On Tour with the Prince

DOI:

[10.1093/tcbh/hwx037](https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwx037)

Document Version

Accepted author manuscript

[Link to publication record in Manchester Research Explorer](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Mort, F. (2017). On Tour with the Prince: Monarchy, Imperial Politics and Publicity in the Prince of Wales's Dominion Tours 1919–20. *Twentieth Century British History*, 29(1), 25-57. <https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwx037>

Published in:

Twentieth Century British History

Citing this paper

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**On Tour with the Prince. Monarchy, Imperial Politics and
Publicity in the Prince of Wales's Dominion Tours 1919-
1920.**

Journal:	<i>Twentieth Century British History</i>
Manuscript ID	TCBH-2017-ART-025.R1
Manuscript Type:	Article
Keywords:	monarchy, diplomacy, empire, media

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Review

On Tour with the Prince. Monarchy, Imperial Politics and Publicity in the Prince of Wales's Dominion Tours 1919-1920.

Abstract: The stage managers of ritual and the media transformed the British monarchy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, consolidating its image as splendid and popular and also as more accessible and quasi-democratic. Historians have emphasized that these processes of modernization largely began in Britain. This article locates the origins of democratized royal ritual in the white dominions, especially after 1918. Canada, Australia and New Zealand were political and cultural laboratories where royal advisors and British and dominion politicians launched experiments in the practice of progressive empire and innovatory styles of informal ceremonial, which had a long-term impact on imperial and later Commonwealth relations. Focusing on the Prince of Wales's early dominion tours, the article argues that though royal diplomacy followed earlier itineraries in efforts to consolidate the racialized British world, it also threw up new and unintended consequences. These registered the rapidly changing international order after the collapse of the European monarchies, together with the demands of the prince's own modernist personality. Faced with republican and socialist opposition in Australia and Canada, the touring prince was drawn into competing forms of nationalism, as dominion politicians and journalists embraced him as representing domestic aspirations for self-government and cultural recognition. It is argued that modern royalty personified by the Prince of Wales problematizes the history of twentieth-century public reputations defined by the culture of celebrity. The British monarchy was forced to confront both the constitutional claims of empire and the politics of dominion nationalism, as well as the pressures of international publicity.

When Edward, Prince of Wales, landed in Canada at St John New Brunswick in August 1919 on his first empire tour the occasion was marked not just by formal welcome ceremonies but by 'so huge a crowd' that the prince himself dubbed it 'an astonishing spectacle of affable

democracy'.¹ Arriving on *HMS Renown*, the royal party were greeted by massed Canadians pressing against the town's crush barriers, while a 'battery of moving picture machines and camera men ... struggled around and watched the scene'.² The prince acknowledged his popular appeal, not just by the youthful and smiling informality that was fast becoming his hallmark, but also by speaking to key imperial subjects. Reviewing the troops who formed the local guard of honour, he singled out 'my brother Canadians' who had served with him on the western front during the First World War and were distinguished by their bravery and their 'free cordiality'. Warming to this theme of masculine comradeship forged in battle, he asked his audience 'to look on me as a Canadian, if not actually by birth, yet certainly in mind and spirit'.³ But war veterans were not the only prominent members of the welcome party. As the newsreels screened flag-waving children singing 'national airs', young women stepped forward in an elaborate pageant representing the nine provinces of Canada.⁴

Historians have charted the way the British monarchy modernized itself and was modernized in the first decades of the twentieth century, but they have argued that these changes largely began at home, in Britain.⁵ A new informal style of royal tour pioneered by the prince's parents, George V and Queen Mary, just before the First World War, together with a spate of post-war weddings and funerals, were domestic ceremonies designed not just with mass appeal but also with an eye on greater royal accessibility. They consolidated an image of the British monarchy as 'splendid, public and popular' that had been crystallized in the late nineteenth century, but they also introduced a different genre of publicity and mass communications focused on the more personalized and intimate exposure of royalty.⁶ They were designed to celebrate the survival and quasi-democratic character of the British monarchy, in the face of the fall of the major autocratic dynasties across Europe.

But partially democratized ritual was not just a hallmark of the domestic production of sovereignty during the inter-war years, it was equally central to the politics and display of

monarchy across the British empire. Late Victorian and Edwardian versions of ‘ornamentalism’, as David Cannadine has defined it, had been dominated by spectacular projections of the monarch as distant matriarch or resplendent hierophant, and this type of royal iconography continued in British India and in many of the colonies well beyond 1918.⁷ But after the war notions of ‘our Democratic Royalty’, as the Australian press put it in 1920, increasingly predominated over more hierarchical versions of British sovereignty, especially in the leading dominions of Canada and Australia.⁸ Dominion populations were brought into closer real or imagined contact with British royalty, via ceremonial and publicity that presented an informal public image of monarchy by associating it with more horizontal conceptions of power and prestige. These rituals of empire were not just co-terminus with the more intimate projections of the monarchy circulating in Britain, they were often in advance of domestic versions on account of their experiments in royal populism.

The pre-eminent figure in this contemporary version of imperial display throughout the immediate post-war years was the Prince of Wales, who led an international field of royal contemporaries and newer types of personality with his distinctive brand of modernism. Many biographers and academic historians have tended to fix the prince as a leading figure of inter-war celebrity culture. Laura Nym Myall has argued that the transatlantic media associated the Prince of Wales with a pseudo-egalitarian aesthetic that promoted his popularity to audiences across the Anglophone world.⁹ He has also gained a bad press as the suave bachelor who selfishly danced his way through a string of love affairs, neglected official duties and flirted with fascism, ending up with his abdication as Edward VIII and marriage to American divorcée, Wallis Simpson.¹⁰ But such readings capture only part of his career. This article reasserts the prince’s central place in the political and constitutional story of progressive empire during the 1920s, a position that shaped his appeal for key dominion populations. The Prince of Wales’s status as an imperial icon was pivotal to public

1
2
3 projections of his personality. I aim to show that royalty presents a problem for the analysis
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5 of celebrity culture, because modern royal figures like the prince carried a much more
6
7 traditional pedigree based on the active legacy of hereditary privilege and constitutional
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9 authority. Major work was required to turn royal aura into modern fame and that process was
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11 contested and frequently inconclusive--no more so than with the Prince of Wales.
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15 Between 1919 and 1925 the prince travelled across the empire and throughout the world in
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17 a series of royal visits which took him to forty-five different countries, dominions and
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19 colonies, covering a total distance of 150,000 miles.¹¹ These journeys began to firm up his
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21 reputation for change and innovation that was characterized by his physical and cultural
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23 mobility. He first toured Canada (with a brief detour to Washington and New York) for three
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25 months in 1919, followed by New Zealand and Australia in the spring and summer of the
26
27 next year. [Figures 1 and 2 here] India and Japan were the main destinations in 1921-22, with
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29 the prince returning to North America again in 1923 and 1924. His final extensive tour in
30
31 1925 covered The Gambia, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, South Africa and Argentina.
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36 These tours drew on much earlier ideas of the royal progress and the travelling court that
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38 were central to the itinerant displays of medieval and early modern European rulers, but there
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40 were more recent precedents as well.¹² As Charles Reed has shown, since the 1860s
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42 members of the British royal family embarked on regular visits across the empire with the
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44 aim of bringing imperial subjects together via the active presence of the sovereign's
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46 representative.¹³ The ritual space of the royal tour was a site where the British world was
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48 made and remade. The prince's father and mother made an extensive colonial tour in 1901 as
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50 Duke and Duchess of Cornwall, while their trips to India in 1905-6 and in 1911 culminated
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52 with the massively ritualistic coronation Durbar in Delhi, where George V and Queen Mary
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54 appeared in full regalia to receive homage from the Indian princes.
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The Prince of Wales followed his parents to India in the early 1920s. That tour revealed the political problems confronting him, as his entourage and the government at home unsuccessfully tried to replicate the elaborate ceremonial that had dominated the king and queen's earlier visit - now in the face of stiff opposition from well-organized Indian nationalism. But here I examine the prince's much more dynamic overseas visits to Canada, New Zealand and Australia. I adopt a thematic rather than a chronological approach to the tours, taking them together for evidence of a major shift in the presentation and performance of royalty. Canada, as the initial itinerary, was a learning curve for court officials and the prince alike. Less than six months separated this visit from the Australasian tour, which meant that their underlying paradigms about democracy and monarchy remained broadly similar, despite the fact that the political and diplomatic cultures in each country varied considerably.

