

The Round Table
Movement and the Fall
of the 'Second'
British Empire
(1909-1919)

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By

Andrea Bosco

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To Luigi Vittorio Majocchi
master in the art of maieutic

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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

Brand Papers (BrP)	Meston Papers (MeP)
Bryce Papers, (BP)	Milner Fond (MF)
Cabinet Papers (CABP)	Milner Papers (MP)
Cecil Papers (CeP)	Montagu Papers (MoP)
Chatham House Papers (CHP)	Murray Papers (MuP)
Chelmsford Papers, (ChP)	Round Table Papers (RTP)
Colonial Office (CO)	Royal Commonwealth Society Papers (RCSP)
Colonial Office Papers (COP)	Sea Cadet Association Papers (SCAP)
Curtis Papers (CP)	Selborne Papers (SP)
Dawson Papers (DP)	Seton-Watson Papers (S-WP)
Dover Wilson Papers (DWP)	Toynbee Papers (TP)
Foreign Office Papers (FOP)	Zimmern Papers (ZP)
Imperial War Cabinet Papers (IWCP)	Walker Papers, (WP)
Lloyd George Papers (LGP)	War Cabinet Papers (WCP)
Lothian Papers (LP)	Wrong Papers (WrP)
Mansbridge Papers (MaP)	

“The future of the world depends upon the gradual recognition,
by the rest of the world, of the fundamental principles
which lie at the heart of Anglo Saxon civilization.”¹

¹ Kerr to Curtis, 9 June 1920, LP, 208/255 8.

INTRODUCTION

In spite of the phobia of federalism, there is a strong federalist trend within British political culture. In three very different historical contexts federalism inspired the action of political movements such as the Imperial Federation League, the Round Table and the Federal Union. Federalism was then regarded as the solution to problems arising from the first signs of crisis, the disintegration and the possible collapse of Great Britain and its Empire. The life of those movements was relatively short, and when their political failure became manifest, they turned into 'educational' organizations: the Imperial Institute, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and the Federal Trust for Education and Research.¹

Debate on federalism was introduced into Great Britain in 1832 by John Austin, and developed by John Stuart Mill, Henry Parkes, Goldwin Smith, Julius Vogel, Robert Stout, John X. Merriman, C. R. Lowell, James Bryce, Henry Sidgwick, Charles Dilke, Auberon Herbert, Edward Jenkins, Albert Venn Dicey, John Seeley, Lord Acton, and Edward Freeman. From the mid-Nineteenth century federalism emerged as an alternative constitutional model to the unitarian state, able to resolve problems connected with granting self-government to the colonies while maintaining a wide-flung Imperial union.²

¹ Michael Burgess, *The British Tradition of Federalism* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995); John Kandle, *Federal Britain* (London: Routledge, 1997); id., *The Round Table Movement and Imperial Union* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975); John Pinder and Richard Maine, *Federal Union. The Pioneers* (London: Macmillan, 1990); Andrea Bosco, *Federal Union e l'unione franco britannica. Il dibattito federalista nel Regno Unito dal Patto di Monaco al crollo della Francia (1938 1940)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009).

² John Austin, *Province of Jurisprudence Determined* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, n.d.); John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty; Representative Government; The Subjection of Women: Three Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954); Henry Parkes, "Our Growing Australian Empire," *Nineteenth Century*, 15, (1884): 138 49; id., "Australia and the Imperial Connection," *Nineteenth Century*, 15, (1884): 867 72; Robert Stout, "A Colonial View of Imperial Federation," *Nineteenth Century*, 21, (1887): 351 61; John X. Merriman, "The Closer Union of the Empire," *Nineteenth Century*, 21, (1887): 507 16; Goldwin Smith, "The Canadian Constitution," *Contemporary Review*, 52, (1887): 1 20; C. R. Lowell,

With the creation in 1884 of the Imperial Federation League—and the production, at the suggestion of Prime Minister Lord Salisbury, of a ‘Federal Plan’ in 1892, aiming to secure by federation the permanent unity of the Empire—for almost a decade federalism gained increasing support among the British public at large. The formation of 31 branches throughout the country, and in Canada, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand—totalling over 2,000 members—fostered closer Imperial union and encouraged the colonies to share the burden—financial and military—of Imperial defence, at a time of rising nationalism and power politics in Europe.³

However, following the rejection by Gladstone in April 1893 both of the League’s ‘Federal Plan’, and of the request for an Imperial *ad hoc* Conference to discuss reforms of Imperial relations, the League collapsed in December 1893, failing to agree upon an alternative policy for the 1890s or to find a compromise among the conflicting schools which coexisted within it. Since it was the expression of heterogeneous currents of opinion, united only by a common interest in promoting a radical solution of the Imperial and Irish questions, the League was not able to express a well-defined political culture, in spite of the publication, since

“English and American Federalism,” *Fortnightly Review*, 49, (1888): 189–95; James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth* (London: Macmillan, 1891) 3 vols.; id., *Studies in History and Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901); Henry Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1919); id., *The Development of European Polity* (London: 1903), 436–7, 439; id., *The Elements of Politics* (London: 1897); Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain* (London: 1865); Auberon Herbert, “The Canadian Confederation,” *Fortnightly Review*, 7, (1876); Edward Jenkins, “Imperial Federalism,” *Contemporary Review*, 16, (1871): 165–88; id., “An Imperial Confederation,” *ibidem*, 17, (1871); Albert V. Dicey, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution* (London: 1885); id., *England’s Case Against Home Rule* (Richmond: 1873); John R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (London: 1883); id., “United States of Europe,” *Macmillan’s Magazine*, 23 (March 1871); John E. E. Dalberg Acton, *The History of Freedom and other Essays* (London: 1907); Edward Freeman, *History of the Federal Government from the Foundation of the Achaean League to the Disruption of the United States* (London: 1863); id., “Imperial Federation,” *MacMillan’s Magazine*, (April 1885): 430.

³ Michael Burgess, “‘Forgotten Centenary’: The Formation of the Imperial Federation in the UK,” *The Round Table*, 289, (1984): 76–85; id., “Imperial Federation: Continuity and Change in British Imperial Ideas, 1869–1871,” *The New Zealand Journal of History*, 17, 2, (1983).

January 1886, of the monthly *Imperial Federation* and the creation in 1888 of the Imperial Institute.⁴

The ambiguity in which the federal idea was proposed, in the guise of simple devolution, was a consequence of the contradiction in terms of the concept of 'Imperial federation', where Imperial was just the opposite of federation. The federal principle seemed more applicable to England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales rather than to the Empire, since their existence as former distinct states—which had opted for the unitarian principle—meant their consent to amending the form of union. Nationalist sentiment, however, would have welcomed the application of the federal principle, with the creation of independent legislatures and executives, as an intermediate stage towards full independence.

The instance of Ireland, merged with the United Kingdom in 1801, provided the most complex trial for federalism. The failure of the Gladstone 1886 plan (as well as of similar plans of 1893 and 1912) allowed just a devolutionary 'home rule all round'. Instead of autonomous legislatures with well-defined competences, as demanded by the Irish Nationalists (but also by the Scottish, and to a lesser degree by the Welsh), Ireland was ultimately accorded local institutions with increased administrative and legislative powers, delegated by Westminster, within a unitarian system of government.⁵

The creation in September 1909 of the Round Table Movement marked a turning point in the debate on federalism and in its application both at home and in the Empire. Having been imbued with the Imperial ideology produced by Oxford in the late Nineteenth century, for the Round Tablers federalism was a political and constitutional form to be filled with an historical content: the British Empire. The dominant ideas at Oxford at the time included Burke's theory of organic unity, social Darwinism, the absolute certainty of the superiority of 'white culture' (and in particular English), the sense of responsibility towards non-Europeans, and finally the idea of Imperial mission. The writers who mostly influenced the intellectual development of the Round Tablers were Freeman, with his theory of the linear development of the principle of self-government following the Anglo-Saxon experience of the parliamentary system, and T.

⁴ Michael Burgess, "The Federal Plan of the Imperial Federation League 1892: Milestone or Tombstone?" in *The Federal Idea. The History of Federalism from the Enlightenment to 1945*, Andrea Bosco ed. (London: 1991), 139 53.

⁵ John Kendle, *Ireland and the Federal Solution: The Debate Over the United Kingdom Constitution, 1870 1921* (Kingston and Montréal: McGill Queen's University Press, 1989).

H. Green, with his Hegelian concept of development and social reforms as a moral duty.⁶

The Oxford approach to Imperial questions seemed, according to Ronald Robinson, “unmistakable,” characterized by the “high moral tone, the lofty view which Mansergh called ‘largess of mind,’” and the inclination “for tracing philosophical antithesis through long historical perspectives, for presenting the Imperial record teleologically in terms of an ideal end.” The Round Tablers were imbued by a climate, “where philosophy was linguistic, and secular scepticism poured on religiosity.”⁷

The Round Table developed and propagated a political ideology which would have promoted and accompanied the transition from a British leadership of the Empire into an equal partnership among its component parts. The alternative to organic union would have been disruption, as happened to the Athenian ‘insular’ Empire, finally defeated, on the sea, by an alliance of two ‘continental’ powers, Sparta and Persia. The invention of the principle of representation, and of federal government, they thought, were contributions which the Anglo-Saxon political tradition had offered to the development of the principle of self-government invented and experimented with in Athens, making thus possible its application to the national, and then to the supranational levels. The deep meaning of their mission sprang from the awareness of living at a time of crisis, which could be overcome only through the extension and application of the democratic principle beyond the nation-State, seen as the cause of international anarchy. If it were not possible to achieve that goal within the English-speaking peoples, who were the most advanced in the art of responsible and democratic government, they believed that nobody else could have succeeded. The British Empire in fact appeared to the Round Tablers as the most congenial organization of States to start with, in order to create and consolidate a federal nucleus set for enlargement.

The Round Table’s main argument supporting the case for a closer Imperial union was based on the growing Anglo-German rivalry, which represented a renewal of the traditional rivalry between the continental and

⁶ Jesse Norman, *Edmund Burke: The First Conservative* (London: Basic Books, 2013); Yuval Levin, *The Great Debate: Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, and the Birth of Right and Left* (London: Basic Books, 2014); Geoffrey Thomas, *The Moral Philosophy of T. H. Green* (London: Oxford University Press, 1988); Maria Dimova Cookson and William J. Mande eds., *T. H. Green: Ethics, Metaphysics, and Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2006).

⁷ Ronald Robinson, “Oxford in Imperial Historiography,” in *Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth*, Frederick Madden and David K. Fieldhouse eds. (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 42 3.

the insular systems, which in their essence were antagonist. If the continental system was based on centralization of powers, autocratic and militaristic by nature, the British was based on the liberties of the individual citizen, decentralization, and representative democracy. Continental pressure brought the British governments to slow down and limit the process of devolution of powers from the centre to the periphery of the Empire—an Empire which was itself an economically and politically evolving entity, bound to be re-defined on the basis of the principle of equal partnership.

The question of the defence of the Empire—and therefore the survival of British political culture and institutions—depended very much on the Royal Navy's supremacy on the seas, challenged by the strongest Continental State at that time, Germany, as in the past it had been challenged by Spain and France. Great Britain could not any longer bear alone the cost of naval rearmament, which was designed not just to prevent a German invasion of the British coasts, but also to protect the independence of all the component parts of the Empire, which had therefore to take a full share in this task. The protection which Britain had successfully offered the Dominions, giving them the possibility of developing their economies and self-government, was called into question by the pressure of events, which required a direct assumption of responsibility for the maintenance of their own security and their free institutions.

As soon as the Round Tablers realized that the Dominions needed to go all the way through the full exercise of national sovereignty before being ready to federate, they turned to the United States, and envisaged a period of time during which through Anglo-American co-operation and alliance it would be possible to restore the necessary international economic and political stability to give time for federal ideas to take root. Economic and political co-operation between Great Britain and her thirteen rebellious former colonies was then regarded by the Round Table as the only practical solution to the problem of world instability, inherent in the political division of the world into sovereign States.

The place of the Round Table Movement in the history of the British Empire could be compared to that of the sun at noon, the moment of its greatest radiance but also the beginning of a rapid and inexorable decline. What the Round Tablers attempted to do was to reverse that inexorableness. Could the history of the British Empire diverge from the fate which marked all the empires in the course of history? This was the challenge which the Round Tablers took up. The aim of this volume is to discuss the strategies and means employed in this fascinating venture.

The Round Tablers were, at the beginning of the venture, young men. However, they remained loyal to the cause—to different degrees, but nevertheless loyal—for all the rest of their lives. They were not, therefore, victims of a youthful delirium of omnipotence, but actors in a coherent and persistent programme of action. What they were looking for was not just an answer to the problems of a multi-racial Empire kept together by a provisional convergence of interests, but a radical solution to the problems of interdependence of the modern age, which could be better discerned within the British Empire than anywhere else in the world stage at the time. Their spirit was longing for a deep meaning to give to their lives, and they found it in the Empire. Only later they discovered in federalism the political ideology able to give this existential yearning a political dimension. There was a ‘spiritual’ element at the base of this conversion, and long fidelity, which had its dynamic source in Anglicanism.

“Those were the days when a vision of what the Empire might be made dawned upon certain minds with almost the force of a revelation,” John Buchan wrote retrospectively, with extraordinary insight and honesty, on his early Round Table days, expressing in words the inner feelings of all his companions. They “dreamed of a world-wide brotherhood with the background of a common race and creed, consecrated to the service of peace.” Great Britain was seen as “enriching the rest out of her culture and traditions, and the spirit of the Dominions like a strong wind freshening the stuffiness of the old lands.” They saw in the Empire “a means of giving to the congested masses at home open country instead of a blind alley.” They saw hope “for a new afflatus in art and literature and thought.” Their creed “was not based on antagonism to any other people,” it was “humanitarian and international.” They believed that they “were laying the basis of a federation of the world.” As for the native races under British rule, they “had a high conscientiousness,” which “involved a new philosophy of politics, and an ethical standard.”⁸

The central figure of the Round Table was Alfred Milner. Milner’s patriotism was centred on the world hegemony of the British Empire: “I am a nationalist...not a cosmopolitan.” “If I am also an Imperialist and not a Little Englander,” Milner declared towards the end of his life, in a sort of farewell statement, “it is because the destiny of the English race...has been to strike fresh roots in distant parts.” Milner’s imperialism knew “no geographical but only racial limits,” and it was based on British cultural and political achievements. He believed that the “competition between

⁸ John Buchan, *Memory Hold the Door* (London: 1940), 120, 124 25.

nations, each seeking its maximum development," was "the law of human progress...the Divine Order of the world, the law of Life."⁹

Milner was the intellectual and political leader of the most progressive school of Imperial thought throughout the Empire. "It was Milner," Leo Amery observed, "who over some twenty years laid securely the foundations of a system whose power in shaping the outlook and spiritual kinship of an ever-growing body of men throughout the English-speaking world it would be difficult to exaggerate." "More people would probably have gone round the world with or for him," Robert Vansittart recorded, "than anyone else in the mist procession" of famous men he had encountered in a long lifetime of public service. George L. Beer identified in Milner's imperialism "all the depth and comprehensiveness of a religious faith," and its significance was "moral even more than material." According to John Kendle, the Empire was for Milner "a substitute religion," and his young men drank "deeply" at his ideological well, "and for the rest of their lives their basic ideas and ideals owed much to Milner's beliefs and convictions." His views were labelled by the Liberal Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannermann as "*religio Milneriana*." Those who were engaged in worship of Milner offered the evidence, according to Campbell-Bannermann, for the "psychological infirmity of the Oxford mind."¹⁰

Perhaps the most illuminating sketch of Milner's character is that of Beatrice Webb. After meeting Milner in 1906, "brooding over South Africa," where he felt his whole "house of cards" was tumbling down, she commented, with her usual sharpness: "A God and a wife would have made Milner, with his faithfulness, persistency, courage, capacity and charm, into a great man: without either, he has been a tragic combination of success and failure."¹¹

⁹ Speech given on 28 Oct. 1901 in Durban: Cecil Headlam, *The Milner Papers. South Africa 1899 1905* (London: Cassel, 1931), 287; Alfred Milner, *The Nation and the Empire* (London: 1913), xxxii, xxxv. Milner's 'Credo' was published after his death in *The Times*, 27 July 1925. Milner to Curtis, 1 Dec. 1908, quoted in Alex May, "The Round Table, 1910 1966" (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1995), 26.

