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The origins of peacekeeping

Australia responds to the post-war world

War, sadly, has always been part of human affairs, however much poets and ordinary people from antiquity onwards have longed for the blessings of peace.[1] From earliest times states have allied with each other, promising not to make war on each other and, often, to defend the other from attack. The subject of this volume, however, is not peace but peacekeeping: the use of members of armed forces (as well as police and other civilians), working in a multinational environment in the wake of conflict, helping bring about conditions that will allow the parties to the conflict to build a more peaceable future. The cardinal qualities of peacekeepers, as against those engaged in fighting wars, are that they should use the minimum level of violence necessary to achieve their goals and that at some level they should be impartial in the disputes between the parties. Importantly, they are representatives of the international community, not of their own country's government and their own national interests. That is why peacekeeping is conducted by multinational forces, and unilateral efforts by one state to conduct 'peacekeeping' are liable to be regarded with suspicion.

On those criteria, peacekeeping was an invention of the twentieth century. Until the formation of the League of Nations after the First World War, there was no international body that even pretended to represent the whole of humanity. Only with the formation of the League did it become possible to deploy military officers and units in a way that allowed them to be regarded as representatives of the international community rather than of their own states. This chapter describes the League's pioneering efforts at what later came to be called peacekeeping; the formation of the United Nations and its plans for collective security; and finally the way Australian politics provided a backdrop to Australia's peacekeeping efforts, under the Labor government of the 1940s and the Liberal–Country coalition government between 1949 and 1972.

1 Chapter written by Peter Londey.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The League of Nations, established in 1919 as an outcome of the Paris Peace Conference at the end of the First World War, was the first major attempt to set up a world organisation with the purpose of averting future wars. This book is not about the League of Nations, but there are three ways in which the history of the League is important for the chapters that follow. First, the League was in many respects the prototype for the United Nations, whose doings do occupy much of this volume; it is worth examining the similarities and differences. Second, on several occasions the League made tentative steps into activities of a sort that, under the United Nations, would one day be called 'peacekeeping'. And third, between the two world wars the League was a significant stage on which the young Australia practised its nationhood and gained some of the brash confidence with which, in the 1940s, the nation's leaders sought to influence the creation and early development of the United Nations. This and the following sections will not attempt a history of the League of Nations, but will rather focus on its importance both to peacekeeping and to Australia.

The first meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations commenced at 11am on 15 November 1920, in the Salle de la Reformation in Geneva, Switzerland. Australia's delegate, Senator Edward Millen, described the scene that morning: 'The city was beflagged for the occasion, and vast crowds lined the streets to watch and cheer the arrival and passage of the delegates in their cars, each car bearing the appropriate national flag.'[2]

The existence of the League aroused vast hopes, but it was still, by its very nature, a club of nation states. It was therefore in almost every way the forerunner of the United Nations, and shared with its successor the distinction of, for the first time in human affairs, approaching universality. It has been pointed out that, apart from the USA, every 'recognized State' of the day was at some time or another a member.[3] It would be left to the United Nations to bring into its fold the great number of states that, between the wars, were still the colonies of one or another European (or occasionally Asian) power, but the League approached the principle of universality as far as was possible at the time. Indeed, countries whose true independence was questionable, such as the dominions of the British Empire, were expressly welcomed as members.

The Covenant of the League of Nations sought to ensure peace first of all through a process of disarmament (Article 8) and through a guarantee by members to protect the independence and territorial integrity of all other members (Article 10). In the event of war or the threat of war, procedures were laid out to settle the dispute through investigation, arbitration and judicial settlement, the latter through a Permanent Court of International Justice (Articles 13–15). If a member state disregarded all this and went to war, it would '*ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League', which would immediately break off economic and other relations with the offending state and its nationals. If appropriate, the Council would then recommend military operations, and member states would contribute the forces required (Article 16).

2 *League of Nations, First Assembly, 15th November, 1920, to 18th December, 1920: Report of the Australian Delegate* (Commonwealth of Australia, 1926), p. 3.