The white dominions provide important case studies of experiments in royal politics that were committed to modernization. In the aftermath of world war and the rise of Bolshevism, imperial politicians identified their predominantly British settler populations as politically mature, safe for democracy and loyal to the crown, despite significant elements that were republican, or anti-British, or both. As immigrant societies, they were also defined as young countries, supposedly unencumbered by the weight of history and amenable to progressive political and social agendas--beliefs that were also identified with the Prince of Wales himself. It was in the dominions that the prince crystallized his role as the representative of a distinctively British projection of democratic royalty.

Simultaneously, this strategy of progressive empire carried with it deep-seated racialized projections which, as Bill Schwarz has demonstrated, centred on the 'luminous presence of the white man'.¹⁴ Assumptions about the superiority of British settler stock, with royalty cast as its apogee, were present in the intellectual thinking of most of the courtiers and politicians

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2
3 who pioneered the tours, both at home and in the dominions. They were also inscribed in the
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5 Prince of Wales's own compelling public image as the bearer of modern princely virtue, as
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7 well as in his privately held beliefs about white superiority that underscored all his foreign
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9 tours. Furthermore, a racialized agenda was written into the systemic exclusions and
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11 marginalizations of indigenous peoples that characterized the dominion visits, especially in
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13 Australia.
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17 Historians who have examined the prince's major foreign travels have focused
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19 productively on political explanations of their origins and consequences. In that sense, the
20
21 prince's Australasian tour has been cast as a success--a visit that reduced social tensions after
22
23 the war and strengthened a 'white Australia' and New Zealand policy that pulled the
24
25 dominions firmly back into the imperial fold.¹⁵ By contrast, in the prince's royal progress
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27 through India (the most politically motivated and the most formal of all his visits),
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29 'monarchical splendour', as Chandrika Kaul has argued, failed in its strategic aim of shoring
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31 up the Raj for a British public at home--the result of Mahatma Gandhi's effective strategy of
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33 boycott.¹⁶ A different reading of political and racial outcomes has traced the prince's
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35 influence on the western educated, urban elites in India and in West and South Africa in
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37 1925, revealing how the ceremonial rites of empire produced what Hilary Sapire has termed
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39 'ambiguities of loyalism' among a group who embraced both moderate nationalism and
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41 imperialist aspirations.¹⁷ Taken together, these studies have tended to view the ceremonial
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43 elements of royal display as the cultural supports for imperial *realpolitik*, or as the catalyst for
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45 nationalist and republican opposition to British imperialism.
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51 I adopt a different interpretative approach here to the relationship between imperial
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53 strategy, on the one hand, and ceremony and publicity, on the other. My focus on the elite
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55 rituals associated with the royal family and the court is deliberate, because I argue that this
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57 constellation of forces retained an important place in the political culture of British and
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3 dominion diplomacy after the collapse of the old European order in 1918. In the recent
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5 renaissance of diplomatic history, scholars have returned to the complex symbolic codes--
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7 many of them monarchical and royal--which secured international relations between nation
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9 states in the long nineteenth century.¹⁸ Following Johannes Paulmann's suggestive ideas
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11 about 'royal internationalism' and 'royal cosmopolitanism', I argue that their significance did
12
13 not end in 1914.¹⁹ As the king's heir and bearing the full weight of Foreign Office
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15 endorsement, the Prince of Wales was inserted into these rituals of old diplomacy, with their
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17 elaborate ceremonial and formalities. Though the creation of the League of Nations
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19 transformed diplomatic channels after the war, its new global order was not acknowledged on
20
21 the prince's tours, which were assertively imperial rather than internationalist.²⁰
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27 However, the well-oiled channels of British diplomacy were complicated by an
28
29 accumulation of unpredictable and unforeseen consequences on the royal visits which I
30
31 analyse here. First, the nationalist political demands of dominion politicians and peoples
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33 threw up unintended issues for the court and the Foreign Office. For the prince was seen not
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35 only as the personification of empire, but also as a figure who represented domestic
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37 aspirations for increased self-government and cultural recognition. And though he asked
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39 dominion audiences to embrace him as one of their own, he had to face down political
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41 opponents who were often hostile to the monarchy. Industrial militants, ardent republicans
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43 and socialists were just some of the forces confronting him.
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48 A second wildcard in this mix was the proliferating forms of the mass media. John
49
50 Plunkett has insisted that Queen Victoria was Britain's 'first media monarch', while there is
51
52 plenty of evidence to support arguments that modern, personality-driven journalism drove the
53
54 imaging of British royalty well before the First World War.²¹ Equally, the idea of
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56 'democratic royalism', with spectacle promoting political and cultural consensus has been
57
58 linked to the efforts of late Victorian and Edwardian stage managers of royal ritual.²² While
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the political uses of ceremony and media management were not wholly new, coverage of the Prince of Wales in the dominions introduced a different alignment of imperial interests with an intensified stress on publicity. Dominion journalists in particular served as crucial intermediaries between monarchy and people, working to introduce the prince to Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders who were seen to be not only *subjects* of the crown but now also avid *consumers* of royalty. Royalty's relationship with 'the Anglophone citizen', as Nym Mayall has termed it, was almost always mediated by publicity.²³

Finally, I explore the Prince of Wales's own efforts to negotiate these competing demands on his character, that were driven by the tension between imperial politics and the modern cult of celebrity. The prince's personality on tour presents a significant case study in the psychology of early-twentieth-century public reputations. The pressures of his public role and his growing demand for a private life remained characteristically unresolved, in ways that were to have long-term consequences for the British monarchy.

