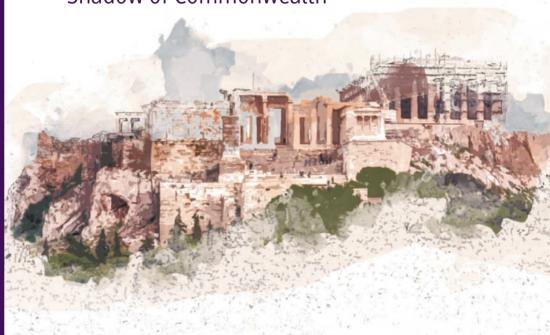# The International Thought of Alfred Zimmern

Classicism, Zionism and the Shadow of Commonwealth

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Introduction: An Apostle of Commonwealth

In the history of modern British political thought, the globally dispersed territory composed of the United Kingdom and its diasporic settler colonies—now called Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa—held a distinct place. During the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, it attracted innovative political imaginations. Under the rubric of Greater Britain, a body of ambitious schemes for a post-nation-state political community including a supra-parliamentary federation were projected on this transoceanic territory.[1] Such imperial schemes had long-tailed repercussions. The years around World War II saw the revival of unificatory projects for the empire. The proposed (con-)federal Commonwealth was often placed as part of a Euro-Atlantic polity or a future global state.[2] Today the debate about Britain's global policy in a post-Brexit era rekindles the visions of the "Anglosphere," the daydream of reunifying the core five English-speaking countries based on purported shared legacies of the British Empire.[3] From the mid-century to recent years, however, the justification of a union between Britain and its former settler colonies tended to be discredited. Notable among such intellectual decolonization is Hedley Bull's criticism of "the myth of the Commonwealth" in 1959.[4] An eminent scholar in the academic subject of International Relations (IR), Bull denounced a group of early twentieth-century imperial

arguments that he believed had masked the realities of world politics by fabricating a "common will" of the British Commonwealth.[5]

Alfred Eckhard Zimmern (1879–1957) was inspired by the late Victorian and Edwardian debate about Greater Britain. As its early twentieth-century successor, he was committed to imperial reform. While his international thought was complex, involving shifts, tensions and confusions, it was constantly shaped by his project towards the reformation of the settler empire and the creation of a British Commonwealth. Meanwhile, he sought to overcome Anglo-centric racial accounts, which were prevalent in the projects for Greater Britain and enunciated in such works as J.R. Seeley's *The Expansion of England* (1883) and Charles Dilke's *Greater Britain* (1869/1890).[6] Against such accounts, Zimmern formulated a distinct principle of coexistence between diverse national groups, describing his vision of multinational Commonwealth as the "Third British Empire"—the term for which he is remembered.[7] Moreover, he saw this empire as a significant model for a new world order. In his words, it was the "more intimate League" that the League of Nations as a global organization should emulate.[8] After World War II Zimmern proposed a global state that would integrate such exemplary empire in itself. One could certainly criticize his advocacy of a unified British Commonwealth as an attempt to create the myth of the Commonwealth as Bull himself would do. However, a simple endorsement of Bull's view will lead to overlooking a wide array of unique, peculiar and even idiosyncratic aspects of Zimmern's work on empire and global order.

Zimmern is an elusive thinker with a multifaceted career. Arguably he is best known as a leading early IR academic for having held two significant chairs in the subject: the Woodrow Wilson Chair of International Politics at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, and the Montague Burton Professorship of International Relations at Oxford.[9] Yet in his lifetime, he assumed a variety of other roles and professions. He was a classicist, a geographer, a British imperial campaigner, a Zionist, a civil servant for the British government and the League of Nations, an international educationist, a contributor to the Christian ecumenical movement, and one of the main architects of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In the wake of World War II, he also worked for the global government campaign in the United States. Zimmern's thought has been examined in a number of academic fields, spanning from classics to IR historiography, and has been appraised from different perspectives.[10] Most significantly, he has been viewed as a

Grecophile intellectual, a key British liberal internationalist, an adherent of interwar idealism (as opposed to realism) and an international spiritual holist rooted in the tradition of British philosophical idealism.[11]

