

John Campbell, OBE in Conversation with Ronald E. Bornstein

- Hello everybody. Welcome back. This morning, or rather this evening, your evening, we are privileged to have Ron Bornstein, who will be in conversation with John Campbell. They will be discussing John's new book, *Haldane: the Forgotten Statesman* who shaped Great Britain and Canada. John Campbell, OBE, is the co-founder and chair of Campbell Lutyens, an international private equity and infrastructure advisory house. He was born in Newcastle upon Tyne, lived in Desmond, close to the childhood home of Haldane's mother, and was educated at the King School Canterbury and at the University of Cambridge, where he read Economics, winning an exhibition at Sydney Sussex College for his work in economic history. He began his career in corporate finance at NM Rothschild.

He and his wife Shellard have three children, Milo, Coco, and Rollo, four grandchildren and two step grandchildren. Campbell has long been inspired by lord Haldane's example, having first visited Haldane's Scottish home, Cloan in Perthshire, at the age of 12. The book has been many, many years in planning and gestation. So John is going to be in conversation with Ron Bornstein. Ron is an international lawyer who has practised in New York, Paris, San Francisco, and London, where he currently resides. He's a member of Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and a lifetime member of Pacific Pension and Investment Institute.

He was a Ford Foundation fellow at the Academy of International Law at the Hague, and a visiting fulbright professor at the University of Dhaka. Ron, an American who grew up in Manhattan, holds a BS economics from the University of Pennsylvania, Wharton School, and a JD from its law school. Ron is also a patron of the British Museum and the sponsor of its soon to open French Impressionism prints, from Monet to Suzanne, exhibition. So welcome gentlemen. It's a great pleasure to have you with us here tonight, and I'm now going to hand the floor over to you.

- Good evening or good day. I'm Ron Bornstein and I'd like to make a few introductory remarks, first about Wendy and the academy. I was locked down in London and I was an early student of the academy and have attended virtually all of its sessions. And I want to personally thank Wendy for her vision, her generosity, and her welcome. I didn't know Wendy, she didn't know me. We had a mutual friend who suggested that I join. And it's really been a tremendous benefit to me as it has been to many of you who are listening tonight. So thank you, Wendy.

And when I think of your programmes, I think of words by a great American woman who is a tremendous and sometimes notorious wit. And it goes like this; "The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity." So thank you, Wendy. I started the academy. It's now the lockdown university, but I like to think of it as Ms. Wendy's Academy of Perpetual Discovery for the incurably Curious. So with that, I will turn to my remarks about John. John Campbell and I met, John, as we'll be talking to you from his house in Gloucestershire, England. I'm in my flat in London, but John and I met 15, 20 years ago on a veranda overlooking the Pacific Ocean under very different circumstances.

And it was for the opening reception of a think tank I helped to create, which focused on the future, not the past. It focused on demographics and investment and the betterment of people and security of people in the immediate future, but also for generations to come. And after chatting a bit with John for the first time, it was clear to me he was a man, not only of uncommon intellect, but also uncommon curiosity, who was not only very articulate, but also a very keen listener who could meet ambassadors or prime ministers and also meet researchers and students and treat them with the same courtesy and curiosity no matter who they were. And listen carefully, as I said, and distill their remarks in a very, very cogent way.

So I think we're in for a treat tonight. John and I, we get together several times a year in various parts of the world, and we'd often have dinner, sometimes accompanied by his lovely wife, Shellard. And John was always talking about this fellow Haldane, Lord Haldane. And I had no idea who he was. And I thought, well, John's on this quest to, you know, he's going to Ottawa and he's going to Scotland and he's all over learning about Haldane. And so I thought, well, fine. And then fast forward to 2020 and I'm in lockdown.

I made a short podcast on the French impression exhibition at the British Museum that I was involved with. And I sent it to John and he said, "Fabulous, I'll send you my new book." And I thought, oh, new book. Okay, well this is, he finally got around to publishing something, and I was not expecting very much, frankly, given all the other commitments John had. And before the book arrived, I was reading the Sunday Times culture supplement, and I saw this, I hope you can all see it, which is a two page spread on John's book with a prominent picture of Lord Haldane by Philip de Laszlo, who as Patrick told us, was the successor to John Singer Sergeant's portrait business.

And as you may be able to read, I'll read it for you, "The calibre of politician we need. He outshines all modern British politicians." And this is written by Max Hastings, who's probably the leading popular historian in the United Kingdom and very well recognised and respected. Well, if you clicked onto the Haldane link that was included in the invitation, you'll see that there are numerous reviews of John's book. There is numerous praise by statesmen and military people such as Gordon Brown, Malcolm Rifkind, sir Collin McCall, the former chief of MI6, and Nicholas song. It's just amazing this outpouring for my friend John, and the work that he did.

This is the book Haldane, with the Portrait of Haldane. And the subtitle outside of Canada is The Forgotten Statesman who shaped Modern Britain. The subtitle in Canada is The Modern Statesman who Shaped Modern Canada and Modern Britain, because he had such a huge impact on the structure of the Canadian government and Constitution. The book is almost 500 pages, but don't let that put you off. It's a lovely tapestry of a man's life interweaving all sorts of famous individuals who we've heard about in lockdown University.