¹⁰ Leo Amery, *My Political Life* (London: 1953), vol. 1, 298 9; Lord Vansittart, *The Mist Procession* (London: 1958), 183; A. Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies: A Study in British Power* (London: 1985), 131; Kendle, *Round Table Movement*, 4, 10; J. A. Spender, *Life of Campbell Bannerman* (London: 1923), vol. 1, 264.

¹¹ Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie eds., *The Diary of Beatrice Webb* (London: 1984), 3, 49.

Milner's personality was autocratic, and was venerated by his disciples as "H.E." or "his triple X." Buchan wrote that "loyalty to Milner and his creed was a strong cement which endured long after our South African service ended." Milner's nobility of mind, "his entirely natural charm of manner, his lofty idealism, the complete absence of ambitious scheming or of anything approaching self-conceit in his character, and his broad and vigorous patriotism, made him," according to Bruce Lockhart, "the ideal inspirer of youth." With young men Milner "was at his best. He liked to surround himself with them. He believed that they should be given their chance." Lockhart found it hard to write about Milner "in anything but superlatives." "I must have been one of the last of the young men," Lockhart declared, "to worship at his feet and there I have remained."¹²

According to Amery, who recognized in Milner his "spiritual chief" to the end of his days, Milner "approached his conclusions cautiously." But few men "in the same degree had the intellectual courage to accept them unreservedly and follow them out with unflinching tenacity." Milner was "at heart a radical, always ready for far-reaching changes of outlook and method...a constructive radical, thinking in terms of concrete action," but above all he was "an idealist, a man with a vision to which he dedicated his life." It was that forward-looking idealism "which naturally drew younger men to look to him as their leader."¹³

The specific contribution of the Round Table to the development of the federal idea into a political movement was to produce a theory of supranational political action centred on reflection on the question of power. The Round Table theorized on and realized—through Milner's influence on British Unionist and Liberal political élites—the exercise of power not through the traditional instruments of political struggle—the parties, and the control of parliamentary institutions—but through the formation and consolidation of an extra-parliamentary consensus on a specific political agenda. Set a strategic goal, the movement would employ all available means to achieve it, including the manipulation—they called it 'moulding'—of public opinion, and the exercise of coordinated action by a network of associated individuals and organizations. The Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Council on Foreign Relations were the major among them.¹⁴

¹² Buchan, *Memory Hold*, 99; Vladimir Halperin, *Lord Milner and the Empire. Evolution of British Imperialism* (London: 1952), 199.

¹³ Leo Amery, foreword to *Lord Milner*, by Halperin (London: 1952), 22 3.

¹⁴ Stephen King Hall, *Chatham House: A Brief Account of the Origins, Purposes and Methods of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937); Andrea Bosco and Cornelia Navari eds., *Chatham House*

The creation of *The Round Table*, a quarterly journal devoted entirely to Imperial and foreign affairs, which was produced by the London office in collaboration with colonial editors, and “to which all workers and all important statesmen in the Dominions could be induced to subscribe,” is perhaps the most relevant and lasting contribution of the movement to the evolution of the federal idea, and the consolidation of a political culture which inspired the processes of Atlantic and European unification. The magazine launched the movement worldwide, and became “the recognized organ of the groups in all parts,” influencing those in a position to influence public opinion. The journal was “not intended so much for the average reader, as for those who write for the average reader.” It was an elitist journal which provided “food for thought,” having in each issue three or four lead articles, with the addition of chronicle articles from each Dominion. *The Round Table* preached the gospel of Anglo-Saxonism first developed by Dilke, Fiske, and Hawkins.¹⁵

London was, at the beginning of the century, the centre of a worldwide system of metropolitan political journalism, providing “the ‘live rails’,” as Curzon observed, “for connecting the outskirts of Empire with its heart.” *The Round Table* was the only journal completely devoted to Imperial and foreign affairs. Other journals like the *Westminster*, the *Edinburgh*, and the *National Reviews*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and *Blackwoods* only occasionally dealt with Imperial and foreign policy. The first number of the journal appeared in November 1910, and its print-run was of 3,500 copies, gradually increasing to 6,500 by June 1914. Subscribers were more numerous in the Dominions than in the United Kingdom. By 1918 *The Round Table* had “won an established and influential position” throughout the British Empire, with sales of around “ten and a half thousand,” being the “largest and most widely-distributed circulation of any political quarterly magazine in the British Empire.”¹⁶

Walter Page—American Ambassador to London, and a former magazine editor—believed that the Round Table group was “perhaps the best group of men here for the real study and free discussion of large political subjects,” and that the journal was “the best...I dare say, in the world.” According to *The Spectator*, *The Round Table* in two years of

and *British Foreign Policy 1919 1945. The Royal Institute of International Affairs During the Inter War Years* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1995); Peter Grose, *Continuing the Inquiry: The Council on Foreign Relations from 1921 to 1996* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 2006).

¹⁵ Kendle, *Round Table*, 65; Lionel Curtis, *Dyarchy* (Oxford: 1920), 74.

¹⁶ James D. Startt, *Journalists for Empire* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1991), 214. Advertising circular for the United States, 1918, RTP, 234.

publications passed “from an adventure into an institution.” If the *Daily Chronicle* thought that *The Round Table* was “indispensable to all serious students of politics,” the *Pall Mall Gazette* stated that there was “no publication that surpasses it in clearness of thought and statement.”¹⁷

Thanks also to the ‘collateralism’ of some historical institutions of the University of Oxford—All Souls College, primarily, but also Balliol, New College, and the Rhodes Trust—and a total control of such ‘quality press’ as *The Times* and *The Observer*, the Round Table was able to exercise, within the Empire, a ‘cultural hegemony’, particularly during the thirty years between 1910 and 1940.¹⁸

The Round Table was not, as the Imperial Federation League, a simple pressure movement inspired by federalist values, but a political organization, with a significant rooting in all the major peripheral centres of the Empire; with almost unlimited financial resources made available particularly by the Rhodes Trust; with a magazine widely recognized as authoritative in matters of Imperial and foreign policy; and especially with a small group of young men who devoted to the federalist cause most of their lives. Two of them, Lionel Curtis and Philip Kerr—the two musketeers, or the Castor and Pollux of the movement, as they were defined by their contemporaries—left the deepest mark in the battles of the movement. “I am only a blade in the scissors,” Curtis wrote to Kerr in 1927, “and cut nothing unless I am hinged with you.” But the relationship was never easy. Curtis tended to patronize his friend ten years younger, who thought that Curtis’s veneration for the Empire was a kind of idolatry. Kerr could not share Curtis’s “transcendental confidence that one is divinely inspired in one’s political operations.” However, according to Lionel Hitchens, Curtis “imposed a spirit into the Kindergarten which they would never have had” without him.¹⁹

Beyond analysis of ideas and dynamics within the movement, the present study aims to provide a new interpretation of events and views which have raised controversial questions within Anglo-Saxon

¹⁷ Page to Arthur W. Page, 25 July 1915, quoted in Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co, 1922), vol. 2, 84 7; RTP, c 845, 131 4, 175 9.

¹⁸ Kerr to Sir Horace Plunkett, 5 Dec. 1916, quoted in Keith Neilson, “Lord Lothian, Russia, and Ideas for a New International Order, 1916 1922,” in *Lord Lothian and Anglo American Relations, 1900 1940*, Priscilla Roberts ed. (Danvers, MA: Dordrecht, 2010), 45.

¹⁹ Curtis to Kerr, 23 May 1927, LP, 227/132 4; Kerr to Lady Anne Kerr, 16 Sept. 1914, LP, 464/43; Kerr to Brand, Feb. and Dec. 1912; Hitchens to Curtis, 19 Dec. 1910, quoted in Kendle, *Round Table*, 123.

historiographical debate. The analysis starts with the vital and structural link between the Imperial Federation League, the Liberal and federalist culture of Victorian England, and the Round Table. Everything indeed began at Oxford in 1878, during a famous debate at the Oxford Union on the desirability of Imperial federation. In spite of the fact that the motion in support of the reasons in favour was rejected by fifteen votes against eleven, from that moment the question of institutional reform of an Empire which still seemed to enjoy good health became part of the existence of those young men, who would play, within two decades, a prominent role in the political, cultural, and economic life of the Empire.²⁰

Among them there were Herbert Asquith, Alfred Milner, and George Parkin. There is no evidence that Cecil Rhodes took part in it, but the influence of Oxford's "mystic mantel of greatness" on the young man who was to devote his immense fortune, accumulated in South Africa, to the University was certainly decisive. In spite of having been created in London, the Imperial Federation League had been essentially a cultural product of Oxford. It is true that also Cambridge—with John Seeley, Henry Sidgwick, and Lord Acton—and the London School of Economics—with its three successive directors, William P. Reeves, William Hewins, and Sir Halford J. Mackinder—contributed significantly to the development of an Imperial ideology, but it was Oxford that exercised the role of the cultural capital of the Empire.²¹

If Parkin was instrumental in attracting the young Milner to the Imperial Federation League, it was William Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who offered Milner a model of 'militant' journalism. He above all provided Milner with the fundamental link to Rhodes, in spite of a crisis in their relationship when Stead opposed the drift towards war of Milner's policy in South Africa.²²

²⁰ Oxford Union Library, "Rough Minute Books," 1873 6; 1876 84; Colin Newbury, "Cecil Rhodes and the South African Connection: 'A Great Imperial University'?" in *Oxford and the Idea*, Madden and Fieldhouse, 79.

²¹ John Flint, *Cecil Rhodes* (Toronto: Brown and Company, 1974), 23; Robert I. Rotberg, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); W. A. S. Hewins, *The Apologia of an Imperialist: Forty Years of Empire Policy* (London: 1929); William Pember Reeves, *The Long White Cloud* (London: 1898); id., *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand* (London: 1902); Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality. A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* (London: Constable, 1919).

²² George R. Parkin, *Imperial Federation: The Problem of National Unity* (London: Macmillan, 1892); John Willison, *Sir George Parkin: A Biography* (London: 1929); William T. Stead, *The United States of Europe on the Eve of the Parliament of Peace* (London: 1899); id., *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil*

Milner had been the link between the two phases of ‘Imperial federalism’, the British ‘old school’ of imperialism (represented by the Imperial Federation League, Cecil Rhodes, Joseph Chamberlain, Lord Rosebery, and Lord Salisbury), and the ‘new school’, represented by the Round Table. Milner drew his power and influence on the formation of British Imperial and foreign policy from heterogeneous social forces of which he was a sort of intersection point. On one side, Milner had in Rhodes the incarnation of capitalist exploitation and accumulation of wealth in colonial Britain. On the other, there was Stead, who offered Milner the foundations of the Imperial ideology, providing a base of legitimacy and perpetuation of an Empire which included within its borders one fourth of the world’s surface and of its population, largely completely subject to the rule of a British Parliament and Cabinet. Then, Milner could also rely upon Reginald B. Brett (later Lord Esher)—a director of Rhodes’ British South African Company, and adviser of Edward VII and George V—who facilitated the rise of the ‘outsider’ Milner into the British foreign and Imperial policy decision-making inner circle.²³

Milner, the chief architect of the Second Anglo-Boer War, and one of the major figures who bear the moral responsibility—on the British side—for the First World War, created the Round Table in order to gain the Dominions’ support for Great Britain in the event of a new European war. Britain’s controversial entry into the Great War could be seen as a desperate attempt to save Britain from a civil war with a political-religious character—the Anglo-Irish conflict, in which Milner was about to take on a leading role, secretly arming the Ulster Volunteers, a private army loyal to the crown—and from the breaking-up of the Empire, without which Britain would have regressed to the rank of a second-rate power. According to this interpretation, Wilhelmine Germany fell—like the naive Boers, allied with the German colony of South West Africa—into a trap skilfully set by the British imperialists to reaffirm with weapons a global economic and political hegemony by then almost completely lost.

Historiography did not fail to highlight the crucial role played by the Conservative Milner in the ascent to power, in December 1905, of the imperialist triumvirate Asquith-Grey-Haldane—prominent members of the

John Rhodes (London: 1902); id., *The Americanization of the World, or the Trend of the Twentieth Century* (London: 1902); Frederic Whyte, *The Life of W. T. Stead* (London: 1925); Edmund Garret, “Milner and Rhodes,” in *The Empire and the Century* (London: 1905).

²³ For a critical analysis, see: James Lees Milne, *The Enigmatic Edwardian: The Life of Reginald, 2nd Viscount Esher* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1986).

