, Scouting in French speaking Canada was left to its own devices, run by several separate organizations, under the auspices of the Catholic Church. Affiliation was not seriously discussed until 1930, when the Canadian committee held several conferences with some of these groups in the hopes of reaching an agreement with them, notably, one in Trois-Rivieres, and a larger group known as *Les Eclaireurs*.

The breakthrough came with the arrival on the scene in 1931 of Archbishop (later Cardinal) Villeneuve of Quebec. Villeneuve was originally very anti-Scouting, even writing an article denouncing it in 1919. He made a complete about face, however, and used his position to establish a strong Scouting program for French Catholic Canadians, *La Federation Des Scouts Catholiques*. He initiated talks about cooperation with Mr. T.H. Wardlesworth, the provincial commissioner for Quebec, in 1931. Villeneuve carried a lot of authority with French Catholics, and was therefore seen as the best chance for affiliation by Stiles and the rest of the Canadian HQ. Unfortunately, however, there were at least five different French Catholic religious orders that had to be reconciled, each with their own opinions on Scouting. For example, as Stiles reported to B-P, “The Jesuits do not like our Sixth Scout Law [A Scout is a friend to animals], claiming that animals have no souls, etc., but the Franciscans are very keen on the Sixth Scout Law.”<sup>126</sup> This particular division had to be solved by a rewording of the law, the final result

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<sup>126</sup> John Stiles to Harold Legat, October 11, 1933. Volume 36, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

being: “*Le Scout voit dans le nature l’oeuvre de Dieu; il aime les plantes et les animaux.*”<sup>127</sup> This is just one example of the difficulties that had to be reconciled. Villeneuve had his work cut out for him in uniting these varied opinions.

Villeneuve was faced with a further difficulty, as his own *Federation* threatened smaller groups like *Les Eclaireurs*, who did not want to be dissolved. *Les Eclaireurs* attempted to get ahead by going over the heads of Villeneuve and Stiles, corresponding internationally with IHQ in London, as well as France’s Scout HQ in Paris. It was unsuccessful, however, as IHQ referred them back to Ottawa.<sup>128</sup>

Meanwhile, talks with Villeneuve’s *Federation des Scout Catholiques* continued. In December 1933, Villeneuve sent a letter formally proposing affiliation, with one firm demand: “*Nous désirons une organization particulière semblable à celle des ‘Scouts des France,’ laquelle affiliée à Londres, se gouverne elle-même.*”<sup>129</sup> Villeneuve would not consider affiliation without a large degree of autonomy. This demand was a great stumbling block to achieving affiliation, as Villeneuve’s proposal would institutionalize segregation of French and English Scouts, and perhaps even accentuate differences rather than create bonds. His proposal contravened the Fourth Scout Law, and Stiles and IHQ were thus loath to accept it. Much of 1934 was spent debating how affiliation could be brought about on more reasonable terms. A second potential problem was that if special status was granted to Catholic Scouts, other denominations might soon clamour for similar recognition. Furthermore, the agreement only dealt with French Catholics in Quebec; there was concern that *La Federation* would soon push for control of those

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<sup>127</sup> “Statutes et Règlements de la Federation des Scouts Catholiques de la Provenance de Québec.” Volume 36, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>128</sup> T.H Wardleworth, “Roman Catholic French Canadian Troops: Report to meeting of the special committee on French-Canadian Scouting,” February 12, 1935. Volume 2, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>129</sup> J.M Rodrigue and Cardinal Villeneuve to John Stiles, May 19, 1933. Volume 6, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

outside the province as well. This particular concern proved prophetic, as French Catholic groups in Ottawa and Timmins, among others, would later decry *La Federation*'s existing mandate, as it left their status in limbo. It would be several decades, however, before the agreement was renegotiated to include them.

In the end, the segregation inherent in the agreement was accepted because it was felt that "there would be no more segregation of French-Speaking boys when they were members of the new federation, than there had been previously."<sup>130</sup> It may not have improved the situation, but the commissioners saw no negative impact. On the contrary, it meant that the Scout organization could maintain at least a degree of control over the French Catholic Federation, by bringing it into the fold of the official World Scouting Movement. It now had to abide by official standards set out by the International Bureau.

Once the agreement was brought about, there was a period of uneasy transition, in which *La Federation* attempted to bring all of the smaller Catholic Scout organizations into its fold. It was moderately successful, though some dissenting groups persisted. *La Federation* succeeded, at least through the 1930's, in establishing a degree of cooperation not seen before between French and English Scouting in the country, as well as a more united French Catholic population.

Most of this success was due to Cardinal Villeneuve, Stiles, and a few other dedicated men on both sides of the arrangement in Canada. IHQ was strangely absent. Although B-P liked to be kept informed, and the Canadian Committee was officially subordinate to IHQ, he was hardly involved in these negotiations at all. The International Bureau was mostly absent as well, though there were a few exceptions. On one occasion, Hubert Martin, as head of the Bureau, offered his opinion to Stiles, offering the solution found in Holland concerning Catholic Scouts

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<sup>130</sup> "Regarding Segregation." Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Committee on French-Canadian Scouting, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1935. Volume 8, MG28 I73, "Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds," Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

in that country as a template for the Canadian situation.<sup>131</sup> Stiles in fact agreed with the proposal, and the Dutch solution was referenced when the actual agreement was being drawn up.

B-P, meanwhile, through the IHQ overseas commissioner Harold Legat, requested to be kept updated on any changes in the situation.<sup>132</sup> There were a few occasions where IHQ interference actually hindered the affiliation process. In June 1934, Legat informed Stiles that the French International Commissioner was “anxious to be of use, if they can, in bringing their brother Catholics into our Scouting fold.”<sup>133</sup> As such, they were sending a man, Paul Coze, at the end of August to be of assistance in making the agreement. This interference quickly became a liability. Stiles was told by Two French Canadian members of the committee that Coze was a “persona non grata, and that as French Canadians they objected to the role he is attempting to play at this critical time in the history of Canadian Scouting.”<sup>134</sup> Coze’s intentions may have been benevolent, but he came across as interfering and arrogant. Jumping into the negotiations at such a late stage made it seem as if he was simply looking to make a name for himself.

Stiles began damage control, corresponding furiously to find a way to stop Coze. One Commissioner suggested telling Coze that the camp he had intended to stay at was closed, Wardlesworth suggested a further precaution: discontinue the affiliation discussions until Coze’s trip had ended. B-P was expected in Canada the following spring anyways, so they could pretend the discussions had been postponed in anticipation of his arrival. B-P Stiles was still concerned that Coze might insult Villeneuve and derail chances of a successful agreement. He dashed off a cable to IHQ in London: “Situation Critical. Advise Coze not to interfere. Desire wait Chief

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<sup>131</sup> Hubert Martin to Imperial Headquarters (forwarded to John Stiles), June 11, 1934. Volume 36, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>132</sup> Harold Legat to John Stiles, September 27, 1933. Volume 36, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>133</sup> Harold Legat to John Stiles, June 11, 1934. Volume 36, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>134</sup> John Stiles to T.H. Wardleworth, June 21, 1934. Volume 36, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

Scout's visit next May. Scout camps close last week August."<sup>135</sup> He then explained the situation more fully in a letter to Legat:

There is nothing which the French Canadians resent more than advice from a man from France. They have been living with the English; have learned in a measure to understand them and have enjoyed certain liberties under the Union Jack. Therefore, strange as it may seem, the French of Canada are farther removed, in my opinion, from the French of France, than they are from their English speaking brothers. If Mr. Paul Coze, with all his ability, were to come to Canada at this stage of the development of French Canadian Scouting I am afraid he would discover that he was doing us and our cause more harm than good.<sup>136</sup>

This letter highlights the urgency of the situation. Scouting may have been an international movement, but the affiliation with the French Catholic Scouts was to be a domestic affair. Interference from IHQ, and from France, was out of the question. Even B-P, the founder of the movement, was seen as an outsider to the agreements. He was called in to help only because it seemed the only option, a way of delaying and avoiding Coze, not because he was necessary to complete the agreement. Although the signing of the accord between the Boy Scouts of Canada and *La Federation des Scouts Catholiques* coincided with B-P's visit the following spring, the main work had been completed prior to his arrival. B-P attended the meeting where the affiliation was confirmed, but played little part. He met Villeneuve only after the agreement was completed, and corresponded with him in congratulations of the accord more than in an effort to bring it about. That is not to say that B-P did not make any effort to be of assistance. In 1933 he had travelled to Italy to meet with the Pope in hopes of strengthening Scouting's ties with the Roman Catholic Church. But this meeting had very little impact on the actual discussions surrounding affiliation.<sup>137</sup>

Coze, too, played little role in the end. He arrived in Canada on schedule, but only after receiving stern warnings that he was not to advise *La Federation* in any manner; the trip was to

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<sup>135</sup> John Stiles to Imperial Headquarters, June 23, 1934. Volume 36, MG28 I73, "Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds," Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>136</sup> John Stiles to Harold Legat, June 25, 1934. Volume 36, MG28 I73, "Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds," Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>137</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 544.

be a tourist visit more than anything. He did meet Villeneuve briefly, and had a cordial conversation about affiliation, but that was all. He left the country neither a hero of affiliation nor a villain.<sup>138</sup>

When the agreement was signed on May 16<sup>th</sup>, its significance was far reaching. The *Scout Leader* declared that there was “every reason to believe that this latest development of the Movement in Quebec may contribute importantly to a better mutual appreciation and understanding of viewpoints, historic, racial, and religious, between the two great parent races of Canada.”<sup>139</sup> This optimistic appraisal of the accord speaks more to Scouting’s aspirations rather than its actual effects. The agreement’s significance was not as far reaching as this article’s author hoped, especially as it fell apart following the Second World War, and had to be renegotiated through the 1960’s in a climate of revived Quebec Nationalism. But it is correct in saying that it contributed to better understanding, at least in a small way. It created a new point of contact and official interaction between religious and language groups, which otherwise would not have existed. It was achieved through the efforts of Canadians, and Canadiens, in spite of International interference.

Scouting in Canada also represented a barrier against American influence, which, viewed from Britain, was an imperial aim rather than a national one. Scouting was at once a tool for assimilation, “re-educating” non-British migrants; and a device for the protection of minority cultures, institutionalizing autonomy for French Catholics. The theme that is constant through the interwar years in Canada is one of isolationism, beginning with James Robertson’s opposition to international Jamborees, and continuing through Stile’s rejection of international interference by

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<sup>138</sup> T.H. Wardlesworth to John Stiles, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 1934. Volume 36, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>139</sup> “French Canadian Brother Scouts Welcome!” Extract from *The Scout Leader*, June 1935. Volume 36, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

IHQ and *Les Scouts de France*. The view from London, meanwhile, told a very different story. For B-P, Scouting in Canada was uniting the Dominion not for Canada, but for the empire. He agreed that foreign influences from America and Eastern Europe had to be monitored and contained, but for a very different purpose. Divisions in the national fabric were a threat to the great imperial vision, not just to Canada alone.

Segmentation in South Africa was on an entirely different plane. Fault lines between ethnicities and political factions ran deep, and it was a dangerous situation for any youth movement which aimed to be universal. The Scout Movement, bound to its Fourth Law which professed no distinctions based on country, class, or creed, had to tread carefully to be accepted in an environment which did not appreciate such universal tolerance. Recognizing the danger of ignoring such strong exclusionary sentiments, the Scouts began their life in South Africa as a European-only organization. There was a National Council just as in Britain, and then a provincial council for each province. One of these, the Cape Council, was actively opposed to any non-Europeans becoming members. The Scout organization justified this policy of exclusion by arguing despite the Fourth Law, in South Africa they were “obliged to consult the feelings of the parents of their boys, and they have the object lesson before them of two other societies, the Boys Brigade and the Church Lads Brigade, who have, through premature recognition of colour, lost the membership of all their white boys.”<sup>140</sup> White parents pulled their children out of organizations which allowed other ethnicities, and so the Scouts were careful not to let that happen to them as well. The Scouts adapted their principles, preferring to have a successful all white movement over a small, underfunded and unpopular movement that was supposedly open to everyone but realistically would not include Europeans. There was little that was socially progressive or inclusionary about it.

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<sup>140</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Alfred Pickford, October 22, 1928. TC 53, Scout Association Archive, London.

That is not to say that the Scouting administration in London was content with the situation. As early as 1918, B-P was searching for a way around this obstacle; it was important to him that training in citizenship was available to all British subjects. His solution, at first, was “to let the natives use some of our ideas but not to admit them directly into the brotherhood.”<sup>141</sup> The “native” movement, given the name Pathfinders, ran parallel to Scouting, and had B-P’s blessing, though not that of the Cape Scout Council, which preferred not to be in any way responsible for the coloured Scouts, thinking it would be damaging to the Scout “white” movement.<sup>142</sup> But B-P pressed ahead with the experiment anyways, confident that it would be beneficial. After all, he saw it as a great opportunity to unite the dominion and strengthen the unity of the empire. He wrote to Lord Buxton, Chief Scout of the South African Union, explaining the scheme’s potential:

In the United States and Canada the Scout Movement is now recognized by the governments as a practical step towards Americanizing and Canadianizing the several foreign elements in their respective populations; and with the broadminded handling evident in South Africa I have great hopes that it may be helpful in the same direction for the Union”<sup>143</sup>

The “experiment” seemed to go well, being quite popular among native boys, and under the leadership of Dr. Rheinallt Jones, it reached 4,000 members by 1927.<sup>144</sup>

The creation of this separate organization, the Pathfinders, demonstrates the severe difficulty which the race issue created in South Africa. A separate movement was the only viable option. It was not long, however, before B-P’s need for control showed itself. He was not content with a separate movement, and wanted a single, united association under his authority. B-P began lobbying the South African Scout Councils to officially recognize the new Pathfinder Movement, but it was to be a decade long battle before the initiative would come to fruition.

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<sup>141</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to H.W. Soutter, January 13, 1917. TC 53, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>142</sup> Chief Scout of South Africa to illegible, June 17, 1919. TC 65, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>143</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Lord Buxton, August 28, 1919. TC 65, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>144</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “South African Tour Report, 1926-7.” TC 53, Scout Association Archive, London.



B-P may have sincerely wished that the Pathfinders join the Scouts, but he was not the one that made the initial push for it to become a reality. It was the local Pathfinder groups themselves who did that. The Scout organizations, both in London and in the Dominion, were taken unawares until almost too late. The Pathfinder Movement had had most of its success in the Transvaal province, but there was a great deal more resistance to it in the Cape. A crisis was signalled when Rheinallt Jones, the organizer of the Pathfinders, received a flood of applications for new Pathfinder troops to be created in the Cape in the spring of 1927. Meanwhile, the Cape Council, which was the body that ought to have been responsible for registering these new troops, was very much against having anything to do with the Pathfinder Movement. The crisis, then, was that “there was a very grave danger that the Cape coloured and natives would take the matter into their own hands and start Scout troops, or that the Pathfinder Council in Johannesburg would proceed to register troops in the Cape Colony.”<sup>145</sup> This was a severe danger. If the Pathfinders began setting up their own organization to register the troops, it would break apart the movement altogether. They might be led astray, B-P worried, or become “political.” But the Pathfinders would not back down; they had been waiting over a year for the Cape Council to move on the issue. The Cape refused, telling Rheinallt Jones that if they must, the Pathfinders should just join the Scout Movement proper, and they, the Cape Council, would resign altogether.<sup>146</sup> If they did so, they would take all the White members with them, destroying Scouting in South Africa. The Cape Council, upon being pressed to reconsider the admission of the Pathfinders, obstinately refused, saying: “let them join the Boys Brigade.”<sup>147</sup> In this standoff

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<sup>145</sup> Chief Executive Officer of the Transvaal, “Report on the Pathfinder Movement,” May 9, 1927. TC 65, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

between the Pathfinders and the Cape Council, it did not matter which side won; it would be a disaster for the Scout Movement either way.