And I contacted Wendy and I say, "I can't believe this. There are all these people. There's Oscar Wild, there's, you know, the Webbs, there's Churchill, there's Belfor, there's Asquith. Just

all the, there's King Edward the seventh. I can't believe that such a man existed." And before I saw this book, I was starting to think that John had invented Haldane because no man like this could have existed without everyone knowing about him. He, you know, I thought John might be a delusional modern day Boswell to this fictitious Johnson that he invented. And I mean, Samuel not Boswell of course, but obviously the man does exist. He's not Mr. Zellie.

This is really a question of, not a question of life imitating art. It's really true. And to prove it, there is, I know many of you are interested in bibliographies. There is a 30 page list of books and articles in this work. There are 120 some odd illustrations, some of which John owns and will share with you tonight. And there's also a handy ribbon here, so you can go back and forth as I did, hopscotching around and making all these connections make sense. So I think John's remarks fit in very well with many of the talks we gave. Excuse me, we've heard, he will touch on, not only on on Britain, but also Germany, where he studied and learned to speak German fluently and became very familiar many of the great philosophers and authors we've been hearing about. He was an MP during the world war and was very conflicted, as John will mention.

And he was very involved in the events leading up to World War I when he was charged with reorganising the British Armed Forces forces after the war. And then to top it off the, you know, maybe the most unbelievable thing to me is that he was a very avid philosophical scientist, he was very interested in this. And at an early stage, he started studying the theory of relativity and became enamoured with that and hosted Albert Einstein on his first trip to England in 1921. Just amazing. And I hope that whets your appetite for what's going to be a very interesting conversation with John.

The woman wrote "The cure for boredom's curiosity, there is no cure for curiosity," is of course Dorothy Parker, who also wrote the seven word rhyme that may be more familiar to you. "Candy is dandy, but liquor is quicker." So refrain from following that maxim but relax and enjoy John. I'm sure you will. Thank you, John.

- Well, what can I say after that? Ron, thank you very, very much indeed for the wonderful introduction. You, like Haldane, you've been a great mentor to me, as you know, over a long time, but I won't go into all the details of that except to say thank you for what you've done in getting me together with the Lockdown Academy. Thank you Wendy, for allowing me to join in this evening, you as the chancellor of the University and to talk to your faculty and other members. It's a very, very great privilege. So let me cut straight to it.

And there's quite a lot of ground to cover. First question is, who was Haldane? And I believe that Haldane, just to pin my colours firmly to the mast, was arguably the greatest statesman that Britain has had in the 20th century. If you judge statesmanship by continual work in setting up organisations which stand tall a hundred years after the death of the person that created them. Churchill was magnificent, obviously in war, but was a bit of a disaster in a lot of other respects, Haldane did almost everything he set out to do. Built organisations that stand tall today.

How did I get involved with Haldane? My father was a consulting engineer in a firm called Merz & McClellan. One of his partners was a man called Graham Haldane. Merz & McClellan by the way, a number of you are involved in South Africa, was very much involved in developing the whole electricity system of Africa as it was here in the UK. They put together the National Grid in 1926. But Charles Merz, Haldane's great friend, who was the founder of Merz & McClellan, also put together the electricity supply system for South Africa.

He did the great inquiry in 1990 on behalf of the government of South Africa, into electricity generation and transmission, and then that led to ESCOM being set up in 1923. So we have that very much in common. So I was 12 years old, I had, with my four siblings, my father said to me, living as Wendy had said in Newcastle on Tyne, the north of England in Jesmond, "We're going to Scotland for our holidays." We always went domestically, in those days you rarely travelled abroad. And so to Scotland we went and he said, "I'm going to take you to meet one of my partners who's just inherited a house, which was in his family for quite a long time, and we are going to go and visit him and you better behave yourself. So smarten yourself up and ask some questions and be interested."

So I was 12 years old. We arrive at this house. Let me just, I'll show you first of all, here we are. This is the house we arrive at in Scotland. You see it in the book. It's a wonderful turreted house built up on the hillside, this marvellous view of 150 miles from it looking north across the whole sweep of the grand pins. And this was where it turned out that Lord Haldane had lived, and Lord Haldane was the great uncle of my father's partner, Graham Haldane. On his London house there's a plaque and that is the plaque that sits there to this day.

It's the only plaque, the only memorial to Haldane anywhere in Britain. And you'll come, I think, to share with me, I hope by the end of my talk, the sense that that is perhaps rather unfair. It says "Haldane, statesman, lawyer and philosopher." If Haldane could have written one word on that, none of those words would've appeared. You would've wanted to put the word education or educationist. And I'll come on to explain a bit about that. But I go into the house and my father has said, "Ask some questions."

So as a stamp collector, I looked up at the ceiling of the drawing room and I saw stamp up on this 14, 16 foot ceiling. And I said, how did it get there? And Graham Haldane said, "Oh, JM Barry, who wrote Peter Pan back in Lord Haldane's time, put it up on the ceiling. He bet the people in the drawing room that he could put it up there without using a pole or a ladder. He took a half crown and took a stamp from the writing desk, licked the back of the stamp, turned over a little bit onto the half crown, flicked it up to the ceiling, the stamp stuck on the ceiling and been there ever since. And the half crown return was put into his pocket."

So I was quite interested. Dick Haldane, the son of Graham Haldane, who was 12 years old, same age as me, then took me to look around the turreted house. And when we went into the dining room, it was very dark, laid for lunch, quite a dark room, he put on the lights, and a light

above the fireplace lit up the portrait of a man. And I said, "Who is that man?" And he said, "Oh, that's Lord Haldane. He was the Minister for war and he saved Britain."