This book is a critical and sustained analysis of the international thought of this many-sided British public moralist. Building on and partly modifying the body of existing literature, it aims to fulfil three main purposes. First, it offers an intellectual biography of Zimmern, examining critically the way in which his thought developed during the first half of the twentieth century. This approach is taken to capture Zimmern's frequent ideological shifts, the theoretical continuities and discontinues involved, and the intervening influences on his thought. The absence of such chronological analysis have prevented a full appreciation of his political ideas and visions.[12] Specifically, it has led to missing key shifts in his project for world order from the 1930s to the post-World War II years. Analysing his argument of this period will show that in the 1930s Zimmern became profoundly sceptic about the capacity of the League, which contrasts with the traditional image that he was a strong advocate of the League. In the wake of the war, he turned to proposing a world federal government, which also diverges from the existing account that he was not a supra-statist.[13] I attempt to provide a more integral picture of this thinker by looking into his varied intellectual evolution from the turn of the century to the early Cold War era.

Second, I foreground the significantly underanalysed, yet vital components of Zimmern's international thought. I draw particular attention to two ideological elements, demonstrating that they were its enduring characteristics. One is the harmonious coexistence between depoliticized nationalities. This derived mainly from the strand of cultural (or spiritual) Zionism that Zimmern subscribed to. The other is a combination of civic and pre-civic moralities, which he created through reference to Edmund Burke's arguments. Zimmern suggested this Burkean combination as "liberalism." I argue that to a great extent, Zimmern's scheme for reorganizing the British Empire and global order was weaved by these two elements as its warp and woof. He can be depicted with two apparent oxymorons: he was a *Burkean liberal* internationalist, and at the same time a *Zionist internationalist*.

Finally, I claim that Zimmern can best be understood as an apostle of Commonwealth, defined as a person who remained faithful to his envisaged British Empire as a template for an extra-imperial or even a global community. Zimmern believed that the British Commonwealth embodied

universalism. He expressed such belief in a letter to his fellow international J.A. Hobson in 1916: "The Commonwealth is not an English, or an Anglo-Saxon, but a world-experiment—an attempt to work out not national or racial but universal and fundamental principles."[14] This conviction of imperial universalism drove him to hold that those values and principles incorporated in the British Commonwealth could inform wider political communities. Key among such principles were the aforementioned two ideological attributes: the coexistence between multiple depoliticized nationalities and the Burkean combination of civic and pre-civic moralities. Zimmern's ennobled conception of the Commonwealth as a world template continued until his last years in America. For him, the imperial and the global were thus entwined.

In what follows I do three preliminary works. First, I dislocate the lingering label of Zimmern as an interwar idealist. Then, I flag up two politico-ideological contexts as particularly relevant to understanding his international thought. One is the late Victorian and Edwardian projects for Greater Britain, and the other modern Zionism. Finally, I will discuss his unique usage of liberalism.

Beyond IR Historiography

Conventionally, Zimmern has featured in the disciplinary history of IR and specifically in the so-called First Great Debate (idealism versus realism). In this narrative, he has been disparaged as a typical interwar idealist. The Great Debate posits that IR academics between the world wars were naïve visionary thinkers who obsessively focused on the progressive reform of international politics rather than on a sober analysis of its harsh realities. Such utopians were spurned in the late 1930s and 1940s by judicious realists, who rightly concentrated on power politics and the issue of national security.[15] E.H. Carr's dichotomy (realism against utopianism) provided a formative style of the Debate despite his actual eclecticism.[16] Yet Hedley Bull must be regarded as most responsible for its consolidation. In his historiographical account in *The Aberystwyth Papers* (1972), Bull wrote a developmental history of IR with idealists predominating in the 1920s and early 1930s over whom realists triumphed in the subsequent years. According to him, the idealist group was marked by its impetuous commitment to progress in the international system. One of the most distinguished interwar IR scholars, alongside some others like Philip Noel-Baker (the first Ernest Cassel

Professor of International Relations at the LSE), the functionalist David Mitrany and Columbia historian James T. Shotwell, Zimmern was a chief representative of the group.