3 Walters, *History of the League of Nations*, p. 3.

The theory behind this program of collective security was beautiful in its simplicity: that any state deemed by the League to be aggressor in a conflict would quickly find itself vastly outnumbered by the member states coming to the victim's aid. Ultimately it failed, as the same idea would later fail in the United Nations. In 1939, a passionate advocate of the League, the classicist Gilbert Murray, bemoaned that failure, which he saw as having several causes. Partly, the timing was unfortunate: 'The makers of the Covenant had … imagined it as working in a normal world, and the world in which it had to work was utterly abnormal.' But more than that, it was a failure of political will in such cases as the Soviet annexation of Armenia following war between Armenia and Turkey in 1920; the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931; and the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935.[4] The weakness of collective security is that countries have to be willing to fight wars to make it work. The Great Powers were not ready to face the risk of war; yet, in Murray's view, if member states had been 'ready to use force, there would have been no need for it'. Murray identified more particular causes: British and French war weariness; the accidents of which statesmen were in key positions at critical moments; and the general habits of diplomats, more interested in national than international interest: 'On the whole they sought the friendship of aggressors rather than the victims because the aggressors were usually the stronger, and a strong friend is better than a weak.'[5]

Nevertheless, in a flurry of activity in its early years, the League of Nations set significant precedents for post-war UN peacekeeping. In several cases the conflicts were border disputes arising from the radical redrawing of boundaries in Europe after the First World War. As was later the case with the United Nations, the basis for peacekeeping-type activity was not very clearly set out in the League's Covenant (the equivalent to the UN Charter). Articles 10 to 16 set out a range of measures to be taken in the case of a dispute between member states of the League. When other measures failed, a resort could be made to arms: 'It shall be the duty of the Council in such case [*sic*] to recommend to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the covenants of the League …' (Article 16).

In practice, Article 16 was invoked only once, in the case of Abyssinia, and usually the rather more general terms of Articles 11 and 15 were made the basis for action:[6] 'Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations …' (Article 11).

> If there should arise between Members of the League any dispute likely to lead to a rupture, which is not submitted to arbitration or judicial settlement in accordance with

4 On these events, see Henig, *League of Nations*, pp. 71, 134–53, 159–73.

5 Murray, 'A League of Nations', especially pp. 69–73. On the importance of Murray's background as a classicist, see ch. 15. Given their concern with state-on-state conflict, it is easy to see why Murray and others saw a collective security regime as the appropriate response. Yet in practice the idea is deeply flawed (see discussion below and in ch. 15), and Murray probably exaggerates the particularity of circumstances that let to its failure in the interwar period. Peacekeeping, although derived from some similar ideas, is more an alternative to than a form of collective security.

6 See in general the discussion at Wainhouse, *International Peace Observation*, pp. 7–11.

> Article 13, the Members of the League agree that they will submit the matter to the Council. Any party to the dispute may effect such submission by giving notice of the existence of the dispute to the Secretary General, who will make all necessary arrangements for a full investigation and consideration thereof. (Article 15)

PEACEKEEPING UNDER THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

With the League generally today remembered (if at all) simply as a failure, it is easy to forget that in a series of cases it did help parties in conflict come to some resolution of their dispute. In some cases this was done by despatching commissions of enquiry composed of civilians – often diplomats – to examine the problem on the ground, speak to participants, and report back to Geneva (where the League was based). This procedure was followed, for example, in the 1920 dispute between Sweden and Finland over the Aaland Islands, an archipelago straddling the mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia: after receiving a report from a three-member commission, the League Council confirmed Finnish sovereignty over the islands. The members of the commission were Belgian, Swiss and American, and the principle was established that they were appointed as individuals, answerable only to the Council.[7] More or less similar commissions were employed in the cases of dispute between Lithuania and Germany over Memel (1920–24), between Greece and Italy over Corfu (1923), between Turkey and Iraq over Mosul (1924–25) and between Greece and Bulgaria (1925).[8]

Another precedent set in 1920 was the appointment of a military commission, consisting of military officers, to adjudicate or observe. This was first done in September 1920, when the League Council was mediating between Poland and Lithuania over the question of the city of Vilnius. The Council proposed that both parties move their forces behind the frontier set by the Allies in 1919, and appointed a military commission tasked with 'ensuring on the spot the strict observation by the interested parties of the obligations arising from this agreement'. The commission consisted of army officers, ranging in rank from captain to colonel, from Britain, France, Italy, Japan and Spain. It was initially successful in persuading both sides to move their forces some kilometres behind the provisional border. Poland then abandoned the earlier agreement and seized Vilnius, but the commission was once again successful in negotiating a ceasefire and establishing a zone of separation between the forces. The Council then made plans to conduct a plebiscite in Vilnius, under the protection of an international force of at least 1500 troops. However, negotiations between the belligerents broke down, the plebiscite was not held, and the military commission was withdrawn in October 1920. The League had failed: Poland, having obtained Vilnius by force, was able to keep it. But the military commission itself had demonstrated the potential for a small independent body to negotiate between the parties on the ground and help prevent further fighting.[9]

7 Walters, *History of the League of Nations*, pp. 102–5; Wainhouse, *International Peace Observation*, pp. 11–15; Henig, *League of Nations*, p. 70.