That is the portrait you see behind here. It's been lent to me as a lifetime loan by Dick Haldane to encourage me in doing this work over the last 10 years in particular. 'Cause it's been 10 years of pretty deep look abrasion, as one pulled together, everything that one wanted to say about this extraordinary man. And I must pay credit to someone who I hope is listening in. Richard McLaughlin, my collaborator in this for the last five years, a brilliant young researcher, writer, everything that's good in this book is down to his blue pencil and his erudition, and keeping me under control. So there we were at Cloan, Dick takes me around the house.

And over the years when Dick got into his mid twenties, he inherited the house from his father. And I began to go and stay there. And he was there that sitting in Lord Haldane's room high up on those turrets, looking out over that fantastic view, and came to understand something of this extraordinary man and eventually to fall in love with him. And he's been the complete influence on the whole of my adult life. I never have a day when I don't think about Lord Haldane, and the disciplines and the way he goes about things informs every aspect of my life. He has the answer to every problem.

- John, John, maybe you could share with us some of the acquaintances of Haldane. I know he went to Germany for his education and wasn't he also on good terms with Oscar Wilde? He helped him in his prison.

- Perhaps best way of introducing that is that, Haldane, very quickly, he was born in Edinburgh. He goes to Edinburgh University, he has three incredibly able siblings. He then goes to Göttingen university in Germany. And that's where the whole of his life takes off. But the problems take off as well. He falls completely in love with German philosophy, with German literature. You've got, I believe something coming up tomorrow night on Goethe.

His landlady introduces him to Goethe, and he is devoted to Goethe for the remainder of his life, in 25 years, he travels in the footsteps of Goethe. This is a true volume. Life of Goethe was written by his great friend, Hume Brown. And they travelled for 25 years doing everything in learning about Goethe. And when Hume Brown dies just before the second volume's completed, Haldane writes the last chapter of 50 pages on Faust, which I believe you are studying tomorrow. So that, yes, Germany was really very, very important. That's where he was introduced to the philosophers, to Pfister, that led to Hegel, which led to Schopenhauer-

- And that fits in very well with this whole week, where we've been talking about Germany, and this afternoon we were speaking about the late 19th century and early 20th century. So it's contemporaneous with what you're talking about.

- Well, Haldane was totally fluent in German, loved, loved Germany. It was the centre of so much of the guidance that I, when I come onto the war office, we'll talk about the influence

there, but in education, the all of this was absolutely critical to what made Haldane the man that he was. And as you rightly say that after coming back to Edinburgh, he qualifies in philosophy. He then takes up the law, he comes to London to become a lawyer, he studies for bar. He's called to the bar at the age of 23, I think it was.

And at 33, he becomes the youngest QC for 50 years, 50 years, enormously . He goes special very early on in his time at the bar, which means that as he hadn't got a very strong voice, he was able to argue the most complicated cases in front of the House of Lords and in front of the Judicial Committee of the Council, which was effectively the ultimate appeal court for the empire.

- John, how did Oscar Wild come to his attention?

- Oscar Wild came to his attention because they'd met on one or two occasions socially. And then Oscar Wild is incarcerated in jail in 1895. And Haldane hears that he's having a terrible time, he's not allowed any visitors, Haldane decides he will go to see him. Why was he able to do that? Because he was part of an inquiry into prison conditions that gave him the opportunity through the home secretary to visit any prison at any time.

He goes to see Wild in Wandsworth prison before he moves to Redding, and then visits him later on after he'd made the move, Wilde bursts into tears, Haldane procures paper for him, writing materials, books to read. And then he says to Wilde, "You've now got a great subject to write about, being in prison," and Wilde commits to writing something. And I have here the result of that, which is the Ballad of Redding Jail, which was published in 1898 after Wilde came out of prison, was living in France, but with the compliments of the author typed in there. It couldn't be written by Oscar Wilde because he was in France, and was published in England. But the publisher sent it to Haldane as a redemption of the pledge to write something really great. And that was the Ballad of Redding Jail.

- That's fabulous. And didn't he arrange for books to be sent to Wilde every week in prison? Stack of books

- It wasn't every week, but on a very regular basis that books were put into the library, which then Wilde was allowed to access, but it was libraries, in prisons.

- John, John, another familiar name to this group is Rothschild. And as it is to you, because that's where you started your financial career. Could you tell us a little bit about his relationship with the Rothschild, both English and French?

- Yes, I was lucky enough to go and work at NM Rothschild when I came down from Cambridge in 1969. And they've had a wonderful archive, which they made available to me. Jose was very close to the first Lord Rothschild. He was a regular visitor to his home. I asked the current Lord Rothschild if he could give me any evidence of the number of times Haldane visited, whether he

was really that deeper friend. And Jacob very kindly got the book out for 10 years, from 1901 to 1910, added up the number of visits, said it was 29 visits I think in total that he'd stayed overnight and said, "I think we can call him quite a good friend."

And Haldane's relationship with the first Lord Rothschild was intimate. Lord Rothschild was incredibly philanthropically generous in particular setting up the London School of Economics, he put up some of the founding capital. Haldane would often turn to him, stayed regularly at his home, as I said, stayed with the French Rothschild. And perhaps the best way of describing the depth of that relationship is to say that in 1915 when Haldane became chancellor, there was a very serious matter came up, which I talk about in the book. I won't go into the detail now. And Haldane had to see him and he went to Rothschild's home in Piccadilly. And Rothschild was actually just about to die.