Progressive Imperial Politics

When the Prince of Wales arrived in Canada in 1919 he was twenty-five and in search of a role. Over the next six years he was given one as an 'Ambassador of Empire'.²⁴ After the war politicians and journalists presented the prince to the dominions as the paradigm of white masculinity around whom imperialist discourse could rally. But this ideal of manhood was not heroic in the Victorian mould; his personality was self-effacing and understated, despite his position as heir apparent to the king/ emperor. Photographs of him released on the Canadian tour strike a characteristic pose; head lowered and to one side, with a boyish smile and diffident charm, advertising an open but still unformed personality. [Figure 3 here]

Unequivocally, the prince was defined as part of the 'war generation', which historians have understood to have had a major impact on transforming Edwardian conceptions of

manliness.²⁵ Efforts to identify him with the conflict threw up contradictory ideas about his masculinity. War service in France and Italy enabled him to claim comradeship with the ordinary soldier, which was integral to the idea of him as a quasi-democratic public figure who belonged to the contemporary world.²⁶ As Heather Jones has shown, the prince's service on the western front had earned him the epithet 'a prince in the trenches'.²⁷ Equally, older notions of chivalric manliness and the ideal of an honour culture also shaped his public presentation.

The point was that the Prince of Wales's personality was highly malleable, especially when it was shaped by the media. Canadian and Australian supporters of royalty saw the prince as a 'delight to the eye' who could lubricate the machinery of empire.²⁸ For journalists demanding greater royal accessibility the reference points were different; it was the prince's easy-going style, lack of reserve and his qualities as a 'regular fellow' that made him emblematic of a post-war generation of young men across the world.²⁹ While W. Douglas Newton, who tracked the prince through North America with his souvenir publication *Westward with the Prince of Wales* (1920), put it even more prosaically: he was 'the average ... youth of modern times'.³⁰

Back at home, it was Lloyd George, the supreme master showman turned imperialist, who linked the young royal's character to the demands of imperial unity. As the prime minister put it: 'the winning ... charm of his personality ... strengthens the invisible bonds of ... Empire.'³¹ Lloyd George often viewed monarchy instrumentally, a strategy that was first evident with his involvement in Edward's crowd-pulling investiture as Prince of Wales at Caernarvon Castle in 1911.³² The prime minister's input into the prince's early empire tours revealed his direct interventions into British foreign policy, especially over dominion affairs, where the aim was to promote forms of imperial diplomacy that by-passed what he regarded as the narrow Foreign Office outlook.³³

Backing Lloyd George was a formidable array of politicians and royal advisors. Many of these figures had cut their teeth as forward-thinking imperialists in the Round Table movement led by Alfred, Lord Milner, before 1914, which was initially dedicated to closer union between Britain and the dominions. The leader of this influential pressure group in court circles was the Conservative politician Leo Amery, Parliamentary Under-Secretary to Milner at the Colonial Office. Amery and Milner cultivated the prince with clear intent. In May 1919 Milner received the first of several visits from the prince to discuss his impending Canadian tour.³⁴ After the trip, Amery pronounced himself 'tremendously impressed by the value' of the royal visit 'from the Imperial point of view'.³⁵

But the prince's tours were not just driven by British politicians dedicated to renewing imperial governance. Sir Robert Borden, W.H. ('Billy') Hughes and William Massey, the respective premiers of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, were the intermediaries who promoted monarchy and the prince as part of a fast-moving political agenda on their own home turfs. Here the international context becomes more complex, revealing the interplay of imperial politics and nationalist aspirations in the dominions.

Robert Borden was a Conservative monarchist who always insisted that his vision for Canada privileged the 'British connection and British ideals'.³⁶ Before the war, he was active in support of imperial defence and on his visit to London in 1919 he discussed the impending Canadian visit of the Prince of Wales with the king.³⁷ But Borden tempered his royalism by insisting that Canada's dominion status now meant partial autonomy from Britain.³⁸ This dual strategy was apparent in the careful reception he gave the prince throughout the tour, when Borden maintained that Canadian public opinion wanted to preserve the ties to monarchy, but in ways that enhanced rather than reduced dominion status.³⁹

Emphasis on dominion ownership of the monarchy was even more apparent in the politics of Billy Hughes. Hughes was a committed imperialist and a co-founder of the 'white Australia' policy, positioning the country as an 'Anglo-Saxon outpost of the Empire in the South Pacific'.⁴⁰ The monarchy played a part in Hughes's nationalist and internationalist aspirations because, in a similar way to Borden with whom he liaised regularly, the thrust of his foreign policy was to assert Australian autonomy within a looser imperial federation that was linked by the crown.⁴¹ Bill Massey of New Zealand was arguably the most straightforward imperialist among the dominion premiers. But like Borden and Hughes, Massey pushed for a degree of national autonomy, especially in foreign affairs.⁴² These three leading politicians claimed the prince as their own--a prince for Canada, Australia and New Zealand, rather than as simply a representative of the British monarchy in the dominions. Their argument was that in the aftermath of world war, involving the massive sacrifice of empire troops and increasing demands for partial autonomy from political leaders and citizens across the dominions, the king/emperor and his family had become ever more important as the connecting thread that bound disparate peoples together.

Constitutionally, this modern monarchical version of empire was enshrined in the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and written into the 1931 Statute of Westminster, with its stress on the legislative independence of the self-governing dominions, their jurisdiction over key aspects of sovereignty and the emerging idea of the British Commonwealth as an association of free peoples, linked by common allegiance to the crown.⁴³ 'Progressive imperialism', the term deployed by figures like Amery and Hughes, was used to distinguish it from nineteenth-century versions of imperial governance. Along with an emphasis on the sovereign as a pre-eminent unifying force, there was a growing awareness of the power of publicity and enhanced communications technology, combined with efforts to synthesize aspirations for dominion self-government with the demands of imperial politics in Britain.

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3 But the policy of progressive empire was controversial. At home, H.G. Wells and George
4
5 Lansbury took the lead in attacking the prince's tours on the grounds of political ineptitude
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7 and cost.⁴⁴ An outspoken republican critic of monarchy during the war, in 1920 Wells
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9 launched a trenchant critique of these 'smiling tours of the Prince of Wales' as an exercise in
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11 'colossal national egotism and ... self-satisfaction'.⁴⁵ Despite the fact that many 'liberal
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13 apologists' saw the British empire as a benign force akin to the League of Nations, Wells
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15 insisted that it had failed to live up to expectations. His attack focused on the future of the
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17 international political system, while Lansbury, in his role as editor of the *Daily Herald*,
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19 highlighted monarchy's role in the 'bankruptcy of the present social order' at home.⁴⁶ In
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21 India, Gandhi finessed his opposition to the prince's visit there by stressing that it was
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23 important to distinguish between 'the Prince' as a likeable individual and 'the Prince' as a
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25 detestable symbol of empire.⁴⁷ Gandhi's recognition of the contradictory faces of the prince
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27 highlighted the tension between the public and private character of modern royalty--a tension
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29 that was to pose growing problems for palace advisors, as well as for members of the royal
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31 family themselves, during the inter-war period and beyond.