> By the 'idealists' we have in mind writers such as Sir Alfred Zimmern, S.H. Bailey, Philip Noel-Baker, and David Mitrany in the United Kingdom, and James T. Shotwell, Pitman Potter, and Parker T. Moon in the United States. […] The distinctive characteristic of these writers was their belief in progress: the belief, in particular, that the system of international relations that had given rise to the First World War was capable of being transformed into a fundamentally more peaceful and just world order. […] The most polished work of the 'idealist' writers is perhaps Sir Alfred Zimmern's *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law*, and at the basis of all their thinking is the dichotomy expressed in the division of this book into two sections: Part I, 'The Pre-War System'; Part II and III, 'The elements of the Covenant' and 'The Working of the League.' […] In the 1930s, in response to the challenge presented to 'the League system' by the revisionist powers, the emphasis changed to the study of collective security and of 'the problem of peaceful change,' but the progressivist premises of these writings remained intact.[17]

The First Great Debate has contributed to the stylized official history of IR, a disciplinary legitimating device that enables a Thomas Kuhnian "normal science."[18] It is still reproduced in some textbooks. In *International Relations* (2014), Martin Griffiths, Terry O'Callaghan and Steven Roach define idealists as "futurists" aspiring to a perfect cosmopolitan world. They were at variance with post-World War II realists focused on "practical or prudential considerations." Like Bull, Griffiths, O'Callaghan and Roach refer to Zimmern's work as a typical case of idealism.[19]

The category of idealism is misleading in two related senses. First, it is almost a retrospective and an anachronistic imposition. This has been demonstrated over the last quarter of a century in the historiographical turn of IR—a converging area for disciplinary historians in the academic field and scholars of the history of international thought.[20] A broad array of historians, including Lucian Ashworth, Duncan Bell, David Long, Brian Schmidt and Peter Wilson, to name but a few, have integrated the historiography of IR and the study of the history of political thought, relocating the works of early IR practitioners in wider contemporary political, ideological and institutional contexts. Despite subtle

differences in their methodological approaches, their shared commit-
ment to historical contextualization has deconstructed the First Great
Debate and disclosed its unhistorical character.[21] It turns out essen-
tially a triumphalist discourse, a device established well after World War
II and enforced retroactively on earlier decades to legitimate the self-
proclaimed superiority of realism. In other words, the debate risks what
Quentin Skinner calls the "mythology of prolepsis," a mythology in which
the imputation of retrospective significance to a given text occludes a
proper understanding of its actual intention and meaning.[22] Peter Wilson
declares that "there was no coherent and self-consciously idealist school
of thought in the interwar period." Rather "this period spawned a diver-
sity of liberal schemes for war avoidance which self-styled 'realists' were
to erroneously, and damagingly for disciplinary development, lump into
a single 'idealist/utopian' box."[23] In place of the Debate, the aforemen-
tioned historians have also shown the complicity of early IR academics in
empire. Early twentieth-century IR was closely associated with, or even
served to justify, extra-academic practices for creating global hierarchies,
such as imperial expansion, colonial rule and domination over non-white
races.[24]

Second, idealism is deficient in its explanatory power. The rhetorical
and retroactive usage of this category to dignify realism has deprived it
of analytical rigour, making it extremely elastic and ambiguous. In fact,
it is utilized to signify varied and almost opposite positions from paci-
fism to anti-appeasement. Still, it may hold as the phrase to describe the
belief in progress that was possessed by many interwar IR theorists.[25]
To a fair degree, Zimmern himself was one among them. However, even
if so, only claiming that they had such belief does little to explain the
actual complexity of their political and international thought. It was made
up of multifarious arguments and construals on an extensive range of
contemporary issues, including, albeit not exhaustively, European impe-
rialism, racism, anti-colonial nationalism, the depredations of capitalism,
the outlawry of war, peaceful change, the role of religion, global govern-
ment and global social justice (as the literature in the historiographical
turn evinces). Zimmern's international thought was characterized in a
similar way, embodying his unique interpretations of diverse subjects.
Besides, it was within this intellectual compound that his normative claims
and analytic judgements can both be found and were frequently entwined
with one another. The term idealism falls far short of accounting for such

intellectual complexity. In short, the unhistorical or at least ambiguous and oversimplifying category of idealism has to be dislocated.