He died a few weeks after, but he got up from his bed and went to greet Haldane. And there was a wonderful thing he said before Haldane could speak, Lord Rothschild rose and said that "I know not what you are come to see me. But I have said to myself that if Haldane asks me to write a check to him of 25,000 pounds and to ask no questions, I will do it upon the spot," That's two and a half million pounds today. That shows some confidence in the relationship-

- Incredible. Incredible. John, would you like to say anything else about the 19th century before we go into the 20th?

- I think the only thing I might just quickly touch on is on the educational side. I think let's very quickly on the politics and then education. Politics, Haldane was a liberal, he came to London to, and in parallel to his legal work, immediately got to work in developing his political footprint that he set up in, he was born in 1856, in 1880, at the age of 24, he sets up the 80 club, which celebrates the return of Gladstone's liberal government.

They go out and preach the gospel of all the good things, of social improvement that the liberals believed in. Of course, there was no labour party in those days. Haldane wanted to capture really the principles of what became the Labour party for the liberal party. In the end, they didn't move fast enough to do that. But Haldane was very, very close to the Fabians, to the Webbs. That's what led to a lot of the work on London Education Reform, LSE, and working on a cross party basis with Balfour on the conservative party side. So Haldane's a great cross-party man and believing that one needed together. So politically liberal, and then on the educational side-

- How old has he? How old was he when he entered Parliament as a member?

- He entered parliament at the age of 29.

- 29, really.

- In 1885. That's when he met, Well, Asquith came in one year later in 1886, he met Sir Edward

Grey who went in the 1885. They were 23 years old, 29 years old, and 33, the young liberal imperialists.

- Incredible.

- [John] Formed a very, very close-

- Okay, and speaking of imperialism, maybe we should turn to the Boer war at around the turn of the century.

- I'd be very happy to do that. I think we should first of all define what you mean by liberal imperialists. It was not an imperialism in the form of really trying to oppress, on the contrary, it was to tie the empire together by what Haldane called the silken bonds of free trade. It was very much concept what the commonwealth is today rather than exploitive empire, very racially neutral, in no way superior, whether it was dealing with any part of the empire.

And certainly with the Boer he wrote movingly to his mother saying how much he respected the Boer as well as the English origin people in South Africa. They were both to be honoured for all of their individual capabilities. Yes, the world war was a disaster in Britain, enormously expensive and great damage done, great loss of life, great disease with the army and the troops, but even greater were equally great disease and damage, of course to the civilian population. And that Haldane of course, wasn't in government then. He only came in 1985. And it was the conservative government that had gone to war, with Salisbury and then with Belfor. But the, it was, I just lost my thread... Yes.

I was just about to do with the concentration camps, which was really so important that when Kitchener had laid waste, so many of the farms, the women and children were putting into camps for their own safety. But the disease became rampant. And the result of that was that there was very, very significant deaths, which Haldane, as I write in the book, was much concerned about. And his brother J.S. Haldane, the physiologist, he sent him to see Chamberlain. And that led to the Oxford DNV talking about one of the key roles was played by J.S. Haldane in his life was improving the conditions of the people in those camps.

- Thank you. And as I recall, when he was an MP, he was conflicted between his party's policies and his conscience. And it's a classic issue. Yeah.

- Yep. He was always a man of principle. He was never somebody who just followed the party line. And so if you take his education work, which was, as I mentioned at the beginning, so magnificent. Let me just quickly run through what he did in education. He set up LSE with the Webbs in the 1890s. He created London universities, a teaching university rather than an examining body in the changes in the London University Act In 1898, he supported welfare cross party in the Education Act in 1902, he set up the structure of the modern Irish universities, which came into being in 1908.

He set up the structure of all the civic universities of Britain, the universities attached to cities. So Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, Bristol, Nottingham, were all Haldane creations.

- Man, there must be millions of Britain's and others who graduated from these universities and he must have changed society tremendously over the years.

- I say that my belief is that there's one degree of separation between Haldane and every man, woman, and child in the United Kingdom, because of the influence that he had. He sets up Imperial College, calling it imperial, going back again to liberal imperialism with a small I rather than a bad, he persuades South African Byt and Verna to finance it a hundred thousand pounds.

Their statues sit outside to this day, despite all the tearing down of statues that goes on. He set up the adult educational authority. He was president of Birkbeck, chancellor of St. Andrews, chancellor of Bristol, rector of Edinburgh University. And every single thing he did in education, he did in his spare time, he never had education office.

- Sounds like more than enough for one person in a lifetime, let alone in his spare time.

- It's an extraordinary inspiration. But let's just come back maybe on to the war side. We move on from the Boer war. Suddenly the election comes in 1905, Haldane's 49 years old, he goes into government for the first time and he goes in as the Minister for war. And that is the poison chalice, that the British Army was totally dysfunctional, totally unfit for purpose during the Boer war, and afterwards. So he sets out to reconstruct it. He goes up to Cloan, sits in that wonderful study he had, surrounded by his books, looking out to the north. And he sits down to think, and he said to parliament when they said, "Look, what are you going to do about the army?"

He said, "I'm not going to tell you because I'm just a virgin that has met a bronzed warrior for the first time. And it'll take nine months before there'll be any evidence of the two of them getting together. So I'm going to go off to the hills to think and I'll come back with my formula." And it took him less than nine months. But he comes back and he totally reconstructs the British Army into the structure we have to this very day.