Liberal League—against the 'radical' Liberal Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who was opposed to imperialist and protectionist policies. With control of the Treasury, the Foreign Office and the War Office, Milner and the Liberal imperialists were thus able to obtain, following the premature death of Campbell-Bannerman in 1908, also the control of Downing Street. When Asquith revealed all his inadequacies as supreme war leader and in dealing with the Irish question, Milner and his Unionists allies did not hesitate to replace him, in December 1916, with Lloyd George, at the price of the irreparable split of the glorious Liberal Party into two rival camps, and its final disappearance from the British political scene as a major actor, opening thus the way to the unchallenged hegemony of the Conservative party for more than two decades.²⁴

Since the forced abandonment in July 1905 by Joseph Chamberlain of the leadership of the Tariff Reform Movement—which controlled the majority of Unionist MPs—Milner became the intellectual and political leader of a transversal 'imperial party' which was able to force, at times of crisis, changes to British home, Imperial and foreign policies which were coherent with the defence of British vital and strategic interests. Milner's detachment from Unionist party politics—being able however to command the majority of its MPs—gave him a special role in influencing the decisions of its successive leaders—Balfour and Bonar Law—and also allowed him to negotiate with the Liberals on specific agendas. In this respect, Milner's responsibilities were larger than those of a single man. Milnerism was the dominant ideology of the late Edwardian era, which strongly influenced the British political inner-circle, not just on Imperial and foreign policies. It was Milnerism which 'invented', to a large extent, the 'German threat' in South Africa and in Continental Europe, in order to

²⁴ John Wilson, *CB: A Life of Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman* (London: Constable, 1973), 426 34, 442; G. A. Farrer, *England under Edward VII* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922), 237 45; Sir Maurice Frederick, *Haldane 1856 1915: The Life of Viscount Haldane of Cloan* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), 154; Peter Fraser, *Lord Esher: A Political Biography* (London: Hart Davis, 1973), 426; Michael Waterhouse, *Edwardian Requiem: A Life of Sir Edward Grey* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2013); Roy Jenkins *Asquith: Portrait of a Man and an Era* (London: Collins, 1978), 145 146, 154; Keith M. Wilson, *The Policy of the Entente; Essays on the Determinants of British Foreign Policy, 1904 14* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 20, 23; David Dutton, *The History of the Liberal Party in the Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 15 16; John Grigg, *Lloyd George: The People's Champion, 1902 1911* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 83 88; Michael Bentley, *Politics Without Democracy: 1815 1914* (London: Fontana, 1984), 321 322; Robert Rhodes James, *Rosebery* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995), 451.

foster the closer political union of the Empire, and to maintain Ireland under British rule. Once the external menace disappeared after World War I, the Dominions gained full control of their national sovereignty, Great Britain lost Ireland, and had to acquiesce to the process of Indian independence.

The strategic choice by Milner and his disciples to favour the Tsar, rather than the King's cousin, in the creation of a Balkan sphere of influence, revealed itself to be disastrous for the Empire and for Europe. In 1910 Germany was a competitor—even though antagonistic and determined to acquire the status of world power—but not yet an enemy. It was transformed into an enemy, in ideological terms, by Milner and his disciples. In order to stand, Empires feed themselves with wars.

That the Great War could have been avoided is a thesis suggested by a part of the historiography, in the evergreen debate about the origins of the conflict. As in South Africa, which was about the strategic issue of eventual German supremacy south of the Zambezi river, so in the Balkans, Great Britain decided to directly intervene in a conflict aiming to contain the rise of Germany to the status of a great power of global dimensions. British support for the hegemonic ambitions of Russia in the Balkans—in exchange for the inviolability of the Straits and of the Asian borders of the Empire—was the fundamental strategic decision that forever deprived Great Britain of the immense advantage of her insular position. The decision to set up the Expeditionary Force, and to put it at the service of France—and not of India, as originally announced—in a possible war between France and Germany, without declaring in advance the determination to defend the neutrality of Belgium, closed permanently the circle around Germany, making war almost inevitable. In these major choices, the influence of Milner behind the scenes runs from beginning to end.²⁵

²⁵ On the debate on the origins of World War I, see: Luigi Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953); H. W. Koch, *The Origins of the First World War: Great Powers Rivalry and German War Aims* (London: Macmillan, 1984); Steven E. Miller, Sean M. Lynn Jones and Stephen Van Evera eds., *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Samuel R. Williamson Jr., *Austria Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* (London: Macmillan, 1991); Niall Ferguson, "Germany and the Origins of the First World War: New Perspectives," *The Historical Journal*, 35, 3, (Sept. 1992): 725–52; M. B. Hayne, *The French Foreign Office and the Origins of the First World War, 1898–1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1993); Joachim Remak, *The Origins of World War I, 1871–1914* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace, 1995); Laurence Lafore, *The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I* (Waveland, MS:

Without the creation of an 'external threat', the attempt to bring about the political union of the Empire would have been doomed to failure. In order to survive, the Empire desperately needed the Hun, the opposed, in ideological, political, and economic terms. Without an 'external threat' the Empire would possibly have disintegrated before 1914, and the United Kingdom might have been precipitated into a civil war in order to prevent the secession of Ireland. The creation of the 'external enemy' was certainly not the only cause which generated World War I, but in Weberian terms it could be considered as the 'adequate cause', namely the cause without which the course of events would have been different. The arsenal provided by the joint action of *The Times*, *The Observer*, Oxford and London academic institutions, the Rhodes Trust, a number of imperialist organizations, and King Edward's entourage, gave Milner a tremendous fire-power which—as shown during the July 1914 Irish crisis—made the difference. Milner's most formidable weapon was however represented by his young men.

Educated at Oxford, and assembled in South Africa after 1904 with the task of rebuilding the social and political fabric wounded by the war, the future members of the Round Table all came, with few exceptions, from the British aristocracy and the Anglican Church. Back in London in the summer of 1909 after having accomplished—without the direct involvement of their master—the Milnerian design of the political union

1997); Ruth Henig, *The Origins of the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2001); Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig eds., *The Origins of World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Zara S. Steiner and Keith Nelson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* (London: Macmillan, 2003); Annika Mombauer, *Helmuth von Moltke and the Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Gordon Martel, *Origins of the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2008); Roger Parkinson, *The Late Victorian Navy: The Pre Dreadnought Era and the Origins of the First World War* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008); John Charmley, *Splendid Isolation?: Britain, the Balance of Power and the Origins of the First World War* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009); William Mulligan, *The Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Günter Bischof, Ferdinand Karlhofer, and Samuel R. Williamson Jr, *1914: Austria Hungary, the Origins, and the First Year of World War I* (New Orleans, LA: University of New Orleans Press, 2014); Geoffrey Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe: The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Habsburg Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez eds., *The Outbreak of the First World War: Structure, Politics, and Decision Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus* (London: Routledge, 2015).

of the four South African former colonies—Transvaal, Orange River, Cape and Natal—the young men of the so-called Milner’s Kindergarten founded the movement in the Welsh country house of Lord Anglesey, in the autumn of that year. In the space of five years, the movement became, according to Lloyd George “a very powerful combination—in its own way perhaps the most powerful in the country.” The passage of Lloyd George from number 11 to number 10 Downing Street in December 1916 owed much in fact to Milner and his Kindergarten, so that two of its members, Kerr and Waldorf Astor, followed him as his private secretaries. Lloyd George could then witness how each member of the Kindergarten brought “to its deliberations certain definite and important qualities,” and behind the scenes they had “much power and influence.” This was a judgement shared by the *New York Times*, which, following Kerr’s early resignation as Lloyd George’s Private Secretary in 1921, identified in Kerr and his associates the real ‘power behind the throne’.²⁶

From 1916 to 1919 the Round Table played a direct and crucial influence—through Milner, Arthur Balfour, Robert Cecil, H. A. L. Fisher, and Arthur Steel-Maitland within the Cabinet; with Kerr as Lloyd George’s main foreign policy adviser; and with Curtis as leader of the movement—on domestic and Imperial affairs. Their attempts to apply the federal principle to the solution of the Irish question and to reform Imperial relations failed, however, in spite of the fact of having reached the centre of power in London, and having as ‘associates’ Jan Smuts, Robert Borden, William Hughes, and William Massey as prime ministers in South Africa, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

On 16 April 1917 the Imperial War Conference passed Resolution IX, advocating a “readjustment” of Imperial relations at the end of the war, “based on the full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth and of India as an important portion of the same,” and the preservation of “all existing powers of self-government and complete control of domestic affairs.” The Dominions and India should have “an adequate voice in foreign policy and in foreign relations,” and “effective arrangements for continuous consultation in all important matters of common Imperial concern,” should be made along with “necessary concerted action founded on consultation.”²⁷

Resolution IX represented in fact a mortal blow to the Kindergarten’s hopes, ruling out forever the federal solution for the Empire, in spite of the

²⁶ S. Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets* (London: 1970), vol. 1, 422 3; *New York Times*, 24 March 1921.

²⁷ Halperin, *Milner*, 157 62; Geoffrey Dawson, *The Development of Dominion Status, 1900 1936* (London: 1937), 175; Amery, *My Political Life*, vol. 2, 107.

fact that during the war the Empire had been in fact transformed—with the creation of the Imperial War Conference and Cabinet—into a quasi-federation. It was not just a coincidence that ten days earlier the United States had entered into the European conflict, moving the world's centre of gravity from the Channel into the Atlantic. This was a decision which would have for the British Empire major strategic consequences, particularly for Canada and South Africa. As the war had shown, Great Britain had lost her capacity to lead alone successfully a Continental coalition of forces able to defeat the hegemonic ambitions of the strongest Continental power, and had also lost for ever her insularity, before the coming into operation of the combination of naval and air power. As soon as the 'European' war transformed itself into a 'world' one, the Empire disintegrated.

The end of the Round Table's federal hopes came, however, from fire behind. The irony is that Resolution IX was based on a bipartisan petition advocating a change in Imperial relationships, which the Canadian Round Table sponsored, and which collected more than a thousand signatures. Canada, in fact, had been the crux of the whole Imperial question, and of the Round Table movement. Canadians seemed to reject the extremes of secession and Imperial federation, favouring a less constraining middle ground. The Round Table's federal ambitions appeared to Eddy and Schreuder as a "grand ballet of incomprehension with their chosen collaborators in the Dominions," doomed to failure, and "as hopeless as the earlier British mercantile Imperial attempts to forge a north-west passage through winter ice."²⁸

Abandoning the Imperial federal scheme, the Round Table turned to fostering the processes of Indian and Irish self-government—offering a fundamental contribution—allowing Great Britain to throw, at the critical moment, on the balance of world power the weight of a new Dominion of three and half hundred million inhabitants, and defusing, at the same time, the threat of a 'betrayal behind'. An independent and neutral Ireland would have in fact put at risk—as happened during the Second World War—the security of the Welsh and English coasts.

Although none of the leaders of the Round Table were really convinced of being able to achieve the federation of the Empire—except perhaps Curtis, but no later than 16 April 1917—the Round Table in fact worked to maintain a certain degree of *co-operation* between Great Britain and its Dominions, by then completely independent. In order to preserve

²⁸ Kendle, *Round Table*, 192; J. Eddy and D. Schreuder, *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism: Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa First Assert their Nationalities, 1880 1914* (Sydney: 1988), 51, 45.

this strategic collaboration—aimed at upholding the international role of Great Britain as a superpower—the Round Table promoted ‘progressive’ policies in India, Ireland, and Palestine. With the consequent partitions—India and Pakistan, Ulster and the Republic, Israel and Palestine—these policies were the harbinger of civil wars. In order to keep in place some form of post-imperial collaboration, and to be consistent with the ideals of a world to be rebuilt on the “fundamental principles which lie at the heart of Anglo-Saxon civilization”—the construction of the Augustinian *civitas Dei*, in the quite earthly Curtis’s version—the Round Table stamped its permanent seal on a process of decolonization that had tragic results. Since, however, the Round Tablers placed themselves in the perspective of the universal, they assumed that those immediate results were not what mattered most.²⁹

Created in an effort to halt the decline of an Empire which had reached its apogee, and representing the most advanced and well organized expression of British nationalism, the Round Table with its actions produced precisely the opposite results on all fronts, by accelerating the break-up of the Empire and demonstrating how the federalist culture is the exact opposite to the nationalist one. In trying to reconcile opposites—Empire and federation—the Round Table in fact witnessed and to some extent produced the Empire’s crucifixion. And it was just the application of federalist schemes to former colonies which served to speed up its break-up. In the beginning, opposites attract each other, but in the end they exclude themselves each in turn. Hence the widespread phobia for federalism in Great Britain today.

Once this contradiction exploded, there remained however on the field—over the rubble of the Empire, and of the Irish and Indian civil wars—a political culture which nurtured both the European federalist movements—with the birth of the Federal Union, with the federalist conversion of Altiero Spinelli, and with the action of Jean Monnet—and the Atlantic federalist movement, with the long loyalty to the cause by Clarence Streit.³⁰

²⁹ Deborah Lavin, “Morals and the Politics of the Empire: Lionel Curtis and the Round Table,” in *Essays Presented to Michael Roberts*, John Bossey and Peter Juppe eds. (Belfast: 1976); id., “Lionel Curtis and the Idea of Commonwealth,” in *Oxford and the Idea*, Madden and Fieldhouse; id., *From Empire to Commonwealth: A Biography of Lionel Curtis* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).

³⁰ The influence of the Round Table and the Federal Union on Spinelli, Monnet, and Streit is discussed in Andrea Bosco, *June 1940, Great Britain and the First Attempt to Build a European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016).

It was World War I that brought about a profound transformation of their consciences. Veneration for Milner prevented the Kindergarten from fully understanding the game in which they had been skilfully encapsulated—for the fierce anti-German campaign carried out by the magazine of the movement, and *The Times*, which fell under their control, between 1910 and 1914—until the end of the Great War. Kerr, the most intelligent and sensitive member of the group, brought by Milner himself to become the closest collaborator of Lloyd George, was the first to become aware of Milner's manipulating skills: Kerr developed during the 1919 Paris Peace Conference a sense of guilt towards Germany, which inspired the *Memorandum of Fontainebleau* and the subsequent policy of appeasement.

Aware that the Great War had been an unnecessary carnage, in which he lost his brother David, Kerr—become in the meantime Lord Lothian—made of his desperate attempt to prevent the Second World War a personal matter, bringing into play all the extraordinary fire-power accumulated meanwhile by the movement. In the implementation of a policy diametrically opposed to that of Milner, appeasement, Lothian actually contributed to the establishment of Hitler's supremacy in Central and Eastern Europe, exactly what Milner and the Liberal League had denied to the King's cousin. It is interesting to note how the architects of these diametrically opposed policies towards Germany belonged to the same organization, and how those policies were in any case unable to prevent the outbreak of two world wars. Indeed, they accelerated the drift towards the catastrophe. At different historical moments, but in the same context, the Round Table had strong ideological reasons for adopting opposite policies, which were the major causes of two world wars. If Milner failed, Lothian at the end succeeded, using Germany for other purposes.

Both Milner and Lothian were 'tragic figures', being both of them a tragic combination of success and failure. If Milner was a patriot—who, for a curious 'heterogenesis of the purposes', bears the major responsibility for the crucifixion of the Empire—Lothian, on the other hand, laid down the foundations of the 'Atlantic order' as we know it, contributing to the resurrection of the 'First British Empire'—or the Empire as such before the "Intolerable Acts" of 1774—under a new supranational, not yet federal form, at the price, however, of appeasing Hitler. Once again, Germany had been used—this time meeting all her territorial and strategic claims—to rally the Anglo-Saxon democracies against a renewed 'external threat'.