8 Wainhouse, *International Peace Observation*, pp. 35–53; Henig, *League of Nations*, pp. 69–70, 88–94.

9 Wainhouse, *International Peace Observation*, pp. 15–20; James, *Peacekeeping in International Politics*, pp. 33–5.

In late 1921, a commission of enquiry with mixed military and civilian membership monitored the separation of Albanian and Yugoslav forces after a period of border conflict.[10] At the same time, the League was sanctioning or sponsoring much larger forces to support a League presence or the conducting of a plebiscite. During 1920, a joint British–French force of two battalions maintained the autonomy of Danzig (the subject of dispute between Poland and Germany).[11] And between 1920 and 1922, international plebiscite commissions in four areas were supported by international forces: in Schleswig, a British and French force of 3000; in Allenstein and Marienwerder (disputed by Germany and Poland), a British, Italian and French force of about 2000; in Upper Silesia, a French and Italian force of 13 500; and in Sopron (on the Austrian–Hungarian border), a force of 450.[12]

The most significant such force was set up much later in the League's history, in 1935, to protect a plebiscite in the Saar territory. The territory was nominally part of Germany, but at the Paris Peace Conference after the First World War France had been given the area's coal mines as a form of reparation. The territory was then placed under an international commission, supervised by the League, for a period of 15 years, after which a plebiscite would determine whether it should return to Germany, become part of France, or remain under the control of the League. The plebiscite was held in January 1935, in an atmosphere of some tension, especially given that Germany was now under Nazi rule. The International Force, commanded by British Major General John Brind, consisted of 1500 British, 1300 Italian, 250 Dutch and 250 Swedish troops. Despite local Nazi hostility (describing the force as an army of occupation) and some genuine local misgivings (assuaged in part when the British troops arrived with footballs and organised games with the locals), deployment of the force proceeded smoothly. Troops were stationed at twelve points around the territory, to be available for rapid response in case of trouble. Their role was military, not policing, and they were to be called into action only at the request of civil authorities. Their orders were to use the minimum level of force necessary. On polling day they were deployed close to polling stations, but more or less kept out of sight to avoid an impression of overt military presence. They also provided some logistic support for the plebiscite.[13]

In the event, voting passed off smoothly (and returned the territory to Germany). After the initial period of tension, the international force was generally adjudged to have been successful and to have contributed to the peaceful nature of the plebiscite. At the same time, General Brind's final report raised some concerns that are still relevant today: the difficulties of acquiring adequate intelligence; the need for contributing states not to have an interest in the conflict; problems of language and of communications; different conditions of service among the various contingents; and tendentious reporting by the press.[14]

10 Wainhouse, *International Peace Observation*, pp. 29–33.

11 James, *Peacekeeping in International Politics*, pp. 25–6.

12 Ibid., pp. 27–32.

13 For documents and narrative, see Wambaugh, *Saar Plebiscite*; Wainhouse, *International Peace Observation*, pp. 20–9; James, *Peacekeeping in International Politics*, pp. 75–9.

14 Wainhouse, *International Peace Observation*, pp. 27–8. Wambaugh, *Saar Plebiscite*, p. 317, gives a more optimistic account of perfect harmony.

In summary, the League's contribution to the development of 'peacekeeping' was considerable. UN military observers in Indonesia, Kashmir, the Middle East and elsewhere had their forerunners in the League's military commissions, while larger UN forces, such as that set up after the Suez crisis in 1956, and later forces that supervised elections or referenda in Namibia, Cambodia, East Timor and elsewhere, could certainly trace their roots to the International Force in the Saar and the earlier forces that supervised plebiscites immediately after the First World War. Yet, as will be seen, much of this experience seems to have been forgotten, or submerged by the overwhelming trauma of the Second World War. A reviewer of Wambaugh's 1940 book on the Saar plebiscite commented that it was a pity that it had appeared 'at a moment when Plebiscites have become of purely academic interest to the majority of mankind', but hoped that it would be studied 'in happier days to come', when peaceful self-determination was once again on the agenda.[15] But in fact memories of achievements such as that in the Saar were easily submerged amid darker memories of the 1930s and the horrors of the war itself, and in any case did not fit with the dominant narrative that the League had been a complete failure. In 1950, a well-informed man like Owen Dixon, wrestling with the problem of how to ensure a free plebiscite in the Vale of Kashmir, was apparently quite ignorant of the similar problem solved with the International Force in the Saar only 15 years earlier.[16] In effect, peacekeeping had to be invented anew after 1945.