He sets up the British expeditionary force of the regular army. He sets up the territorial army. He sets up the officer's training corps, which tragically brought all those wonderful young men into being able to quickly train up the mass battalions at the beginning of the war in 1914, 1915, 1916. He creates the Imperial general staff based on the foundations of the general staff idea, which he then implemented. That idea was created by Balfour. He creates the royal flying corps. He creates MI5, MI6, the admiralty when he, and there was no general staff in the admiralty and he wanted to go there in 1911 to become the first Lord of the Admiralty, Churchill pips him at the post Churchill is 33 years old and he goes into government in 1908.

So he is 36, 18 years younger than Haldane. But Churchill says he will put in a general staff into the admiralty. He didn't quite get round to doing it by the beginning of the war. And that's part of the problems we faced in Gallipoli and elsewhere. So maybe to go a little bit further on the military side, he becomes Lord Chancellor in 1912, but he is invited to go and address the combined bar associations of America and Canada in Montreal. He sails into New York.

He is met there by J.P. Morgan Jr. Put on his yacht and sails up the Hudson River to West Point because he was a former minister for war, they lay on the biggest parade of cadets that had ever been laid on in the history of West Point. Photographs of that are in my book. He then goes on to Montreal where he addresses the combined bar associations. The president of the United States asks him to go and visit him, but he hasn't got time because as Lord Chancellor, he carries and protects the great seal of England.

And the King would only allow him to go abroad for a very limited period. And then he had to rush back to the UK. So that's his only visit, sadly, to North America. War comes in 1914. Little anecdote, just to give you a little teaser again, for what's in the book, sir Edward Grey, the foreign secretary who he's completely intimate with, comes to live with Haldane for 10 weeks, two weeks before the beginning of the war, 10 weeks afterwards. The German ambassador comes to present his papers when he goes back to Germany, all the boxes are going to and fro. They're sitting there on the 2nd of August having dinner and a message comes in, in the box to say that Belgium is being invaded, confirmation.

They rush around from Queen Anne's Gate to Downing Street. It's about four or 500 yards away, Sir Edward Grey, Lord Haldane and the Earl of Crewe, the leader of the House of Lords, the liberals in the House of Lords. They find the Prime Minister playing cards with the ladies. And as Elizabeth Haldane wrote in her book, he would not be disturbed for an hour. And the Earl of Crewe said, "He is playing on the coffin," meaning the coffin of Europe. So war breaks out. And then this is tragedy for Haldane because with amazing efficiency, the British expeditionary force is into position within two weeks alongside the French.

They do their bit to hold back the rate of the German advance, help with turning the German army at the battle of the Marne. And then come May, 1915 and a coalition government has formed, the conservatives come in. And what happens, the conservative press combined with the conservative party had always objected to so much of what Haldane had done. And in particular was suspicious about Haldane going to meet the Kaiser. In 1912, Haldane had become quite close to the Kaiser. The Kaiser, he had invited him to attend his military manoeuvres in Berlin immediately after Haldane become Secretary State for war.

He thought that the German staff was a very, very good structure, which he wanted to help to guide his reconstruction of the British general staff. When the Kaiser had come to Britain on state visits in 1907, and 1911, he'd seen Haldane as one of the senior ministers. He'd come to have lunch in Haldane's home in 1911 at the coronation of King George the fifth with his generals. He forced himself on holiday for that. He heard the generals coming to lunch and

invited himself. He called Haldane's home a doll's house. It's a little Georgian house in Queen Anne's Gate. Suddenly the conservatives are coming to government. They refuse to serve if Haldane stays in the government. He's thrown by Asquith, his greatest friend, the man to whom he was best man, who was the prime minister. He's thrown to the wolves.

And so till the end of the war, Haldane is out of office and only comes back in in 1924 when he returns as Lord Chancellor. So it's a really terrible story, where the king was made to change his name, obviously from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to Windsor, the Battenbergs to Mount Batten. John Betjeman's father was having his windows smashed in Bond Street, yet he was of Dutch by origin, had been a hundred years in Britain, but had two Ns in his name. So it was thought to be German. Everybody went mad in the=

- John. Wasn't he an intimate of Edward the seventh during this period, as obviously before this period, before the coronation. But can you mention that?

- You're quite right, Edward the seventh, the great ability of Haldane was to get on with everybody. He believed you need to listen to people all the time. And so he would pay as much attention to the doorman at the Ministry of War as he would with almost the king himself. But he became very intimate with king Edward the seventh, they would meet both in Britain and on holiday at Marienbad in Germany. And an indication of the depth of their love for each other was when the king died in 1910, the Queen asked Haldane to come and sit with her at the king's bedside just to pay his last respects to his body before it was taken from his bedroom. Now, he was deeply influential in encouraging the creation of Imperial College.

It was very much, it worked out of the king. The whole reconstruction of the army could never have done without the king. The king had to ask all the Lord lieutenants to come to Buckingham Palace when they were objecting to having the militia, the yeomanry, the volunteers, all the local regiments they loved so much, turned into a great modern efficient machine. They were told, come to Buckingham Palace, where the king said to them, "You know what your duty is, you'll support me in this." And the duty was, if they didn't want to support him, would they resign as lords lieutenant of their county. And that was why they were somewhat opposed, you know, when they had their chance to put the knife into Haldane in 1915.