If one accepts Zimmern's periodization of a 'First British Empire' ending in July 1776 with the Declaration of Independence by the former

thirteen American colonies; of a 'Second' Empire ending at the Paris Peace Conference, recognizing an independent diplomatic representation to each Dominion; and of a 'Third' Empire expressed by the Statute of Westminster, then it is possible to identify in Resolution IX a unilateral declaration of independence by the Dominions in matters of foreign and military policies. April 1917 bears therefore a specular historical significance comparable to September 1774, with the creation of the First Continental Congress. Both dates marked turning points in the history of the British Empire, which since then evolved into a new political and constitutional form. If the collapse of the 'First' Empire was the consequence of a war of independence, the fall of the 'Second' Empire was the result of a war waged just to attain its political and economic cohesion. In both cases, the thirteen former American colonies played a crucial role.³¹

The study of the Round Table brings us in fact to the central question of the first half of the Twentieth century, the Anglo-German rivalry, which resulted in two world wars because of the weakness of the British Empire. If in the Nineteenth century after the end of the Napoleonic Wars Britain was successful, from an isolationist position, at preventing the spread of the various European wars of regional character into a general conflict, during the Twentieth century Great Britain twice failed in the task, losing her insularity in continental alliances. She prevailed over Germany only thanks to the intervention of the Dominions, India, and her thirteen former colonies on the other side of the Atlantic.

The negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference persuaded Kerr and Curtis that the British Empire, even a reformed Empire, was no longer able to guarantee, by itself, international stability. The centre of gravity of world power had already shifted from the Channel to the Atlantic—reflecting on the political scale a process which on the economic and financial scales had already manifested itself since the beginning of the Twentieth century. But in the United States there did not then exist the subjective conditions for their association to the direction of world politics. Kerr and Curtis felt that they had to prepare the transition from an Anglo-French to an Anglo-American dyarchy in the management of world power. The Anglo-French dyarchy, which had constituted the centre of gravity of international relations since the Italian and German unifications, appeared no longer able to guarantee a peaceful revision of the *status-quo* established by the treaties, and thus to prevent a regional conflict from spreading worldwide.

³¹ Alfred Zimmern, *The Third British Empire* (London: 1926).

The entrance of the United States into the forefront of world power politics had permanently changed the world's balance of power, which now required a direct and perpetual association of the United States in the maintenance of the world's economic and political stability. The Round Table thus envisaged a re-establishment in the Twentieth century, with American support, of the political and economic conditions of the Nineteenth, during which, after Trafalgar, Great Britain gained an unchallenged world hegemony both militarily (with the Royal Navy), in the economic and financial system (with the sterling gold standard and the centrality of the City of London), and at the political level (with the joint action of the Foreign Office and intelligence). This supremacy, which is known as *Pax Britannica*, lasted almost a century, and gave the world the longest period of truce in history after the fall of the Roman Empire, a period which saw—according to the Round Table—the most spectacular jump of Western civilization in all its forms, particularly in the field of scientific and technological discoveries, but also in ever growing standards of quality of life.

Aware of the fact that the United States lacked a foreign policy élite able to carry out new American global responsibilities, the Round Table created in Paris, in May 1919, in collaboration with members of the 'Inquiry'—a group of young academics and business leaders led by Walter Lippmann, which gathered in the winter of 1917-18 in New York and in Paris during the Peace Conference to advise President Wilson on the post-war settlement—the nucleus of two organizations which were to play, from then on, a central role in the process of formation of British and American foreign policies: the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, and the Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

On the initiative of Curtis, the Round Table achieved "the strategic object" of the strengthening of Anglo-American relations—in spite of the fact that they were strained—"with a necessary tactical change," namely with the creation of an 'institutionalized' and coordinated élite, responsible for the process of formation of foreign policy on both sides of the Atlantic. That tactical change was necessitated by the fact that the Round Table had entered since 1917 into an irreversible crisis, and that the leading figures of the movement had been involved, during and after the war, in professions that did not allow them a more active engagement in the movement.³²

³² Curtis to Lothian, 6 Dec. 1936, quoted in Andrea Bosco ed., *Two Musketeers for the Empire. The Lionel Curtis Philip Kerr Correspondence, 1909 1940* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1997), 150 1.

The political philosophy put forward by those very active groups of British ‘liberal imperialists’, as well as by American Wilsonian intellectuals, financial operators and academics, was based on the assumption that the involvement of the United States in the direction of world politics marked the beginning of an historical process, defined by Kerr as “the integration of the English-speaking world... a much larger idea” than the Imperial one. If in 1920 Kerr identified in the “larger idea of a union of self-governing communities” the foundations of the American Federation and the British Empire, in 1927 he believed that this “much larger idea” had by then entered into “the realm of practical possibilities.” The dream of Rhodes, to permanently recover to Great Britain the thirteen rebel former colonies, was about to become true. From then on Curtis and Kerr played the major role, on the British side, in that recovery.³³

On the other side of the Atlantic, the Round Table could rely upon the *New Republic*, a journal founded in 1914 by Willard and Dorothy Straight—an American couple active in progressive circles—which played a significant role in supporting the entry of the United States into the European conflict. Straight shared with Kerr a total endorsement of Admiral Alfred Mahan’s strategic doctrine on sea power, considering the survival of the Royal Navy of fundamental importance for American security, and persuaded an initially reluctant Lippmann, editor of the journal, to openly support the case for American belligerency. From early 1915 Lippmann advocated American policies favouring the Allies, a fair peace settlement, and the definitive abandonment of American isolationism. The United States were, according to Lippmann, an integral part of an “Atlantic community,” and American war aims should have been for “a union of liberal peoples pledged to cooperate in the settlement of all outstanding questions, sworn to turn against aggressor, determined to erect a larger and more modern system of international law upon a federation of the world.”³⁴

³³ Kerr to E. Lascelles, 24 Dec. 1920, LP, 214, 124 26; Kerr to Curtis, 26 May 1927, LP, 227, 155 8. On the Rhodes Trust, see Frank Aydelotte, *The Vision of Cecil Rhodes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946); Thomas J. Schaeper and Kathleen Schaeper, *Rhodes Scholars, Oxford, and the Creation of an American Elite* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998); Anthony Kenny, *The History of the Rhodes Trust, 1902 1999* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Philip Ziegler, *Legacy: Cecil Rhodes, the Rhodes Trust and Rhodes Scholarships* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

³⁴ Priscilla Roberts, “Willard D. Straight and the Diplomacy of International Finance During the First World War,” *Business History*, 40, 3, (July 1998): 16 47; Lippmann to Graham Wallas, 21 April 1916, quoted in John Mortin Blum ed.,

If Wilson was the exponent of American support for a theoretical liberal world order based on respect for international law and morality, Theodore Roosevelt was the leading exponent of an 'Atlantic system', "heightened," according to Priscilla Roberts, "for many patrician Americans," and aimed at maintaining "social and political dominance over the tide of non-Protestant immigrants from southern and eastern Europe," and to force the newcomers "to accept old-stock values and norms." Before 1914, however, supporters of a more active and direct involvement of the United States in European affairs were, among the Democrats, limited to Theodore Roosevelt's entourage, represented by John Hay, Elihu Root—to become President of the Council on Foreign Relations—Henry Cabot Lodge, Brooks Adams, and Mahan.³⁵

Republican Atlanticists included Henry L. Stimson, Frederic R. Coudert, and George W. Wickerham. Among the Democrats the most prominent were, from 1914, Colonel Edward M. House, Robert A. Lansing—Wilson's Secretary of State—Walter Page—American Ambassador in London—Franklin D. Roosevelt—Assistant Secretary to the Navy—Norman Davis—Assistant Secretary to the Treasury—Frank L. Polk—Assistant Secretary of State—and John W. Davis, the Solicitor General. Within Wall Street, J. P. Morgan and Company played a leading role in raising substantial financial assistance to the Allies before American intervention. J.P. Morgan Jr., Henry P. Davison, Thomas W. Lamont, Dwight W. Morrow, Willard Straight, Russell C. Leffingwell, and Benjamin Strong—the first Governor of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York—had in Cliveden, the Buckinghamshire country house of the Astors, a venue for social entertainment and conferences with Round Tablers during their frequent business trips to England. Davis, Polk, and

Public Philosopher: Selected Letters of Walter Lippmann (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1984), 46; Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1980), 67–73.

³⁵ Roberts, *Lord Lothian and Anglo American*, 33–4. On the East Coast attitude in the United States towards immigrants, see Desmond King, *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of the Diverse Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). On Roosevelt's entourage, see Richard H. Collin, *Theodore Roosevelt, Culture, Diplomacy and Expansion: A New View of American Imperialism* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1985); Kenton J. Clymer, *John Hay: The Gentleman as Diplomat* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975); William C. Widenor, *Henry Cabot Lodge and the Search for an American Foreign Policy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980); Richard W. Leopold, *Elihu Root and the Conservative Tradition* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1954).

Paul D. Cravath of the Treasury and State Departments were also able to benefit from the Astors' hospitality.³⁶

The Twentieth appears as a century divided exactly in half. If the first half had been marked by two world wars, which put an end to European hegemony in international politics, its second half was characterized by a long period of truce, during which no regional conflict spread, and directly involved the super-powers. It is plausible then to identify in the signing of the Atlantic Charter, in August 1941, the real watershed of the Twentieth century. If it were a simple military-economic agreement—the United States had already openly deployed alongside Britain in the fight against Nazism—it would have been exhausted with the collapse of Germany. If instead it were an alliance to contain the Bolshevik threat, it would have disappeared with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Since 1991, the policy of Atlantic union has instead extended to include an increasing number of States, and has been reinforced, including a common army, integrated economic and financial institutions, and a market on the threshold of acquiring common rules. The signing of the Atlantic Charter initiated, around the Anglo-American nucleus, an apparently unstoppable process of economic and political integration among States which over the four previous centuries had permanently resorted to war in order to resolve conflicts among themselves, which the simple means of diplomacy were not able to prevent. It brought about the enlargement of the sphere of influence of the English-speaking countries on world economics and politics alike.³⁷

The Atlantic Alliance rather than representing the passing of the torch—whose delay cost Europe and the world two global conflicts—marked the continuity, the enlargement, and the deepening of Anglo-

³⁶ For a debate, see Godfrey Hodgson, *The Colonel: The Life and Wars of Henry Stimson, 1867 1950* (New York: Knopf, 1990); Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Nicholas J. Cull, "Selling Peace: The Origins, Promotion and Fate of the Anglo American New Order During World War II," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 7, 1, (March 1996): 1 15; Priscilla Roberts, "The Anglo American Theme: American Visions of an Atlantic Alliance, 1914 1933," *Diplomatic History*, 21, 3, (1997): 333 64; Willaim N. Tilchin, *Theodore Roosevelt and the British Empire: A Study in Presidential Statecraft* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1997); Ross A. Kennedy, *The Will to Believe: Woodrow Wilson, World War I, and America Strategy for Peace and Security* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2009).

³⁷ For a discussion of recent developments of the Atlantic Alliance, see Ennio Di Nolfo, *Il mondo atlantico e la globalizzazione. Europa e Stati Uniti: storia, economia e politica* (Segrate: Mondadori, 2014).

Saxon hegemony in world politics. Such hegemony has since the Seventeenth century been able to prevent the unification of Continental Europe by means of violence by the strongest continental power—Spain of Charles V and Philip II, France of Louis XIV and Napoleon I, Germany of Wilhelm II and Hitler, and Russia of Stalin and Brezhnev. It encouraged, on the contrary, Europe's economic and political unification through peaceful and constitutional means with the building of supranational institutions.³⁸

According to this perspective, we did not have therefore a 'British century'—the Nineteenth—and an 'American century'—the Twentieth—but four centuries of Anglo-Saxon supremacy. During this time we witnessed the affirmation of the national principle—an expression of the Continental political tradition—and its overcoming through its opposite, the federal principle, an expression of the insular political tradition. The Round Table was the first political movement which had full awareness that the Great War had opened up a supranational phase in human history, and that this historical novelty was governable with the instruments of democracy, but only through the gradual transfer of portions of sovereignty from the old nation-states to a new supranational institution. The English-speaking peoples could lead that process—thus creating the first nucleus of aggregation—because they invented federal government and were the first to experience its application, and because they shared the same fundamental moral, political, and economic values.

Anglo-Saxon historiography has failed yet to grasp the deep meaning of the Round Table's political action, because it has studied it from a national or post-imperial perspective. To the pioneering work of Walter Nimocks in the early seventies has been added the fundamental work by John Kendle, who also studied the federalist debate in the United Kingdom in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, as well as the Irish question. Michael Burgess then deepened Kendle's contribution, offering a scholarly exhaustive survey of the Imperial Federation League and the British federalist tradition, particularly during the Nineteenth century. Very valuable has been the contribution by Alex May, offered both through his doctoral thesis and as co-editor of the proceedings of a major

³⁸ Erich Marcks predicted in the early 1920s that the outcome of WWI would bring about "Anglo Saxon world domination", since counterweights were "hardly discernible". An Anglo American convergence of interests would have also produced appeasement towards Germany, Erich Marcks, *Englands Machtpolitik. Vorträge und Studien* (Berlin: 1940), 182.

conference dedicated to the Round Table and sponsored by the Lothian Foundation in 1996.³⁹

Carroll Quigley was the first to grasp the historical meaning of the Round Table's contribution to the building of an Anglo-American 'establishment', but the highly unscholarly character of his study strongly undermined its value, as has been true of the recent work by Quigley's follower, John P. Cafferky. Inspired by Quigley's intuition is also the work by Kees van der Pijl, who applied to the Round Table a neo-Gramscian paradigm, identifying in the Kindergarten the inner circle of Britain's ruling class, until it was replaced in the 1950s by the corporatist liberal Nuffield group.⁴⁰

The most comprehensive and valuable study on the contribution by Curtis to the movement and to Chatham House is that of Deborah Lavin, but there are still aspects of the figure and work of Curtis to highlight. Conversely, historical debate on the controversial figure of Kerr has been greatly enhanced—particularly by the contributions of David Reynolds, John Turner, Stefan Schieren, David P. Billington Jr., and Priscilla Roberts—since the publication of the 'official' biography by James Butler at the beginning of the sixties. With the publication of *The Larger Idea*—being the proceedings of the Lothian Colloquium, held at Bedford College, London, in November 1882, on the centenary of Lothian's birth—John Turner significantly contributed to the re-definition of Lothian's status in history, bringing to light the underlying cultural and political continuity of the British Empire with the Atlantic order. The publication by the Lothian Foundation of the Kerr-Curtis, and Kerr-Lloyd George correspondence, also contributed to this revival.⁴¹

³⁹ Walter Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men. The "Kindergarten" in Edwardian Imperial Affairs* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970); Kandle, *The Round Table*; id., *Federal Britain* (London: Routledge, 1997); id., *Ireland and the Federal Solution*; Michael Burgess, *The British Tradition of Federalism* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995); Andrea Bosco and Alex May eds., *The Round Table, the Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1997).