AUSTRALIA AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Membership of the League of Nations represented for Australia a significant coming-of-age as an international actor.[17] The League Covenant was deliberately framed to invite membership by any 'fully self-governing State, Dominion or Colony', thus allowing for states, like Australia, of ambiguous or partial sovereignty.[18] Spurred on by the nationalism of W.M. (Billy) Hughes, Australia was a founder member of the League, and resisted attempts to subsume its voice in League affairs under that of the British Empire as a whole.[19] But Hughes's narrow nationalism made him unpopular in Geneva,[20] as elsewhere. Australia's real reputation in the League was established by men like Stanley Melbourne Bruce and John Latham. Bruce, in particular, was influential, first as Prime Minister from 1923 to 1929 and later as Australia's representative at Geneva from 1932 to 1938 (while Resident Minister and later High Commissioner in London). In the 1930s Bruce achieved, in the words of DFAT historian W.J. Hudson, 'an immense reputation as a dedicated and radical internationalist'.[21] Yet he was also aware of the League's Eurocentric limitations; already, in 1923, he had with considerable foresight

15 Wambaugh, *Saar Plebiscite*, reviewed by MacDonnell, *International Affairs Review Supplement*, p. 121.

16 See ch. 7; further discussion also in ch. 15.

17 The best account is Hudson, *Australia and the League of Nations*; more recently, see Cotton, 'Australia in the League of Nations'.

18 League of Nations Covenant, Article 1.2.

19 See for example Hudson, *Australia and the League of Nations*, pp. 36–7.

20 Ibid., p. 39.

21 Ibid. On Bruce, see also Lee, *Stanley Melbourne Bruce*.

yearned for 'a league or union of nations in the Pacific', where indeed Australia itself was the mandatory power administering the former German colony of New Guinea.[22]

At least at first, the way the collective security provisions of the Covenant would affect Australia was an open question. In 1920, a committee of very senior Army officers, chaired by Sir Harry Chauvel and including Sir John Monash, reported on the military defence of Australia.[23] The committee commented that 'it is possible, as it is devoutly to be hoped, that the League may come to be the protector of weak nations against the strong',[24] but noted that it would be prudent nevertheless for Australia to continue to make preparations for her own defence. But the committee also considered, with no obvious aversion, the other side of the coin: that Australia might be called on to contribute forces to the League. It was possible 'that the League of Nations may so develop as to be able to exercise effective control, particularly in those directions from which Australia now has most to fear. In such a case Australia will, of course, be called upon to find her share of "the world police"'.[25]

The Australian situation was in truth unusual: as part of the Empire, Australia might be called on to help enforce collective security; as a small and isolated state, on the other hand, she might look to the League for protection against aggression. Despite the early flush of enthusiasm, which could influence even a committee of generals, Australia's geographical isolation was so extreme as to make reliance on a League based in Europe rather risky. In 1923 a Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance was put forward in Geneva: it met with little general enthusiasm, and was ultimately rejected. But in any case it included the provision that countries need come to the assistance of victims of aggression only within their own continent, thus relieving Australia of both obligation and protection.[26]

In general, Australia's approach to League affairs was heavily influenced by the fear that the League – probably at the behest of Japan – might interfere either with the White Australia policy or with tariff protection for Australian industry.[27] The problem was that the timid approach dictated by such narrow nationalism, in Australia and elsewhere, ensured that the League could never be effective in maintaining peace.[28] The sense of Australia's tenuous physical connection with Britain also had its effect. In 1935 and 1936, Australia was opposed to the imposition of sanctions on Italy, in response to the invasion of Abyssinia, mainly because of the dangers to Australian trade through the Mediterranean.[29] To some extent, Bruce's sense that sanctions were a blunt

22 *Age* (Melbourne), 13 April 1923, quoted at ibid., p. 40. On the New Guinea Mandate, see Pedersen, *The Guardians*, pp. 135–6, 299–317, 347.