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37 In a context where both the prince's personality and his involvement in the imperial
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39 project were contested, it was no accident that Edward Grigg became a key figure in his
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41 household during the Canadian and Australasian trips.⁴⁸ Appointed Military Secretary and
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43 political advisor in 1919, he was hand-picked by Lloyd George and fully endorsed by the
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45 king. Grigg was a vocal polemicist for progressive empire, with a commitment to 'practical'
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47 rather than 'sentimental imperialism'.⁴⁹ Following the intellectual lead of his mentor, Milner,
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49 Grigg maintained that 'there is no centre [of empire] but the King'.⁵⁰ He had been associated
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51 with Milner's circle before the war and boasted the press baron Lord Northcliffe as another
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53 early patron.⁵¹ Like Amery and Milner, Grigg was a prominent journalist, in his role as a
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55 colonial editor of *The Times*. Grigg's newspaper connections were crucial because they
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2
3 cemented the links between publicity and empire politics. On both dominion visits Grigg
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5 wrote the prince's speeches and acted as royal minder; he also liaised with the empire's
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7 media and supervised journalists travelling with the royal party. While on tour Grigg was in
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9 constant dialogue with Lloyd George and the king, talking up the political impact of the visits
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11 as well as keeping them alert to potential problems.
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15 Princely Democratic Style
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18 Edward Grigg pioneered the prince's democratic and accessible style as the device designed
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20 to present royalty to the dominions. 'Public Reception to Meet Prince of Wales. Vancouver's
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22 Welcome Will be on Democratic Basis', announced a press banner headline in September
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24 1919, as the prince travelled westwards across Canada in the special train provided by the
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26 Canadian Pacific Railway.⁵² The back carriage was equipped with an outdoor 'observation
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28 platform', which the prince used to make impromptu speeches to local audiences along the
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30 track.⁵³ Variations on his populist persona were finessed throughout both tours. The
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32 following year, by the time the royal party approached Melbourne, Grigg wrote to the king's
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34 private secretary, Lord Stamfordham, explaining what was now a well-tried formula for many
35
36 of the prince's major public appearances: 'one big public reception' will be 'organized in
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38 every large city so as to prevent any possible notion that he [Prince of Wales] was not
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40 anxious ... to meet all classes of the population.'⁵⁴
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46 The decision to alter royal protocol and stump the dominions, as the prince put it, was a
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48 proactive response by the prince and his suite to the demands of local audiences, once the
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50 Canadian tour got underway.⁵⁵ It had taken the over-enthusiastic reaction of Canadian war
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52 veterans to force the issue. By the end of the war Canada's total casualties stood at 67,000
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54 killed and 250,000 wounded. At the time of the prince's visit it was clear that honouring the
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56 Canadian dead and meeting returned soldiers was top of the royal agenda for the empire. The
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1
2
3 prince's inauguration of Warriors' Day in Toronto in August 1919 was organized by the
4
5 Great War Veterans' Association at the Canadian National Exhibition Grounds. The
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7 ceremony centred on him formally reviewing the massed ranks of 27,000 veterans on
8
9 horseback, before addressing them on a specially constructed dais. But as the prince later
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11 recalled, the moment he appeared the men 'broke ranks and, cheering and yelling, surged
12
13 around me'.⁵⁶ As the 'human mass' engulfed him, he was 'lifted off the horse's back ... and
14
15 passed like a football over the heads of the veterans'.⁵⁷ (See Figure 3) Here was the type of
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17 crowd response that erupted again and again on the tours. The veterans wanted to get close up
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19 to the prince, to touch him and claim him as one of their own, acknowledging the wartime
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21 bonds of masculine comradeship. In so doing they broke the physical and symbolic barriers
22
23 of reserve that conventionally distanced British royalty from their subjects.
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28 After the Toronto incident 'informal meetings' of all kinds, and not just with veterans,
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30 became part of the prince's programme. They took a wide variety of forms: from meet-and-
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32 greet sessions, when the prince struck up apparently spontaneous conversations with
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34 Canadian farmers or newly arrived immigrants, to the monster democratic levees favoured by
35
36 Grigg, which became a hallmark of the tours. By the time of the Australian visit the following
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38 year, the prince walked to Melbourne's Exhibition Building to host what was now billed as a
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40 'People's Reception', where '20,000 people ... filed past' him--'150 ... to the minute'.⁵⁸ The
41
42 same format was on display at Sydney's Town Hall in June. Some of these experiments in
43
44 populist informality had been tried by the prince's parents on their industrial visits across
45
46 England and Wales before 1914. But it was the scale and the youthful, media-driven
47
48 personality of the prince that distinguished his tours from earlier versions of democratic
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50 ceremonial.
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55 Such largescale public events were notable not only for their characteristic performance
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57 style, but also for their distinctive setting and the nature of their visual record. For these
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exercises in royal democratic participation the prince would arrive and depart on foot, rather than in a horse-drawn state landau or at the head of a motorcade, while some of the elite trappings of royalty--notably top hat and formal dress--were discarded, reportedly by order of the prince himself.⁵⁹ He was thus physically and symbolically closer to the people in ways that the Toronto veterans had demanded.

Across the dominions these events were captured by the newsreels, through codes of reporting that reinforced the prince's popular appeal and suggested the integration of royalty into a post-war world of mass society in which the visual image was paramount. Luke McKernan has demonstrated that the royal family topped the bill as the favoured subject of contemporary British newsreels and closer, more informal filming of royalty increased during the war, with the explicit co-operation of the king and queen.⁶⁰ The Prince of Wales led the field in royal media popularity, despite the fact that from the mid-1920s his relations with the camera, and the camera crews, became more problematic on account of his resentment at unwarranted media intrusion.⁶¹

British Pathé covered the Canadian tour at every stage, with a characteristic visual formula for the prince's progress. Their account of major events usually opened with establishing shots of the formal welcome ceremonies by national dignitaries like the Duke of Devonshire as Governor-General, Borden as Prime Minister and military figures in full dress uniform, who together represented the constitutional and the warfare state. But these sequences then quickly cut to middle-distance panoramas of the prince in the centre of extensive, surging crowds, moving subsequently to 'close up' shots of the royal visitor.⁶² The visual narrative emphasized that the prince was not just the focal point of official ceremonial, but that he was the object of popular democratic participation as well. All this was in marked contrast to the respectful middle-distance shots of the prince that Pathé had

documented in his send off from Portsmouth Harbour to Canada, accompanied by the king and queen.⁶³

In Canada, the sense of a horizontal rather than a purely hierarchical connection between prince and people was reinforced by the implied point of view of newsreel audiences in relation to the royal visitor. At many events, such as his visit to the Military Hospital in Toronto, Edward appeared to walk straight to camera and by implication into the close and intimate field of viewers themselves.⁶⁴ Many of these visual effects were in part a result of the limitations of available technology, to be sure. In 1919 newsreel cameras were not equipped with close-focus lenses, which meant that crews needed to be physically close to royalty in order to capture near-distance shots. Newsreel journalists also varied their position among the people to reinforce the democratic visual argument. Their regular point of view was that of the unobtrusive documentary observer, but sometimes they placed themselves inside the surging masses, revealing that the newsreels were themselves 'part of the crowd'.⁶⁵ Camera crews also singled out characters from the multitude, especially in the treatment of war veterans and women. It was these two groups that the media closely identified with the royal politics of empire.

When the prince arrived at the rail junction town of Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, to inspect a military hospital, the opening sequence showed him moving down a long line of wounded soldiers.⁶⁶ But what followed were close ups of the prince in animated discussion with individual veterans, indicating royal concern for the soldiers' welfare and suggesting that these men had personalities independent of their role as serving soldiers.⁶⁷ Related visual codes distinguished female relatives of the Canadian war dead. When the prince presented posthumous medals 'to mothers whose sons fell on the fields of France' at New Brunswick, the camera was again close up to record the reactions of one woman, whom the prince was seen to engage in sympathetic conversation, framed by military figures.⁶⁸ [Figure 4 here] But

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3 it was in Pathé's record of younger, more contemporary women that the individualized focus
4 of the media was most visible. As the prince moved westward to Winnipeg, Manitoba, short-
5 skirted flappers were identified as prominent members of the crowd, pressing forward against
6 the police cordon.⁶⁹ When the prince inspected the Battalion of Western Cavalry, the
7 newsreel shot one of these young women breaking through the human barrier and running
8 straight to camera--by implication towards the prince himself.