So there we are, we're at war. The war comes to an end. The victory March takes place in 1919. And Haldane is sitting in his home in Queen Anne's gate, just across St. James' Park from Buckingham Palace. Earl Hague leads the troops up to the palace. The king takes the salute. And what does Hague do? He says to his ADC, "Before I go home, I shall go and see Lord Haldane who has not been invited to this great celebratory lunch." And he drives around to Haldane's home, finds Haldane alone there with his butler, and goes to pay his respects to him. And three months later he writes with a copy of his dispatches in which he inscribes them "To the greatest Secretary of State for War Britain has ever had."

And then that goes on. Two years later, we get to Einstein as Ron was saying earlier, Einstein

comes to Britain as Lord Haldane's guest. What had Haldane done when he was sent off to the hills in 1915, he began to get back to philosophy, to thinking, thinking about science, developing his ideas. And he writes a book on the principles of relativity, on the philosophy of relativity. So he invites Einstein to come stay with him in London. He takes him to his lectures. And I have here a photograph of Einstein and Haldane at their home. And that again is in the book. And then here's a copy of the theory of relativity.

But this isn't just any copy, it's one inscribed by Einstein to Haldane. There it is, you might just be able to make it out, thanking him for visiting him in 1921. I'll hold it up for a little bit further. And that is the ticket to the talk that was given at King's College by Einstein in German. Haldane was a fluent German speaker. Obviously that was not a problem. And many people spoke German in those days. They probably wouldn't have understood the lecture even if it had been in English. But he was chaired by Haldane.

And I must just read you, if I may, from that, if I could just quickly find it, the comment that was, one second, that Haldane introduces him by saying, "You are in the presence of the Newton of the 20th century, of a man who has affected a greater revolution in thought than that of Copernicus, Galileo, and even Newton himself." And of course you are introducing a German two years after the war, not the most popular thing to do and having him to stay in your house. But that's typical of Haldane. You stand by your friends, you stand by your principles. I think, Ron, that probably covers the period up to the end of the war. Would you like to say just one or two things? You talked about PPE, would you like me to talk about that or are we getting close to running out of time?

- I think we have a few minutes. And of course that's philosophy, politics and economics.

- Okay. And it was rather nice, all encompassing phrase that Ron said, "Why don't you talk a little bit about PPE," which is the Oxford philosophy, political philosophy, politics, and economics. Haldane was a fabulous philosopher, he was offered the chair of moral philosophy at St. Andrews, which then and now is our top moral philosophy university. It's the university that my collaborator Richard McLaughlin went to. Haldane was an idealist, you'll have to read about exactly what that means. In the footsteps of Hegel, of Green, of Whitehead, deeply spiritual man, he believed that God was within the breast of every man and woman in the universe. He was totally interdenominational.

He had certain very, very strong principles, philosophic principles he derived from Hegel. And I'll give you just one critical one. He believed in the right level of society at which decisions are taken as being the fundamental way to organise any state. And states had to be organised, Haldane passionately believed, from the bottom up, you should run, Ron, your home, you should also be part of the village you live in, or the suburb of London. You should be part of London, you should be part of England. You should be part of the United Kingdom.

You should be part of Europe, of NATO, of the World Bank. Of the United Nations. But you are

an integral part of every single one of those, 'cause you've given up to a higher level the responsibility for doing something that you couldn't do as well at the lower level. So you only hand up to a higher level what can't be done at lower level. So when we talk about Haldane in Canada, for those of you that are dialling in from Canada, and McGill have very kindly published the book at their press in Canada. What I believe, and I posit in my book, that Haldane saved Canada. Now how could Haldane save Canada?

Well, I'll tell you how, he becomes Lord Chancellor. And when your Lord chancellor, he becomes the supreme judge for the whole empire. His special knowledge is constitutional law. He'd always done high constitutional matters in front of the House of Lords. He was always fascinated by the Canadian constitution, which he believed was written upside down, 1867. There was too much part the dominion, too little part the provinces. So as the judge, when he became the judge in 1912, he was able to find in the cases that came before him, whatever he could, an interpretation in favour of the provinces, devolving power down to them from the excess paths he believed the dominion had.

Why do I say Haldane saved Canada? He dies in 1928, 67 years later in 1995, Quebec votes by less than 1% to stay in Canada, 49.6% to 50.4%. My argument is that if Haldane had devolved any less to Quebec, they'd have even more dissatisfied and on that margin, Quebec would've left Canada. That's what doing great principled politics is all about it. It informs exactly how we should look at the question of the Union of Great Britain. How we should be looking at European Union affairs, how we work with America, with the commonwealth. That it gives you the foundation of working out at every level of society what should be done by who.

- Sorry, I was muted. And obviously as an American lawyer, we have that classic issue perennially between the federal government and the state government. And as you rightly said, it exists throughout the world. And it's amazing. I mean, I know that there's the other side of the argument in Canada that provinces have too much power. But yeah, that's for another day.

- You're right. Getting that balance right is so important. But, so the Constitution is so important and you're seeing that in America at the moment, that the Constitution, I believe in America, was written to hold in the power the President if it was necessary to do that. And that's exactly what it's been very effectively doing, I believe over the course of the last few years. I might just mention one other thing about countries working together. One of the last things that Haldane does in the height of the war is, it starts in September, 1914. What does he do in April, 1915? He writes a paper saying, "When the war is over," and he submits this to the cabinet, "I think we need to reorganise international affairs by setting up a body."