⁴⁰ Carroll Quigley, *The Anglo American Establishment* (San Pedro, CA: GSG, 1981); John Cafferky, *Lord Milner's Second War. The Rhodes Milner Secret Society, the Origin of World War I and the Start of the New World Order* (Lexington, KY: 2013); Kees van der Pijl, *Transnational Classes and International Relations* (London: Routledge, 1998).

⁴¹ John Turner, *Lloyd George's Secretariat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); David Reynolds, "Lord Lothian and Anglo American Relations, 1939 1940," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 73, Part 2, (1983); Stefan Schieren, *Von Weltreich zum Weltstaat. Philip Kerr/Lord Lothian*

This study will end with the creation, during the Peace Conference of 1919, of the Institute of International Affairs. From that moment, the Round Table in fact ceased to be a movement organised on a territorial basis, to become, through Chatham House precisely, an elitist movement for the organization of consent through a well-defined and experienced methodology, which will be the object of the next study. In this, the documentary excavation has mainly concentrated on the National Archives of Scotland in Edinburgh (on the Lothian Papers), and at the Bodleian Library in Oxford (on the Curtis Papers, the Round Table Papers, the Milner Papers, the Murray Papers, the Grigg Papers, the Bryce Papers, the Zimmern Papers, the Dover Wilson Papers, the Selborne Papers, the Dawson Papers, the Brand Papers, the Maud Selborne Papers, and the Toynbee Papers). At the National Archives in Kew there have been consulted the Imperial War Cabinet Papers, the War Cabinet Papers, the Cabinet Papers, the Colonial Office Papers, and the Foreign Office Papers.

The survey has been carried out also with consultation of the Meston Papers, the Montagu Papers, the Curzon Papers, the Chelmsford Papers, the Mansbridge Papers, the Northcliffe Papers, the Cecil Papers, and the Imperial Federation League Archive at the British Library in London; the Chatham House Papers at the Chatham House Archive in London; the Seton-Watson Papers at the School of Slavonic Studies, University of London; the Royal Commonwealth Society Papers at the Cambridge University Library; the Strachey Papers and the Lloyd George Papers at the Parliamentary Archives in London; the Montagu Papers at Trinity College, Cambridge; the Walker Papers, the Massey Papers and the Wrong Papers at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto; the Milner Fond at the National Archives of Canada, Ottawa; the Ridley Papers at the Northumberland Archives, Ashington; the Deakin Papers at the Australian National Library, Canberra; the Macadam Papers at the London School of Economics and Political Science; the Sea Cadet Association Papers in London; the Nancy Astor Papers at the University of Reading Library; the Jebb Papers at the Institute of Commonwealth

Weg vom Imperialisten zum Internationalisten, 1905 1925 (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1995); David Billington Jr., *Lothian: Philip Kerr and the Quest for World Order* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006); Priscilla Roberts, *Lord Lothian and Anglo American Relations, 1900 1940* (Danvers, MA: Dordrecht, 2010); James Ramsay Butler, *Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr), 1882 1940* (London: 1960); Bosco, *Two Musketeers for the Empire*; id., *Adviser to the Prince. The Philip Kerr (Lord Lothian) David Lloyd George Correspondence 1917 1940* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1997); John Turner ed., *The Larger Idea. Lord Lothian and the Problem of National Sovereignty* (London: The Historians' Press, 1988).

Studies in London; and the Headlam-Morley Papers at the Churchill Archive Centre in Cambridge.

My debt of gratitude goes first to Luigi Vittorio Majocchi, to whom this study is dedicated, for having introduced me to the thought of Mario Albertini, who laid the theoretical foundations for the socio-historical paradigm developed in this work.⁴²

Let me express profound gratitude also to Professor Giulio Guderzo, founder of the ‘Pavia school’, which studied the historical-social aspect of the federal idea—i.e. the bipolarity between the sense of belonging to a local and world community—and promoted the systematic investigation of the movements for European unification, placing at the centre of historiographic research the study of the subjective factor in the building of the European supranational institutions, thus reversing the dominant paradigm which, by contrast, places on governments the absolute primacy in the creation of the European Union.⁴³

A special obligation is also due to John Kendle, for his sharp criticism on an early version of this study, largely based on his comprehensive research on the Round Table and the British federalist tradition. A particular mention should be made to the memory of John Pinder and the Hon. David Astor, whose teachings, encouragement and, last but not least, financial assistance, had been of vital importance in the establishment of the Lothian Foundation, and the development of historical research on the British federalist tradition. Particularly dear to me is also the memory of Sir Charles Kimber, founder with two other young men in early 1939 of the Federal Union Movement, archetype of all subsequent federalist movements for European and Atlantic unification. Our long conversations, over the years, at his cottage on the shores of the Thames in Oxfordshire, offered me an invaluable opportunity of attaining a more definite insight into Curtis’s multiform, magnetic, and complex personality.

This study much benefited from Tiziana Stella’s pioneering investigation on the intellectual origins of the thought of Clarence Streit, from Joseph P.

⁴² Luigi Vittorio Majocchi, *La difficile costruzione dell’unità europea* (Milano: Jaca Book, 1996); Mario Albertini, *Tutti gli scritti*, 9 vols. (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006 10).

⁴³ See the proceedings of a number of conferences on the theme: Sergio Pistone, *I movimenti per l’unità europea, 1945 1954* (Milano: Jaca Book, 1992); id., *I movimenti per l’unità europea, 1954 1969* (Pavia: Pime, 1996); Ariane Landuyt e Daniela Preda, *I movimenti per l’unità europea, 1970 1986*, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000); Paolo Caraffini, *Costruire l’Europa dal basso. Il ruolo del Consiglio italiano del movimento europeo (1948 1985)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005); Bosco, *Federal Union e l’unione franco britannica*.

Baratta's masterly account of the world federalist tradition, and from Ira Straus' study on the Atlantic federalist tradition.⁴⁵

Among the many colleagues and friends who have significantly contributed to the improvement of this study, I have first to mention Joseph P. Baratta, Alex May—present Secretary of the Round Table—Eric Goldstein, Stefan Schieren, George Egerton, and Jacob Ray Crawford for their most valuable criticism. Max Guderzo raised comments on an early draft of this work, which much contributed to its improvement, leaving however just to myself the full responsibility for the outcome. To Nicholas Hall goes my recognition for having carefully revised this text for publication.

Let me express, finally, my thankfulness to the many scholars, not mentioned here, who have devoted much energy to the study of the Round Table, Chatham House and the Atlantic tradition, providing an enormous amount of information and ideas which much contributed to the shaping of this work. What the work of those colleagues brought into the public domain has however been studied from the perspective of the nation-state—the British nation, the former Dominions and Indian nationalism, and inter-national relations—whereas the perspective of this work is supranational. It traces the emergence of the supranational idea within the British Empire, with the formation of a political culture which first triumphed within the Anglo-Saxon world, and was then universally exported, becoming the interpretative criterion and guiding principle of the present supranational course of history.

Tris Klisies, Greece
Summer 2016

⁴⁵ Tiziana Stella, *Federalismo e atlantismo nella politica estera degli Stati Uniti. Il contributo di Clarence Streit* (PhD diss., University of Pavia, 1999); Joseph Preston Baratta, *Strengthening the United Nations: A Bibliography on U. N. Reform and World Federalism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1987); id., *The United Nations System: Meeting the World Constitutional Crisis* (Oxford: ABC CLIO, 1995); id., *The Politics of World Federation. United Nations: U. N. Reform, Atomic Control*, vol. 1 (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004); id., *The Politics of World Federation. From World Federation to Global Governance*, vol. 2, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004); Ira Straus, "Lothian and the Anglo American Problematic," in *The Larger Idea*, 124-36.

CHAPTER I

THE BRITISH FEDERALIST TRADITION, IRELAND, AND THE IMPERIAL FEDERATION LEAGUE

1. The question of sovereignty in the process of British unification

The debate over the nature of the British union arose at the beginning of the Seventeenth century, when James VI of Scotland became James I of England on the death of Elizabeth in 1603, opening the way to the integration of the kingdoms of Britain into a British kingdom. James's plan to proceed from a 'union of the Crowns' to a 'perfect union', with the unification of English and Scottish parliaments, legal systems, administrations and economies, did not however gain the immediate support of the ruling classes of the two countries, and produced a reflection on the implications of the union.¹

The question of equal representation for Scotland and England in a parliamentary union, while retaining their own parliaments, was first raised in 1604 by John Doddridge, MP for Horsham, Sussex, who suggested the creation of a common legislature only "for the generall causes which shall equallie concerne bothe people," having "great care and vigilancy" in the appointment of the representatives of each nation, "least the one exceede the other in number of sufferage or voice." Among the duties of the common Parliament there would have been, according to an anonymous pamphlet of the same year, the solution of conflicts between national parliaments.²

¹ Bruce Galloway, *The Union of England and Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1985); Brian Levack, *The Formation of the British State: England, Scotland and the Union: 1603 1707* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

² Bruce Galloway and Brian Levack eds., *The Jacobean Union: Six Tracts of 1604* (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1985), 146; Levack, *The Formation of the British State*, 48.

It was however only at the beginning of the Eighteenth century that debate over the nature of the union intensified and spread around the two kingdoms. With reference to ‘federal’ schemes the Scots aimed to protect their political, religious, educational and cultural autonomy from their incorporation in a hegemonic England. Interested mainly in economic union, which meant equality of trade and access to colonial markets, the Scots were prepared to accept limitations to their parliamentary sovereignty, but were determined to resist incorporation by the English, who could not conceive union on different terms: “I do not comprehend,” the Duke of Portland could write in 1706, three years after the Commissioners opened negotiations for the union, “the material benefit of a federal union, nor the means of arriving at it.”³

At the time, it was not yet known how federal government—first created with the American Constitution in 1789—would function, and reference to ‘federal’ schemes meant simply the application of loose confederal bonds, on the example of the Swiss Cantons before 1848, classical Greece or the Netherlands. An “incorporating union,” James Hodges wrote in 1703, would deprive the member kingdoms “of all capacity to contradict the governing power, to which they have effectually submitted all those their separate rights, without reserve.” On the contrary, in a

Federal Union...distinct, free, and independent kingdoms, dominions or States, do unite their separate interests into one common interest, for the mutual benefit of both, so far as relates to certain conditions and articles agreed upon betwixt them, retaining in the meantime their several independencies, national distinctions, and the different laws, customs and government of each.

For “Federal Union” Hodges did not mean a union “consisting barely in articles of Confederacy betwixt the two Kingdoms...but an Union of close nature,” with a common monarch. Such a federal union would allow the member kingdoms

to retain their National Distinction, to enjoy their particular liberties, privileges, and independency, and to hold their different governments in Church and State...except as to amendments agreed upon for rectifying innovations and abuses in the government on either side.⁴

³ William Ferguson, *Scotland's Relations with England. A Survey to 1707* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1977), 234.

⁴ James Hodges, *The Rights and Interest of the Two British Monarchies, Inquir'd into, and Clear'd: With a Special Respect to an United or Separate State, Treatise I and III* (London: 1703), 2 4, 6 7.

In presenting the choice between a union by incorporation and a federal union in abstract terms, without discussing the question of sovereignty and the constitutional functioning of a federation, Hodges did not merely expose the case of the Scots, keen to defend their national identity, but also introduced for the first time into the political debate a theoretical alternative to the unitarian State. It is interesting to note that the same fundamental alternative was in front of the delegates at the Philadelphia Convention in 1787, and that the American Constitution was just a compromise between two opposing parties, the supporters of a unitarian State on the European model on one side, and those defending a loose confederation on the other. This was a compromise which was not possible to achieve by the Scottish and English Commissioners charged to negotiate the nature of the union, for England was a major power in Eighteenth century Europe, while Scotland was a small power.

The question of sovereignty, if located—according to Sir Robert Filmer and Thomas Hobbes—in the absolute monarch, or—according to John Locke—in the parliament, was crucial for the outcome of the constitutional choice, which favoured the unitarian model. Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, Scottish Commissioner, reported, on this respect, that the choice between a federal or incorporating union was first discussed among the members of the Scottish Delegation, who dismissed the federal solution as “ridiculous and impracticable,” in spite of the fact that it was “favoured by the people of Scotland,” and they decided to give in to the English Commissioners, who “were positively resolved to treat on no kind of union with us but what was to be incorporating and perpetual.” Clerk was well aware of the fact that a “federal compact” would be “impracticable, or of very little use to us,” since the two nations were “accustomed to monarchical government,” and one was “much superior to the other in riches, numbers of people and an extended commerce.” The federal solution seemed at the end inadequate “to secure the peace of this island, or fortify it against the intrigues and invasions of its foreign enemies.”⁵

The advocates of a federal solution were well aware that Scotland—at the time with almost the same population of Middlesex, which was much

⁵ H. T. Dickinson, “The Eighteenth Century Debate on the Sovereignty of Parliament,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5 Series, 26, (1976): 189-210; John M. Gray ed., *Memoirs of Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, Baronet Baron of the Exchequer. Extracted by Himself from his own Journals 1676-1755*, vol. 13, (Edinburgh: Publications of the Scottish Historical Society, 1892), 60; Daniel Defoe, *The History of the Union Between England and Scotland* (London: 1786), 315.

richer and paid ten times more taxes than Scotland—would have suffered economically within a unitarian State. Andrew Fletcher—member of the Scottish Parliament and leading figure of the Scottish Country Party—pointed out that since it was “remote from the seat of the government,” Scotland would have been “made subservient” to the interests of England, which would have resulted in an “unjust subjection of one people to another.” With some reason, the Act of Union of 1707, giving the Scots a representation of 45 seats and the English 513 in the House of Commons, and 18 against 180 in the House of Lords, could be rather regarded as an act of annexation.⁶

The federal idea, first proposed by the Scots and decisively negated by the English, had some chances for success in the colonies, where the Westminster Parliament until the 1760s allowed advanced forms of self-government, based on the principle that the settlers had taken their rights with them when they emigrated, and that the exercise of those rights had become, over the years, a matter out of the control of Westminster. It was Parliament’s attempt to restore its indivisible sovereignty, and to claim the unitarian character of the Empire by raising taxes in the colonies for Imperial purposes, which opened the way for the federal idea to be realized. Citizens of the colonies rejected the British claim of parliamentary indivisible sovereignty, advocating the principle of ‘no taxation without representation’ both at the local level—largely already independent from Westminster’s control—and at the Imperial level, where responsibility lay for decisions affecting foreign, military and trade affairs.