A flurry of urgent telegrams made their rounds in an effort to break the impasse. Most Scout officials internationally sided with the Pathfinder's cause, pressuring the Cape Council to give in. One suggestion was that the National Council step in and bend the Cape Council to its will.<sup>148</sup> Ultimately, no arrangement was made which satisfied everyone. The Union Scout Council did take responsibility for the Pathfinders, avoiding the provincial Cape Council from resigning, or from having to be responsible for the Pathfinders. It was a tenuous and frail agreement, but it managed to delay the issue, and it satisfied B-P's desire to control the Pathfinders. In 1931 he explained: "Our policy laid down by the Union Scout Council is to make this a parallel movement run by local Pathfinder Committees each with two Scouters on it as liaison officers. This is to ensure that the PF movement does not shift into undesirable channels or get captured by communist, etc."<sup>149</sup> But this arrangement was nonetheless insufficiently stable to be permanent, nor did any of the parties involved really wish it to be permanent. A true association between the two movements was necessary.

A chance came five years later, early in 1936. The first South Africa Jamboree was held from January 8-16, and B-P was to attend. Just as at other jamborees, the event was a chance to bring together youth for a celebration of the Scouting spirit. B-P attended, however, primarily as an opportunity to persuade the Cape Council to bring the Pathfinders into true association with the Scouts.<sup>150</sup> The odds were stacked against success. He had to overcome the deep-rooted antagonism in the Council, not to mention the antagonistic press and a wary public, which follow

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<sup>148</sup> Alfred Pickford to H.L. Smith, June 17, 1927. TC 65, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>149</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Diary of South African Tour, 1931: Pathfinders," June 15, 1931. TC 9, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>150</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Brief Report on African Tour," 1935-36. TC 10, Scout Association Archive, London.

the story carefully. The Girl Guides had just recently managed to secure a federation with their version of the Pathfinders, the Wayfarers, but in doing so had roused the opposition. It would not be so easy for the Scouts to do the same. Cape newspapers, “agog for sensation” as B-P put it, wrote that he intended to amalgamate the movements into one, rather than the loose federation of autonomous, parallel movements actually proposed.<sup>151</sup>

To make matters worse, B-P, now aged 78, contracted malaria during the jamboree. He understood the difficulties he faced in recognizing the native organizations, explaining them in a letter later that year:

Colour prejudice has in the past been so strong in South Africa as to preclude any such recognition...But realizing that the natives are becoming more educated and race-conscious, and also subject to insidious propaganda by communists etc, one felt it was all important to give them no cause to feel that unjust discrimination was being employed against them...It was difficult to break down the traditional colour-bar of the white people – especially those of Dutch speaking centres.<sup>152</sup>

Astoundingly, despite everything against him, B-P won the point. A federation was created, with three autonomous branches: “Native Scouts” (Bantu or Pathfinder), “Coloured Scouts” (mixed descent), and “Indian Scouts”. Like the white branches, each new branch had its own council under the control of the National Scout Council. However desirable, this was nonetheless an imperfect situation. The native boy’s organization may now have been equal on paper, but it was still entirely segregated.

There was hope for the future. B-P wrote in 1936 that this step was just one in a process, that in the future segregation may be ended altogether.<sup>153</sup> Even though this hope proved false a

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<sup>151</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Harold Legat, February 11, 1936. TC 10, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>152</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Clive Wigram, May 9, 1936. TC 10, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>153</sup> Robert Baden Powell, “A New Development in the Scout Movement in South Africa.” *Journal of the Royal African Society* 35:141 (October 1936), 370-371. Quoted in Eduard Vallory, “Status Quo Keeper or Social Change Promoter? The Double Side of World Scouting’s Citizenship Education.” in *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement’s First Century* Eds. Nelson R. Block and Tammy M. Proctor. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 214.

decade later, with the beginning of apartheid, it was still a significant achievement. B-P wrote to Imperial Headquarters in February to explain the significance of the federation:

The Scout Movement has given a lead to public opinion and on better lines than those given by the Prime Minister, Hertzog in parliament on the same day. He dilated on the theory that by giving the natives a certain amount of representation of their interests in parliament there need no longer be fear of their overwhelming the whites. With us it was rather from a sense of justice and fair play to the underdog that we let the natives and Indians come into Scouting...I am convinced that we have done the right thing, and just at the right moment, in making this federation.<sup>154</sup>

This was to be B-P's last major initiative as an active policy maker in the Scout Movement. The next year, at the World jamboree in the Netherlands, he would retire from active service in Scouting. But it was certainly a strong finish to a remarkable career.

During the 1930's, the non-European question was not Scouting in South Africa's only challenge. There was another dimension to the ethnic tensions at play. The race issue was tied inextricably to the political issue of nationalists of Dutch descent versus British imperialists, an antagonistic vestige of the Boer War. The two issues were tied together because it was the Boer population which held most strongly the anti-native sentiment. But the Boer population had a larger aim; to promote Afrikaner culture and heritage, and revoke the unjust rule by British authorities. While the Boers did indeed have valid claims against the actions of imperial Britain stretching back a half century or more, in its current form it was far behind British in social progress. The political branch of the movement, the National Party, would go on in 1948 to form the government, and institute formal apartheid. In 1931, they began a very different method of asserting Afrikaner culture: a "copycat" youth movement, meant to teach nationalist values. It was very much a "political" movement, as B-P called it, promoting not universal unity but

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<sup>154</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Imperial Headquarters, February 27, 1936. TC 10, Scout Association Archive, London.

advancing the cause of just one group within society. This youth organization was called the *Voortrekkers*.<sup>155</sup>

Proposed by a member of parliament, Dr. Van der Merwe, a nationalist whom B-P considered a “republican firebrand,” the *Voortrekkers* were based in the Orange Free State, and run by Van der Merwe and an associate, Dr. Fisher.<sup>156</sup> B-P was at first unsure about the new organization, but after some quick correspondence, established that “undoubtedly the *Voortrekker* movement is anti-British, with the objective of dividing the children into two hostile camps”<sup>157</sup> In his diary, B-P made a note revealing his low opinion of the imitation organization:

Reitz says they are run by cheap politicians out for notoriety, asking for opposition from the Scouts, but we have gone the right way to work in offering to help them. He said ‘give the movement your blessing and it will die- it can only live on opposition’ they have done very little in the way of organization so far. At Stenderton there is a troop, but its committee has joined itself to the Scout committee!”<sup>158</sup>

Indeed, the Scout Movement felt little threatened by the *Voortrekkers*, which were poorly organized, to the point that they even gave up setting up their own administration at one point, requesting to be recognized by the World Bureau as an official Scout organization. Here, the Scout Movement was once again led by its Scout law, using it as a policy guide. The Second Scout Law enforces loyalty to the constituted authority of each country. The *Voortrekkers*, as a nationalist organization, left out allegiance to the crown in their own pledge, making it impossible for them to be recognized by the World Bureau. What is more, it had become custom for the Bureau to only recognize one organization per country, and South Africa already had an established Scout movement. When the *Voortrekker* official, Dr. Fisher, protested, B-P told him

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<sup>155</sup> For more on the origins of apartheid, see Saul Dubow, *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919-1936*. (London: Macmillan Press, 1989); for more on how the British actions in South Africa, including the Boer War, contributed to racial segregation, see Adrian Guelke, *Rethinking the Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 41-60.

<sup>156</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Diary of South African Tour, 1931: Voortrekkers,” June 15, 1931. TC 9, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>157</sup> W. Durfton to Robert Baden-Powell, June 24, 1931. TC 53, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>158</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Diary of South African Tour, 1931: Voortrekkers,” June 13, 1931. TC 9, Scout Association Archive, London.

in clear terms that politically motivated organizations were not permitted. Those that differed on religious grounds, such *La Federation* in Canada, were allowed, but never political ones.<sup>159</sup>

The *Voortrekkers* were not recognized by the International Bureau, and were left to compete with the larger Scout organization, but they did not disappear easily. Five years later, in 1936, they were still a thorn in Scouting's side. The *Voortrekkers'* existence alongside the Scouts highlighted ethnic differences. The Scouts may have wanted to be an international, universal organization, but to the Afrikaners, they were very much still a British institution. It was much harder to attract Dutch-speaking boys to the Movement than it was British boys. Hopes were high, however, for reconciliation. Some Dutch-speaking boys did in fact begin to join Scouting, and they made up 20% of the Scout Movement in South Africa in 1931.<sup>160</sup> B-P hoped that this integration would put "the future manhood of south Africa in better mutual relationship than has been the case in the past. It is still badly needed."<sup>161</sup>

In South Africa, the Scout movement had a difficult and troubled existence in the interwar years. Racial tensions forced the abandonment of some of Scouting's supposedly core principles. On the other hand, once established, they did fight to bring those principles back in. The struggle for equality between natives and Europeans brought some success, but only in a limited way. Timothy Parsons, in his thoroughly researched book on South African Scouting, makes it clear that the Pathfinders were not wholly satisfied with B-P's federation. The parallel councils were not actually equal in practice; the White Movement had the ability to expel or suspend the others if they did not follow policy.<sup>162</sup> It was a nevertheless a high point in Scouting's transformative role in society, forcing a small but significant change on an unwilling

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<sup>159</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Diary of South African Tour, 1931: Voortrekkers," June 15, 1931. TC 9, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>160</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Draft Summary of Australasian Tour," 1931. TC 49, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>161</sup> Baden-Powell to Wigram, May 9, 1936.

<sup>162</sup> Parsons, *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement*, 98-99.

population. Meanwhile, the Scouts were too well established to be threatened by the nationalist *Voortrekkers*. By 1931 when the *Voortrekkers* were proposed, Scouting also held the moral high ground as an international organization. Had the clash between the two happened prior to World War One, the result might have been very different. After all, the *Voortrekkers* in 1931 looked very similar to what the Scouts looked like in 1908: a national (in fact, imperial) organization built to strengthen the bonds of empire, in opposition of outside influences.

If the Scouts took a progressive stance on equality in South Africa, in India they found themselves painted as the antagonist due to their opposition to Indian independence. In the early years, the picture was not so clear cut. The very first Scout Troop in India was started by a missionary, Reverend Alexander Wood, and consisted entirely of Indian boys.<sup>163</sup> However, there was a great deal of debate over whether Scouting ought to be for European youth in India alone, and only the White troops were officially recognized at first. Most of the Scout Troops began extracurricular activities attached to schools, which were segregated. B-P wished to establish the European Scout Movement firmly before expanding it to Indian youth, but in 1915 a letter from James Maxton informed him that:

India has changed very rapidly since you were here, and the demands that will be made upon us after this war is over will be very extensive. Among them there is going to be a determined set for permission to Indians to volunteer; and I shall be greatly surprised if there is not a concomitant outcry against the Boy Scout movement being restricted to English schools. It will have to be considered whether the organization, with any necessary adaptations, can be extended to selected Indian boy schools.”<sup>164</sup>

Unfortunately for B-P, this prediction came true, and in fact went beyond anything Maxton predicted. By 1919, there were more unofficial Indian Scout Troops than there were European Scout Troops in India. The problem of what to do about the Indian troops was acute. On one hand, the usual fear existed that unofficial Scouts, left unsupervised, would become “political.”

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<sup>163</sup> Carey Watt, “‘No Showy Muscles’: The Boy Scouts and the Global Dimension of Physical Culture and Bodily Health in Britain and Colonial India.” in *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement’s First Century* Eds. Nelson R. Block and Tammy M. Proctor. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 134.

<sup>164</sup> James Maxton to Robert Baden-Powell, July 9, 1915. TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.

In the Indian context, this meant revolutionary or pro-independence. The most prominent advocate of this concern was General May, who wrote to B-P about this danger, inferring that even under Scout control, Indian troops might become revolutionaries. B-P wrote back:

It is true that revolutionary movements might be carried on under the guise of such brotherhoods but at the same time when under proper supervision, as in the Scout Movement, I do not see how this could occur...I feel convinced that if we do not admit the natives into our movement they will endeavour to form imitation movements on their own, and these, not being under any proper supervision, might degenerate into political societies and do real harm.<sup>165</sup>

B-P by this point had been convinced that indeed Indian youth would have to be accepted into the official Scout Movement, if only to control them. Others were not so convinced. The Assistant Chief Commissioner in India was concerned that the caste system in India was so irreparably opposed to Scout values that Scouting in India could never work: “Caste is completely and radically opposed to the Fourth Scout Law, and if Indians as a whole are to be admitted (and those now clamouring for admission are chiefly Brahmins) either the Fourth Scout Law must be entirely altered or caste ideas must be dropped.”<sup>166</sup> These concerns were valid objections to B-P and other administrators. However, the over-riding factor was the sheer size of the Indian Movement. Would the Scout administration in India even have the capacity to administer such a large population of youth? In 1918, a memorandum offered three possible courses of action. Admit Indians to troops already formed, to form a separate association for them (like in South Africa), or leave them without “authoritative guidance.”<sup>167</sup> The third option was considered the worst of the three options. Even though the administration was unprepared to handle the sheer number of Indian youth involved, leaving them be was unthinkable. Their fears that unofficial Scouts might become caught up in “political” matters was already being realized: theosophist and promoter of the Home Rule Movement, Annie Besant, had started her own

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<sup>165</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to General May, May 8, 1916. TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>166</sup> W.P. Pakeuhaiwash Capire to Robert Baden-Powell, December 4, 1916. TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>167</sup> “Memoranda on Scouts in India.” June 7, 1918. TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.



Indian Boy Scouts, which numbered over 20,000 by 1918.<sup>168</sup> Besant was a controversial character, having been imprisoned in 1917 for her protests.

B-P realized that, with these numbers, it would be impossible to defeat Besant's movement altogether, so he decided instead to work towards amalgamation with them. The affiliation finally came about in 1921, and Besant was given a position in the movement, but it was not an easy process. Many were concerned about the respectable Scout Organization stooping so low as to associate with the troublemaker Besant. One such person was H.A. Gwynne, editor of the *Morning Post* and the *Evening Standard*. Gwynne himself was a controversial man, having encouraged an attempted coup to overthrow David Lloyd George in 1918, and being strongly anti-Semitic.<sup>169</sup> On the other hand, he was still perceived as a respectable gentleman, with many connections and influence through his newspaper. In fact, he was one of the original seven gentlemen to whom B-P sent his scheme for the Boy Scouts for approval back in 1906.<sup>170</sup> He gave advice to B-P on various issues in the early years of Scouting.<sup>171</sup> In 1921, Gwynne wrote again to B-P to give advice, this time warning him about Besant and her connection with another controversial character, fellow theosophist Charles Leadbeater. B-P thanked Gwynne for the unsolicited background check on Besant, but dismissed his concerns:

She has changed her character in the last few years...She appears to be exceedingly loyal and has organized some 21000 Boy Scouts and Girl Guides as part of the education system which she had started in numerous centres throughout India. It was thanks to the lead that she gave that we were enabled to secure the adherence of other organizations of Indian Scouts which had originally been run with some political aim but which have now come under our direction and control.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 496.

<sup>169</sup> "Gwynne, Howell Arthur (1865–1950)," Keith Wilson in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33622> (accessed July 24, 2012).

<sup>170</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 372.

<sup>171</sup> Gwynne Papers. MS Gwynne, Dep. 15. Special Collections and Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

<sup>172</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to H.A. Gwynne, June 9, 1921. TC 51, Scout Association Archives, London.

Besant was briefly working with the Indian government, as it had promised some reforms and released her from prison. Leadership of the Independence Movement had been taken over by Mohandas Gandhi, leaving Besant out of the spotlight, and, therefore, out of controversy.

With the amalgamation, things seemed to run more harmoniously through the 1920s. B-P met with Besant in a charming episode in which, on stage at a rally, he was supposed to recite the Scout Promise, and have Besant repeat it, in order to swear her in. In a momentary bout of forgetfulness, B-P faltered, and Besant had to whisper the words to him first, and he then belted them out for the crowd.<sup>173</sup> He even wrote to Besant to ask for anecdotes to include in an Indian edition of *Scouting for Boys* (ultimately published in 1946).<sup>174</sup> In 1931, observers reported the good work the Scouts and Guides were doing there. In fact, in India the Girl Guides were the more valuable of the two organizations. One visitor wrote “It is the only thing that has brought Purdah girls into daylight, that has given girls any degree of freedom, happiness and a little wholesome childish fun.”<sup>175</sup> The movement seemed to be doing well for India.