Furthermore, it is important to confirm that in the analysis of interwar IR, attention must be paid to the difficulty in drawing a sharp categorical contrast between IR work and non-IR work. Interwar IR was still fledgling. It constituted criss-crossing speculative circles, a "trading zone," where intellectuals in various professions ranging from history, law, economics, geography, policy-making and diplomacy to popular journalism could mingle and collaborate for a richer understanding of world politics. The concepts and language used were blended from such assorted areas, though out of this creole evolved key parameters for the more professionalized IR in the later years: most notably, the concept of anarchy.[26] In other words, neither a strict disciplinary boundary nor a clear dividing line between academia and extra-academic activities existed in this nascent field of study during the interwar period. Such fuzzy borders need to be taken seriously in examining Zimmern's purported IR writings, such as *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law* (1936). They must be located and investigated as part of a broader complex of his intellectual discourse (rather than as an output within IR as a strict discipline), which in turn comprised a specific episode of early twentieth-century British political and international ideologies.

In summary, I move beyond the conventional label of idealism, historically scrutinizing Zimmern's international thought in its original complexity. My attempt is thus to properly recapture his work as that of an early twentieth-century multifaceted British thinker rather than an IR academic, although the latter is a non-negligible aspect of the former. In doing so, I give prominence to two pertinent politico-ideological contexts: the late Victorian and Edwardian debate on Greater Britain, and Zionism. These are critical to grasping the evolution of Zimmern's ideas.

British Commonwealth and Classicism

In the decades across the turn of the twentieth century, global imperial competition and a threat of decline, coupled with technoscientific novelties, urged the British elite to overhaul their vast, scattered, multi-ethnic and polyglot empire.[27] The debate surrounding the creation of Greater Britain was based largely on this imperative. An intellectual vogue that began to flourish in the 1870s, Greater Britain projects privileged the

settler empire—the region composed of Britain and its settler colonies in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and southern Africa—over the subject empire, including India and other dependencies. Authors of such projects pursued the establishment of a single intercontinental political community over the settler empire, though their specific institutional proposals were widely different. This trend for a gigantic British polity deviated from the imaginations of earlier thinkers. The English liberal luminary John Stewart Mill serves as an illustrative case. In the early 1860s, Mill argued that the spatial extent of a political community was ultimately constrained by physical distance. A great geographic expanse prevented the acquisition of adequate knowledge of counterparts' interests, a robust rational deliberation, an overarching national identity and thus, the creation of "the same public." Therefore, regarding the British setter empire, Mill claimed that "Countries separated by half the globe do not present the natural conditions for being under one government."[28]

However, such notion of insurmountable nature declined towards the turn of the century. As Daniel Deudney notes, the late Victorian and Edwardian periods were marked by the emergence of a wide range of "industrial globalist" thinkers. The spread of the industrial revolution around the world, as well as constant innovations in communication and transportation technologies, including the transcontinental railway, telegraph, telephone, ocean liner and airplane, radically transformed the scale and tempo of human activities.[29] This technoscientific revolution engendered a widespread perception that the globe had shrunk dramatically. The prominent historian J.R. Seeley, for instance, observed in *The Expansion of England* (1883) that "distance is abolished by science." "In the eighteenth century [Edmund] Burke thought a federation quite impossible across the Atlantic Ocean." Yet since then, this Ocean "has shrunk till it seems scarcely broader than the sea between Greece and Sicily."[30] Similarly, the liberal critic J.A. Hobson declared in the mid-1900s that the planet was already a single unified space with various "modes of cosmopolitanism," like the "immediate and simultaneous" global flow of capital, labour and information.[31] This cognitive transformation of geography drove industrial globalist thinkers to devise disparate schemes for a greater political organization beyond the nation-state, such as a pan-regional imperial polity and even a world state.[32]