The unwritten constitutional nature of the Empire was ‘federal’, in the sense that there existed a strong tradition of separation and distinctions of powers, to be exercised by governments autonomous in their own spheres of competence, local and imperial. It was a working practice of federalism—as Kendle has pointed out—not yet embodied in a written Constitution, and was the fruit of more than a century of Imperial economic, cultural, political and military relations between the centre and the periphery of the Empire. The system broke up in 1764 when the central authority, because of external pressure—the Jacobite threat and rising Anglo-French rivalry—refused to recognize the civil rights that the American colonists had taken with them when they emigrated, and that over the years had become customary and *de facto* accepted. Sovereignty, the Americans claimed, did not lie in the Imperial Parliament but in the

⁶ Andrew Fletcher, *An Account of a Conversation Concerning a Right Regulation of Governments for the Common Good of Mankind, December 1703*, in *Political Works* (London: 1732), 363–448.

citizen, and therefore had to be exercised by the citizen through representative institutions at all levels, local and imperial.⁷

The failure “to comprehend federalism,” Andrew C. McLaughlin argued, the denial of the “possibility of its existence” within a largely composite Empire, brought about a crisis “of an Imperial system in which federalism already existed.” Robert Tucker and David Hendrickson have rejected the view that the First British Empire “was neither federal in principle nor federal in practice,” but agree that it had “federal features” and was “federal in spirit.” In fact, before the invention at Philadelphia of the mechanism of the federal government, federalism was an idea of reason, abstract in essence, able to express the principle of the union of the whole in the diversity and autonomy of the component parts, and therefore could not exist in practice. The trend towards the centralization of powers was in accordance with the increasing intensification of power politics in Continental Europe. It was the need for British political and military intervention on the Continent, to restore the balance of power challenged by the French quest for hegemony, that prevented the British Empire from enjoying the advantage of its insularity and developing towards a federal union.⁸

Supporters of a Constitutional Imperial reform towards federal lines,

⁷ Kendle, *Federal Britain*; John V. Jezierski, “Parliament or People: James Wilson and Blackstone on the Nature and Location of Sovereignty,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 32, 1, (1971): 95 106; Dickinson, “The Eighteenth Century Debate,” 189 210; Barbara A. Black, “The Constitution of Empire: The Case for the Colonists,” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, 124, 5, (1976): 1157 1211; John Phillip Reid, “In Accordance with Usage: The Authority of Custom, the Stamp Act Debate and the Coming of the American Revolution,” *Fordham Law Review*, 45, (1976 7): 335 68; Jack Greene, “From the Perspective of Law: Context and Legitimacy in the Origins of the American Revolution,” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 85, 1, (1986): 56 77; C. F. Mullett, “Colonial Claims to Home Rule (1764 1775): An Essay in Imperial policy,” *University of Missouri Studies*, 2, 4, (1991): 1 31; Bernard Bailyn, “Sovereignty,” in *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 198 229; Jack Greene, *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States, 1607 1788* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986); Charles M. Andrews, “The Government of the Empire, 1660 1763,” in *History of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), vol. 1, 405 36; J. Ewing, “The Constitution and the Empire: From Bacon to Blackstone,” in *ibidem*, 603 33.

⁸ Andrew C. McLaughlin, “The Background of American Federalism,” *American Political Science Review*, 12, (1918): 215 40; Robert Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *The Fall of the First British Empire: Origins of the War of American Independence* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1982), 172 86.

such as Thomas Crowley and Joshua Steele, were isolated in the political debate. With the passage of the ‘Intolerable Acts’ the controversy reached a point of no return: “Fear of anarchy,” H. T. Dickinson pointed out, “and dread of civil war made the acceptance of parliamentary sovereignty appear to be a political necessity.” In the British political tradition the question of sovereignty was analysed and debated within the legitimacy of the monarch or the Parliament, in the context of the compromise of an evolving parliamentary monarchy. Sovereignty was conceived as indivisible and unlimited, and the only limitations to the political will were “those that the sovereign itself voluntarily chose to observe.”⁹

2. The creation of the federal government

Modern federalism was born in the course of the Philadelphia Convention, which ended in 1787 with the approval of the new Constitution of the United States of America, ratified the following year.¹⁰

The federal Constitution was the fruit of a compromise. The War of Independence had highlighted the limits of the Articles of Confederation, which had come into effect in February 1781 with the aim of preserving a certain degree of political, economic and military co-operation between the thirteen North American colonies at war with Great Britain. This league of sovereign States had often been on the point of collapsing during the course of the war, since not all the States had been threatened to the same extent by the common enemy. The war effort had been supported by some States more than others, thus creating marked internal tensions both during and at the end of the war. Those same tensions arose once again at the time the Constitution was drafted, with, on the one hand, supporters of a unitary government modelled on the European States and, on the other, supporters of a simple reinforcement of the Articles of Confederation, defending the sovereignty of the individual former colonies. A compromise was reached, in the literal sense of the term, and hardly anybody seemed to

⁹ Charles F. Mullett, “English Imperial Thinking, 1764 1783,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 45, 4, (1930), 548 79; Dickinson, “The Eighteenth Century Debate,” 189 210; Akhil Reed Amar, “Of Sovereignty and Federalism,” *Yale Law Journal*, 96, 7, (1987): 1425 1520; Samuel H. Beer, *To Make a Nation: The Rediscovery of American Federalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Greene, *Peripheries and Center*, Ch. 9.

¹⁰ Mario Albertini, “La federazione,” in *La politica e altri saggi* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1963), 31 61; Luciano Bolis ed., *La nascita degli Stati Uniti d’America. Rendiconti del Convegno tenuto a Roma dal 13 al 15 luglio 1956* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1957).

realize that a new kind of government was born. It was the battle for ratification of the new Constitution which gave Hamilton, Jay and Madison the opportunity to develop the first theory of federal government, and their writings in *The Federalist* outlined the theoretical and practical principles of federalism for the first time.¹¹

In *The Federalist*, Hamilton, Jay and Madison produced the first rudiments of a federalist conception of international relations, which offered the theoretical basis for the development of the federal idea into an ideology. Having understood that the alternative to the union of the thirteen former-colonies would have exposed the North American Continent to European power politics, Hamilton developed the concept of the ‘political island’. By doing so he pictured a situation in which the United States would take up the role of an ‘insular power’ in relation to Europe and the rest of the world, a role that Great Britain was currently playing and would continue to play for another century to come. Hamilton was able to develop the general features of European history, namely the European civil wars, from the federalist perspective. Federation would prevent the chief characteristic of European inter-State relations, namely power politics, from developing on American soil.

With the Revolution the Americans rejected British rule, but they did not reject British political tradition, where they found the solution to the problems that most concerned them: the limitation and control of political power. According to H. A. L. Fisher—author of a two-volume biography of Bryce, and according to Gilbert Murray, “the spirit of liberalism, of Britain, of the Nineteenth century”—the founding fathers were the product of the British liberal and constitutional tradition, based on a “system of civil, political and religious freedom.” The federal system born with the American Constitution was seen as the product of Anglo-American constitutional tradition, based on the principle of ‘natural rights’ and the principle of popular sovereignty, advocated and introduced into political thought by James Harrington and John Locke.¹²

If Locke had found in the parliamentary system the basis for a legitimate limitation of the powers of an absolutist monarch, the American

¹¹ Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison, *The Federalist* (New York: 1887–8). The 85 essays brought together in *The Federalist* were first published in New York journals between autumn 1787 and spring 1788.

¹² John Pinder, *The Federal Idea and the British Liberal Tradition*, in *The Federal Idea. The History of Federalism from the Enlightenment to 1945*, Andrea Bosco ed. (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1991), 99–117; Herbert A. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe* (London: 1936), vi; id., *James Bryce* (London: 1927); id., *Political Unions* (Oxford: 1911).

Constitution brought Locke's lesson to its extreme consequences, placing the legitimacy of sovereignty entirely on the citizens. With the identification of the source of legitimacy in the citizen, and not in the monarch or representative institutions, it was up to the citizens to accept a division and limitation of their sovereign rights for the well-being of themselves and the community as a whole. The essence of the federal government was that sovereignty could be divided vertically between different levels of government (central and regional), and horizontally between different agents or institutions representing the citizens (the legislature, the executive and the judiciary). The fundamental attributes of sovereignty could therefore be divided without dividing sovereignty itself, which belonged to the citizen and not, as in a unitarian State, to the monarch or Parliament.¹³

The British Constitution provided the founding fathers with the classical model of representative democracy and separation of powers, which had however to be adapted to a political and social situation completely different from the former mother country. Hamilton, Jay and Madison refer in particular to Locke and Montesquieu. Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des lois* was for them, according to Bryce, "a sort of Bible of political philosophy," cited "much as the schoolmen cite Aristotle." Montesquieu went in fact beyond Locke in including an analysis of the merits of the federal system, thus suggesting its compatibility with Locke's political philosophy.¹⁴

The British failed however to immediately understand the potential of the federal idea for the constitutional reform of an Empire facing the disruptive action of centrifugal forces within it, and the challenges of revolutionary France outside it. During the late Eighteenth century the

¹³ A classical study on the federal system is offered by Kenneth C. Wheare, *Federal Government* (London: 1945). Kenneth Wheare won in 1933 the Beit Prize with an essay on the Statute of Westminster, which remained, with his study on federal government, a classic. It was William Beveridge who encouraged him to write his volume on federal government, Jose Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford: 1977).

¹⁴ Charles de Secondat, (Baron de Montesquieu), *L'Esprit des lois* (Paris: 1748), Book 9, Ch. 1 3 and Book 11, Ch. 6; id. *Encyclopédie*, vol. 14, 158, quoted in Bernard Voyenne, *Histoire de l'Idée Fédéraliste*, vol. 1, *Les Sources* (Paris and Nice: 1976), 132; James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth* (New York: 1910), vol. 1, 183, (third edn.). The three volumes and 1700 pages of Bryce's *The American Commonwealth* were the product of twenty years' work, and remained, according to Wheare the standard work on the subject on both sides of the Atlantic for half a century.

experimental application of the federal idea remained in fact within the limits of the American subcontinent.

The full and innovative character of the federal idea was first grasped by Alexis de Tocqueville—who visited the United States in 1831, and outlined it in *De la Démocratie en Amérique*—and hence remained—even if apparently at times disappearing, like a Karst river, in the underground of the unitarian State—a constant and evolving theoretical and practical option. The growth of the economic welfare of the colonies in all parts of the Empire increased the pressure by the periphery on the centre for greater degrees of self-government at the local level and political representation at the Imperial one.¹⁵

The debate on federalism was introduced into Great Britain in 1832 by John Austin, providing a theoretical basis for the advocates of an unlimited and indivisible parliamentary and national sovereignty. In *Province of Jurisprudence Determined* Austin presented the first theoretical and empirical analysis of the federal system, focusing on the question of the division of sovereignty and multiple loyalties. Bryce criticised Austin for being imprisoned in the scheme of the unitarian State. According to Herbert Spencer, Austin derived “the authority of law from the unlimited sovereignty of one man, or of a number of men,” giving to parliamentary majorities a “divine right” which was dangerous for individual and minority rights. Spencer attributed Austin’s tendency to assimilate “civil authority to military authority” to his early career in the army.¹⁶

In Great Britain federalism received wide academic attention after the publication in 1854 of its first theoretical and historical analysis by the American George Ticknor Curtis, who offered to John Stuart Mill the basis for a major contribution to the study of federal government. In *Considerations on Representative Government* Mill however highlighted more the weaknesses rather than the strengths of the federal system. Writing at a time when the American Civil War seemed to mark the total failure of federalism to settle with peaceful and constitutional means the conflicts among States, the model of the unitarian State, as applied in Great Britain, seemed more appropriate to bring about union in diversity. A critical view of the federal system was put forward in 1867 also by Walter Bagehot in *The English Constitution*, arguing that in a unitarian

¹⁵ Alexis de Tocqueville, *De la Démocratie en Amérique* (Paris: 1835).

¹⁶ John Austin, *Province of Jurisprudence Determined* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, n.d.); James Bryce, *Studies in History and Jurisprudence* (Oxford: 1901), vol. 2, 88 9; Herbert Spencer, *The Man versus the State* (London: 1884), 81 2.

State the “sovereign power is single, possible and good,” while in a federal system sovereignty was not just divided between two levels, federal and State, but it was subdivided between Congress, Senate and the President. “A distinct force,” Bagehot pointed out, “for each artificial compartment,” would “make but a motley patchwork.” Montague Bernard, Chichele Professor of International Law and Diplomacy at Oxford, thought, on the contrary, that the *Federalist Papers* were the “finer model of political writing.”¹⁷

Another jurist, James Lorimer, chairholder of international law at Edinburgh, proposed in 1867 the creation of an international government for international purposes, with a two-chamber legislature, a judiciary, an executive and an exchequer. This government was to dispose of a small army and the member-States had to disarm to the level required for the maintenance of internal order. There would be an international tax, levied by the States, and their internal affairs would be excluded from the scope of the central government, save in the event of civil wars.¹⁸

3. The application of the federal model in Canada

The unification of the British North American colonies and the emerging of federalism as an alternative constitutional model to the unitarian State opened the way for the application of the federal idea within the Empire. Plans with a quasi-federal character designed to limit the influence of the French Canadians and promote the economic and political stability of the Canadas were put forward in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries by William Smith, Jonathan Sewell, John Beverly and Richard John Uniacke, but the Canadian question arose as an emergency only in the late 1830s. The British could not re-open a colonial front at a time in which all efforts had to be concentrated on the European Continent and therefore preferred to accept the partition of Quebec into an Upper (mainly

¹⁷ George Ticknor Curtis, *History, Formation and Adoption of the Constitution of the United States with Notices of its Principal Framers*, 2 vols. (London: 1854); John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty; Representative Government; The Subjection of Women: Three Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 380-401; Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1954), 304-41; Montague Bernard, *Two Lectures on the Present American War* (Oxford: 1861), 90.

¹⁸ James Lorimer, *Institutes of the Law of Nations: A Treatise of the General Relations of Separate Political Communities* (London: 1884), summarised in Finn Laursen, *Federalism and World Order* (Copenhagen: World Federalist Youth, 1970), 38-9.