In the late 1930’s, however, as the independence movement heated up, things began to go wrong for the Scouts. The trouble came in 1937. When answering some questions about the tour, he said that the biggest obstacle for Scouting in India was the lack of a good word in Hindustani for the Scout ideal of “honour.” The response from Indian Scouts was immediate and indignant. The Bombay Provincial Scout Council issued a resolution that, while accepting that B-P did not mean to insult India, stated “that the Chief’s remarks to the effect that he could find no equivalent to the word honour in the Hindustani language is likely to seriously discredit the Indian nation in the eyes of the world.”<sup>176</sup> The resolution went on to list no fewer than five words

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<sup>173</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 497.

<sup>174</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Annie Besant, December 2, 1921. TC 51. Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>175</sup> Mrs. Pain to Robert Baden-Powell, July 8, 1936. TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>176</sup> “Bombay Provincial Scout Council Resolution,” July 6, 1937. TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.

that might possibly be used: *abroo*, *iman*, *izzat*, *sharafat*, and *ghairat*.<sup>177</sup> Another concerned party, Mrs. Eastley of the Girl Guide association in India, cabled IHQ: “Very earnestly beg you to persuade chief to retract character statement. Understand issue has become political, only possible way to allay public feeling.”<sup>178</sup> B-P’s response was not very helpful: “certain political press entirely misrepresents for own ends my remarks regarding national character which applies to all countries alike. Scouts can prove they have character by disregarding unjust attack. Kindly repeat this to scouts.”<sup>179</sup> He was sure that it was mere sensationalism from the press which was causing the uproar, political agitators whom respectable scouts and citizens ought to ignore.<sup>180</sup> B-P may have been correct; it was “political agitators” and supporters of independence who took offense to the statement. After all, only five or six members of the movement actually resigned over the issue out of four hundred thousand Scouts and Scouters in India.<sup>181</sup> What B-P failed to understand, however, was that even though it was just these “political” troublemakers who were using his remarks to cause outrage, much of the population was now in sympathy with the cause of independence from Britain. The year before, the Government of India Act had passed, paving the way for the colony’s political independence. The issue was far larger than B-P himself or even the Scouts for that matter. B-P, who grew up in a world where India was the jewel of the empire, and British rule was taken for granted, did not understand the enormity of the popular movement for independence. A letter to the chief commissioner of the Guides in India, Phyllis Carry Morgan, sheds light on the situation as B-P failed to see it: “It is somewhat difficult for me to explain the position in India as no explanation of mine can overestimate the gravity of the situation...you have to be in Bombay and Madras to realize how bitter the feeling is amongst the

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<sup>177</sup> “Bombay Provincial Scout Council Resolution,” July 6, 1937.

<sup>178</sup> Mrs. Eastley to Robert Baden-Powell, 1937. TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>179</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Mrs. Eastley, 1937. TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>180</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “untitled” article for *The Scouter*. TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>181</sup> Mr. Hogg to Phyllis Carry Morgan July 14, 1937. TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.

general public...The matter has got beyond any remarks made by lord B-P.”<sup>182</sup> It was an unfortunate end to B-P’s career. His successful reconciliation of the various movements in South Africa the year before had seemed to confirm Scouting’s important transformative role; it was such a contrast when in India a year later a single sentence could unravel so much.

B-P’s bewilderment at the outcry was a result of his understanding of the empire. His shining vision, expressed in 1926, of a united imperial power as a force for good in the world, was not applicable to the actual situation on the ground when tested. His vision of empire was an imagined community. It was held together by certain bonds of commonality; but there were just as many differences. In Canada, relations had been rocky between French and English, and between protestant and catholic, factions, but crisis had been averted there. In South Africa, however, deeper chasms existed between ethnic groups. It took a great deal of effort to fight off the nationalist sentiment of the Afrikaners, and it was even more difficult to persuade them to accept the various non-European ethnic groups. In India, Scouting was seen as a conservative force, inspiring unity and teaching loyalty to Indian youth. But it was not strong enough to stem the tide of antagonism towards British rule, and ultimately failed to stop independence.

Throughout these case studies, it has become obvious that Scouting’s success at being a force for change, or for conservation of authority, was a result of its ability to be flexible and adapt to the changing circumstances. The local situation, not the central administration, was the most influential in deciding the shape of the Movement. Even B-P, at one point, reluctantly had to admit that “local conditions must govern.”<sup>183</sup> The explicit core principles of the movement were not sacred; they could be abandoned to satisfy a higher principle, if an unwritten one. This

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<sup>182</sup> Mr. Hogg to Phyllis Carry Morgan July 14, 1937.

<sup>183</sup> W. Baker, “Discipline of Boys Today is not What it Used to Be.” *Outspan* 42, no. 1101 (2 April 1948), 85. Quoted in Timothy Parsons, *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement in British Colonial Africa*. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), 77.

principle was that of establishing itself, of growth, and of control. In a sense, this was a positive, internationally minded goal. But it was also driven by B-P's desire to oversee the organization. Ever since Francis Vane's breakaway movement in 1909, B-P was careful not to allow any part of the movement out of his grasp, fearing a takeover by 'political' influences. By 'political,' he meant any manner of radical ideologies, including communism and separatism. Within the empire, he saw separatism as the greater of these dangers, a feeling which informed his obstinate attitude in 1937. The empire had to remain united if it was going to be a force for international good

## Avoiding “the temptation of the town”: Assisted Migration Schemes<sup>184</sup>

*“What the country does want out there are those husky young Britons who mean to succeed, men who can put their hearts and their backs into their work, men of adventure and open air; men with pluck, guts and cheerfulness. Those are the fellows that Australia wants, and for who Australia holds every kind of opportunity, as indeed do Canada, New Zealand and most of our colonies and dependencies. Let your young migrants break away from being captives of their ‘background’ and push out from this overcrowded, over-civilized little island to go forward to the bigger adventure of a MAN’S life, helping to make our great empire stronger and mightier yet.”<sup>185</sup>*

- Robert Baden-Powell, *The Scouter* (1935)

Canadian Stephen Leacock, best known for his humourist works, was also a staunch imperialist. In 1928, he wrote: “It is quite plain that the future welfare of each division of the Empire will largely depend on the intimacy of its economic co-operation with others... [In economic integration] alone can be realized the full strength and the full security of imperial unity.”<sup>186</sup> Leacock was writing in context of a study on assisted immigration to the Canadian West from other parts of the empire. Some 9.7 million migrants left Britain between 1853 and 1920, and almost half of those went to the dominions.<sup>187</sup> Inter-imperial migration’s benefits were twofold: it could empty the streets of poor “loafers” and “wasters” in overpopulated areas like London, while at the same time populating and building up strong new agricultural bases in the younger colonies and dominions which were, supposedly, short of good men.

This ideal was the driving force behind several assisted migration programs stretching from the Great Famine in Ireland in the 1840s into the twentieth century, set up by both government and by philanthropic gentlemen and organizations who were “doing their bit” for the empire. The Canadian government, for example, in 1925, offered a loan of three hundred pounds

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<sup>184</sup> The quotation is from Robert Baden-Powell, “Report on Emigration to Southern Australia,” June 22, 1912. TC 49, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>185</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Migration,” Draft of article for Publication in *The Scouter*, 1935. Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>186</sup> Stephen Leacock, “Preface” in John Thomas Culliton, *Assisted Emigration and Land Settlement*. (Montreal: Federated press, 1928), 3.

<sup>187</sup> Andrew Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back? The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the mid nineteenth Century*. (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005), 156.

to “approved” British families which wished to settle on Canadian government farms, also making monetary assistance available for the passage. This sort of scheme emphasized the need for toughness, as hard work was necessary for success, but it also highlighted the possibility of a new start for good British families willing to face the tasks resettlement presented.<sup>188</sup> Assisted migration sometimes took another form, sending lone children rather than family groups from Great Britain to various parts of the empire. These youth were often those who lived in “institutions managed by poor law guardians and charitable agencies...[They] were widely perceived to constitute a social problem and even a danger.”<sup>189</sup> The solution, good for both the child and for society, was to send them overseas. Growing up as frontiersmen, these youth would become a boon to the empire rather than a drag on society. The Boy Scout Association, shared this ideal, and this, along with its own “profound faith in the restorative virtue of a rural environment,” led it to start its own migration program.<sup>190</sup>

The Scout Movement utilized its own influence and widespread network of Scouts and Scouters in an attempt to strengthen the bonds of empire through migration. The story of the Boy Scouts’ assisted migration scheme fits more broadly into its ideological vision of a strong empire as the foundation for global goodwill and understanding. The scheme was ultimately, however, based on a gross misconception of the conditions in the dominions, as well being out of touch with the wants of potential immigrants at home. The provincial life rarely held any attraction for boys growing up in the metropolis, and the ideal of the frontier prominent at the Scout’s beginning was now diminishing. Baden-Powell had grown up fascinated by the frontier, and the

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<sup>188</sup> Ministry of Immigration and Colonization, *Assisted Settlement of Approved British Families on Canadian Government Farms*. (Ottawa: Ministry of Immigration and Colonization, 1925).

<sup>189</sup> Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 247.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid*, 263.

likes of “Buffalo Bill” Cody excited him.<sup>191</sup> He still felt this attraction to the frontier, but the generation growing up in the 1920’s had new idols. The movie star was replacing the war hero, and life in the empty dominions seemed a boring and unnecessarily difficult prospect.

In large part the lack of interest in migration on the part of youth was tied to a shift in conceptions of masculinity. For B-P, the ideal masculine body and character were defined by late Victorian and Edwardian values. It had several parts. One key attribute was the idea that “physical degeneration was seen as spiritual as well as a medical and physiological problem.”<sup>192</sup> Physical degeneration was tied to moral degeneration, and the decline of youth’s bodies was imagined to represent the decline of the nation itself. The solution, for Victorian males, was the public school system ethic of “playing the game.” Participating in sport, not as a spectator but as a team member, inculcated in young men the bodily strength and sportsmanship that the empire needed. But “playing the game” went beyond the schoolyard, as the Britain itself became the team one would play for, bowling against the competing nations of Europe and the world in a social Darwinist struggle. The way this played out can be seen in the terminology for the century long rivalry between Russia and Britain in Central Asia, which became known as “the Great Game.” The Great Game was the setting for imperialist Rudyard Kipling’s popular novel, *Kim*. B-P so much approved with the manly characteristics of Kim in the novel that he began *Scouting for Boys* with a synopsis of the novel, painting Kim as the ideal Boy Scout. The ideal man was a man of action and resourcefulness, not unhealthy reflection.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 188.

<sup>192</sup> Roberta J. Park, “Biological Thought, Athletics and the Formation of Character.: 1830-1900” in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin, Eds. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 8.

<sup>193</sup> Allen Warren, “Popular Manliness: Baden-Powell, Scouting, and the Development of Manly Character.” in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin, Eds. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 199-200.



Another key attribute of the ideal Victorian male was his ability to excel on the frontier. This was one of the driving forces behind the Scout's migration scheme. The frontiersman was playing the greatest game of them all, expanding the empire. They took the lead, pushing out the imperial boundaries while their lesser kinsman stayed home. What is more, they had the advantage of learning from "primitive" societies which, although uncivilized, could revitalize those whom civilization had rendered "soft." B-P enshrined this concept in Scouting as well, taking chants and ceremonies from Zulu traditions and weaving them into Britain's own traditions. An adventure on the frontier was a perfect chance to demonstrate one's manliness. As such, youth who migrated to the empire's distant realms were believed to have been given the greatest opportunity possible: a life with meaning and dignity expressed through their grit in overcoming hardship, doing their duty to cement Britain's hold on the colonies through settlement.

By the mid 1920's however, the frontier element of manliness was waning. Millions of young men had "played the game" for the empire in the First World War, leaving the home country to defend it across the channel. The trenches were literal frontiers, the front lines where only the most manly could thrive. But the random carnage of machine gun bullets demonstrated that in modern warfare, Victorian notions of manliness did not hold up. Leading the charge from the front was now foolish, not plucky. After the war, the idea of a lost generation, in which the best of Britain's youth had disappeared, took hold of the public mind. This lost generation actually refers to not a loss of an entire population, but rather to the loss of elite and upper class males. The upper echelon suffered the most casualties during the war, due to their belief in their duty to "play the game" in wartime. But the popular conception was that it was not the Germans

but the older generation and their values which had murdered Britain's best men.<sup>194</sup> As a result, there was a very real break with the past in how manliness was conceived.

Youth who held the new understanding of manliness was much less enticed by the frontier, making migration an unappealing option. Still, for the boys who did take up the opportunity, the Boy Scouts' organization would play a significant role in their lives, taking on the position of father figure and protector; a support community for the young settlers arriving in a new environment.

The idea that Scouts could assist in populating the imperial frontier developed very early in the organization's history. Prior to the First World War, a Farm School of Training was set up in Sussex, to train Boy Scouts "in character and all round handiness in agricultural work and instilling into them the love for country life."<sup>195</sup> Approximately two hundred boys were trained at the farm school before the war began, at which point most of the youth joined the army, leaving the school empty. The project was not continued after the war, due in large part to the lack of finances; the Jamboree at Olympia in 1920 had nearly bankrupted the organization. The short lived program did not, however, end without making a significant impact on Scouting's founder, who was inspired by it to pursue greater possibilities. In 1912, B-P met a contact from Australia, who, having heard about the Scout Farm, told him: "Boys are preferable to men as immigrants, being more readily adaptable to colonial methods of agriculture and less likely to fall under the temptation of the town."<sup>196</sup> Based on this evidence, B-P wrote a report for the Committee concerning emigration to Southern Australia. The report was a brief but important formative step

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<sup>194</sup> Patrick McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity, and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 84.

<sup>195</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Major Fox, August 19, 1925. TC 27. Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>196</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Report on Emigration to Southern Australia," June 22, 1912.

towards what would later be an ambitious migration scheme. It would have to wait, however, until the war ended.

Australia was to be the focus of the Scout's migration scheme. Very early on, Scouting had run into difficulties in Australia, and the Movement almost split in two. The divide was between military and non-military scouts over whether Scouting ought to be like Cadets, or a more pacifist organization. This debate had caused a great deal of trouble for B-P in Britain in the same period, but the issue was even more heated in Australia than it was in Britain. B-P caused outrage when he visited Australia in 1912, and refused to attend rallies put on by the military Scouts. He wrote bluntly: "The movement is not some form of compulsory training requiring a strict military command organization."<sup>197</sup> Despite his strong stance, the divide survived even the war, and in 1919 B-P again instructed the Australian leaders in how to avoid military, cadet-like training.<sup>198</sup> But the postwar mood had made the debate less contentious, and through the 1920s B-P felt secure in his control over the Australian Movement. It was here in this vast "land of opportunity" that the Scout Movement would aim to roll out its most ambitious empire building project yet: the assisted migration program.

The program was instituted in 1921, and originally boys had the choice between New Zealand, Australia, or Canada. A separate department of the Scout Organization was opened to facilitate the migration program. A report from the department's busiest year, 1927, shows the kind of activity it attended to:

Propaganda: 10,000 special migration wall cards giving details of the migration department have been sent to every Scout troop headquarters in the British Isles. The cards were welcomed by all counties and should be the means of stimulating interest in overseas settlement.

Lectures: [17 lectures]

Scout magazines: [multiple articles published]

Leaflets dealing with the scheme: these have been sent to all Scout troops in the British Isles.

Letters receive from Scouts re: migration 4739

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<sup>197</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Report on 1912 Tour," June 18, 1912. TC 49, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>198</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to William Birdwood, November 19, 1919. TC 49, Scout Association Archive, London.

A great deal of effort was expended on simply advertising the scheme. Almost twice as many letters were sent out from the Migration Department to Scouts concerning migration than were received from interested parties. The “wall cards” published by the Migration Department explained that it had resources available to all Scouts concerning the prospects for migrants across the empire, and would aid any interested parties in their journey.<sup>200</sup> It was a strong sales pitch, but the response was fairly disappointing. The initiative, even in its most successful year, was trying to fulfill a need that did not exist; British youth simply were not overly keen to farm a property somewhere in the far reaches of the empire.