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17 The experiments in royal populism pioneered by the Prince of Wales also influenced some
18 of the public performances by other, younger members of the royal family at home after the
19 war. The prince's sister, Princess Mary, and his brother, Prince Albert, Duke of York, were to
20 the fore in initiatives of this sort. 'It is now no longer Mary's wedding but (this from the
21 papers) it is ... the "National Wedding" or even the "People's Wedding"', explained the
22 Duke about the nuptials for his sister in 1922.⁷⁰ The ceremony in Westminster Abbey was
23 extensively covered by the newsreels, which stressed that the bride was 'Still "Our Princess"!'
24 Amid unforgettable [sic] scenes of love and loyalty'.⁷¹ The Duke of York's own career
25 properly began in 1919 (after military service in the Royal Navy and the Royal Flying Corps)
26 when he became President of the Industrial Welfare Society, aimed at improving industrial
27 conditions and promoting industrial harmony.⁷² But it was his own marriage to the media-
28 friendly Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon in 1923 that increased his popularity. Almost
29 immediately after her engagement was announced, Lady Elizabeth gave an informal
30 interview which appeared on the front page of the *Evening News*. Journalists described her as
31 a 'charming picture of English girlhood' and evoked 'the goodwill that had been shown her
32 by high and low'.⁷³ The coverage was a portent of things to come.

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At the heart of these experiments in royal democratic style was a growing awareness of
the power of media-orchestrated public opinion, which for monarchy was seen as a challenge
and a threat. As Alan Lascelles understood it in the early 1920s after he had joined the Prince

of Wales's staff as Assistant Private Secretary, 'when you get down to bed-rock' the prince was dependent on 'Public goodwill', and cultivating goodwill, as he put it starkly, was 'better than a guillotine in the yard of Buckingham Palace'.⁷⁴ Lascelles made plain his anxieties about 'Bolshevists' who had just seen off a clutch of European royalties.⁷⁵ He was right to be nervous, for as the prince arrived in Canada, Borden hurried back from the Paris Peace Conference not just to welcome his royal guest, but also to deal with serious rioting and civil disobedience in Quebec.⁷⁶ Across the country, a widespread cost of living crisis in 1919, coupled with industrial militancy in the west, made the premier anxious about the negative reception the prince might well receive in Canada.⁷⁷ Industrial tensions were at their most serious in Winnipeg, a scheduled stop on the tour.⁷⁸ By June, only weeks before the prince's arrival there, a wage dispute had quickly escalated into a general strike, supported by many returning soldiers.

The first leg of the tour of New Zealand the following year was disrupted by a national rail strike. In Australia, republican and anti-imperialist protests against the prince's tour were orchestrated in all major cities and spearheaded by sections of the Australian Labor Party. Much of the opposition centred on the excessive cost of the visit, echoing arguments made at home about the hubris and overreach of British foreign policy.⁷⁹ In New South Wales, Labor organized a boycott of the tour, denouncing the prince as 'the official mouthpiece of the employing class'.⁸⁰ For a time it seemed likely that Brisbane would be a no-go city for the prince because, as Hughes admitted, Queensland was 'honeycombed with Sinn Feiners'.⁸¹ Republicanism and Catholicism were a potent mix in Australia, where sectarian divisions had been heightened by the Easter Rising in Ireland and by the subsequent civil war there.⁸²

To what extent did these protests impinge on the royal project for progressive empire and accelerate the shift towards a more democratic style of monarchy? Imperialists like Grigg and Amery launched the Prince of Wales into dominions that were politically restless and

where opposition to monarchy was often deep-seated and longstanding. The three interconnected threats--Bolshevism, republicanism and militant nationalism--haunted the imagination of all connected with the tours from the king down. In Australia as in Canada, Grigg's response was proactive, insisting that wherever possible the prince should face down the opposition. He stressed how essential it was for Edward to visit labour areas, such as those in north-western Tasmania, so as 'not to leave a feeling of unfair treatment'.⁸³ As the tour gathered pace, both Grigg and the prince agreed that their experiments in democracy worked best without the constant presence of politicians, because they believed there was a public relations advantage to be gained by asserting royal independence.

At the same time, the parameters of royal democratic accessibility were clearly policed in racial terms throughout the Australasian tour. In that sense, the contrast between New Zealand and Australia was stark. The prince received an elaborate Maori welcome at Rotorua, New Zealand, and Maori dancing and gift-giving was captured by photographers and on the newsreels.⁸⁴ A front cover of the *Free Lance* magazine sketched the uniformed prince enthusiastically receiving a kiss from a Maori woman in national dress.⁸⁵ The relative prominence that the Maori population was awarded was a tacit acknowledgement that New Zealand's first peoples were of equal status to the white settlers, a point that was underlined in film footage of the tour which showed the prince meeting Maori men who had fought during the war.⁸⁶ Once in Australia, the situation was one of almost total exclusion of indigenous peoples, who were quite simply left unacknowledged by Grigg and his local organizers. A hurriedly arranged meeting with Aboriginal men and women in South Australia on the journey from Perth to Adelaide was the only time that the prince encountered them, and his comments were disparaging in the extreme, describing them as 'the nearest thing to monkeys I've ever seen'.⁸⁷ Philip Ziegler, Edward's biographer, has noted that the prince was racially prejudiced even beyond the norm for his generation, a

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3 prejudice that became more pronounced as his tours went on through the 1920s.⁸⁸ In 1925 at
4 a ball in Sierra Leone en route to South Africa, he went on record to his mother saying that
5 he had 'flatly refused to dance with black women! That's too much!!'⁸⁹
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10 Racial hierarchies were written into all the prince's tours, but so too were marked
11 polarizations that distinguished British royals from their contemporaries in mainland Europe.
12 Newspaper readers and assembled crowds were constantly reminded of the difference
13 between the prince's own accessible public style and the autocratic posturing of recently
14 toppled monarchs. "'I Serve' Democracy's Prince', announced the *Melbourne Herald*,
15 quoting the prince's personal motto and explaining to readers that 'the Czar ... the German
16 Emperor' and all the other 'despots' had been failures because they were remote from their
17 people.⁹⁰ Back at home, the latest reports of the Prince of Wales mixing informally with
18 dominion crowds were placed on the same newspaper page as coverage of the exiled German
19 emperor, who Lloyd George argued should hang for war crimes.⁹¹
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33 It would be wrong to overstate the nature of these changes to royal diplomacy. On both
34 tours there were plenty of state banquets, drives and investitures, where only the elite of
35 Canadian, Australian and New Zealand society were present.⁹² Such functions reinforced
36 imperial hierarchies and fixed royalty as the traditional fount of social honour. On the
37 prince's tour of India, which followed almost immediately after Australia, informality was
38 conspicuously absent from the programme. Traditional ceremonial dominated, which was
39 designed to reinforce a resplendent image of the British Raj. Faced with Gandhi's boycott,
40 along with Edward Montagu's reforms at the India Office (which proposed eventual
41 dominion status for India), palace opinion, from the king down, believed that royalty needed
42 to go down there 'hot and strong'.⁹³ But Admiral Sir Lionel Halsey, the prince's private
43 secretary on the tours, believed that over-formality was one of the reasons why this visit was
44 seen as a failure--because the prince was not allowed to display his personality, surrounded as
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he was by the persistent over-encumbrance of ritual.⁹⁴ Comparisons between the prince's Indian tour and his dominion visits are instructive because they point to royalty's contrasting styles of ceremonial in these countries, which were attuned to specific audiences understood in racial as well as national and cultural terms. The dominions set a new benchmark in royal informality, where imperial politics was twinned with the intensified power of publicity to produce an altered public image of the monarchy.