British) and Lower (mainly French) Canada, with some degrees of self-government at the local level but under the absolute control of the Imperial Parliament, as stated by the Constitutional Act of 1791. In order to avoid another disaster in North America, the British Government entrusted Lord Durham, a prominent 'colonial reformer', to produce a survey of the Canadian question, and put forward proposals for constitutional reforms. A critical view of the emigration and land-granting policies by the British government was shared, at that time, by other colonial reformers such as Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who supported the case for placing on the settlers a higher degree of autonomy and political responsibility.¹⁹

Durham's plan for the union of Upper and Lower Canada as a preliminary step towards a federal Canada, including the Maritime colonies, gained the support of Lord Glenelg—Secretary of State for War and the Colonies from 1835 to 1839—who thought that the Canadians should be given some kind of "joint legislative authority," and by James Roebuck—MP for Bath—who launched a plan for the creation of a Canadian federal republic. Resistance to the federal plan did not come however from the British Government, which was favouring a strong and united Canada to counterbalance the rising influence of the United States in North America, but from the Canadians themselves. New Brunswick opposed the projected union with Lower Canada—which, in turn, opposed the union with Upper Canada—while the Maritime colonies feared a loss of identity. Durham's proposals—published in a report in January 1839—supported a legislative union of Lower and Upper Canada for the exercise of responsible government.²⁰

Prominent advocates of a federal solution not only to the Canadian question, but also for all around the Empire, were James Stephen—Permanent Under-secretary for the Colonies from 1836 to 1847—and Lord Howick—later to become the third Earl Grey—Parliamentary Under-secretary for the Colonies from 1846 to 1852. A "federal body" would, according to Howick, "supply that bond of connection between the

¹⁹ L. F. S. Upton, "The Idea of Confederation: 1754 1858," in *The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age* (Toronto/Montreal: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), 184 207; W. H. Nelson, "The Last Hopes of the American Loyalists," *Canadian Historical Review*, 32, 1, (1951): 22 42; Reginald G. Trotter, "An Early Proposal for the Federation of British North America," *Canadian Historical Review*, 6, 2, (1925): 142 54.

²⁰ R. G. Trotter, "Durham and the Idea of a Federal Union of British North America," *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report*, (1925): 54 65. For a discussion, see: Ged Martin, *Britain and the Origins of Canadian Confederation, 1837 1840* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995).

different provinces...and would thus enable the Home Government gradually to influence for one of direct control.” Howick did not limit himself to expounding a principle, but became the main advocate, within the British Government, of the application of the federal model to New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and British North America. Grey even advocated a federal union between a federated British Empire and the United States, which “would pave the way for the last great federation—the brotherhood of man.”²¹

The problem was that the colonies were not yet prepared to adopt Earl Grey’s innovative and far-sighted scheme, which had to wait three lustra to be realized. But it is significant to note that once the British Government defined a strategy for the long period, promoting economic and political unification of colonies scattered around the world through the federal model, that strategy was tenaciously and coherently implemented and at last realized. This strategy was not immediately accepted by the colonies because they did not initiate the idea. “They were not prepared,” according to Kendle,

to accept constitution mongering on that scale from the Imperial centre. Until they were ready to accept the logic of a wider union there was little the British government could do at a time when self government was increasingly accepted as the working shibboleth of Empire.

The federal idea, Kendle remarked, was however “by mid-century a serious option for all concerned with resolving the problems connected with granting self-government while maintaining a wide-flung Imperial union.”²²

²¹ Ged Martin, “Confederation Rejected: The British Debate on Canada, 1837 1840,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 11, 1, (1982): 33 57; John M. Ward, “The Third Earl Grey and Federalism, 1846 1852,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 3, (1957): 18 32. For a discussion, see: John M. Ward, *Earl Grey and the Australian Colonies, 1846 1857: A Study of Self government and Self interest* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1958); Bruce A. Knox, “The Rise of Colonial Federation as an Object of British policy, 1850 1870,” *Journal of British Studies*, 11, 1, (1971): 92 112; Ged Martin, “Britain and the Future of British North America, 1841 1850,” *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 2, 1, (1987): 74 96; id., “An Imperial Idea and Its Friends: Canadian Confederation and the British,” in *Essays in Honour of A. Thornton*, Gordon Martel ed. (London: Macmillan, 1986), 49 94; William Thomas Stead, *The Americanization of the World, or the Trend of the Twentieth Century* (London: 1902), 162.

²² Kendle, *Federal Britain*, 20, 24, 24. In 1846 Earl Grey proposed a Bill to Parliament to provide a federal government for Australia, but Australians had to wait until the 1890s before Conservative governments, worried by European

The obstacles to overcome in order to promote a federal union of the overseas colonies had also a natural character. The colonists were generally concentrated in small areas and scattered in vast territories, and communications were very poor, since the railway networks had yet to be developed. If, in theory, a combination of municipal, provincial and federal government could be the solution, in practice it was extremely difficult to guarantee synergy among the different governing bodies.

The British were well aware that, once Canada became independent and a federal State created, it would be difficult to maintain a permanent and institutional association with the former colony. "If an attempt were made to create a federal system," Lord Elgin—Governor General of Canada in the late 1840s—well argued,

on a more extended basis after the model of the United States, the central Body having no foreign Policy army and navy to manage, will either occupy itself in doing mischief, or in the discharge of duties which now devolve on the Provincial legislatures. In other words a federal [Union] can hardly fail to become either a nuisance or a legislative Union.

However, faced with the danger of the falling of the Canadian provinces, one by one, into the United States' sphere of influence, the British in the end saw federation as the only practicable solution to the problem of governance of the British North American colonies. The primary geo-political strategic interest of the British Government should have been, according to Sir Edmund Head—Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick and later Governor-General of Canada—"to foster common interests that would prepare the colonies for independence as a unit." "Everything that concerned Imperial matters," including the question of insulating Britain "from the troublesome French of Canada East," could "best be handled by a federal government."²³

Powers' annexations in the Pacific, convened constitutional conferences and established the Australian federation in 1900. The idea of a federal union of South African British colonies was launched by Liberals in the mid Nineteenth century. The Colonial Secretary, Edward Bulwer Lytton, asked Sir George Grey in 1858 to report on the possibility of a union of South African colonies, Lionel Curtis, *Civitas Dei* (London: 1934 37), 415.

²³ Martin, "Britain and the Future," 80; Upton, "The Idea of Confederation," 199, 187; Chester Martin, "Sir Edmund Head's First Project of Federation, 1851," *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report*, (1928): 14 26; id., "Sir Edmund Head and Canadian Confederation, 1851 1858," *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report*, (1929): 5 14; Alice R. Stewart, "Sir Edmund Head's Memorandum of 1857 on Maritime Union: A Lost Confederation Document," *Canadian Historical Review*, 26, 4, (1945): 406 19; Reginald G. Trotter, "The British Government and the Proposal of Federation in 1858," *Canadian Historical Review*,

In 1858 Edmund Head thought that time had come for the British Government, and not the colonies, to take the initiative for a federal union and that it was up to the British Government, and not the colonies, to call for a Convention between the Maritime colonies and the provinces of Canada. In fact the Canadians seemed by then ready to enter into proper negotiations among themselves, which inevitably raised tensions among the colonists, since the economic and political interests to defend were very different among them. Federation came about in 1867—just two years after the conclusion of the American Civil War, during which the federal model went through a tough trial—mainly because of the determination of the Canadians themselves to mark and preserve their identity both from the United States and from Great Britain.²⁴

In the meantime the federal principle had also been applied in Continental Europe: in Switzerland, as a means to unify Cantons of different languages, cultures and religions, and in Germany, as an instrument of Prussia's power politics.

4. *Federalism and academic debate*

The extension of the federal principle outside North America fostered studies and debate by distinguished academics and authors, offering the general public a broad understanding of the federal system. The works by the Australian Henry Parkes, the Canadian Goldwin Smith, the New Zealanders Julius Vogel and Robert Stout, the South African John X. Merriman and the American C. R. Lowell offered a scholarly contribution to the assimilation in Great Britain of a 'new' political principle.²⁵

14, 3, (1933): 285 92; Bruce Knox, "The British Government, Sir Edmund Head, and British North American Confederation, 1858," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 4, 2, (1976): 206 17.

²⁴ James A. Gibson, "The Colonial Office View of Canadian Federation, 1856 1868," *Canadian Historical Review*, 35, 4, (1954): 279 313.

²⁵ Henry Parkes, "Our Growing Australian Empire," *Nineteenth Century*, 15, (1884): 138 49; id., "Australia and the Imperial Connection," *Nineteenth Century*, 15, (1884): 867 72; Robert Stout, "A Colonial View of Imperial Federation," *Nineteenth Century*, 21, (1887): 351 61; John X. Merriman, "The Closer Union of the Empire," *Nineteenth Century*, 21, (1887): 507 16; Goldwin Smith, "The Canadian Constitution," *Contemporary Review*, 52, (1887): 1 20; C. R. Lowell, "English and American Federalism," *Fortnightly Review*, 49, (1888): 189 95; E. J. Phelps, "The Constitution of the United States," *Nineteenth Century*, 23, (1888): 297 316, 441 57; [Anon.], "The Swiss Constitution," *Westminster Review*, 129, (1888): 133 51. For a study on the making of the Australian federation, see: Luke Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism: Manipulation, Conflict*

The major contribution to the study of the federal idea came however from Edward Freeman, Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, who played a leading role in establishing federalism as a topic of academic study in Britain. In *History of the Federal Government from the Foundation of the Achaean League to the Disruption of the United States*, first published in 1863, Freeman offered an historical analysis of the origins of the federal idea from classical Greece to the Lombard League. In discussing a possible federal solution for the United Kingdom, Freeman pointed out that the creation of a federation out of a unitarian State was neither practicable or advisable. “No one could wish,” he argued, “to cut up our United Kingdom into a federation, to invest English Counties with the rights of American States, or even to restore Scotland and Ireland to the quasi-Federal position which they held before their respective Unions.” A federation could be born only “by the establishment of a closer tie between elements which were before distinct, not by the division of members which have been hitherto more closely united.”²⁶

Analysing the creation of the Swiss federation, “the most perfect federal union which Europe has seen,” Freeman observed that “the essence of a Federal Union” was the “surrender” of some of the powers of the member States “to a central body,” while retaining “others in their hands.” “If the States,” Freeman pointed out, “retain...or if they surrender all their powers, they do not form a Federal Union at all.” In order to have a federation “there must be something entrusted to the Federal power which the several States cannot touch, and something left to the several States which the Federal power cannot touch.” The federal Constitution was a compact prescribing “the limits of Federal and State authority.” Comparing the British to the American model, Freeman observed that “the revision of a Constitution, Federal or Cantonal, does not convey to a Swiss the same notion of radical and revolutionary change which it does to an

and Compromise in the Late Nineteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

²⁶ Edward Freeman, *History of the Federal Government from the Foundation of the Achaean League to the Disruption of the United States* (London: 1863), 9 10, 15 6, 90 1. The volume was republished posthumously in a new form in 1893 edited by J. E. Bury as *The History of Federal Government in Greece and Italy*, with the addition of a new chapter on Italy and notes on Germany, found among Freeman’s papers. Freeman considered federalism as “the most finished and the most artificial production of political ingenuity. A Federal Union will form one State in relation to other powers, but many States as regards its internal administration. This complete division of sovereignty we may look upon as essential to the absolute perfection of the Federal ideal,” (*ibidem*, 3).

Englishman.” The revision of the Constitution, both in a unitarian or in a federal State, was necessary to prevent “revolution or secession,” and if in Great Britain it could be done by an ordinary Act of Parliament, “with very little of debate within the Houses or of public excitement out of them,” in the United States it could be done only by a referendum. Freeman took, according to Burgess, a conservative attitude towards constitutional reforms, advocating “continuity of institutions,” and warning against “the inherent evil of an organic change, of the snapping of a link between the past and the present.”²⁷

A fundamental contribution to the study of the federal system came also from James Bryce, British Ambassador to the United States from 1907 to 1913, with the three volumes *The American Commonwealth*, which remained for decades a classical reading on the subject, especially in relation to the debates on the making of the Australian federation in 1900. His definition and distinction between “rigid” and “flexible” Constitutions entered the tradition of political thought. If a flexible Constitution was, like the British one, unwritten, based on tradition and evolving according to innovations largely shared by the citizens, a rigid Constitution was, like the American one, written, a covenant defining with clarity the horizontal and vertical division, distribution and limits of powers.

Entering into the debate over a possible federal evolution of the Constitution of the United Kingdom and the Empire, Bryce warned that it should necessarily have to be written, and therefore “rigid.” He also acutely observed that the “difficulties, both legal and practical, with which these proposals, taken either separately or in conjunction, are surrounded, are greater than those who advocate them have as yet generally perceived.” The historical trend was to replace flexible with rigid Constitutions, and it was apparently meant, Bryce observed, to protect the rights and interests of the “Many,” but, in fact, it would result in defending the rights and interests of the “Few.” For “Few” Bryce meant the elitist forces as opposed to the democratic forces which seemed to claim, at the turn of the century, a central role within the political, economic and social institutions of the modern State. Federalism appeared to be designed to protect the rights of the “Many,” but in the case of the United Kingdom

²⁷ Edward A. Freeman, “The Proposed Revision of the Swiss Federal Constitution,” *Fortnightly Review*, 2, (1885): 533 48; id., “The Growth of the Commonwealth,” *Fortnightly Review*, 20, (1873): 434 56; Michael Burgess, “Imperial Federation: Edward Freeman and the Intellectual Debate on the Consolidation of the British Empire in the Nineteenth Century,” *Trivium*, 13, (1978): 77 94.

and the Empire, according to Bryce, it could be used to perpetuate the privileges of the “Few.”²⁸

Following the historical and theoretical approach of Freeman and Bryce, Henry Sidgwick, Knightsbridge Professor at Cambridge, observed that a confederation represented a “stage in the development of federality” into its proper realization, the federation. The federal State was, more than the unitarian one, “in harmony with the ideal of modern democracy...as a means of realizing the maximum of liberty compatible with order.” The historical trend of the growth of civilization produced the creation of larger political units, and only the federal system was able to bring about a democratic union of States. “When we turn our gaze from the past to the future,” Sidgwick observed, “an extension of federalism seems to me the most probable of the political prophecies relative to the form of government.” “Not beyond the limits of a sober forecast,” Sidgwick could conjecture, “that some further integration may take place in the west European states...and that the new political aggregate will be formed on the basis of a federal polity.” In a posthumous book, *The Development of European Polity*, including the lectures he gave in Canada between 1885 and 1899, Sidgwick saw the advantages of federalism both in gaining external strength and economic benefits through uniting States, and in securing local liberties within formerly unitarian States.²⁹

A strong attack on federalism came from Albert Venn Dicey, who in articles and lectures published between 1882 and 1885—at a time of intensified debate on ‘home rule’, when the federal idea gained increasing support as a solution to the Anglo-Irish conflict—identified in the division

²⁸ Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*; id., “Flexible and Rigid Constitutions,” in *Studies in History and Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), vol. 1, 145 254; id., “The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia,” *ibidem*, 468 553. Bryce, Regius Professor of Civil Law at Oxford in 1870, a Liberal MP in 1880, and Cabinet minister in three Cabinets, was a personal friend of Freeman. Bryce, in a book published in 1901 containing four essays on federal themes, attacked the unitarian tradition as representing “the dogmas” of Bentham and Austin, which had “had most influence” in England during the previous 70 years, Bryce, *Studies in History*, vol. 2, 50. On Bryce, see John T. Seaman, *A Citizen of the World: The Life of James Bryce* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006). Secretary of State Elihu Root’s Anglophile attitude and global outlook had been strengthened by his frequent contacts with James Bryce while British Ambassador to Washington.