The late Victorian and Edwardian currency of Greater Britain projects was among such post-nation-state intellectual movements. At the time, a constellation of British thinkers across ideological divides including Seeley,

James Bryce, A.V. Dicey, E.A. Freeman, W.T. Stead, J.A. Hobson, L.T. Hobhouse and Lionel Curtis, to name only a few, championed integrating the citadels of "global Britishness" as J.G.A. Pocock dubs it—that is, the United Kingdom and the aforementioned settler colonies—albeit with notable differences in their institutional planning.[33] Some Greater Britain theorists argued for the building of an intercontinental imperial federation with overarching legislative, judicial and executive power. Some, like Dicey, designed what can be called a racialized "isopolitan citizenship," a bundle of common civil and political rights granted to the "Anglo-Saxons" (as a racial collectivity) irrespective of their places of residence within the British settler empire.[34] Others still, including Freeman, rejected any unitary legal or political system, emphasizing instead the cultural and spiritual bonds among constituent members, specifically, the Anglo-Saxons. A large number of imperial advocacy organizations were also created. One of the most powerful was the Imperial Federation League founded in 1884 as a platform for public agitation, which was dissolved nine years later.[35] Another was the Round Table, established in 1909–10 chiefly by the so-called Milner's Kindergarten—a group of Oxford graduates who had worked as imperial civil servants in post-bellum South Africa under Lord Alfred Milner for its federal union. Coupled with its internal diversity in the institutional scheme for empire, the Round Table inherited the impetus of the debate about Greater Britain beyond World War I. It amounted to a major force behind the creation of the British Commonwealth of Nations as stipulated in the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and the Statute of Westminster, 1931 (and also behind some leading semi-academic think-tanks like Chatham House).[36]

Importantly, the late Victorian and Edwardian advocates of British imperial unification shared, in general, a "historical mindedness" as it was frequently labelled at the time.[37] History, precedent, tradition, ancient authority and appeal to legacy played a critical role in devising their plans for empire. In 1880 Seeley argued that "men's views of politics vary with their views of history." The English are guided "in the larger political questions by great historical precedents."[38] Likewise, the Oxford historian Freeman underlined a direct relevance of classical antiquity. "[N]o portions of history are more truly 'modern'—that is, more full of practical lessons for our own political and social state—than the history of the times which in mere physical distance we look upon as 'ancient'."[39] As Freeman's accent on antiquity suggests, the Greco-Roman period occupied a

special place in late Victorian and Edwardian British imperial discourse. An array of recent classical reception studies, conducted by such scholars as Barbara Goff, Phiroze Vasunia, Mark Bradley, C.A. Hagerman and Sarah Butler, illustrate that many explanations of the ancient civilization offered around the turn of the century constituted a pivotal point of reference for grounding, warranting or justifying distinct future visions of the British Empire. The Greco-Roman history, culture and intellectual products, including authoritative texts, served as a self-reflexive mirror for British imperial thinkers in shaping and buttressing their ideologies.[40] For example, Vasunia illuminates this by focusing on the accounts of the Roman Empire provided by James Bryce, Seeley, J.A. Froude and others. He argues that their construals of the Roman Empire were "inseparable from their claims about the British Empire, and in fact reveal more about the latter than the former." Analogies between the Roman and British Empires "assisted British imperial interests," including the promotion of Greater Britain.[41] Ancient Greece also provided a critical reference point for fostering the reorganization of the British Empire. Freeman's work *Greater Greece and Greater Britain* (1886) is one of the most salient examples. He proposed a non-federal scheme of Greater Britain, highlighting the cultural and spiritual attributes of the "Anglo-Teutonic" race as the most robust ties between the metropole and the settler colonies across the world. Simultaneously, he sought to legitimate such British imperial scheme by developing a distinct interpretation of ancient Greek colonization, a picture of trans-Mediterranean Greater Greece parallel to his ocean-spanning Greater Britain.[42]