What was it that made Scouting so bent on assisting migration? It was clearly not a demand from the grassroots members. Instead, it was once again the brainchild of the administrative and ideological head of the movement. The imperial focus of the scheme reflects Robert B-P’s vision of a strong, united empire. It was an expression of patriotic imperialism, with the underlying assumption that the dominions were just as good a place to live, if not better, than the home country. Migrants could reach a higher standard of living, as well as assert their freedom and dignity as productive citizens of the “British World.”<sup>201</sup> It was a partnership of assumed *equality* between the dominions and Britain. Ideally, migration would solve both the overpopulation crisis in an area with excess skilled and unskilled labour, and the underpopulation problem in another where land was in abundance. At the same time as it promoted unity and equality within the empire, however, the scheme was inherently exclusive: while it rested on the principle that all British subjects were equal, it also institutionalized the fact that

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<sup>199</sup> Imperial Headquarters, “Report on Scout Migration for the Year Ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1927.” TC 27, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>201</sup> Thompson, 157.

non-Britons were less desirable. “Good men” were wanted, but what qualified a “good man” was defined by traditional, British, insular values.

Some hint of the intent of the Scout migration program can be found in the fact that many of the Scouts who used it were funded by the Whitehead Scholarship. This is the same fund which B-P had recommended using to send a man to Canada to help prevent Americanization and promote the tie between Canada and Britain (See chapter Two). The fund was intended to be used to help “both training and the empire.”<sup>202</sup> Scouting’s administration saw migration as a tool to strengthen the empire.

Of the three dominions open to migrants, Australia was by far the most popular, receiving over the entire life of the program three times the number of Scout migrants that Canada and New Zealand together received.<sup>203</sup> In all three locations, however, the program had a slow start. In Canada, B-P met resistance once again from Chief Commissioner James Robertson, though Scout officials in Western Canada were much more willing to help.<sup>204</sup> Eastern Canada was not very amenable to the plan, with exceptions such as the Vimy Ridge Training Farm near Guelph, Ontario, meant to help teach new British migrants farming skills.<sup>205</sup> By the peak year of 1927, approximately ten Scouts per month were arriving in Canada.<sup>206</sup> Progress was slow at first in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In 1922, the as yet small program sent only fifty-nine boys overseas, and the next year just one hundred and fifty.<sup>207</sup> It grew steadily, however, and by 1927,

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<sup>202</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Imperial Headquarters, 1934-35. TC 35, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>203</sup> P. Cooke to Mr. Thwaite, December 17, 1958. TC 274, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>204</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Diary of Canadian Tour, 1923,” March 29, 1923. TC 9, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>205</sup> “Scouting and Migration,” Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Committee. November 23, 1926. Volume 2, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>206</sup> “Scout Migration,” Minutes of the 40<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Committee. October 25, 1927. Volume 2, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>207</sup> P. Cooke to Mr. Thwaite, December 17, 1958. TC 274, Scout Association Archive, London.

the migration program was sending nearly a thousand Scouts yearly, from the British Isles to the dominions, and elsewhere.

The scheme was fairly simple. The idea was to apprentice boys to local farmers, who would train them and receive their help, until the period of apprenticeship was up. The farmer would father the boy, and the Scout Association would help with “after-care;” making sure that the boys found local Scout groups to join, and ensuring they were happy in their placements. In some cases, the boys had to pay their own passage, in years where scholarships were scarce. In others, the cost was subsidized or even wholly paid for them. Scout members assisted in the entire process of migration, with boys travelling together on ships, forming Scout troops on board, and being greeted and entertained by local Scout troops in every port. Upon arrival, the Scout administration would find Scout families willing to put up the boys into their houses until it was time to send them out to their individual placements on farms in the countryside. Once there, the Scout organization also communicated by letter regularly with both boys and farmers to ensure all was well.

All was not always well. Some boys adjusted, but the countryside was not always the most attractive option, especially for boys used to the bustle of London. The problem, ultimately, lay in the two misplaced assumptions that underpinned the entire program: that British boys wanted to emigrate, and that the dominions wanted migrants. The falsity of the first of these assumptions is demonstrated clearly through the disconnect between B-P’s writing and the underwhelming response of youth. B-P tried to explain the lack of interest in the program as a lack of understanding about the empire. In a 1930 article titled “Empire Ignorance” he wrote: “A very great deal of the reluctance of parents to let their sons and daughters migrate overseas is due

to their ignorance of the conditions and opportunities in the dominions.<sup>208</sup> This is clearly an oversimplification on his part. There were multiple reasons that youth and their guardians chose not to migrate. The fact is, the response to the call for migrants was lukewarm at best. Dominion officials noticed the problem as well. Even in years that there was an actual demand for migrants, the trouble of convincing them to leave home was recognized. They hoped that B-P, as an influential figure to youth, could help convince youth to take the big step. James Spence of the Canadian Official News Bureau wrote to B-P in 1929:

The dominions generally and Canada in particular are anxious to inaugurate a substantial flow of lads from the old country, but according to our own experience and that of our good friend Captain Sutton [HQ commissioner for oversea Scouts and migration] there is a singular reluctance on the part of boys generally to take advantage of the unique opportunities which present themselves. Many, in particular in the areas where unemployment is rife, prefer to remain out of work. This is a serious business and one in which the Scout organization could, if I may say so, do a world of good without being suspected in any way of party bias.<sup>209</sup>

Spence went on to ask B-P, as “a person of authority,” to personally appeal to youth to consider migration. B-P rose to the occasion, writing various articles and letters addressed to boys concerning migration. He also often wrote letters of encouragement to those who did set out, praising them for taking such an important step, and exhorting them to stay off the drink and stick to their work. “Lucky beggars you fellows are to be going to the great country that awaits you overseas,” he wrote, “I wonder if I may also say – lucky country to get such fellows for her future men. I hope so!”<sup>210</sup> It will be seen later that even the personal interest of a famous man like B-P was not always enough to convince youth to migrate, or even to take up a respectable farming career once there. Many youth simply did not want to go farm in the periphery of the empire.

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<sup>208</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Empire Ignorance” Draft Article for Publication, 1930. TC 21, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>209</sup> James Spence to Robert Baden-Powell, February 16, 1929. TC 27, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>210</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Scouts Migrating Overseas, December 1928. TC 27, Scout Association Archive, London.

The response from youth and their parents was better for those few programs which offered schooling rather than simply farming apprenticeships, or better yet, offered a job opportunity. Scouting was able to offer a career in the Rhodesian police in 1927 for boys over twenty years of age, and that position received many applicants. The Scouts were also able to offer some scholarships to higher education institutions in Southern Rhodesia and Australia, which received greater responses, though even then there was difficulty. Despite the scholarship, travel expenses still had to be paid. B-P wrote to Lord Lovat, the Undersecretary of State for the Dominions, and later Chairman of the Overseas Settlement Committee, asking for further funds to pay the passage: “The notice is very short and it is difficult all at once to find boys with the right qualifications, including the ability to pay their passage.”<sup>211</sup> The Overseas Settlement Committee agreed to pay their passage, and once that cost barrier was removed, the Scout organization received over two hundred applicants for the scholarship.<sup>212</sup> Unfortunately, there were only six available positions at the school. These sorts of education opportunities were a very minor part of the migration program, openings being few and far between. Farming was the main focus, but the idea was less popular. B-P wrongly assumed that many boys would want to go to farm the frontier.

Even for those that did want to go, there were a lot of barriers to migration. Besides the cost of travel, there were also the poor conditions for new arrivals in the dominions. While B-P accused others of “empire ignorance,” he himself was unaware that the large open spaces of Australia, for example, did not automatically result in jobs openings available for everyone there. He was not alone. Many in the United Kingdom held a “lingering assumption that Australia was

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<sup>211</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Lord Lovat, May 7, 1927. TC 27, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>212</sup> Imperial Headquarters, “Report on Scout Migration for the Year Ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1927.”



primarily a primary-producing economy with undeveloped rural resources.”<sup>213</sup> But Australia’s population was actually largely urban by the 1920s, not rural, and had been for decades.<sup>214</sup> The demand from the dominions was no longer for unskilled farm hands, but rather professional, white collar, and skilled workers who could help the burgeoning colonial cities prosper.<sup>215</sup> The Australian Scout Commissioner, Colbron Pearse, wrongly blamed politicians. He told B-P in 1926 that “the government (labour) is not doing enough to encourage migrants. We have many unemployed and there are so few openings in this side for newcomers.”<sup>216</sup> In reality it was the nature of Australia’s economic situation which dictated the flow of migrants. The situation only worsened once hit by the depression at the end of the 1920’s, and the opportunities for new migrants, especially young boys with little experience, became few and far between. B-P’s assumption that Australia’s geographic size meant it could sustain a larger population was ill-founded.

Perhaps the best way to demonstrate the aspirations of the Scout leadership in this program, and its ultimate failure, is through a case study of one of the most successful of the Scout migration programs, the migration scheme for Victoria, Australia. Although the Scouts had been sending youth to Australia since 1921, it was a concerted effort in 1926 which established this one based in Victoria, which became the most significant program of them all. A parallel program had been attempted in New South Wales, but never got off the ground. In Victoria, however, through the extraordinary efforts of superintendant Cecil McAdams, the program got off to a fast start. It was open to boys aged 15 to 19, and each month successful

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<sup>213</sup> Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, 58.

<sup>214</sup> P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*. (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), 225.

<sup>215</sup> Stephen Constantine, “British Emigration to the Empire-Commonwealth since 1880: From Overseas settlement to Diaspora? In *British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity*. Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich, Eds. (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), 25.

<sup>216</sup> Colbron Pearse to Robert Baden-Powell, September 16, 1926. TC 49, Scout Association Archive, London.

applicants were shipped from Britain together, forming Scout troops on board their ship. Upon arrival, they were paid between 15/- and 18/- per week.<sup>217</sup> The first such party sailed on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1927. One boy recorded his thoughts on the journey out to Victoria:

I enjoyed the voyage out very much, and I think the other boys did as well; we were made welcome by the Scouts of Cape Town, and enjoyed a sing song and supper during the time we were there. We were also made welcome at Adelaide, and the Scouts (headquarters) entertained us for three days. We were met at Melbourne by Dr. C.G. McAdams, and were taken to headquarters. We were billeted with different people, who came and fetched us in the evening. I stayed in Melbourne until 9<sup>th</sup> of July, and then journeyed to Paynesville which is about 170 miles from Melbourne.<sup>218</sup>

The life each boy lived varied depending on the farmer they were apprenticed to, but letters from the boys show the sorts of activities they typically were made to do. One described milking and plowing, as well as being taught how to pack apples. The same youth was unable to join a Scout troop because the nearest one was six miles away.<sup>219</sup>

Some boys enjoyed escaping city life, and the Migration Department asked them to send letters which could be used to convince others of the benefits of migration, to be used for advertisement purposes. One Scout, Arthur Patterson, wrote about the joy of escaping to the wide open land:

My situation is excellent, the food is good and the work is reasonable, in fact not so hard as I anticipated. I live as one of the family so the quietness of the country after living in London is somewhat taken off. I am sorry to say I cannot help you as far as getting any Scouts out here, but I believe Mr Woods mentioned in his letter to you a farmer's name who wants a Scout. Please tell the Scouts in England that this is the life, let 'em all come.<sup>220</sup>

Impressed with the boy's work, Patterson's employer, Mr. Woods, did indeed write asking for another Scout for his brother-in-law. But this sort of ideal situation seemed to be rather uncommon. Most boys would have rather been employed in the big city of Melbourne, rather than toiling in the countryside. Patterson, it seems, was an exception, having been keen to farm since he was young. His parents wrote that "it was his ambition to go on the land, so we feel

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<sup>217</sup> Imperial Headquarters, "Report on Scout Migration for the Year Ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1927."

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

confident that he will do his best to get on at his new work. Camping with the Scouts gave him the idea of the outdoor life and it is natural to him, as on my wife's side the family were farmers, although Arthur has never been on a farm himself<sup>221</sup> Other boys, however, were not so keen to live what could be a rather dull life in the countryside. Despite the lack of interest, the program managed through persuasive advertising to find enough boys that at its peak, ten youth from the United Kingdom were sent every month through the migration department to Victoria. A lot of the program's success seems to be due to the personal energy of Dr. Cecil McAdams, as it was not long after he resigned as superintendant in 1928 that the flow of young immigrants stopped. His resignation was followed quickly by the onset of the depression, making it harder and harder to find positions for potential migrants.

The Scout organization, meanwhile, was itself strapped for cash. After the initial boom of success, they were now looking for a way to remove themselves from the burden of having to maintain those youth that had already arrived. One solution, arranged chiefly by Lord Somers, was to pass off the responsibility of after-care to another organization that had its hands in the assisted migration concept: the Big Brother program. The Scout chief commissioner in Australia wrote about the deteriorating situation in July, 1930:

The actual position out here is really rather desperate, as far as migration of any kind is concerned. Australia is really going through an exceedingly bad time, quite the worst in my history, and probably the worst she has ever experienced. The result is that migration, as far as Victoria, particularly, is concerned, is absolutely dead, and the Victorian government will not talk of it or think of it for the slightest moment, although, I understand that Queensland is doing so. When the state of things will alter, goodness knows, for I am no prophet. Both the agricultural department and the cabinet are not favourable of us doing anything, even to the extent of that scholarship scheme in our agricultural colleges<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Mr. Hoadley to C.J. Sutton, July 27, 1930. TC 27, Scout Association Archive, London.

The commissioner went on to discuss the agreement with the Big Brother Program.<sup>223</sup> The talks seemed likely to collapse, as the Scouts were unable to agree to take on any of the expenses if collaboration were to occur. The details of the arrangement, if it were to succeed, would see the Big Brother Movement take over after-care for any boy which went and signed their necessary papers. In return, the Scout Movement would ensure that the youth were settled into Scout troops, and arrange lodgings for them in Scouting homes when they came to town. For new arrivals (the few that there were), the Scouts would continue to welcome them and arrange for them to be placed among Scouts. A last stipulation of the agreement was to be that the Scout Association would attempt to convince Scouters to also become Big Brothers, as there were not yet enough to go around. Due to the influence of Lord Somers, the arrangement was accepted. The Big Brother Movement took on a large role in assisted migration in Australia, becoming well known for its work across the empire. B-P, despite the apparent failure of his own movement's migration program, still felt proud of its achievements. He was rather hurt when in 1936 he found that in South and East Africa, "the newspapers were full of interest in the subject of migration, and invariably mentioned the Elder Brother movement of Australia, but never a word about the Boy Scouts."<sup>224</sup>

The last youth to move to Australia through the Boy Scout Movement in the interwar years was in 1932, a year in which just four youth took the trip. The next year, and for the rest of the decade, no youth utilized the Scout Migration Department, to Australia or elsewhere, due to the Depression. Things looked up in 1936 and 1937, when talks began about restarting the program. A letter was even sent to all commissioners and Scoutmasters in 1936, stating that "the

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<sup>223</sup> For more on the Big Brother Movement's involvement in migration, see Geoffrey Sherington, "A Better Class of Boy: The Big Brother Movement, Youth Migration and Citizenship of Empire," *Australian Historical Studies*, 120 (2002): 267-85.

<sup>224</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Imperial Headquarters, May 1938. TC 10, Scout Association Archive, London.

difficulties which necessitated the closing down of migration schemes are now beginning to pass away and it is hoped that the time is not far distant when there will be a call for boy farm learners oversea.”<sup>225</sup> It went on to ask Scouters to send in a list of boys who were eligible and suitable to go. Before this plan could be implemented, however, the Second World War broke out, halting the effort. After the war, the Victoria branch of the department did finally reopen, but by then it was a historical oddity. Only twelve boys used it, between 1956 and 1959.