23 Department of Defence, *Report on the Military Defence of Australia by a Conference of Senior Officers of the Australian Military Forces* (Melbourne, 1920); a copy is at AWM 1, 20/7. Chauvel and Monash had commanded Australian forces in the Middle East and on the Western Front respectively in the First World War.

24 Ibid., p. 6, para. 4.

25 Ibid., pp. 9–10, para. 21.

26 Hudson, *Australia and the League of Nations*, pp. 41–7.

27 See for example the debate over the Draft Protocol of 1924, and in particular over amendments proposed by Japan, on occasion splitting the Empire vote (Hudson, *Australia and the League of Nations*, pp. 47ff).

28 Ibid., pp. 57–8, argues that the failure of the Draft Protocol in 1924 and 1925 already spelled the effective end of any hope that the League could prevent war.

29 Ibid., pp. 73–87.

instrument, especially when wielded by a body that lacked universal membership, was also a factor[30] (and the bluntness of the instrument has been fully demonstrated in more modern times). In 1937, when Japan invaded China, Bruce played an active role in minimising the League's response, in order to avoid antagonising Japan with a response that might be hostile but would also be ineffective. The following year, in response to continuing pressure from China, the League imposed voluntary sanctions against Japan, but no member state actually imposed them.[31]

As noted above, League membership did represent a stage in Australia's development as an independent nation. At the same time, Australians' timid view of the outside world did little to help the League grow into the role for which it was designed. Australia's greatest contribution was in the form of individuals such as Bruce, who became one of the statesmen of the League.[32] Bruce's greatest contribution, relying heavily on his friend and economic adviser, Frank McDougall, was to push the League into the social and economic sphere, especially in the areas of agriculture and nutrition; this work ultimately bore fruit in the shape of the Food and Agriculture Organization after the Second World War.[33] The work of men like Bruce and McDougall certainly paved the way for the role H.V. Evatt would play in the early years of the United Nations.

THE UN PLAN FOR COLLECTIVE SECURITY

The opening paragraph of the preamble to the UN Charter sets out the four great aims of the organisation:

> **We the Peoples of the United Nations Determined**
> to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
> to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
> to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
> to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom …

Peacekeeping, the subject of this volume, would generally be seen as relating to the first of these aims, saving mankind from the 'scourge of war'. But, to some extent from the beginning, and certainly increasingly as time has gone on, peacekeeping has come to be a complex set of activities, which, taken together, address all four of the fundamental aims of the United Nations. Thus peacekeeping, although never mentioned in the Charter, is fundamentally an activity in accord with the aims of the organisation, which were devised in 1945.

In 1945, the United Nations Organization superseded the League (although the latter was not formally wound up until the following year). Yet the United Nations was very much an evolution from the League, and mirrored both its intentions and its

30 Ibid., pp. 84–5.

31 Ibid., pp. 89–93.

32 Cf. Walters, *History of the League of Nations*, p. 695.

33 Hudson, *Australia and the League of Nations*, pp. 169–80; Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, pp. 165–79, 190–3, 231–51 and *passim*.

structures. This was rarely stated at the time, however, when many were all too aware of the failures of the League to prevent aggression or to avert the Second World War, and when there were still fears that US isolationism or Soviet suspicion might keep one of the key superpowers out of the new organisation.[34] Nor had it been an inevitable result. Discussions about some future body began as early as 1941, when US President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill nearly included a reference to post-war 'effective international organization' in the Atlantic Charter (Roosevelt had it taken out for fear of an isolationist backlash).[35] In the years that followed, discussions of the possible form of such an organisation took place within the US State Department, between Britain and her dominions, and elsewhere.

Two significant alternative models to that which ultimately eventuated were proposed. First, there was a model favoured by Roosevelt, in which responsibility for security issues rested not with the member states collectively but specifically with the Great Powers, in particular the 'Big Four': the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain and China. Roosevelt referred to these as the Four Policemen, the powers that would underwrite peace through a 'trusteeship of the powerful'.[36] Early US planning for a new organisation proposed a 'security commission' made up of the Four Policemen; Roosevelt saw the Great Powers sponsoring a peace under whose umbrella smaller nations would feel confident enough to disarm.[37] Late in 1943, Roosevelt put to Stalin a plan for an organisation with an assembly, a council (dealing with 'non-military questions') and a body composed of the Four Policemen, which would have exclusive power to enforce peace. (The State Department had a somewhat more moderate plan, whereby the Four Policemen provided the force but were subject to the guidance of the council.)[38] Roosevelt's plan might have represented accurately enough the grim Thucydidean[39] realities of power (although a country such as Australia, self-consciously aware of its contribution to two world wars, might not agree); but it did so too starkly for it to be widely acceptable. It was also premised on continuing unity among the Big Four, a unity that was in fact only a temporary expedient to achieve the defeat of Germany and Japan.[40] Ultimately, the Big Four were rolled into the Security Council, which was given more or less exclusive purview over matters relating to international conflict.