And he outlined in that paper, without naming it, the concept of the League of Nations, which then emerged immediately after the war and then led to the United Nations. So it was always that desire to think ahead. And I might just say that going on from the philosophy to the politics side of it, what did Haldane do when he went to the hills? He began to think about the structure of government. And so he chaired a royal commission on the machinery of government. The

only major review that has ever been done of the structure of British government at a holistic basis. And he worked out how after the war it could be efficiently run, what ministries you need, the size of the cabinet. So he recommended a ministry of health, he recommended his job as Lord Chancellor should be split into three parts. We should have a Supreme Court, a neutral chairman of the House of Lords, there should be a ministry for justice. It took the Ministry of Health came one year after his recommendations.

The Ministry of Justice took 90 years and the Supreme Court took 90 years after his recommendation. So this is the difference between statesmanship and politics. It's thinking ahead, it's anticipating, it's doing something where you get it right over the longer term. Then finally on the economics side, then I'll shut up, just for a little bit of amusement, you said PPE, what does Haldane do in his first book in 1887? He's only 31 years old. He writes *The Life of Adam Smith* because he realises that political economy and the moral side of Adam Smith, of the theory of moral sentiments is absolutely at the heart of building the kind of just society and the right of sociological way and social way.

And then he becomes the president of the Royal Economic Society in 1906, just after he's become minister for war. He keeps that job for 22 years until his death. During the whole of that time, who does he have as the Secretary of the Royal Economic Society or as the Editor of the *Economic Journal*, the *Journal of the Society*? He has Maynard Keynes. So he has this 22 year relationship with Keynes. Now I could go on to lots of other things, but I'll stop there. Let me maybe say one thing just on his personality. 'Cause we haven't had a chance to talk about it at all, but it might amuse you. He was quietly humorous. He was terribly unfortunate in love. I should have said that, and I apologise for missing that out.

He twice fell madly in love, had nervous breakdown at the age of 25, then fell in love with another woman, became engaged. She broke off the engagement again, the story is all given in the book without giving any reason for that, he falls deeply, affectionately in love with a woman called Lady Horner. that Wendy you'll love because she was the muse of Byrne Jones, the portrait of her, there it is, that's in the Tate Gallery in London, the golden stairs. And there she is on the lowest step of it all. The muse of Rossetti, Haldane from 1893 until he dies in 1928, was very, very close indeed to her in a philosophical, she was married and there was no sex in it. But there was everything else. They were deeply, emotionally-

- John. We're coming close to the end and, you know, I want to thank Wendy for allowing some time for questions. But there's that, you know, he's not the most striking example of physical fitness as I recall. And you've got that wonderful entertained with Churchill you might want to share with us.

- Yes, he was actually very fit and he could walk from London to Brighton. He walked from London to Brighton. But he was sturdy. He was diabetic, so he looked rather more overweight than he actually was. But on one wonderful occasion, he was in the lobby of the house in Commons. And Churchill came up and prodded his great corporation, and said, "It's the body of

Nero and the brain of Socrates," somebody wants described him as being. So he prods this great body and says, "Haldane what's in there?" And Haldane pauses for a moment and says, "I'm not very sure, but if it's a boy, I shall call him John. If it's a girl, I shall call her Mary. But if it's merely wind, I shall call him Winston." Probably quite a good point to end on.

- I love it, John. And I'd just like to read something that Einstein wrote about him 25 years after his death. I think it's very, very touching "A man of kind and subtle feelings. As is so rare in the case of men of quite unusual energy and working capacity, I never had the feeling that there was anything worthwhile for which he would not easily find the necessary time and strength." So with that, I want to thank you. I should also say the book is available, as you said, through the publisher, but also on Amazon, that is slightly higher price. And let me-

- Discounted coupon.

- Yes, I'm sorry. Say that again John?

- I think there's a discounted coupon that the publishers made available, which we're going to circulate to people if they'd like.

Q&A and Comments:

Q: Okay, great. Thank you. And then there are a couple of questions. Okay, the first, "Was he any relationship to John Scott Haldane, the respiratory physiologist who studied oxygen?"

A: Absolutely. That the wonderful thing about the Haldanes is that, well, very, very quickly, his father had five children by first wife. She dies in 1851. Haldane is the first child of the second wife who's married. And Elizabeth Burton's sons coming from Jasmine Riley. She brings the brains into the family. Her great uncle was Lord Chancellor. Her brother was professor of physiology at Oxford, the first Wayne Fleet professor. So not surprisingly have they have brilliant children there. Five children, one dies at the age of 16, Older lives, younger one dies.

Jay John Scott, the next one, becomes the professor of physiology. Brilliantly able, did this wonderful work on gas in the first world war, on deep diving, is the person that works on the Boer war concentration camps. And Elizabeth Haldane, his sister, enormously clever.

Do you know that Haldane gets the order of merit only given to 24 people in Britain by the the Monarch at one time? There's 60 members of the order of companions of honour at any one time given by the Monarch again, who two of those 60, Elizabeth Haldane, her own right for the amazing work she does. You'll read about that. And John Scott also is a companion of honour. The younger sibling, William only becomes a knight. He becomes Sir William the Crown agent for Scotland.

Q: From Naomi Pearlman. She's a graduate of the LSE and wants to know why Haldane is not

well known as he obviously deserves to be.

A: Well, I'm delighted to say that on the introduction of Gordon Brown, our former Prime Minister, is now paying a certain amount of attention to Haldane that deserves to be given to him. I went to look at the founders room at the Landon School of Economics to look for the Haldane portrait. The Webbs viewed Haldane as their co-founder. They loved Haldane. They were intimate with him in all kinds of educational schemes over the years. And when I went to look for it, I go into the founder's room, there's the portrait of the Webbs where it's meant to be above the fireplace and Haldane was meant to hang next to them on the site.