It is possible to measure the success of the program by the quality of the service provided, rather than mere quantity. Did it improve the lives of the small number of boys who did use the Scout migration program? Did the program achieve its aims in keeping the boys away from ‘the temptation of the town,’ and settle them down as respectable farmers? The evidence show not. A 1935 report on migration discusses the fate of those boys who had arrived in Victoria several years earlier. It is depressingly pessimistic:

All those who came out, the poorest type are still depending on the Boy Scout Association. The better ones are all doing well. 250 came out through the Boy Scout Association, and 70 or 80 of these were of poor type, and 30 definitely bad...The large portion have returned to cities... The cost of land is almost prohibitive, coupled with the cost of clearing it. There is practically overproduction already of fruit, wheat, veggies, etc. The general conclusion is to only send boys of the good type, somewhat trained to country work and definitely bent on country life.”<sup>226</sup>

Several points in this report are of special note. The first is that very few boys were staying in the countryside, but returned to the city. This is exactly what the Scout organization wished to avoid. The Scout law emphasized hard work. Specifically, the Ninth Law highlighted thriftiness as a virtue. From the perspective of conservative B-P, “loafers” unemployed in the city were neither thrifty nor hardworking; by returning to the cities, these boys were abandoning their Scout principles and becoming a drag on society, the very thing that sending them overseas was supposed to prevent. Also significant is the report’s suggestion not to abandon the program, but

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<sup>225</sup> Imperial Headquarters to Commissioners and Scoutmasters. January 3, 1936. TC 27, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>226</sup> Mr Hoadley and Mr Sanders, “Report on Migration,” 1935. TC 27, Scout Association Archive, London.

rather to improve the screening process for new migrants so as to only send boys of the “good type.” The migrants’ failure to succeed in the Australian countryside, then, was the *boys’ fault* alone, not the fault of the broader economic situation. It is ironic that this should be the conclusion, as in the same report the real reasons for failure are evident. Land was expensive, and even more so to clear it. Farmers did not want strange boys with no experience; skilled workers were more useful to the dominion. The work was badly paid, and there was already overproduction of many crops, leaving little room for new competitors in the market. These were environmental causes, not in any way due to a lack of effort or diligence by the youth. London’s ignorance of the situation in all of the Dominions, not just Australia, is demonstrated by a 1932 memo of the Canadian Boy Scouts. It was written in response to a misguided advertising campaign by IHQ, which had proclaimed the need for more migrants to Canada. In response, Chief Commissioner “Stiles was instructed to write to Imperial Headquarters that the statements published by them were not correct and that they must cease sending boys to Canada.”<sup>227</sup> But B-P and IHQ did not seem to understand that the situation had nothing to do with the youth’s own failure, but was rather due to the poor economic climate. B-P instead drew the conclusion that young migrants needed more character and persistence. They had to tough out the rough times, and accept that life in the country was not “all beer and skittles.”<sup>228</sup> B-P reinforced that view in an article that same year, where he warned Scouters:

If... they go with the determination to take up farming, prospecting or ranching – and TO STICK WITH IT – they will get on. Bu the secret of success is ability to take the rough with the smooth, to keep off the drink and to work hard, and to keep their job... They must sacrifice home comfort and have the guts and grins to face a rough life and a hard one...So if they are going to go out stock rearing on the plains, only to get tired and homesick, and to want cinemas and girls – they had much better stay at home.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> “Boy Immigration,” Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Executive Board, February 9, 1932. Volume 6, MG28 I73, “Boy Scouts of Canada Fonds,” Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>228</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Scouts Migrating to Canada, April 28, 1930.TC 27, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>229</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Migration,” Draft Article for Publication in *The Scouter*, 1935. TC 27, Scout Association Archive, London.

It was a gross misunderstanding of the conditions in the Dominions, and an unfair reflection on the character of the youth. Scouting's migration program, their great effort at building up the empire, was based on flawed assumptions. The romance of the frontier, which a few decades earlier had been a powerful motivator, was in the 1920s and 30s a weak foundation for such an enterprise.

Migration was a vestige of an old ideal. Robert Macdonald argued in his book *Sons of the Empire* that "the frontier" was central to Scouting's origins. "The myth of the frontier," he wrote, "was the dynamo that drove the movement on in its first years."<sup>230</sup> To B-P, who had in his army years lived on the open veldt in South Africa and hunted wild boar in India, the colonies and dominions were places of adventure. But by the 1920's that image of the dominions was often far from the truth. The dominions had cities of their own now, and were becoming more developed. Youth in Britain, meanwhile, were no longer thrilled by the prospect of being a settler in the colonies. Only 4,800 Scouts ever made use of the migration program, a miniscule number out of two and a half million members worldwide by 1933. When B-P wrote to Hudson Bay Company apprentices in Canada's north, he wrote of them as idols to their younger brothers at home in the city. But he was wrong; the city was now the attraction, not the wild. Masculinity was no longer defined by the frontier. "Playing the game," which had before defined a pervasive lifestyle and code of conduct which led young men to the colonies, was now confined to recreation and the playing field.

It is interesting that the frontier myth, so strong at the start of Scouting, died, when the most enduring legacy of Scouting today is camping. That suggests that what made Scouting attractive was not really a chance for an entire new life in the outdoors, but simply an escape or

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<sup>230</sup> MacDonald. *Sons of the Empire*, 205.

release, to be experienced regularly but not permanently. A weekend trek in the countryside was exciting; a permanent life as a settler was frightening.

B-P was oblivious to this reality. The migration scheme was an attempt to employ the frontier's romantic attraction (which no longer really existed) to benefit the empire. In theory, it would be good for the youth as well, offering them an escape from their unemployed state in the city. But most youth, and their parents, were not prepared to take such a large step. Those that did go did not always fulfil the role B-P was calling on them to play. Scout migrants were supposed to be a uniting force in the empire. Their hard work would build up the dominions, to be strong, independent states in their own right, but also bound by sentimental and familial connections to the home country. The result would be a stronger empire, tied together economically and culturally. B-P's understanding of internationalism, as we saw in previous chapters, was marked by a belief that a strong empire was a commendable goal, since a strong, united empire would eventually form one of the building blocks of global governance. But the migration scheme which he saw as a means towards this end was in fact exclusive. If migrants from Britain strengthened cultural ties within the empire, immigrants from outside the empire necessarily weakened that bond. Furthermore, migration focused heavily on the dominions, ignoring, for the most part, the British colonies. This differentiation created a sort of hierarchy among the component realms of the empire, a difference which would be detrimental to the actual unity of the empire as a single unit. The migration scheme, then, was based almost entirely on flawed assumptions. While in its intent the scheme still fit Scouting's two principle aims, a stronger empire and a new internationalism, in practice it was a detriment to both; a conservative force that, led by misunderstandings of the changes in the dominions and in the interests of the new generation of youth, actually inhibited the creation of cross border bonds that were based on



real understandings of each other. It was B-P, in this case, who was ignorant, not the parents and youth he was “instructing.” His movement, as Robert Macdonald noted, “for all its practical good work, was never far away from the imperatives of its own myths.”<sup>231</sup> The migration scheme was informed by these false realities. B-P’s vision of empire, and the outdated myth of the frontier which informed it, blinded him, and the rest of the Scouting administrators, from the realities on the ground, making the scheme an inevitable failure.

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid,210.

## Scouting and the Fascist Challenge

Previous chapters have shown that Scouting was willing to bend its own rules and values as long as ultimate control over the organization was maintained and its growth facilitated. In South Africa, segregation was accepted if it meant that the “native” movement was kept under HQ’s authority. In India, Baden-Powell put a great deal of effort into bringing the Scouts run by the unorthodox Annie Besant into the fold. As the 1930’s progressed, however, Scouting would face a new challenge to its international dominance of informal youth education.

While previous “political” youth organizations had posed only minor threats to Scouting’s authority, the fascist youth organizations of Europe in the 1930s had to be taken far more seriously. The *Voortrekkers* had been poorly organized, Besant had been easily amenable to cooperation, and even *La Federation des Scouts Catholiques* failed to be overly threatening, as religion, not politics, formed the point of dissent. None of these, however, had the institutional clout of the national youth organization set up by Benito Mussolini in Italy, the *Balilla*, or later the Hitler Youth in Germany. Although neither of these countries had ever had an officially recognized Scout Movement before the fascist takeover, the indirect threat was clear: if fascism’s “experiment” in national training succeeded, similar programs in other nations might follow, swallowing up Scouting for good. It was a similar situation to that faced prior to World War One in Britain, and more acutely in several of the dominions, when government run cadet programs, sometimes mandatory, threatened to render Scouting redundant, and left it struggling to find a niche in which its existence was justified.

It is interesting then, that despite the threat, B-P at first celebrated the success of the *Balilla*, and welcomed interaction with the Hitler Youth. Like many other British elite at the time, B-P initially admired Mussolini, seeing his fascist takeover as the best option for that

country. Rather than a threat, fascism was a strong defence against what was considered the real enemy of the peace in Europe, communism.<sup>232</sup>

B-P's admiration for the fascist leaders of Europe has been criticised heavily in the historiography, especially by Michael Rosenthal.<sup>233</sup> It is certain that B-P did indeed misinterpret the intentions of Adolf Hitler, and until very late supported the idea of cooperation between the Boy Scouts and the Hitler Youth. Like the rest of his country, however, he very much changed his mind in the late 1930's, becoming ardently anti-Nazi by the time the war began. B-P's change in attitude towards the fascist youth movements parallels neatly the path taken by Britain's leading politicians in the same period. Like Neville Chamberlain, B-P hoped a policy of appeasement and friendship would lead to "peace for our time." It was only after it was clear that Hitler's objectives were beyond reasonable goals that B-P changed his opinion of the man. Luckily for the Scouts' future reputation, B-P's voice was no longer the only influential power in the Scouting Movement. International Bureau Director Hubert Martin's star was on the rise, and he, being better informed than B-P of international affairs, managed to convince Scouting's administration to steer clear of the Fascist movements.

In the mid 1930's, there were only three European nations without any official Scout organization: Russia, Germany, and Italy. An internal Scout report from that period outlines the reasons for these exceptions, and takes a very different stance on how to treat each of the three. "The only youth movement allowed in Soviet Russia" the report explained, "is the "Young Pioneers," membership of which is practically compulsory. This movement is definitely communist, antireligious and teaches class warfare. It is a junior branch of the Communist

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<sup>232</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 543.

<sup>233</sup> Rosenthal, *The Character Factory*, 273-278

Party...the Scout Movement can have nothing in common with the Young Pioneers.”<sup>234</sup>

Communism was clearly regarded with heavy disdain. As regards Italy, meanwhile, the tone of the report was a less accusatory. Mussolini, it said, had saved his country from Bolsheviks, and despite the fact that he had ended any chance of Scouting being established in Italy, there was “no hostility whatever on the part of Mussolini to the Scout Movement and parties of Scouts who have visited Italy have been received in friendly fashion and helped by *Balilla* without any attempt at propaganda.”<sup>235</sup> As for Germany, Hitler had disbanded all youth organizations and formed his own, fashioned after the *Balilla*, called the *Hitler Jugend*.<sup>236</sup> The report was ambivalent on the Hitler Youth and the Nazi regime in general. This is appropriate, as indeed there was a great deal of division within the Scouting administration through the 1930s over what stance to take concerning the Hitler Youth.

It is first necessary to explain the origins of Scouting in Continental Europe prior to the rise of fascism. Before the creation of the World Bureau in 1920, there was no existing machinery for recognizing national Scout organizations, and Scout troops popped up sporadically under little formal control. In this early period, B-P cared little for these non-British versions of his movement, but was happy to oblige when invited to promote his scheme on the continent by none other than the Tsar of Russia. B-P clearly had no qualms about working with dictatorships. He wrote exultantly in 1918 about the Tsar, though perhaps his praise was all the more assertive because of his severe disapproval of the alternative that had arisen; the Bolshevik regime. After the war, there was no attempt to cooperate with the Soviets to initiate Scouting in

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<sup>234</sup> “Report: countries in which there are no Scouts,” Undated. TC 54, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>235</sup> “Report: countries in which there are no Scouts.”

<sup>236</sup> “Report: countries in which there are no Scouts.”

Russia. This mutual antagonism is hardly surprising, considering that B-P was once sent a coffin by a communist league.<sup>237</sup> In Germany and Italy, however, the situation was more complex.

In many cases, Scouting groups on the continent resembled military cadets. There was a great deal of difficulty in explaining the difference between the two types of organizations. Translations of *Scouting for Boys* were hastily and haphazardly produced, and there were problems with inexact translations, especially in Germany.<sup>238</sup> The problems in Germany did not end at mistranslations. Various competing organizations arose, each of which purported to follow the “true” principles of Scouting. In 1911, many of these joined the *Jungdeutschlandbund* (Young Germany Association), a Government run program under Fieldmarshal General Baron von der Goltz. This prevented them from becoming properly a part of the Scout Movement.<sup>239</sup> The war obviously also hampered relations, but the problems continued well into the postwar period. When talks were began concerning the new International Bureau and the issue of official recognition in 1919, a Scouting magazine article noted that:

The difficulty about the Scout Movement in Germany is that there were four separate movements and only one of the four, as I understand from Sir Robert B-P, has any of the heart and soul such as the English Scout Movement or the Boy Scouts of America. They made the Scout Movement there essentially an ally to their militaristic policy.<sup>240</sup>

In Britain there was also some initial concern over whether Germany was even allowed Boy Scouts by the treaty of Versailles, which banned all military training beyond the official schools, including cadet corps.<sup>241</sup> As late as 1928 the International Bureau was still fielding questions as to the military nature of Scouting, defensively telling one concerned observer that “since the Versailles treaty appears only to have laid down that the Germans should not introduce any form

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<sup>237</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 544.

<sup>238</sup> Ewen Cameron to Percy Everett, April 20, 1912. TC 50, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>239</sup> German Deutscher Pfadfinder to Boy Scout Headquarters, December 5, 1911. TC 50, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>240</sup> Unnamed Scouting Magazine, Untitled, June, 26, 1919. TC 50, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>241</sup> Paris Peace Conference, “Treaty of Versailles,” June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1919. Part 5 Chapter 3 Article 176, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/partv.asp> (Accessed June 24th, 2012).

of military training into their youth movements; and provided that the Scouts are run on our lines I cannot see that the authorities can have any objection to them.”<sup>242</sup> Nonetheless, throughout the 1920’s the German Scouts were unable to form a united organization that the International Bureau felt comfortable recognizing. The International Bureau advised B-P to have no dealings with the quarrelling German associations, the power struggle between them being too contentious. Instead, they continued to press for a united organization that could be monitored and controlled.<sup>243</sup>

This almost seemed possible in the early months of 1933, when Hubert Martin of the International Bureau was informed that all the youth organization of any importance in Germany had joined together under the leadership of Admiral von Trotha. This sudden unity that had escaped them the past decade was caused by the sudden prominence of a common enemy, the Hitler Youth, which threatened to wipe out all the smaller organizations. By joining together, they hoped to be themselves recognized by the German government as an official national organization. Trotha, as a friend of President Paul von Hindenberg, had managed to bring about this recognition temporarily, but the outlook was bleak. One member of the new organization, Otto Stollberg, wrote to Hubert Martin about the atmosphere in Germany at the time:

The government wants us to train Wehrsport mainly. Wehrsport means chiefly: drilling, marching long distances, stalking and tracking, map drawing, judging distances etc.... The interests of our nation do not lie in the direction of international understanding at present. Pacifism is regarded as bad patriotism and nobody may give voice to his views in that respect...We can no longer wear Scout hats. We are forced to wear the neckerchief under the shirt collar – all this being in order not to appear like foreign Scouts or foreign military...I hope that the present bad conditions will not increase and that it may be possible to continue Scouting in Germany.<sup>244</sup>

Within the year, however, the new organization was dissolved and the Hitler Youth made the sole government recognized organization. Being the youth branch of a political party, the

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<sup>242</sup> Imperial Headquarters to Mr. Egedius, April 12, 1928. TC 50, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>243</sup> International Bureau to Robert-Baden-Powell, Undated. TC 50, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>244</sup> Otto Stollberg to Imperial Headquarters, April 20, 1933. TC 50, Scout Association Archive, London.

International Bureau could not recognize the Hitler Youth, but the amalgamation occurred with almost no objection from Scouting authorities, who were perhaps pleased to have the complicated German situation at last resolved, even if in the wrong form.

Italy, meanwhile, was experimenting with national youth movements of its own. The *Opera Nazionale Balilla*, created in 1926 following Mussolini's rise to power, was an attempt at unifying the Italian nation ideologically in support of the fascist regime. It was led by Renato Ricci, an ex-soldier and now member of Mussolini's government. Ricci took inspiration from B-P's Boy Scouts, and met with him to discuss various methods of youth training. B-P was happy to oblige.

There was almost no feeling of grief evident over the abandonment of Scouting in Italy in favour of the *Balilla*. This, again, cannot be explained without understanding the earlier years of Scouting in the country. In late 1909, when Sir Francis Vane broke away and started the BBS, he immediately began to recruit internationally, using a boy's publication, *Chums*, to advertise. The BBS's success overseas was one of the initial catalysts which induced the Boy Scouts themselves to look beyond Britain, as in 1910 Vane's BBS looked poised to become a real rival and potentially the ultimate successor to the Boy Scout Movement. Although his organization took a deep financial hit in 1911, effectively ending the threat of its dominance, it left in place several large enclaves of BBS organizations internationally. The largest and perhaps the most successful of these was in Italy.