On the other side of the Atlantic, in 1943 Churchill began advocating the second alternative model: that of a regionally structured United Nations. As the idea developed, he proposed a Supreme World Council consisting of the Big Four, and three subordinate regional councils, with responsibility respectively for Europe, the Pacific and the Americas. (Presumably Africa and the Middle East, subsequently both the

34 On the similarities between the organisations, and on what almost amounted to a conspiracy of silence, see L.M. Goodrich in Larus (ed.), *From Collective Security to Preventive Diplomacy*, pp. 205–14; Kolb, 'The League of Nations in retrospect', pp. 145–7.

35 On Roosevelt and the United Nations, see especially Hoopes and Brinkley, *FDR and the Creation of the UN*.

36 Ibid., p. 46.

37 Ibid., pp. 50, 74.

38 Ibid., pp. 76–8, 100.

39 That is, the views attributed to the Athenians in the 'Melian Dialogue' (Thuc. 5.85–113); Thucydides' own position is very hard to read.

40 Cf. comments at Hoopes and Brinkley, *FDR and the Creation of the UN*, pp. 113–15.

focus of much UN activity, were still seen as too heavily colonised to provide the basis for a fourth or fifth council.) The idea was that the Great Powers would sit on whichever councils were of relevance to them (the United States would be on all three), and smaller powers (such as Australia) would play a significant role in their own region.[41] The Australian Government reacted with some enthusiasm to these proposals, seeing this as a way for Australia to establish a serious voice in the Pacific (while presumably still enjoying US protection from a logical Chinese hegemony in the region).[42] The Soviet Union was attracted to any form of regionalism that would leave it a free hand in eastern Europe.[43] Some regional groupings, especially the Latin Americans, were worried that a United Nations without a strong regional structure would invite outside interference in their affairs.[44] However, Roosevelt remained unconvinced by the regional model,[45] and eventually it was more or less dropped, apart from the explicit acknowledgement in the UN Charter that regional bodies might legitimately, with Security Council endorsement, have a role to play in maintaining security (Articles 52–54).

The final structure of the United Nations, and the drafting of its Charter, came out of two conferences. The first was a conference of the Big Four at Dumbarton Oaks, a country house in Washington, DC, which had been bequeathed to Harvard University as (appropriately enough) a centre for Byzantine studies.[46] This conference ran from August to October 1944, and produced a detailed set of proposals that underlie the United Nations as it exists today, a United Nations very similar in structure to the League before it. There would be a General Assembly of all member states, a Security Council with five permanent members (the Big Four, plus France), an Economic and Social Council, an International Court of Justice and a Military Staff Committee. The five permanent members of the Security Council would have a right of veto – that is, a negative vote from any one of them would be sufficient to defeat a motion – but there was not complete agreement over how wide the application of the veto should be. The Dumbarton Oaks proposals were taken to a second, much wider conference: the United Nations Conference on International Organization, which opened in San Francisco on 25 April 1945, and signed off on the Charter on 26 June. The San Francisco conference was attended by 46 countries, represented by 1500 delegates and team members. Australia's large team of 45 was nominally led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Army Frank Forde, but its intellectual driving force was the Minister for External Affairs and Attorney-General Dr Herbert Vere Evatt, who became one of the more prominent individuals at the conference.[47]

Without much effect, Evatt and others pushed for limitations to the applicability of the veto. With varying degrees of success, Evatt also fought on issues such as the powers of the General Assembly, the nature of the trusteeship system to replace League of

41 Hoopes and Brinkley, *FDR and the Creation of the UN*, pp. 68–73.

42 Hudson, *Australia and the New World Order*, pp. 16–17.

43 Ibid., p. 151.

44 Ibid., pp. 192–6.

45 Ibid., p. 78.

46 Ibid., p. 130.

47 On Evatt's role, see the next section. On the role of Australia in general, see Hudson, *Australia and the New World Order*.