They asked Elizabeth Haldane to have a copy made by an eminent copier of one of the great portraits to hang next to it. We eventually went down, we found it in a safe in the basement. And I did say to the people that showed me, Ron, "Get it back up on the wall of the founder's room where it's meant to be before this book comes out, 'cause people will be coming to look for it." Of course, with Covid, that's been impossible. But I hope that by the time that we're all allowed out in the community, it'll be back in the place where it was meant to be and where the Webbs asked to be. And the past few papers, which obviously we studied at LSE, are deeply important, on efficiency, co-efficiency, by the way, that cartoon there, efficiency and economy, was the great mantra of Haldane when creating the army.

But he applied that to everything that he did. Get back to first principles, work out what questions you are really asking and what are the answers. And he worked intimately with the co-efficients, they called it, this body that was put together by the Webbs at LSE. Now I think if Haldane came back today and saw LSE as it is today and Imperial as it is today, he would allow himself, I think, a little moment, some pleasure before moving quickly on to some other work.

Q: Yeah. And John, I think the question really could be asked more broadly. And why is Haldane not remembered today for any of his great accomplishments?

A: I think that the answer to that is partly Haldane, and partly the society, partly Haldane is that he never cared to be thanked for anything. He never wanted to be in the front line cause he wasn't the prime Minister, ask with his prime minister Campbell Bannon was Prime Minister Balfour's, prime Minister Churchill eventually becomes Prime Minister after Haldane. He said he worked with these great people intimately, but he was always trying to make it happen in the best way possible.

And it didn't matter about any personal reward, any fame for doing it. But I think the reason why beyond that he's largely forgotten, is that the war he's thrown out in the most ugly circumstances in 1915 on basically being accused of being a traitor and a German sympathiser. Completely mad. He'd gone on a peace mission to Germany in 1912 to meet the Kaiser Bethmann Hollweg, to try to head off the war by coming into an agreement about the principle about the ship building, building the dreadnoughts. That hadn't worked. But the government would never talk about the mission even having taken place.

And so when the war began, people began to speculate. Was the visit that Haldane made, was he trying to sell out Britain before the war? So there was suspicion, and I think when the war came to an end, millions of people were dead. People wanted to look forward rather than back and try to rehabilitate the reputation of someone who had been introduced in such a terrible way, just wasn't a priority. He came back as Lord Chancellor in the first labour government. He was the only minister in that labour government that had ever served in office before. So he was restored. And by the time he died, Lord Northcliffe was then dead. The Times said this was the most celebrated intellect ever to serve in public service in Britain. So for those that knew he was back, but I think it just got lost. Mud sticks, I think is one of the phrases that might apply to this.

Q: And Clive Mendel asked a similar question, maybe you've answered it already. "Why didn't his friends refute the attack against him as a German sympathiser?" Well, might that be because 'cause of the times and-

A: It was two things. It was when the conservative refused to serve in office, which is a terrible, terrible mistake made, they deprived Britain of the greatest statesman, the greatest thinker is thrown out of the government at the time when he was most needed if he'd been there to deal with the peace terms at Versailles, it would've been completely different. He'd been much more on Keynes's side. That's going to be deeply damaging to the whole future of Germany. So he just was, Asquith and Grey who could have come to his defence, didn't.

Grey tried, Asquith stopped him publishing the report on what had been said on this peace mission in 1912, saying wait till after the war. And Asquith by then was really declining that he'd become a social animal. He was playing cards, he was writing to his girlfriend at all the cabinet meetings to Venetia Stanley. He was really behaving, I'm afraid, rather disgracefully, having been the best friend of Haldane, best man, Haldane's best man at Asquith's second wedding, and they remained together. Haldane would never judge anybody.

He never had a bad word to say about anybody, but it was one of the great sadnesses of his life that he was abandoned in that way. But he never dwelled on it. He has got on, he was philosophical. That gets you through everything. There's always something you can turn your mind to. It's practical.

- Well thank you John. I hope our audience enjoyed this as much as I did, and obviously if they want to learn more about Haldane there's an easy way to do it. Read your book, and with that I will just thank you profusely and turn it back to Wendy, unless you have any last words to say. I will. Wendy, are you there?

- I am here. No, here I am. Gosh, John. Thank you. What a talented renaissance man. Your book certainly restores Richard Haldane into his rightful place amongst great men of Britain and Canadian history. His groundbreaking proposals on defence education and government structure were astonishing ahead of his time. The very building blocks of modern Britain, as you

said, even the Canadian constitution as now interpreted is unthinkable without Haldane.

His network's too astonishing, you know, his close friends were Rothschild to Wilde, to Einstein, Churchill to Carnegie, King, to Kaiser. His interest really enabled him to pioneer across party and corporation. So I really have to congratulate you on this incredible book, and I would like to recommend to everybody to buy it and to read it and to quote Gordon Brown, "A labour of love."

Haldane is rescued from the condensation of posterity thanks to you, John. His achievement in war and peace is finally recognised and his rightful place in history is secured. What an incredible book, and I am certainly looking forward to reading it myself. And I want to thank you, Ron, for introducing all of us to John and also for being with us today. So both of you gentlemen, thank you very, very much. And to all our participants, I would like to say thank you for joining us tonight. And on that note, I say goodnight and goodbye.