It is not surprising that B-P and the rest of the Scouting administration were unconcerned about the *Balilla's* takeover, and in fact tacitly supported it, since it rid them of one of the BBS's last major strongholds. Vane, however, was livid, and sought the Scout Association's help in raising a vocal objection to Mussolini, who had disbanded the Italian Scouts and prohibited the

Catholic Scouts in places of less than 20,000 inhabitants (the Catholic Scouts survived at all only through special interference by the Pope). When Vane asked them sign a letter to the League of Nations in protest, both Hubert Martin and B-P both refused, being averse to the idea. Martin wrote to B-P: "I told him [Vane] that we had been advised by the League of Nations that it would be unwise for us to send a formal protest to them as the League would hesitate to throw themselves open to a snub from Mussolini who would undoubtedly contend that it was a domestic affair in which the League had no right to interfere."<sup>245</sup> Vane protested alone, but little came of it. In 1927, Vane's BBS was more of an enemy to the Scouts than the new fascist youth organization. Mussolini was still someone to be respected, and even the League of Nations did not want to oppose him in this matter, let alone the Scout authorities.

For six years, the Scout Organization had little contact with the *Balilla*, aside from some exchanges and travel arrangements. But suddenly in 1933, B-P began actively promoting the *Balilla* as a great experiment and a kindred spirit to the Scouts. This sudden change was the result of a visit paid to Rome by B-P in early March, 1933. The trip was intended to be a sort of diplomatic mission to the Vatican, where B-P was to discuss with the Pope the possibility of further cooperation between Catholic Scouts and the regular Boy Scouts. B-P tolerated separate Scout troops for religious groups far more than he did Scout organizations that were politically motivated. Ideally, however, these religious groups would be amalgamated under one all-encompassing administration controlled and recognized by the International Bureau.

The Catholic Scouts were the last surviving element of Scouting in Italy, but they also existed in France, Holland, Canada, and elsewhere. The Catholic Church, like Scouting, was international. In 1933, B-P wanted to integrate French Catholic Scouts into the larger organization in Canada. The plan was to ask for an advisor from the Pope's staff, who could

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<sup>245</sup> Hubert Martin to Robert Baden-Powell, April 27, 1927. TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.



mediate when questions arose between the two groups. The Pope diplomatically declined, while evasively agreeing to support Scouting in a way that forced no concrete obligations on the church. B-P report to IHQ on the meeting shows that he was equally honey-tongued, quoting the Pope's own words: "I explained to him that the Scouts were not like the *Balilla*, but aimed for international friendship and peace, and that we were acting in accordance with his encyclical which urged 'all people of good will and who believed in God to unite in withstanding the forces of disruption so dangerous today.'"<sup>246</sup> B-P was hoping to prove that Scouting's aim was as all-encompassing as the church's own universal mission. The fact that the final agreement reached in Canada two years later had little to do with B-P's efforts in Rome speaks to the lack of understanding B-P could sometimes have about his own role in the organization internationally. He believed that he was in control of his movement; in some cases his own personal enthusiasm gave him a degree of success, but often he was out of touch with the situation internationally and even within the empire.

The same day as his meeting with the Pope, though unplanned originally, B-P was approached by Mussolini to meet and discuss youth organizations. Of the two meetings B-P attended that day, this would be the more significant. B-P went to Rome in order to try and influence the Pope; he returned having been himself greatly impressed by Mussolini. After a cordial discussion, he was given a first-hand look at a *Balilla* rally. What impressed him most was the *Balilla*'s unifying potential. "Signor Mussolini," B-P wrote, "explained to me that there were many rival sections and parties in his country, and in order to amalgamate them into one nation he had brought the whole boyhood of Italy into one organization under his hand, viz. The

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<sup>246</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Report on Meeting with the Pope, March 2, 1933," Undated. TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.

*Balilla*.<sup>247</sup> For several years B-P extolled the virtue of this power, explaining that the Scouts could do the same. The *Balilla* became a common topic in his speeches and articles. Speaking in India, Canada, and South Africa, all of which had divisive political conflicts, he used the example of Mussolini's *Balilla* as a way forward for a nation in unity with its constituent parts.

Of the dozens of articles he wrote on the *Balilla*, most followed the same formula. The following excerpt is typical:

The Duce...remarked to me, 'our future is in the hands of the boy.' He is himself a boyman with sons of his own and fond of boys, but apart from this he recognizes their future importance to the state, and also he recognizes the omission in the normal system of education of any adequate steps for training them to meet that responsibility. So he has added a new branch of the national education...When his scheme came to be adopted for all boys the Scouts were naturally absorbed into it. But to them the change was not a great one, since the new organization was framed on the lines of the Scout Movement.<sup>248</sup>

This statement about the compatibility of the *Balilla* with Scouting would later embarrass B-P.

This is evidenced by the fact that he added a handwritten addition to the typed draft, with the following caveat: "In the ultimate aims of the two movements respectively there is, however, a considerable difference since that of the *Balilla* is definitely to develop a strong nationalist spirit complete with efficiency for military service."<sup>249</sup> The article then reverted to unabashed praise of the Italian movement:

I found that there was undoubted keenness on the part of the boys; one could see it. I asked, for instance, what punishment they had for non-attendance. None, the boys came eagerly, proud of themselves, and full of enthusiasm....One of the interesting features of the *Balilla* training of body, mind and spirit is that although it has been officially adopted as a definite aid to education it is not obligatory on the younger. Yet every boy and girl in the land seems to be taking it up, their numbers running already to over 3.5 million. I asked Signor Mussolini how this was brought about, and, with very appropriate gesture he said 'simply by moral force'.<sup>250</sup>

The above article, and the rest like it, all focus on the fact that the *Balilla* was a uniting force in its country, and that its youth were being improved in every way through the citizenship training

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<sup>247</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, Speech Broadcast from Toronto, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1935. TC 49, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>248</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Mussolini's Modern Education," For Publication in Unnamed Magazine/Newspaper, 1933. TC 21, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

it provided. Publicly, B-P was keen to promote the *Balilla*, as its success in Italy could help establish that the Scout's own methods were effective. In fact, the only aspects of the *Balilla* that B-P publicly condemned were those which he felt the Scouts did better. One of these was that the Scouts inspired *international* unity rather than merely *national* unity, and secondly that Scouting inspired a sense of duty and patriotism "from the inside" of the boy, rather than instilling it forcefully from without through flag waving and parading. It was a clever propaganda technique which used the *Balilla's* success to demonstrate that Scouting could do even better.

B-P also stressed the voluntary nature of the *Balilla*. He was not as naive as his published article makes him seem. In a private report it is clear he understood the actual situation: "Membership is nominally voluntary but as they have to have their parents' consent (which, if not given, is likely to get papa into trouble) and as they get privileges for cheap travel, entertainments, preference for employment etc. practically every boy in the country is joining."<sup>251</sup> B-P actively covered up the true nature of the *Balilla*, which was nearly mandatory in practise though not officially. B-P was also keenly aware of the organization's military intentions, writing privately to Sir Francis Vane: "I quite agree with your views of the *Balilla* – as you say cadets pure and simple in their rover stage."<sup>252</sup>

Why, then, would B-P be so willing to promote the *Balilla* with all of its potentially negative aspects? B-P in the past had been ardently opposed to any sort of "political" organizations; what made the *Balilla* different? There are several considerations. First, there was never a question of affiliation: the *Balilla* was a friendly organization, but being a political tool, it could never become a Scouting organization recognized by the International Bureau. B-P wanted to ally the two organizations informally. It was a dangerous move, as the military nature

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<sup>251</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Report on the Ballila," Undated. TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>252</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Francis vane, April 24, 1933.TC 51, Scout Association Archive, London.

of the *Balilla* was difficult to hide for long. After all, its primary goal, as historian Tracy Koon points out, was to “create Fascists, Fascists without spot...Fascist soldiers who would be conservators of national values...and the secure military garrison of the new Italy.”<sup>253</sup> But B-P, fully aware of the *Balilla*'s intentions, allied his movement with it anyways. A few factors may have been involved. One was that the *Balilla* was an indirect blessing to Scouting, having dissolved the troublesome BBS. Second, B-P himself had been a military man for much of his life, and still held a great deal of respect for military institutions. His writing, when describing the boy's rally he attended with Mussolini, is passionate; he was clearly impressed by the smart formations and parades of the boys. Militarism was not necessarily negative if used in the right way. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Fascism in 1933 was not yet an enemy to be feared, but rather an ally against the communist threat.

If B-P's actions regarding Italy demonstrate that he was willing and happy to collaborate with fascist political organizations, then his relations with the German counterpart, the *Hitler Jugend*, ought to show a degree of continuity in policy. The evidence suggests that it would indeed have been so, if it had not been for the intervention of Hubert Martin. Martin had been Director of the International Bureau since 1920, and had gained considerable influence within the movement in that time. Meanwhile, B-P was aging, becoming increasingly out of touch with the wants of youth in the empire and internationally. Although their relationship was amiable, the evident shift in influence was contentious. The resulting power struggle between Martin and B-P in the late 1930's centered on the issue of relations between the Boy Scouts and the *Hitler Jugend*.

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<sup>253</sup> Tracy H. Koon, *Believe, Fight, Obey: Political Socialization of youth in Fascist Italy, 1922-1943*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 94.

The *Hitler Jugend* first came to the attention of the Scout Movement in 1933 when it absorbed all other youth organizations in Germany. Just as it was Mussolini and Ricci who sought out B-P in an effort to win support for the *Balilla*, it was the Hitler Youth authorities who first reached out to the Scout Association in 1934. They called a meeting in London that year, the purpose of which was to establish friendly relations between the two organizations. The meeting was attended by Hubert Martin and Lord Hampton for the Boy Scouts, and several leading members of the *Hitler Jugend* administration and German ambassadors, including Karl Nabersberg, Otto Bene, and Dr. Van Scherpenberg. No official arrangements came out of the meeting, beyond exchanging informal pleasantries about mutual goodwill. Martin informed the Germans that Hitler Youth could not attend Scouting Jamborees, as they were not an officially recognized Scout organization. Martin's public statement concerning the meeting was published shortly after:

There is no relationship whatever between either the International Bureau or Imperial Headquarters and the *Hitler Jugend*...We...found practically nothing in common and nothing came of the interview...In any case in such matters Imperial Headquarters would be guided by the attitude of the Boy Scouts International Committee expressed through the International Bureau.<sup>254</sup>

Even at this early state, Martin asserted control of this issue, ensuring that his International Bureau, not B-P's IHQ, directed policy towards the Germans. Perhaps this precaution was warranted. As will be seen later, Martin was certainly better placed than B-P to make an informed decision on the matter.

Martin made it clear to B-P that the Scouts ought to have nothing to do with *Hitler Jugend*, telling him "the international committee are satisfied that the fact that, in spite of all sorts of efforts on the part of the *Hitler Jugend*, the Scout Movement in all countries have refused to link up with them in any way, is gradually having an effect and that this policy is more

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<sup>254</sup> Hubert Martin, "Position Statement Regarding the Hitler Youth," 1934. Scout Association Archive, London, Quoted in Daniel Scott-Davies, Letter to Author, April 27, 2012.

likely to bring about a genuine Scout Movement in Germany than a weakening of our principles.”<sup>255</sup> Martin was anxious to prevent Nazi propaganda from entering the Scout Movement. While Mussolini was admired by many, Hitler, though not entirely detested until after the outbreak of war, was a less laudable character.

B-P felt otherwise. He was a dedicated supporter of the kinds of youth movements the fascist powers were creating (though he did feel his own voluntary and international version was better). As late as October 1939, after the outbreak of war, he still saw great potential in such schemes, writing in his diary: “Lay up all day. Read *Mein Kampf*. A wonderful book, with good ideas on education, health, propaganda, organization etc. - and ideals which Hitler does not practice himself.”<sup>256</sup> Tim Jeal makes a strong case that this entry should not be taken as evidence that B-P supported Hitler’s territorial aspirations or anti-Semitism. The ideas B-P approved of were confined to education, health, propaganda, and organization, and these indeed were similar to B-P’s own views on those subjects. In other pieces of B-P’s writings from the same period he clearly disapproved of Hitler’s expansionist policies, describing him as a “megalomaniac”<sup>257</sup> and as “Public Enemy Number One.”<sup>258</sup> But what the entry does demonstrate is a willingness on the part of B-P to cooperate with parts of the Nazi administration, as if one could flexibly pick and choose the “good bits” of the regime. This fit his pattern in Italy, as well as in India where he worked with Annie Besant despite her disrepute, and in South Africa where he gave in to racial segregation in hopes that unity might in the future alleviate tensions. He acted on the belief that some transgressions might be overlooked in the name of compromise, if the outcome was the

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<sup>255</sup> Hubert Martin to Robert Baden-Powell, August 22, 1935. TC 50, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>256</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Diary Entry,” October 6, 1939. Scout Association Archives, London. Quoted in Daniel Scott-Davies, Letter to Author, April 27, 2012.

<sup>257</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Why Should I Have to Fight?” Unnamed Publication, 1940. TC 39, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>258</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, “Hippos and Gilwell” in *B-P’s Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 176.

strengthening of the Scouting Movement, and, by extension, great mutual understanding across borders.

B-P was not alone in wishing to cooperate with the Hitler Youth. He corresponded with Lord Somers, the Chief Commissioner of IHQ (and B-P's successor as Chief Scout upon his death in 1941). Somers also felt that some cordial interaction with the *Hitler Jugend* was called for. B-P told Somers: "it is high time that we showed a friendly attitude to the German Youth. We ought to lead the way in such direction, but as a matter of fact others are already doing it."<sup>259</sup>

Somers agreed:

The only snag in it is the German attitude towards the Jewish race...personally I do not think we should penalize the youth of Germany, or make them in any way responsible for Hitler and his advisors' attitude towards the Jewish race, but there is sure to be a great deal of adverse criticism of any official recognition given by us to the Hitler Youth, but the sooner we discuss the thing the better.<sup>260</sup>

The Scout Movement was clearly divided on the issue of the Hitler Youth; Martin's International Bureau advocated a complete hands-off policy, and B-P's IHQ promoted cooperation in the name of international friendship. In 1937 the conflict in opinion came to a head. B-P wrote to Martin:

In spite of what you have told me about the conclusions of the International Committee, I think the time has come when we, in the British movement at any rate, ought to do something to be friendly with the Hitler Youth... It makes us look a bit ridiculous if we decree against fraternizing while our boys are keeping up and extending friendship with the German boys through Scouts, school, journeys, gliding club, YMCA, camping clubs...it seems that we at Scout HQ were being left behind, instead of leading the way, and our warnings to the Scouts are being unheeded. What do you think? B-P<sup>261</sup>

B-P went on the following month to attend a meeting with three influential German authorities; Foreign Minister Joachim Ribbentrop, Hitler Youth leader Hartmann Lauterbacher, and Jochen Benemann, a German youth leader who had been organizing German cycling trips through England. Benemann had previously given an interview with a member of the British House of

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<sup>259</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Lord Somers, August, 1936. Scout Association Archives, London. Quoted in Daniel Scott-Davies, Letter to Author, April 27, 2012.

<sup>260</sup> Lord Somers to Robert Baden-Powell, August, 1936. Scout Association Archives, London. Quoted in Daniel Scott-Davies, Letter to Author, April 27, 2012.

<sup>261</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Hubert Martin, October 8, 1937. TC 50, Scout Association Archive, London.