I show that Zimmern was a devoted British imperial reformer and, moreover, that he can be situated as a key successor to and a critic of the Greater Britain projects. Like his predecessors, Zimmern negotiated the past and the present based on his study of the ancient civilization. As a prominent classicist, who wrote *The Greek Commonwealth* (1911), he built a transepochal bridge between his explanations of classical antiquity, specifically, ancient Greece, and of a British Commonwealth.[43] The Round Table, which he joined in 1913, offered a key locus to elaborate his British Commonwealth project through such temporal negotiation. As Chapter 2 will show, for this elaboration Zimmern depended heavily on a view of fifth-century BC Athens he had presented in *The Greek Commonwealth*. That was an idealized rendering of the Athenian polis as the site of perfect civic republicanism. Significantly, such portrayal of

classical Athens itself reflected his own conception of the British impe-
rial future. In his draft essays written before *The Greek Commonwealth*,
including "United Britain" (1905), Zimmern had already articulated a
comparable vision of Greater Britain marked by peoples' display of vibrant
civic virtues.[44] His description of classical Athens as a republican polity
sui generis was largely an outcome of projecting this Greater Britain. For
him, as for many other advocates of Greater Britain, classical scholarship
and a concept of the modern British Empire were entwined and interac-
tively shaped. The Burkean combination of civic and pre-civic moralities
that Zimmern forged lay at the centre of his transhistorical analogy. His
emphasis on the Athenian exemplar was intended to propose a unified
British imperial public who shared such dual moralities.

Meanwhile, despite the similarity in temporal compromise, Zimmern
deviated from many other Greater Britain proponents in a key respect:
the conception of race. As Marylyn Lake and Henry Reynolds note,
the late Victorian and Edwardian era saw the rearticulation of race
differences. It was the time when "transnational racial identifications
and their potency in shaping both personal identity and global poli-
tics" became salient.[45] The African American sociologist W.E.B. Du
Bois's famous declaration at the beginning of the new century—"the
problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line"—
flagged the intensification of racial discrimination and conflicts.[46] Greater
Britain advocates also imbibed elements of racism, specifically of Anglo-
Saxonism. Despite the wide variance in their institutional planning, many
of them including Bryce, Dicey, Seeley, Freeman, Froude, Stead and
Curtis similarly grounded their envisaged Greater Britain (or British
Commonwealth) in a purported racial hierarchy with the Anglo-Saxons at
its peak.[47] While Zimmern was a successor to the Greater Britain projects,
he took a different position on race. He was scathing about such preva-
lent Anglo-centric imperial schemes, although he cannot entirely be seen
as an anti-racist. I argue that Zimmern's anti-Anglo-centric account of
empire was grounded in two key factors. One was his subtle identity as
one of the Jewish Diaspora and his consequent sense of distance from
certain aspects of the English culture. The other was his commitment to
cultural Zionism, which provided a distinct multicultural ideology. It was
these that afforded a peculiar, or even an idiosyncratic, dimension to his
conception of the future of the British Empire.

Jewishness and Zionism

Zimmern's engagement with Zionism has gained little attention in the existing scholarship on this Jewish movement. Only Noam Pianko has focused on it, arguing that he combined Zionist thought and British internationalism to offer "an alternative to the nation-state paradigm."[48] In Chapter 3, I demonstrate the ways in which Zimmern embraced and applied a specific Zionist ideology, namely, cultural Zionism. Based on this Zionist thought, he theorized the harmonious coexistence between depoliticized nationalities (or national cultures). Such application of Zionism was underpinned by his fine Jewish consciousness.