A Royal Celebrity?

Four years after the Prince's Australasian tour, New York's *Sunday News* put a question to a jury of 'twelve representative women' thus: "Who are the three most fascinating men in the world?" Their answer was overwhelmingly the Prince of Wales, followed by movie star John Barrymore and in joint third place leading film actors Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks and Rudolph Valentino, along with the King of Spain. All respondents were agreed that the prince's 'glamour' and his 'wonderful personality' lay at the heart of his appeal.⁹⁵ Here in microcosm was an image of the prince that shaped much of his media reputation during the 1920s and beyond; an icon adored by women and closely associated with Americanized popular culture. What was the relationship between this representation and the project for more accessible royalty pioneered on the prince's first empire tours? Was the prince increasingly defined as a modern celebrity, where his royal status was eclipsed by a contemporary version of manufactured fame?⁹⁶

Cultural historians are agreed that the inter-war period witnessed a significant shift towards the democratization of public reputations in Britain and that royalty and the aristocracy were a key part of that process.⁹⁷ The export of the Hollywood star system to Anglophone audiences worldwide, with its reshaping of nineteenth-century versions of charisma in favour of the commodification of personality, involved scrutiny of 'high' and

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3 'low' characters alike. The tension between them was an enduring pre-occupation of human
4 interest journalists, obsessed with what Charles Ponce de Leon has defined as 'self-exposure'.

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7 ⁹⁸ The Prince of Wales's public image was worked over by a number of these new tactics of
8 international publicity, but his royal status set him apart from the gallery of modern fame in
9 ways that complicates the story of inter-war public reputations. Here I explore the political
10 and cultural tensions that were generated on the tours among journalists, palace advisors and
11 in terms of the psychology of the prince himself, as royalty confronted the contradictory
12 demands of empire, nationalism and celebrity status.
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21 The prince was certainly no newcomer to media scrutiny. Looking back much later on
22 his career he reflected wryly that: 'Publicity was part of my heritage.' ⁹⁹ The early dominion
23 tours were notable media events that required assiduous planning, involving the integration of
24 British and dominion journalists and the newsreels into the royal itineraries. Highly
25 developed regional and local press networks across the three dominions, together with the
26 problems of distance, meant that positive media reporting was critical in a situation where the
27 modern popularity of royalty was heavily dependent on mass circulation imagery. ¹⁰⁰
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37 George V and his advisors took the issue of princely publicity very seriously because it
38 centred on ownership of the royal image. Buckingham Palace laid out detailed plans for
39 journalists travelling with the prince and arrangements were made to berth leading British
40 reporters on *HMS Dauntless* for the crossing to Canada. ¹⁰¹ At the nerve centre of the
41 publicity machine, Grigg made it abundantly clear that the prince was 'particularly anxious
42 that the Press should have all facilities in Canada', in order to promote a 'better
43 understanding between the Canadian people and this country'. ¹⁰² As Laura Cook has shown,
44 the same close official attention was given to media coverage of the Australasian tour. The
45 Admiralty commissioned William Barker of the Topical Film Company to record the journey
46 for the newsreel, while in Australia the federal government's Department of Home and
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Territories' Cinema and Photographic Branch wanted a full visual record of the prince's visit.

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Informal royal influence on the British press travelling with the prince was exercised primarily by patronage and especially by careful selection of those who were permitted to accompany the royal party en route. The reporters' profiles pointed to men with backgrounds in military service and empire politics rather than in human interest journalism. Key figures working for *The Times*, like Gerald Campbell on the Canadian tour and Basil Long in Australia and New Zealand, had distinguished wartime service records. Campbell's career in war journalism was also mirrored by that of Warner Allen, writing for the *Morning Post* and also accompanying the Canadian tour.¹⁰⁴ Basil Long, another member of the press corps, had spent his formative years in Cape Town as a law advisor, journalist and member of the pro-British Unionist Party, before joining *The Times* as Dominions Editor in 1913.¹⁰⁵ Ernest Brooks, the photographer on both tours, had been attached to the royal family before 1914.¹⁰⁶ Brooks had learned his trade on the pre-war *Daily Mirror*, and so he did have a reputation for producing images that catered to populist sentiment.¹⁰⁷ There was also one wildcard in the pack, Victor Marsden, the journalist and translator working for the *Morning Post* on the Australasian tour, who was at the extreme end of anti-Semitic, racialized politics.¹⁰⁸ Most of the other journalists on tour displayed more conventional thinking about white British leadership as a positive international good.

Overall, these were men who shared a strong commitment to duty and establishment norms, so that again empire politics and publicity were co-joined. They were fully aware that royalty sold newspaper copy in a mass market, but it was not in their professional interests to dig out commercially driven scoops about the royal visitor, in the way journalists writing about film stars and other celebrities would have done. To do so would have compromised their own social standards, as well as jeopardising their relationship with the monarchy.