Commons about the differences between Germany and Britain, and was a fairly controversial figure.<sup>262</sup> He was also being monitored closely by MI5, Britain's security service. At the meeting, B-P was impressed by the Germans' friendly attitudes. He especially approved of Ribbentrop's proposal that "true peace between the two nations will depend on the youth being brought up on friendly terms together," the exact ideal B-P had himself been preaching for over a decade.<sup>263</sup> Ribbentrop even suggested that upon his return from South Africa, B-P ought to come to Germany and meet with Hitler. B-P

Martin, meanwhile, could not be convinced that maintaining relations with the Germans was a positive policy. He wrote to Olave B-P in July, 1938:

Finally I am convinced – and so are all our International Committee – that any weakening of our basic principles by the admission of bodies who do not accept them would split the whole World Scout Movement and wreck it. Personally I would rather go down with our colours nailed to the mast – but I am quite sure that we shall not go down! We are increasing in numbers and strength.<sup>264</sup>

This was a very different stance than the one taken by B-P, who had always been willing to be flexible on points of principle, compromising values in hopes of growing the movement. B-P felt that once relations had been established, they would be able to influence the other and change them for the better. Martin disagreed. The standoff was a difficult one, because both sides could claim to be following Scouting's core principles. Martin feared that the political nature of the Hitler Youth and the discriminatory policies of the Nazi regime were inherently opposed to Scouting principles. Somers and B-P, meanwhile, invoked the Fourth Scout Law, arguing that

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<sup>262</sup> The interview between Benemann and Vyvyan Adams is a fascinating read. See Vyvyan Adams and Jochen Benemann, "Where is Young Germany Heading?" *The Forum*, July 1935, 5-10. <http://www.unz.org/Pub/Forum-1935jul-00005> (accessed July 24, 2012).

<sup>263</sup> Robert Baden-Powell To Hubert Martin, November 19, 1937. 180k, KV 87, Part 2. MI5 Files, National Archives, London.

<sup>264</sup> Hubert Martin to Olave Baden-Powell, July 25, 1938. Scout Association Archives, London. Quoted in Daniel Scott-Davies, Letter to Author, April 27, 2012.



German youth ought not be left out simply because they were German. Children were not responsible for the actions of their government.

Although Chamberlain's successful resolution of the Munich Crisis may have momentarily legitimated B-P's support for appeasement, the scales were ultimately tipped in Martin's favour because of the changing attitude of the British public, which was increasingly antagonistic to the Nazi regime after the atrocities of *Kristallnacht* in November 1938. If there was any doubt previously about the nature of Germany's intentions, they were now explicitly clear. Even prior to this, in October, Lord Somers showed some concern that the current climate demanded a more cautious approach to Germany. B-P saw the wisdom of that approach, telling Somers: "I fully agree about our attitude to Germany and taking a watching position till matters clarify, and it will be a grand thing if you can get Stanley's [Stanley Baldwin, former Prime Minister] opinion about it."<sup>265</sup> The political situation forced B-P's hand; Martin's stance ended up being the best choice for the movement. When war broke out the following year, B-P just as firmly supported the fight against fascism as the most patriotic of his countrymen.

It is well that he did. Nazi Germany, despite its attempts at outreach towards the Scouts, saw the Scout Movement as a spy organization, and mistrusted it deeply. This was in part B-P's fault; in World War One he had done little to quell rumours that he was acting a spy, in fact he played it up. His 1915 book *My Adventure as a Spy* fancifully described some of his earlier excursions to the continent as military espionage. It is little wonder that the German's mistrusted his organization. Because of his supposed secretive activities, B-P was one of the names in the

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<sup>265</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Lord Somers, October 1938. Scout Association Archives, London. Quoted in Daniel Scott-Davies, Letter to Author, April 27, 2012.

*Sonderfahndungsliste G.B.*, a list of those to be arrested should Britain be successfully invaded during the Second World War.<sup>266</sup>

One of the most fascinating discrepancies of the entire espionage issue is that, although B-P was perceived by many to be an expert spy, it was in fact Hubert Martin of the two of them who had the most actual contact with the Military Intelligence Services. In fact, several Scouting authorities joined the Intelligence services, including Stanley Strong,<sup>267</sup> and J.S. Wilson, who replaced Hubert Martin during World War Two as head of the International Bureau. Wilson secretly organized British Intelligence in Norway during the war.<sup>268</sup> But the Baden-Powells themselves, Robert and Olave, were not in any way tied to espionage or intelligence despite B-P's public reputation as a spy. In fact, an MI5 official was once arrested after speaking too openly about an MI5 initiative to Olave Baden-Powell.<sup>269</sup> Hubert Martin on the other hand, by nature of his position as Director of Scouting's International Bureau, had access to areas which many did not, Czechoslovakia for example. This was a vitally useful advantage; he was ideally placed to be well informed on international affairs, a fact not lost on Military Intelligence. MI5 files show that Martin was passing information on German youth movements to the Intelligence Services, and was receiving advice on how to interact with them. B-P, comparatively, was poorly informed about the international situation. This unbalance of informed sources makes the split in the Movement over relations with Germany much more understandable. B-P could not have known that Benemann, whom B-P had met, was under surveillance by MI5 because his cycling trips were thought to be spying expeditions. MI5 had received a notice in 1937 of a circular instructing German Cyclist abroad to:

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<sup>266</sup> Walter Schellenberg, *Invasion 1940: The Nazi Invasion Plan for Britain*. (London: St. Ermin's Press, 2000), 162.

<sup>267</sup> Nigel West, *MI5: British Security Service Operations, 1909-1945*. (New York: Stein and Day, 1981), 35.

<sup>268</sup> Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, 508.

<sup>269</sup> West, *MI5*, 163.

Impress on your memory the roads and paths, villages and towns, outstanding church towers, and other landmarks so that you will not forget them. Make a note of the names of places, rivers, seas and mountains. Perhaps you may be able to utilise these sometimes for the benefit of the Fatherland. Should you come to a bridge which interests you, examine the construction and materials used. Learn to measure and estimate the width of streams. Wade through fords so that you will be able to find them in the dark.<sup>270</sup>

The source of these instructions was questionable, but nonetheless travelling German parties were monitored carefully. MI5 also seemed concerned that the Scouts might make some sort of ill-advised formal agreement with the Hitler Youth, and therefore kept tabs on exchanges of youths between the two groups. MI5 did not directly advise Martin on the best policy towards the Hitler Youth, but did recommend that he proceed carefully and discuss the matter with someone in Government.<sup>271</sup> Martin, in turn, provided what information he had, passing on to them B-P's report of his meeting with Ribbentrop, Benemann, and Lauterbacher.

The ultimate result of this relationship between Martin and MI5 is that he was exceptionally well informed of policy towards Germany, in ways which B-P could not be. Because of this, it was Martin who took command of the Scout Movement's policy on this issue. B-P, meanwhile, was left repeating mantras that he had been promoting for two decades, about growing mutual goodwill and understanding. This mantra that was supposed to be universal and applicable to all occasions; it was not a policy tailored to a specific situation. This is vitally important to understanding B-P's actions in the late 1930's. It would be easy from a cursory look at the sources to conclude that B-P was a Nazi sympathiser. Michael Rosenthal does just that. But the simple fact was that he was not. He was, misguidedly perhaps, merely applying his understanding of international relations to another local situation. Just as elsewhere in the world and the empire, B-P felt that fostering relationships between youth would prevent war, by creating a spirit of goodwill vested in the people, rather than in government. It was the newest

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<sup>270</sup> Illegible to Mr. Vivian, July 29, 1937. 121a, KV 85, Part 1. MI5 Files, National Archives, London.

<sup>271</sup> "Report on discussion with Hubert Martin," November 29, 1937. 184a, KV 87, Part 1. MI5 Files, National Archives, London.

incarnation of the idea of the “soul of the League of Nations” that B-P had promoted back in the early 1920s.

More broadly, the Boy Scout’s interactions with the Fascist youth movements demonstrates a reiteration of patterns that show up in nearly all of Scouting’s international policies. They maintained distance at first from the *Balilla* and Hitler Youth because of their political nature, but when approached, were willing to compromise to a degree in establishing relations. This was helped by the fact that they were perceived as anti-communist bulwarks. The number one priority for Scouting in Fascist Europe, as elsewhere, was the expansion of influence of the Scout Movement, under B-P’s control. Promoting the *Balilla* was done as an aid to achieving this goal, riding the *Balilla*’s success and taking it further by arguing that what the *Balilla* did for Italy, Scouting could do for the world.

B-P never faltered in promoting his concept of the soul of the League. As misguided as he may have been in his relations with the Hitler Youth, his contemporaries did not all disown him. Quite the opposite. Winston Churchill published a praise-filled essay on B-P’s crusade for peace in 1939, and, though he never won, B-P was repeatedly nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize,<sup>272</sup> and in 1937, won the Wateler Peace Prize. Even when charged with the notion that the Scouts had failed in their mission to maintain peace once war broke out in 1939, B-P maintained the idea that it was just too soon to pass judgement on success or failure of the Movement. Scouting, he said, was as yet too young, but the future held bright things if Scouting’s principles

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<sup>272</sup> 1928, 1933, 1937, 1938, and 1939. “The Nomination Database for the Nobel Peace Prize, 1901-1956” [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/nomination/nomination.php?action=simplesearch&string=baden-powell&start=11](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/nomination/nomination.php?action=simplesearch&string=baden-powell&start=11) (Accessed July 24, 2012).

continued to be disseminated more broadly worldwide. He compared it to the sowing of a seed, one that would not be harvested for many generations.<sup>273</sup>

As discussed in earlier chapters, B-P's "soul of the League" was merely one piece of his understanding of international relations. It was the long term strategy, but in the short term B-P was also a realist and a military man. He despised disarmament as a policy, and refused to speak at disarmament conferences.<sup>274</sup> His argument was that it was no use disarming when other powers, such as Russia, refused to do so equally. Speaking with an analogy, he argued that if one saw a ruffian assaulting a woman, one's duty would surely be to step in and protect her. But "your assistance," he wrote, "would not be much good to her nor to yourself if you did not know how to use your fists."<sup>275</sup> He supported a strong national defense force, and promoted within Scouting the idea that in case of war, one must "be prepared" by training oneself for defence duty. In response to one observer who asked what the duty of Boy Scouts should be in case of war, B-P responded:

If their country is attacked it would naturally be the duty of every Scout to defend it to the best of his ability, in accordance with his promise to do his duty to the king, as representing the country. If on the other hand the war were one of aggression it would certainly be the Scout's duty to consider whether or not he should engage in it. In the meantime we are not bringing up our Scouts to think in terms of war, but in terms of peace, as anyone who attended the recent jamboree in Holland would assure you.<sup>276</sup>

In this statement both sides of B-P's outlook are evident: The realist who recognized the need for military force, and the idealist who hoped for peace through personal friendship. When confronted for this seeming contradiction, he defended his pro-military stance as a pacifist measure, as defined by the League of Nations itself:

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<sup>273</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Sowing the Seed," in *B-P's Outlook*. (Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979), 179.

<sup>274</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Colonel Mallinson, December 21, 1931. TC 24, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>275</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Draft Letter to Pacifists," 1937. TC 24, Scout Association Archive, London.

<sup>276</sup> Robert Baden-Powell to Mr. Weir, October 9, 1937. TC 24, Scout Association Archive, London.

The existence and maintenance of an efficient territorial army is in no wise incompatible with the aims of the League of Nations. In fact, the covenant of the League definitely regards collective action by armed force to protect the covenants of the League, or to enforce international obligations, as necessary in certain cases.' The League of Nations Union has issued a very clear pamphlet (no 315) entitled 'the League of Nations, the League of Nations Union, and the services', which shows beyond all question that the Union recognizes the need in present circumstances for the British Regular Army.<sup>277</sup>

By invoking the authority of The League of Nations as the ultimate authority on international peace and cooperation, B-P was able to defend his militarism as a pacifist measure. Peace could only be maintained by force for the short term, until mutual understanding could make it unnecessary for future generations. The velvet glove was preferable to the iron hand, but both were ultimately vital to peace. Despite the seemingly contradictory nature of his beliefs, of the contrast between realism and idealism, B-P's stance on international relations actually remained constant throughout the interwar period. In light of this, his approach to the Hitler Youth and the *Balilla* is easier to understand. He supported cooperation as far as it would carry, but once it was obvious that Hitler intended to fight, B-P was readily prepared to abandon attempts at reconciliation and support military resistance.

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<sup>277</sup> Robert Baden-Powell, "Scouts and War," Draft Article for Publication in *The Outlook*, 1932. TC 24, Scout Association Archive, London.

### **Epilogue: Accepting Diversity**

The Second World War brought significant changes to the Scout Movement. The heterogeneity of the Movement became exceptionally clear, as Scouts and Guides played often opposing roles on both sides of the conflict. An entire book could be written on the role of Scouting during the war, as fundraisers and first aid providers, as members of the resistance in occupied Europe, as informers and couriers for both sides, and more. But in a world so divided, further attempts at international unity were put on hold. This was amplified by a crisis in leadership, with the death of Baden-Powell in 1941. And although his authority had already been in decline relative to the International Bureau, the Bureau too momentarily struggled, as Hubert Martin also retired from his position during the war.

Following the war, the landscape of world Scouting changed drastically. Thriving Scouting programs in Eastern Europe were disbanded by incoming Soviet satellite regimes. The same occurred in China in 1949. Meanwhile, the Boy Scout was coming into its own on another continent. American Boys Scouts, having played a large role on the home front during the war, experienced a sort of “golden age” through the 1950’s, idealized through various cultural mediums. American singer Tom Lehrer, for example, labelled the Boy Scouts of America “noble little bastions of democracy,” and artist Norman Rockwell painted idealized Scouting scenes. The rise of the American incarnation of Scouting is a fascinating chapter that cannot be explored here, but it represented a significant challenge to British Scouting. Whether the UK or the US version of Scouting, if either, was the most influential globally through the twentieth century is a question worth future examination. Some of that conflict was brought out in this study in the Canadian context. The question of American dominance was one which Britain had to come to terms with more broadly in the post war period.

Most importantly, Scouting demonstrated a penchant for survival, emerging out of the war as strong as it had been previously. Its longevity, despite the death of its originator and ideological director, B-P, suggests that the movement was greater than the man. B-P had, through the interwar years, attempted consistently to maintain control of the worldwide organization, fearing it would collapse into chaos without careful steering, but it is clear that it would have survived without him. It was adaptable enough to filled specific needs in vastly different localities, and would continue to adapt across time as it did across space. The later twentieth century saw a crisis in the movement, with many observers noting its decline, suggesting it was becoming outdated; an irrelevant vestige of another age. But recent years have seen a revival in interest, and a rebranding of the organization. Whatever the future holds for the Movement, it will continue to be an indicator of societal values through the way it adapts, or fails to adapt, to fit those new norms.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Perhaps one of the most visible examples of this continuing process in current discussion is the LGBT rights issue in the United States, where the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) has banned openly gay members, citing traditional family values as paramount. In nearby Canada, in contrast, the National Scout organization has taken the reverse position, setting up booths and visibly participating at pride events in support of diversity. WOSM, meanwhile, adheres to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which opposes discrimination, and discussed the issue in depth at the 39<sup>th</sup> World Scout Conference in 2011. Just as in the interwar years, however, it is the national organization, not the central authority, which seems to be most powerful; WOSM's ultimate tool would be to expel the BSA from the world organization, but this drastic step seems unlikely given that the BSA is one of the oldest and largest of the national scout organizations worldwide.



### **Conclusion: “Looking Wide”<sup>279</sup>**

This study has argued that Scouting’s policy in the interwar years was driven by a desire to maintain central authority over the Movement. The administration, both Imperial and International, however, failed to do so. The dissemination of certain core principles were meant to create a degree of standardization, but homogeneity was difficult to achieve across such varied localities. The desire to expand membership usually overruled the desire to enforce strict adherence to a set of coherent guiding principles, resulting in modified forms of Scouting that deviated from Scouting’s core values as far as necessary to fit the local conditions.

Those core values, codified in the Scout Law, were themselves the product of a local set of cultural perspectives, emerging out of late Victorian and Edwardian Britain. In the 1920’s, they were extended to fit a more global context, where they were taken up and adapted accordingly depending on the needs of the populations they entered. It was a continuous reinvention of a set of central ideas.

The process that set this in motion was a complicated one. When Robert Baden-Powell wrote *Scouting for Boys* in 1907, he did not expect it to become as large a phenomenon as it did. Built on foundations that appealed to both parents and youth, it spread quickly not just within Britain but internationally. Nonetheless, the early years were characterized by a domestically-focused nationalism. It was only when prodded by outside forces, namely the Vane secession and the sheer popularity of the program outside Britain, that the Scout administration realized it had potential beyond national borders, and with that came responsibilities that were more outward looking.