Zimmern's self-awareness as a Jewish descendant was derived from his familial lineage. He was born to a relatively rich family in Surbiton, Surrey, England, in January 1879, as the only son of Adolf and his wife Matilda Sophia Eckhard. While Matilda was of Huguenot descent, Adolf's ancestry was of liberal-minded German Jews.[49] His parents had emigrated to England from Frankfurt, Germany, in the wake of the revolution of 1848.[50] This European multi-ethnic background precluded Zimmern from adopting an exclusive English identity. During World War I, he wrote to J.A. Hobson that the war impelled him to feel "far more cosmopolitan even than I was before." "To me it is a real *civil war*."[51] The same familial backdrop also brought about ambivalence in Zimmern's faith. Despite Matilda's Protestant teaching, he did not become a complete Christian adherent. The Anglican bishop William Temple, one of Zimmern's colleagues at the Workers' Educational Association (with which Zimmern was engaged in the 1900s and 1910s), even suspected his religious scepticism.[52] However, Zimmern neither grew up a practising Jew, nor intently learnt Judaic customs as an adult. Later, in his speech at a Zionist organization in London, he described himself as a person who was "not an orthodox Jew, or an orthodox Christian."[53]

Although being ambivalent about religion, Zimmern had a clear recognition of his ethnonational roots. He identified with German-Jewish progeny, and his subtle self-consciousness as one of the Diaspora was inscribed in his mind. This can be attested by his own confession of a sense of alienation. Zimmern was trained in an elite English cultural milieu. As a teenager, he received public-school education at Winchester College. Then he entered New College, Oxford, where he was enrolled in the *Literae Humaniores* (a classical studies degree course shaped at the time by British philosophical idealism). After graduation, he remained as

Fellow and Tutor in Ancient History at New College. He also visited Humboldt University, Berlin, in 1903 to advance his study of classics.[54] In the course of such intellectual training, Zimmern appears to have felt a distance from the English milieu owing to his Jewish consciousness. Around the turn of the century, anti-Semitism was prevalent at Oxford albeit not overtly, but implicitly and structurally.[55] Perhaps this ambience brought Zimmern to feel uneasy. He once told his sense of estrangement to his friend and former student Arnold J. Toynbee, hinting "a certain detachment" from English people around himself.[56] Moreover, in the public speech "United Britain" at Oxford in 1905, Zimmern disclosed his inner self-recognition as one of Jewish stock, by styling himself "an *alien* who […] has not a drop of English blood in his veins."[57] His acute perception of ethnocultural differences in political society may have been grounded in such diasporic feeling.

Zimmern's latent, yet constant Jewish identity bore an important consequence; it catalysed his commitment to the Zionist movement. He can be counted as one of the significant early twentieth-century British Zionist promoters. Specifically, he worked—at least briefly in the 1910s—as a transatlantic liaison between Zionists in Britain such as Chaim Weizmann on the one side, and American Zionist leaders including Louis Brandeis and Felix Frankfurter on the other. In addition, Zimmern was also a contributor to the prominent American Jewish and Zionist magazine *Menorah Journal*. It was published by the Intercollegiate Menorah Association, a nationwide non-partisan Jewish society originating from Harvard and led by Horace Kallen, Henry Hurwitz and other various American Jewish intellectuals (both Zionist and non-Zionist).[58] Chapter 3 examines this aspect of Zimmern as a British Zionist and a transatlantic agent in this capacity. Such inquiry has two related advantages. First, it can illuminate the significantly neglected dimension both in the Zimmern scholarship and the wider literature on Zionism. Second, such illumination makes it possible to dissect the distinctive combination of Zionism, British imperial campaigning, liberal internationalism and early IR embodied in this person. The proper understanding of his ideas requires a transcendence of the boundaries of academic fields covering these topics, namely, the history of British political thought, Jewish and Zionist history, and IR historiography.

What should be stressed is that Zimmern was enchanted with cultural Zionism developed specifically by the Ukrainian Jewish philosopher Ahad Ha'am (Asher Ginsberg).[59] A relatively marginalized architect of

Zionism (though currently under reappraisal), Ahad Ha'am was a sceptic of Theodor Herzl's political Zionism and advocated a form of non-statist Jewish nationalism.[60] The principal objective of Ahad Ha'am's Zionist doctrine lay not in the immediate establishment of a Jewish sovereign state, but in the unification of the Diaspora into a single global Jewish nation through the modernization of traditional Hebrew culture and through the creation of a Jewish spiritual centre in Palestine. For him, Zionism primarily indicated the cultivation of a self-distinguishing national spirit among globally dispersed Jewish people. Zimmern adopted this Zionist approach in his early days. He first encountered Ahad Ha'am's writings at the Seventh Zionist Congress convened in Basel, Switzerland, in 1905. Thereafter he continued to espouse cultural Zionism. In 1920, when Zimmern wrote a preface to British Zionist Leon Simon's book *Studies in Jewish Nationalism*, he recalled that Ahad Ha'am's ideas had "influenced me, in steadily increasing measure, ever since."[61]