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3 Grigg and his team had more problems with local Australian journalists, where informal
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5 censorship proved difficult and where a developed regional labour and socialist press kept up
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7 a relentless barrage of criticism of the tour. Their nationalist aim was to castigate mainstream
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9 media fawning and sycophantic courtiers as effeminate and un-Australian--the 'girly girly
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11 gushers' who perpetuated 'this nauseating campaign of ... slush'. ¹⁰⁹ Here the gendered
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13 dimensions of the republican critique of monarchy were front-loaded; muscular masculine
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15 socialism was pitched against feminine irrationality that was supposedly stoked by an
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17 imperial publicity machine.
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21 Grigg's strategy of counter publicity was to cultivate 'native' intermediaries who were
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23 willing and able to promote the Prince of Wales, not as an outsider but as authentically
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25 Australian. The key figure here was the journalist Keith Murdoch, who quite literally
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27 introduced the prince to antipodean readers. Like Billy Hughes at the political level, Murdoch
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29 believed that domestic journalists should preach 'constructive Australianism' and always put
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31 'Australia first'. ¹¹⁰ But he twinned his nationalism with a commitment to progressive empire,
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33 and he saw faster and cheaper flow of news between the dominions as the lifeblood of
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35 imperial democracy. ¹¹¹ Cultivated by Lord Northcliffe before the war, Murdoch had forged a
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37 distinctive Australian media identity for himself in 1915 through his relentless exposure of
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39 British incompetence at Gallipoli. ¹¹² On the tour he stressed the importance of privileging
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41 the 'Australian point of view'. ¹¹³ Murdoch's royal journalism, which was included in many
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43 of the leading British and antipodean dailies, was sought after because it skilfully blended
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45 empire politics with Australian nationalism. ¹¹⁴
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51 Home-grown Australian media figures like Murdoch produced a democratic image of the
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53 Prince of Wales in ways that did respond to current readership demands for human interest
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55 stories. A sample from the formulaic Australian pen-portraits of the prince, which were
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57 continually re-cycled in press coverage nationwide, revealed how his personality was
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3 promoted as a contemporary version of everyman. He was at once a ‘a good sport’ who was
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5 ‘just like cousin Bob.’¹¹⁵ He was also billed as a ‘man’s man’ who could ‘rough it’ with the
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7 best. In Australia this was finessed by giving Edward the attributes of up-to-date national
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9 masculinity, where readers were told he would be christened the ‘Digger Prince’ who had
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11 fought in the trenches.¹¹⁶
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15 Buckingham Palace tried hard to set boundaries for these experiments in royal populism,
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17 though they often found them difficult to enforce. Anxieties centred on the perceived
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19 influence of American-style journalism and the potential threat it posed to British protocol
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21 and authority. Serious problems surfaced on the outward leg of the Australasian tour, when
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23 the prince put into port at San Diego, in southern California.¹¹⁷ A major cause of
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25 apprehensiveness on the part of the prince’s entourage was the presence of a publicity-hungry
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27 Mrs Charlie Chaplin (Mildred Harris) in the mayor’s welcome party. An early child star of
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29 the silent screen, who had also appeared as a harem girl in D.W. Griffith’s Hollywood epic
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31 *Intolerance* (1916), Mrs Chaplin was currently divorcing her movie-star husband. Rumours
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33 circulated that one cause of the marriage breakdown was that Mrs Chaplin had had a lesbian
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35 affair with the Russian-American film and theatre actor, Alla Nazimova.¹¹⁸ Undeterred, Mrs
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37 Chaplin spun a royal story, claiming that she had danced the fox trot with the prince at a local
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39 ball, and she was quick to share the details of her supposed royal encounter with the press.¹¹⁹
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41 Egged on by Mrs Chaplin’s confidences, journalists insisted the prince was ‘so impressed by
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43 this movie star’s beauty’ that he had sent his private photographer to ‘secure pictures of her’.
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52 The Chaplin incident gained international coverage. It highlighted the potential
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54 uncontrollability of the royal image when it was claimed by celebrities who owed nothing to
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56 the crown and who were a staple of human-interest journalism. Much of the regulation of the
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58 British media during this period was informal and reliant on convention and establishment
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3 networks, but transatlantic journalists with their lack of deference and often latent
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5 republicanism were a dangerous mix for royalty. However, for George V the problems lay
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7 not with others but squarely with the prince himself and his wilful over-exposure in front of
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9 the media. Reports of the prince's supposed irregularities of dress, deportment and implicitly
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11 unroyal behaviour were regularly seized on by the king for censure on all the tours.¹²¹ In the
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13 monarch's mind, they were associated with the creeping informality of post-war modern life,
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15 as it was epitomized by American mass culture. George V's obsession with form and
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17 protocol, which regularly provoked criticism of his eldest son, has often been seen as a clash
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19 between his own nineteenth-century values and the popular modernism of the prince.¹²² But
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21 what also lay behind these tensions was the king's desire to protect the traditional aura of
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23 monarchy in a democratic age. The king endorsed the experiments in progressive empire
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25 championed by Grigg, but he was much less certain about the type of performance style and
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27 media coverage of his eldest son that was generated on the tours.
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33 What effect did these contradictory pressures of paternal sovereignty and intrusive
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35 publicity have on the personality of the Prince of Wales himself? Answering the question
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37 involves, in conclusion, some exploration of the psychology of modern royalty and the way
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39 the prince's experience of public exposure on the tours compared with that of other
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41 charismatic, but non-royal, male icons in the 1920s and early 1930s--precisely the figures
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43 who were evoked as his comparators in the *Sunday News* article. There were critical
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45 moments on both tours when an inexperienced prince came face-to-face with the intense
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47 demands of his new-found popularity. Many of his anxieties echoed concerns voiced by
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49 famous co-contemporaries like Valentino, the military officer and diplomat T.E. Lawrence
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51 and the American aviator, Charles Lindbergh. All these men courted fame, while at the same
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53 time resenting the intense media scrutiny of their characters, with long-term repercussions
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55 for their personal life and careers.¹²³ But it was the differences as much as the similarities
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between these figures and the prince that pointed up the specific dilemmas of modern royalty.

On the tours, it was the public's call for the prince's near constant appearances, their desire for ever closer intimacy and the toll this extracted on his composure that presented the most pressing problems. 'Christ ... I feel like a caged animal!! ... it maddens me never to be out of the public eye and to have to lead this external official existence', the prince complained confidentially to his mistress, Mrs Freda Dudley Ward, in one of his many love letters to her, after a particularly trying day at Government House in Victoria, British Columbia.¹²⁴ By this stage of the Canadian visit, the press and Grigg were reporting officially that the prince was 'Overtaxed' by 'the demands made on his energy'.¹²⁵

The pressures were physical as well as mental; the prince's hand was bandaged--the result of heavy bruising from 'Canadian grip', in the form of repeated greetings from over-enthusiastic members of the public.¹²⁶ The king gave his son the frank, well-trying advice of a pro who had been there before: 'I warned you what it would be like ... people think one is made of stone ... you ought to have put yr foot down at the beginning'.¹²⁷ But George V was judging events by the yardstick of his own empire tours twenty years earlier and times had changed.

Australia was even more challenging for the prince than Canada from the point of view of press frenzy and crowd control. Leaving London's Victoria Station on the outward leg of the journey, over-enthusiastic well-wishers, most of them women, had startled the royal party by breaking through the barriers, screaming and waving handkerchiefs.¹²⁸ A 'few years ago', the press observed, such behaviour in front of royalty would have been seen as 'a riot', but London crowds had now become 'less formal and more demonstrative when their

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3 feelings are engaged.’¹²⁹ This high-drama incident was justified by journalists on account of
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5 its emotional authenticity.
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8 ‘Australians will measure’ the Prince ‘by their own standards’ of informality, the gossip
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10 and fashion magazine *Table Talk* announced, in preparation for the arrival of their royal
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12 visitor in Melbourne.¹³⁰ For some Australians, taking a more relaxed attitude to royalty
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14 meant drawing on positive stereotypes of their collective national character to gain ever
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16 closer access to the distinguished visitor. The constant and unsolicited desire to touch him,
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18 despite breaching royal protocol, was overwhelming for so many of the crowds, just as it
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20 became compelling for Australian Prime Minister, Paul Keating, seventy years later, when
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22 he famously put his arm around Elizabeth II’s back!
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27 In Melbourne, the prince experienced a temporary breakdown. He complained in anxious
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29 letters to his family back home that he was ‘fagged out mentally’, while Halsey and Grigg
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31 signalled genuine alarm by sending for the prince’s medical officer.¹³¹ When the prince
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33 resumed his heavy schedule in Adelaide, the state’s newly arrived Governor, Sir Archibald
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35 Weigell, was writing privately to Lloyd George, confiding that the prince’s ‘nervous system
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37 was badly shaken’ which showed in ‘his twitchy movements ... before making any speech’.
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132 Here were genuine parallels with the pressurized celebrity culture of the 1920s, when
intense media scrutiny regularly produced psychological problems for leading personalities.
T.E. Lawrence was a prominent casualty of this type of media culture which had created, by
his own connivance, the legend of ‘Lawrence of Arabia’, with its disturbing consequences
for his character.¹³³ Lawrence’s reaction was to adopt further disguise and self-effacement in
order to cope with fame; the prince negotiated the pressures of over-exposure by defining his
authentic, real self *against* his public persona.