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<sup>279</sup> The quotation is from Robert Baden-Powell. “Impressions on the Jamboree for Publication in The Times.” 1924. TC 55, Scout Association Archive, London.

Sir Francis Vane cast a long shadow. Not only were his actions the catalyst which forced Scouting to look beyond Britain's borders, the threat his BBS posed also established for B-P the overwhelming importance of maintaining autonomy from other organizations, and of controlling the Movement's widespread membership from a centralized authority. This desire for autonomy would inform his decisions throughout the interwar period, be it in relation with other organizations such as the League of Nations and LNU, or with unofficial Scouts such as the Pathfinders, *Voortrekkers*, and *La Federation*.

Growth, autonomy and control were the overwhelming priority of Scouting's headquarters. What it aimed to do with that autonomy was then laid out in the Scout Law and relayed through various forms of dissemination. At the heart of these laws and principles emerged two competing aims: the unity of the empire, and the bonds of goodwill internationally. At first the imperial aim was paramount, internationalism being simply a desirable utopia reachable perhaps in the distant future through proper education of the next generation. Scouting's popularity abroad, however, forced an unintentional internationalism on the Scouts, which they, after some initial hesitation, took up as the new banner of Scouting. Internationalism had to then be reconciled somehow with the already present imperial focus of the Movement. The solution was to make one a step towards the other; a united empire was one building block of several spheres of influence that could be brought together to unite the globe.

The most obvious tool with which to facilitate peaceful interactions between the various empires and spheres of influence was the newly formed League of Nations. Scouting supported the League, as it purported to desire the same outcome. But Scouting also feared being taken over or made irrelevant, and so kept a degree of distance between the League, the LNU, and itself. Scouting maintained its authority and relevance by claiming that it alone could do what the

League really needed in order to succeed: build mutual understanding between *peoples*, not governments, a sentiment which was described as “the soul of the League.”

These high minded goals often conflicted with the reality on the ground. B-P believed that Scouting could unify the empire as one monolithic pillar of goodwill, and later do the same for the world. But when one examines the various situations throughout the empire in which Scouting was transplanted, it becomes obvious that Scouting’s unity was superficial. Individual troops could pick and choose the elements of the program that best suited them. Even national councils, which had to adhere to the Scout Law for recognition, could still interpret those laws in their own way. South Africa, for example, contravened the Fourth Scout Law (equality of country, class or creed) to institutionalize segregation, while at the same time valiantly upholding the Second Scout Law (Loyalty to King) to exclude the nationalist *Voortrekkers*. It is clear that the periphery of the organization controlled the shape of the Movement as much if not more than the central authority B-P tried so desperately to maintain. In India, B-P’s desire for a united empire conflicted with the local yearning for an independent India, and it was ultimately the local situation which won out. In Canada, too, B-P saw Scouting as a tool for uniting the Dominion and staving off the American cultural threat, but not as Canadians; rather as British subjects. But B-P’s vision was not the dominant one in setting policies for Canadian Scouting. IHQ’s interference actually hindered progress towards the affiliation of French and English Scouts. It was the Scout Council and Cardinal Villeneuve in Canada, not B-P in London, who forged the agreement.

Scouting’s migration scheme, too, demonstrated how ill-founded was B-P’s belief in a united empire. It was based on misconceptions of both British youth and the Dominions, informed by outdated conceptions of masculinity which no longer pervaded youth consciousness.

Youth were not prepared to leave home for the frontier, and the Dominions were not economically prepared to receive such unskilled migrants that did arrive. The centre did not have an accurate understanding of the periphery. The experience of youth who utilized the program to travel to Victoria demonstrates that it was they, not IHQ, who ultimately decided their own actions, ignoring urges to be thrifty and prepared for hardships in rural settings, and returning to the cities.

The rise of Fascist youth movements in Europe in the interwar years presented yet another challenge to the Boy Scouts. Like in previous situations, Scouting adjusted to varied circumstances in order to promote its own expansion. It used the *Balilla*'s success at instilling national unity in Italy as proof that Scouting could be a similar unifying force, but for the entire globe. Meanwhile, B-P's willingness to cooperate with Nazi Germany's youth organizations was entirely consistent with his actions through the previous decades. He aimed to build bonds of friendship while at the same time promoting military preparedness, legitimized by the collective security mandate of the League of Nations. B-P's cooperation with the *Hitler Jugend* was not a reflection of personal sympathy for the Nazi regime, but rather his actions are representative of a continuity of tactics for the expansion of Scouting which he had been applying universally to varied situations throughout the interwar years. He was still aiming to build "the soul of the League," a goal which he pursued among the youth no matter how undesirable their country's political regime. Scouting's policy in the matter only deviated through the influence of Hubert Martin, whose rise signalled a changing of the guard; B-P was retiring, the International Bureau was now overshadowing Imperial Headquarters. Scouting's central administration in the postwar years would take a very different shape than it had in the interwar years, in part because it began

to accept that the centre could not entirely control the periphery. The International Bureau would continue to set certain standards, but these were subject to interpretation in each locality.

The paramount observation that can be made about Scouting in the interwar years is that while B-P tried to maintain central control, the level of success was ultimately determined not by him, but by the local conditions. Where they were amenable, he succeeded. Where they were not, he failed. Therefore, although Scouting was an organization meant for the entire empire and later for the entire world, it was in fact domestic concerns which dominated the shaping of the movement wherever it spread.

While this is significant in its own right, it is worth considering the ramifications of this observation outside of Scouting internationally. What does the experience of the Scout Movement tell us about imperialism and internationalism, and about the dissemination of ideas, beyond the specifics of this one organization? Was Leslie Paul correct in his declaration that youth movements are worth studying?

In short, yes. For one, the experience of the Scout Movement parallels that of the official imperial administration, acting as a microcosm of the larger colonial structure. In some cases, in fact, Scouting was an extension of that colonial system, a tool for assimilation or for teaching subjects their place in the imperial hierarchy. It was seen as facilitating indirect rule in Africa by creating a class of “natives” educated in western customs, who could act as intermediaries between British officials and subjects. This of course often did not work out as planned. Indigenous Scout troops often used Scouting as a tool to circumvent colonial rule. Just as Scout officials were only as successful at instilling their ideals as local conditions allowed, colonial officials were only as successful at implanting the society they desired as the population under their rule would accept.

Scouting's experience also says quite a lot about the relationship between the dominions and the home country. By the 1920s and 30s both saw themselves as partners in the project of empire, but what their role in that partnership consisted of was very different. This is clearest in the Canadian context, where Britain hoped to help Canada as part of a larger imperial quest for unity, especially in the face of the United States. Canadians, however, had a degree of resentment over interference, though they were still proud to be a part of the British Empire. This is echoed in the Coze crisis, but also more broadly in the migration scheme, where well meaning British interference was ill-founded upon misunderstandings of the wishes of and conditions in the dominions. This could sometimes make for a tense relationship, and ultimately, the dominions would move further and further from the Home country. The loose British Commonwealth of the post war years was a far cry from the united community that British observers, including B-P, envisioned in the interwar years.

Scouting's attempts at spreading certain values and ideals is perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of this study. Its successes, and failures, in instilling its ideas can tell the historian a lot about how ideas can, and cannot, be disseminated. It is hard to measure their success. Millions of youth and adults across the globe now know the mantra "Be Prepared." On the other hand, local variations of Scouting exist from town to town and troop to troop, let alone from country to country. The ideas which were successfully disseminated were those which could be universally applied, or were necessarily vague. Each Scout could decide for themselves, for example, exactly what it was they were "being prepared" for. The conclusion we can take from this is that it is very difficult to transplant an idea into a society, unless some form of that idea already exists within that society. Each locality accepts only the ideas which meet its needs or wants, the rest are discarded or downplayed. Ideas of imperialism, therefore, were transmitted

easily to British youth before 1914, for example, but they were accepted to a far lesser degree by Indian youth in the late 1930's.

Scouting's experience can also tell us a lot about how bridges of cooperation and integration can be built across borders. This is vastly important in a world where international conflict is still a dilemma, and internal conflicts and civil wars are even more rampant. Scouting's international relationships remained relatively superficial, despite their world Jamborees and other gatherings. They were more successful, however, at creating bonds between antagonistic groups in the domestic sphere. This suggests that geographic proximity plays some role in unity, though alone it is not enough. If, however, geographic proximity is supplemented by certain cultural bonds, such as the values and traditions the Scout Movement created, then it creates enough common ground for at least some movement towards cooperation. Interaction in one form, such as a united Scout organization, can facilitate interaction in areas that are more contentious. This phenomenon is similar to the "spillover effect" in Neo-functionalist theory, described by political scientist Ernst Haas, where integration in one area can lead to integration in others.<sup>280</sup> This theory has been used to explain the expansion of the European Union, which began as a coal and steel community only, then spread to other more complex areas of economic and political integration. The same idea can be applied between culturally divergent communities. A common youth organization can be the first step towards more ambitious cooperative interactions.

Internationally, the same sort of principle can apply, as long as a sufficient replacement is found for geographic proximity. This can be a physical and practical substitute, such as the use of technology to ease communication and transportation. It can also be an intellectual creation,

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<sup>280</sup> Ernst B. Haas. *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces, 1950-1957*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958.)

such as the “imagined community” which in part helped to hold together the British Empire. Scouting created its own imagined community, with traditions, uniforms, ceremonies, and creation myths which could be shared across vast geographical distances. The success and failure of each component of this imagined community can provide an example to those who wish to create a global community. The United Nations system, although with many imperfections, has created certain norms in international politics which the majority of countries abide by, not because it is law, but because it has been established by repetition and become normative behaviour. This sort of behaviour mirrors the Scouts own experience. Some norms are easier to establish than others, as B-P and the Scouting administration found out when they tried to apply supposedly universal principles to various localities. Many of those norms were rejected, adapted, or reinterpreted. But they were successful in establishing a point from which one could work, a core set of tenets which could be agreed on and negotiated, which could lead to further cooperation and mutual adaptation.

Scouting’s legacy then, in the international and imperial sphere, is not in that it succeeded in creating a monolith of identical uniformed youth; it did not do so. Instead, it had to deal with the reality that its broad membership was heterogeneous, with varying values, desires, and customs. But it created a point of contact between these, one which could be built upon and refurbished continually to meet changing needs. This contact point survived even the two major breakdowns of international peace in the twentieth century. Both world wars presented a major setback to the goal of global unity, but the fact that Scouting rebounded quickly as soon as the conflicts ended suggests that the point of contact was enduring. It was not strong enough to prevent war, but it certainly facilitated the reconstruction of international ties between the antagonists. The revival of common bonds, however weak, demonstrates that a foundational



basis for cooperation is to be found in transnational communities such as the Boy Scout Movement, which operate in spite of differences in political outlook, economic circumstances, and cultural background. As such, it is to be hoped that academics will not ignore Leslie Paul's plea, because the experiences of youth movements do indeed hold significant lessons for wider application in multiple fields.

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## Appendix A: The Scout Law, 1908

1. **A SCOUT'S HONOUR IS TO BE TRUSTED.** If a scout says "On my honour it is so," that means it is so, just as if he had taken a most solemn oath. Similarly, if a scout officer says to a scout, "I trust you on your honour to do this," the Scout is bound to carry out the order to the very best of his ability, and to let nothing interfere with his doing so. If a scout were to break his honour by telling a lie, or by not carrying out an order exactly when trusted on his honour to do so, he would cease to be a scout, and must hand over his scout badge and never be allowed to wear it again.
2. **A SCOUT IS LOYAL** to the King, and to his officers, and to his country, and to his employers. He must stick to them through thick and thin against anyone who is their enemy, or who even talks badly of them.
3. **A SCOUT'S DUTY IS TO BE USEFUL AND TO HELP OTHERS.** And he is to do his duty before anything else, even though he gives up his own pleasure, or comfort, or safety to do it. When in difficulty to know which of two things to do, he must ask himself, "Which is my duty?" that is, "Which is best for other people?"---and do that one. He must Be Prepared at any time to save life, or to help injured persons. And he must do a good turn to somebody every day.
4. **A SCOUT IS A FRIEND TO ALL, AND A BROTHER TO EVERY OTHER SCOUT, NO MATTER TO WHAT SOCIAL CLASS THE OTHER BELONGS.** If a scout meets another scout, even though a stranger to him, he must speak to him, and help him in any way that he can, either to carry out the duty he is then doing, or by giving him food, or, as far as possible, anything that he may be in want of. A scout must never be a SNOB. A snob is one who looks down upon another because he is poorer, or who is poor and resents another because he is rich. A scout accepts the other man as he finds him, and makes the best of him -- "Kim," the boy scout, was called by the Indians "Little friend of all the world," and that is the name which every scout should earn for himself. [*Changed in 1910 to: A Scout is a friend to all, and a brother to every other Scout, no matter to what country, class or creed the other belongs.*]
5. **A SCOUT IS COURTEOUS:** That is, he is polite to all—but especially to women and children and old people and invalids, cripples, etc. And he must not take any reward for being helpful or courteous.
6. **A SCOUT IS A FRIEND TO ANIMALS.** He should save them as far as possible from pain, and should not kill any animal unnecessarily, even if it is only a fly---for it is one of God's creatures.
7. **A SCOUT OBEYS ORDERS** of his patrol-leader, or scout master without question. Even if he gets an order he does not like, he must do as soldiers and sailors do, he must carry it out all the same because it is his duty; and after he has done it he can come and state any reasons against it: but he must carry out the order at once. That is discipline.



8. **A SCOUT SMILES AND WHISTLES** under all circumstances. When he gets an order he should obey it cheerily and readily, not in a slow, hang-dog sort of way. Scouts never grouse at hardships, nor whine at each other, nor swear when put out. When you just miss a train, or someone treads on your favourite corn---not that a scout ought to have such things as corns--- or under any annoying circumstances, you should force yourself to smile at once, and then whistle a tune, and you will be all right. A scout goes about with a smile on and whistling. It cheers him and cheers other people, especially in time of danger, for he keeps it up then all the same. The punishment for swearing or bad language is for each offence a mug of cold water to be poured down the offender's sleeve by the other scouts.
9. **A SCOUT IS THRIFTY**, that is, he saves every penny he can, and puts it in the bank, so that he may have money to keep himself when out of work, and thus not make himself a burden to others; or that he may have money to give away to others when they need it.
10. **A SCOUT IS CLEAN IN THOUGHT, WORD AND DEED**. Decent Scouts look down upon silly youths who talk dirt, and they do not let themselves give way to temptation, either to talk it or to do anything dirty. A Scout is pure, and clean-minded, and manly. [*added in 1911*]

Source: Baden-Powell, Robert. *Scouting for Boys: The Original 1908 Edition*. Edited by Elleke Boehmer. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

## Appendix B: Boy Scout Migration Statistics

### Number of Boy Scout Migrants by Year

#### Pre-war

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Youth</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1922	59	(To Australia, Canada, and New Zealand)
1923	150	
1924	219	(To various dominions)
1925	500	
1926	868	
1927	930	
1928	900	
1929	600	(200 to Victoria)
1930	447	(148 to Australia)
1931	130	(26 to Australia)
1932	54	(4 to Australia)
1933-36	0	(period of depression)
1936-39	0	

#### Post war

1956-1959 12

[The table ends here, but the scheme would run into the late 1960s]

### Number of Boy Scout Migrants by Destination, 1924-1932

<u>Destination</u>	<u>Number of youth</u>
Canada	915
Australia	3365
New Zealand	247
South Africa and Rhodesia	129
Other parts of the empire	88
Total	4744*

\*Of the 4744 youth who migrated through the Boy Scout scheme in this period, 77 received funding from the Whitehead Scholarship Fund.

Sources: TC 27 and TC 274, Scout Association Archive, London.

## Appendix C: Scouting Membership Statistics

### Scouting Statistics 1933

<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of Members</u>
British Empire:	853,206
World:	2.5 million

### Scouting Statistics 1937

<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of Members</u>
Canada	81,138
Australia	66,000
South Africa	15,721
Newfoundland	1,500
India	326,381
Empire total	1,055,551
World total	2,855,689

Sources: TC 39, Scout Association Archive, London, and Baden-Powell, Robert. "Our Twenty-Fifth Anniversary" in *B-P's Outlook*. Ottawa: National Council Boy Scouts of Canada, 1979, 154-159.