Simultaneously, Zimmern's reception of Ahad Ha'am's cultural Zionism involved a twist. While supporting this Zionist account of culturally unified global Jewish nationhood, he adapted it to other diverse nationalities. He dissociated all national groups, whether Jewish or non-Jewish, from state sovereignty. The nationalities he conceived were thus essentially depoliticized entities, each integrated through its own intimately shared cultural tradition across state borders. As such, Zimmern rejected the spatial congruity between nation and state, championing plurinational coexistence under the jurisdiction of a vast political community. The globe he envisaged was a world of multinational empires, not of nation-states. On his account, this was a critical departure from the Victorian liberal J.S. Mill. Zimmern regarded him as the defender of the nation-state paradigm. Mill's argument in *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861)—that establishing "free institutions" demanded the general coincidence between "the boundaries of governments" and "those of nationalities"—appeared a testimony to such position.[62] Zimmern's uniqueness resided in bringing cultural Zionism to bear on formulating his post-Millian vision of political community. His scheme of the British Commonwealth, characterized by the harmony between different depoliticized and culturally united nationalities, designated such post-nation-state polity. Liberal multiculturalist Will Kymlicka's remark that Zimmern was an early theorist about minorities' rights is indicative, although he overlooks this British thinker's debt to Ahad Ha'am's Zionism.[63]

It was this Zionist-based multicultural empire that enabled Zimmern to challenge widespread late Victorian and Edwardian Anglo-centric advocacies of Greater Britain, such as Seeley's, and to theoretically deprive the Anglo-Saxons of a privileged status. He was a dissident among contemporary Greater Britain protagonists. Yet, he had ideological allies on the other side of the Atlantic, who likewise fulminated against prevailing Anglo-Saxon centrism in the United States. Chief among them was Horace Kallen, an early twentieth-century American Progressive and a Zionist notable for his invention of the term "cultural pluralism." Another was Randolph Bourne, an American radical pacifist who wrote "Trans-National America" (1916).[64] These two US intellectuals similarly formulated anti-Anglo-centric proposals for a peaceful coexistence between diverse ethnocultural groups comprising American civil society. Albeit on a different geographic scale, their respective visions of the US society mirrored Zimmern's British Commonwealth in fostering multi-ethnocultural harmony.[65] The parallel anti-Anglo projects of the three thinkers can be deemed, to borrow from James Kloppenberg, a unique dimension of the "transatlantic community of discourse" in political theory at the time.[66]

However, Zimmern's anti-Anglo imperial account remained as a revolt against the *intra*-European variant of white supremacism. It did not reach the point of encompassing total non-discrimination towards non-Western "coloured" people. Zimmern was *prima facie* a racial egalitarian, frequently articulating the necessity to overcome conflicts based on the colour-line. In *The Third British Empire* (1926) he set out "the choice between an equal relationship between peoples, irrespective of race or colour, and an unequal relationship," he himself supporting the former.[67] Compared with many other British and American internationalists of the time, such egalitarian voice itself is notable. Nevertheless, it involved inherent limitations stemming from its basic character: a struggle inside the West (against Anglo-Saxonism), grounded in another European identity as a marginalized Jewish descendant. As a consequence, despite his alleged advocacy of racial equality, Zimmern was still discriminatory, prescribing a form of Eurocentric hierarchy by suggesting Western civilization as the overarching criterion. While he recognized full moral personality to (diverse) European whites and those non-whites purported to attain Western modernity such as the Japanese, he withheld it from other non-whites, consigning them to the custody of imperial trusteeship, to that "imaginary waiting room of history."[68] In summary, against