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3 Increasingly alienated from these pressurized rituals, the prince began to refer to them as
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5 'stunts', in an effort to put some linguistic and emotional distance between his private self
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7 and his official image. In public, he continued to speak the language of imperial commitment
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9 and royal service, but as the tours ground on he complained off the record and often about
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11 boredom and fatigue. Australia marked the beginning of a different attitude to 'Princing', as
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13 he now dubbed his official duties. By the mid-1920s when the glamour of the dominion
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15 visits had wholly worn off, the prince was even more upfront, complaining to his staff that
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17 he was 'bored to death' with the tours because they were 'a racket'.¹³⁴ Ziegler has argued
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19 that the first empire tours marked the prince's 'apotheosis', before ingrained character
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21 defects produced a decline in his performance.¹³⁵ But part of the reason for that decline was
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23 the Prince of Wales's failure to integrate the official and the private aspects of his
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25 personality. The difficulty was not his alone. It was the product of growing contradictions
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27 between the traditional outward face of royalty and the need for a more emotionally and
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29 psychologically expansive interior life that was voiced by a wide variety of public figures
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31 and more ordinary individuals during the inter-war years, as that demand was fostered by
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33 new forms of leisure and publicity.¹³⁶

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39 The prince increasingly insisted that he had the right to a private life--and how he behaved
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41 there was his own business.¹³⁷ In its contemporary usages privacy held multiple meanings
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43 because, as Deborah Cohen has observed, by the First World War the term denoted not only
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45 secrecy, concealment and fraudulent dissembling but increasingly an inviolable space of
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47 intimacy that was necessary for emotional satisfaction and self-fulfilment.¹³⁸ The prince's
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49 understanding of privacy came closest to this last definition and it suggested a royal right to
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51 non-interference in key areas of his personality. This paralleled the way contemporary film
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53 stars began to distinguish between their screen personalities and their 'real', private selves.
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55 Ed Owens has defined this dichotomy as a recurrent feature of secular fame in the 1920s,
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when figures like Valentino, along with Fairbanks and his wife Mary Pickford, wrote about their authentic selves configured around leisure pursuits, domesticity and mundane pleasures.

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The difficulty for the Prince of Wales was that royalty were not conventionally understood to have a private life, or if they did it was supposed to be wholly invisible from public view. Coverage of George V and Queen Mary was always assiduous in stressing the monarchs' official and dutiful roles. Therein lay an essential difference between the prince and his non-royal contemporaries--a distinction that needs emphasizing given the way he has been evoked as a figure who blurred the boundaries between royalty and celebrity. The democratic performance of the British monarchy was finessed on the prince's dominion tours, but it was a project that remained tied to royalty's imperial and constitutional character. The prince's demand for privacy was the product of a lived sense of contradiction between his official self and his demand for a more expansive personal existence. Experiences of this sort were not exclusive to the prince, but they were thrown into dramatic relief when he was forced to negotiate not only the traditional pressures of being royal but also the contemporary world of fame.

Conclusion

Writing in 1936, in the shadow of the dictators, Keynes identified a deficit in contemporary democracies; their failure to maintain the dignity of the state through ceremonies that could speak to the common man.¹⁴⁰ Yet the democratic splendour of the British monarchy during the inter-war years profoundly contradicts this idea. Across the empire as well as at home, the modernization of British sovereignty was tied to ceremony, rather than divorced from it. The prince's early dominion tours highlighted how royal ritual began to be more democratically organized, not abandoned, in particular dominion settings. As the king's heir who carried all the contemporary masculine symbolism of empire, the Prince of Wales was in the forefront

of these changes. His early tours were major experiments in royal populism, which often anticipated later developments at home. Canada and Australia were political and cultural laboratories where experiments in innovative forms of ceremonial were first conducted, because courtiers and advisors read their Anglophone cultures and their majority populations as amenable to new styles of royal display.

These princely visits had an extensive afterlife beyond the early 1920s. Some of the consequences followed the logic of statecraft and diplomacy as Edward Grigg envisaged it, with the contemporary philosophy of empire increasingly glued together by the crown. As the tours revealed, this was a monarchy that was now implicitly assumed to be divisible, with the prince seen as a prince for Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and subsequent inter-war imperial legislation confirmed this constitutional state of affairs. Nationalist pressure on dominion politicians was critical in engineering the shift, as figures like Hughes and Borden were forced to respond to the aspirations of their home electorates and also to face down republicans and socialists, who boasted about their role in toppling kings and emperors across Europe.

But this article has also charted a political and cultural story that was less intentional and more uncontrolled. Increasing efforts by politicians and journalists across the empire to identify the future of monarchy with the personality of the sovereign, and with the performance of key members of the royal family, threw up long-term challenges for the House of Windsor. Fusion of the crown's constitutional role with its media heightened appeal began to transform the political authority of sovereignty by intensifying the scrutiny of royal personalities and destabilizing their traditional aura. The media played a critical role in this process, as journalists sought to link leading royals to key dominion audiences--especially war veterans and women--in their search for readers and markets.

On the prince's early tours this publicity strategy was closely tied to an imperial agenda, in official terms at least. However, a study of the prince's personality shows how much he was subject to competing media-driven pressures as well. In that sense, he shared some similarities with transatlantic celebrities, though being royal still marked him out as different in the gallery of contemporary fame. When as Edward VIII he elected to marry outside the royal caste in 1936, two elements that had been incubated on the dominion tours came to a head in the abdication crisis: the publicity frenzy about his character and the insistence by the dominion premiers that they had constitutional rights over the proper behaviour of the British king. Later royals were always compelled to tread a fine line between the need to cultivate public interest in themselves and the dangers of media over-exposure. In the case of two figures--Princess Margaret and Princess Diana--those tensions again became acute, with potentially destabilizing effects on the monarchy.

The democratic pageantry assembled on the prince's tours influenced royalty's performance at home and abroad throughout the later twentieth century and beyond. An informal culture of British diplomacy was built around the actual appearance of the monarch or their representatives on regular foreign visits, on tours of the empire and subsequently in Commonwealth countries. The Prince of Wales's dominion tours firmed up the association between monarchy and democracy across the British world. Empire visits of the sort initiated by the prince proliferated during the inter-war years, and they continued into the period of decolonization after 1945, when the attendance of a royal in British colonies was almost *de rigueur* for the ceremonial lowering of the Union Flag and the initiation of new nation states. Later, across the Commonwealth, prominent members of the royal family were sent out regularly, working local crowds with ritual and smiling informality. This version of democratic ceremonial became an integral part of the monarchy's functions during the reign

of Elizabeth II, but it was inaugurated by the Prince of Wales under very different
circumstances after 1918.

For Peer Review

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