²⁹ Henry Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1919), 426 39, 530 50. Sidgwick had “read most of the proofs” of Bryce’s work “with great care and made valuable suggestions upon them,” (Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, vol. 1, viii). Henry Sidgwick, *The Development of European Polity* (London: 1903), 436 7, 439; id., *The Elements of Politics* (London: 1897), 218.

and distribution of powers the inner weakness of the federal system, while the unitarian one was characterized by “the absolute omnipotence, the sovereignty of Parliament.” In *Considerations on Representative Government*, Dicey identified in the primacy of the judiciary over the legislative and the executive a dangerous shift of power from the base of democratic legitimacy, the parliament, to a narrow circle of self-selected officials of the State, with the consequence of a “prevalence of a spirit of legality among the people.” If applied to the United Kingdom, the federal system would have undermined parliamentary sovereignty, depriving British political institutions “of their elasticity, their strength, and their life.” Being strongly committed to the preservation of the British unitarian State, Dicey thought that it would have served the interests of Ireland, Wales and Scotland much better rather than a federal one. Federalism was, according to Dicey, “the slowly-matured fruit of some earlier and closer connection.” However, he identified in the desire for union, and the dislike for unity, the fundamental federalist spirit, “a combination of union and separation... the desire for national unity and the determination to maintain the independence of each separate State.”

Since federalism required the adoption of a written Constitution, difficult to emend, and the supremacy of the judiciary over the legislative, Dicey argued that it would result in a limitation and reduction of parliamentary sovereignty and executive power—both at the federal and the State level—because of the inner permanent conflict between the poles at which sovereignty was divided. Confusing power with sovereignty, Dicey thought that the division of sovereignty meant a diminution of sovereignty. Federalism seemed to dislocate the British constitutional tradition of an unwritten and therefore flexible Constitution, and undermine the absolute sovereignty of Parliament, weakening the central government.³⁰

Arguing against a view originally put forward by Isaac Butt in 1870 which was gaining increasing support among the British public at large—according to which federalism was “a fair compromise” between the “reasonable claims” of the Englishmen to preserve their own interests and

³⁰ Isaac Butt, *Home Government for Ireland, Irish Federalism: Its Meaning Its Objects, and Its Hopes* (London: 1870); [Anon.], “The Federation of the English Empire,” *Westminster Review*, 220, (1879): 147–53; id., *Westminster Review*, 221, (1879): 22–9; id., *Westminster Review*, 222, (1879): 153–62; Albert Venn Dicey, “Home Rule from an English Point of View,” *Contemporary Review*, 42, (1882), 66–86; id., “Parliamentary Sovereignty and Federalism,” in *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Law and the Constitution* (London: Macmillan, 1886), 128–30; Kendle, *Federal Britain*, 48.

privileges, “the greatness of the British Empire” and the “natural desire of Irishmen for national independence”—Dicey observed that such a dramatic departure from tradition would have produced more “evils” than gains. Thus Dicey wrote during the Irish home rule debate in 1882. In 1897, two years before the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Boer War, in a completely different international situation, Dicey became an advocate of a “a common citizenship for the English race.”³¹

In *The Expansion of England*, Seeley presented a strong case for the reform of Imperial relations according to federal lines. In face of the rise of America and Russia, as predicted by de Tocqueville, to become the great world powers of the Twentieth century obscuring all European powers, Seeley saw that only a federation between Britain, her self-governing colonies—Australia, Canada, New Zealand—and the British colonies in South Africa, could save the Empire from disruption and Britain from decadence. Imperial federation seemed capable of establishing solid constitutional ties between the different races and civilizations of the Empire. The Industrial Revolution and the development of communications were increasingly cutting distances and seemed therefore to prove wrong all those who still believed natural obstacles to be insurmountable.³²

Reflecting on the American Civil War, Seeley observed that “those very colonies which then broke off from us, have since given the example of a federal organization in which vast territories...are held in a union...and the whole enjoys in the fullest degree parliamentary freedom.” The United States “firmly refused to allow their Union to be broken up, or to listen to the argument that a State is none the better for being very large.” It was the British “misinterpretation of the American Revolution” to assume that from the revolution “all distant colonies, sooner or later, secede from the mother country.” The United States had “solved a problem substantially similar to that which our old colonial system could not solve.”³³

³¹ Albert V. Dicey, “A Common Citizenship for the English Race,” *Contemporary Review*, 71, (April 1897): 469.

³² John R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (London: 1883). Seeley inspired the work of Arthur Percival Newton, first Rhodes Professor of Imperial History at Birkbeck College of the University of London with his *Cambridge History of the British Empire* published in 1920, which implemented Seeley’s vision. See also Arthur Newton, *The Empire and the Future* (London: 1916); id., *An Introduction to the Study of Colonial History* (London: 1919). For a discussion, see: D. Wormell, *Sir John Seeley and the Uses of History* (Cambridge: 1980).

³³ Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, 62, 127, 325.

“It was not...simply because they were colonies,” Seeley observed, “that our colonies rebelled. It was because they were colonies under the old colonial system.” A “better system” however existed and was “practicable now.” The model was provided by the United States, which had “shown herself able to combine free institutions in the fullest degree with boundless expansion.” They provided “a great example of a system under which an indefinite number of provinces is firmly held together without any of the inconveniences which have been felt in our Empire.”³⁴

Seeley brought together Ranke’s idea of the primacy of foreign over internal politics and Hamilton’s federalist conception of international relations. From this new perspective, he showed the limits of national historiography, whose “framework is insufficient and too exclusively European,” and studied the expansion of England from 1688 to 1815 in the context of the European struggle for world hegemony in the Americas and Asia. The European policy and the colonial policy were, according to Seeley, “different aspects of the same great national development,” and the survival of a “greater Britain” would have been possible only through “a partnership between equals.” By greater Britain Seeley meant “an enlargement of the English State,” which carried “across the seas not merely the English race, but the authority of the English Government.” The British Empire appeared to Seeley “free from that weakness which has brought down most Empires, the weakness of being a mere mechanical forced union of alien nationalities.” When the State advanced “beyond the limits of the nationality,” its power became “precarious and artificial,” and only an “equal federation” was, according to Seeley, able to keep together the different nationalities it encompassed.³⁵

Great Britain remained still “in possession of a great and commanding colonial power,” because unlike Spain and France, which “were deeply involved in the struggles of Europe,” she had “always been able to hold herself aloof.” As an island, Britain was “distinctly nearer for practical purposes to the New World.” Her march was “on the Ocean wave.”³⁶

The Expansion of England was published in 1883, and in a couple of years sold 80,000 copies, playing a significant role in the creation of the Imperial Federation League. Joseph Chamberlain was so impressed by Seeley’s work as to send his son Austen, later to become a strong supporter of the federal idea, to study history at Cambridge, where Seeley

³⁴ *Ibidem*, 121 2, 236, 127.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, 15, 84, 21, 31, 33, 38, 40, 46.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, 76 7, 88.

held the Regius Chair of Modern History.³⁷

In a lecture given in 1871 to the Peace Society just in the wake of the Franco-Prussian war, Seeley made a strong advocacy for the “United States of Europe,” requiring an impartial federal judiciary, a legislature and an executive. The condition for the establishment of the “new federation arising like a majestic temple over the tomb of war” was, according to Seeley, the creation of a “universal popular movement.”³⁸

Succeeding Seeley’s chair in 1895, Acton in *History of Freedom and Other Essays*—including four essays on federalism which were delivered as lectures, between 1862 and 1889, and finally published in 1907—gave a fundamental contribution to a better understanding of the federal idea in Britain. In a federal government Acton identified the constitutional alternative to the centralization of powers as represented by the French Revolution, being “not the limitation of the sovereign power but the abrogation of intermediate powers.” Acton attacked the idea that only the identification of State and nation provided “national unity” which was gaining increasing support as “the ideal of modern liberalism,” and claimed, on the contrary, that only “the coexistence of several nations under the same State,” was “the best security of its freedom.” Federation appeared as the “most efficacious and the most congenial of all the checks on centralised oppression of minorities...capable of unlimited extension,” and “the only way of avoiding war,” allowing “different nationalities, religions, epochs of civilisation to exist in harmony side by side.”³⁹

Undivided sovereignty would have brought about the centralization of powers, corruption and despotism. When the State coincided with nationalities without a voluntary surrender of sovereignty to a federal institution, conflicts among States which could not be solved by peaceful means led inevitably to war. The existence of different States under the same sovereignty could, otherwise, prevent “the servility which flourishes under the shadow of a single authority, by balancing interests [and] multiplying associations.” Liberty, Acton argued, “provokes diversity, and diversity preserves liberty by supplying the means of organization.” The

³⁷ J. L. Garvin, *Life of Joseph Chamberlain* (London: 1932), vol. 1, 494; Seeley, *The Expansion*, xii.

³⁸ John R. Seeley, “United States of Europe,” *Macmillan’s Magazine*, 23, (March 1871): 439–42, 446, 448.

³⁹ John E. E. Dalberg Acton, *The History of Freedom and other Essays* (London: 1907), 98, 280, 285, 290; G. E. Fasnacht, *Acton’s Political Philosophy* (London: 1952), 243. Acton was a Liberal MP from 1859 to 1865, and was a close friend of Gladstone, with much influence on him particularly with respect to home rule for Ireland.

union of different nations in one State was “as necessary a condition of civilized life as the combination of men in society.” The modern theory of nationality as represented by the unitarian State seemed to be “the greatest adversary of the rights of nationality” itself. “By making the State and the nation,” Acton pointed out, “commensurate with each other in theory, it reduces practically to a subject condition all other nationalities that may be within the boundary.”⁴⁰

5. Daniel O’Connell, William Crawford and the Irish question

Ireland followed the fate of Scotland in 1707 and was incorporated within the United Kingdom in 1801. With the Act of Union and the fusion of the Imperial and Irish Parliaments, Ireland gained representation at Westminster—100 MPs and 32 peers—but lost her own Parliament and the considerable legislative independence gained by 1782.

Pitt’s Act of Union had however quasi-federal elements. Ireland retained, under the Viceroy, its own independent administration which was much valued by Nationalists and by Daniel O’Connell himself, as a link with the Constitution of 1782. During the Nineteenth century, Nationalists gradually infiltrated it and took it over at all levels. It would have had an additional quasi-federal element if Pitt and his Cabinet in 1798 had accepted a scheme according to which Irish MPs would have met annually in Dublin and elected 100 representatives to sit at Westminster. The rest, forming a subordinate assembly in Dublin, would have dealt with internal Irish matters. The plan was supported by William Grenville the Duke of Buckingham and John Baker Holroyd Earl of Sheffield, but was rejected by Pitt, who feared that the Irish Parliament could become an expression of national identity, and not just a municipal exercise of self-government.

The federal idea was first discussed in Ireland in the 1830s, in the context of O’Connell’s first campaign for the repeal of the Act of Union. O’Connell’s call to restore the 1782 Constitution was based on a ‘federative Repeal’, trying to bring together the Irish nationalist movement, as well as Liberal and Conservative gentry, professional people and businessmen.

O’Connell tried to widen the basis of political and social support to the cause of Irish independence, involving William Sharman Crawford, prominent Liberal Presbyterian Ulster landlord, and advocate of reconciliation among Catholics and Protestants. O’Connell’s call for an

⁴⁰ John E. E. Dalberg Acton, “Nationality,” in *The History of Freedom*, 47–65.

independent Irish Parliament was supported by the Catholic majority and accepted within the Protestant community only by a very small fraction. Ulster businessmen, well represented by Crawford, were worried by the prospect of separation from Britain. Crawford was in fact in favour of “a national principle of local legislation,” opposing the idea of “two parliaments with equal powers in all matters.”⁴¹

With the launch in 1831 of the National Political Union campaign, O’Connell aimed to attract Liberal and moderate opinion, receiving from Crawford an opening for “supporting a system of local legislation, in the event of the interests of Ireland not being fully attended to in the arrangements of the Reform bill.” Crawford thought that no Irishman “ought to refuse to join his fellow countrymen in every constitutional effort to procure a national principle of local legislation.” Crawford however refused to be drawn into the repeal campaign, since he did not intend to “disturb the public peace, to undermine the connection between

⁴¹ See Kendle, *Ireland and the Federal*, 8; Alan J. Ward, *The Irish Constitutional Tradition: Responsible Government and Modern Ireland, 1782 1992* (Washington, DC: 1994), 15 27; Kevin B. Nowlan, *The Politics of Repeal* (London: 1965), 8. From a letter by Crawford to O’Connell, Nov. 1831, quoted in B. A. Kennedy, “Sharman Crawford’s Federal Scheme for Ireland,” in *Essays in British and Irish History in Honor of James Eadie*, Todd H. A. Cronne, T. W. Moody and D. B. Quinn eds. (London: 1949), 237. The ‘Catholic question’ was a major issue not only for Ireland, but also for Great Britain, with the increase of the Catholic population to over a quarter of the total, as a consequence of the incorporation of Ireland into the United Kingdom. The enactment of Catholic Emancipation in 1829 represented a significant step in the process of undoing the British Anglican State, and in the formation of an Irish political identity with a strong confessional character. Irish Protestants were a relatively small minority – just 853,160 of the Irish population in 1830 – but occupied the higher positions in Irish society – in terms of wealth, education and power – representing a formidable obstacle in the process of enlarging the franchise, which in the 1830s was very restricted. The concentration of Protestants in the North East of the island created there a local majority, which developed a sense of antagonism and resistance towards the rest of the country. In 1831 the total population of England and Wales was 13,806,797, a further 2,364,386 lived in Scotland, while the Catholics of Ireland alone totaled 6,436,060. Anglicans in Ireland numbered 853,160, and Dissenters some 664,940. Catholics were 81% of Ireland population. For an analysis, see F. S. L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890 1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600 1972* (London: 1989), 316; George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland* (London: Routledge, 1995).

Great Britain and Ireland upon which the prosperity, happiness, and security of the country depended.”⁴²

Crawford’s difficulty in thinking about “two parliaments with equal powers,” brought him to search for an “intermediate course,” securing “in some degree the benefits of local legislation without throwing off the beneficial control of Imperial legislation in Imperial concerns.” The federal model offered Crawford the solution, envisaging an Irish Parliament composed of Irish members of the Imperial Parliament, responsible for Irish affairs and meeting in Dublin before the meeting of the Imperial Parliament. The Irish Parliament would have been independent from Westminster, and able to raise taxation for “works of national utility.”⁴³

Crawford’s federal plan was revised in 1843, suggesting the creation of a system of parliaments for England and Scotland for the management of local affairs, “kept under control and regulation, by the central power of Imperial representation.” It received the endorsement of O’Connell, in spite of the opposition by the Young Ireland movement, denouncing the attempt “to make the repealers believe they are federalists, and the federalists that they are repealers.” On the basis of the Canadian model, Crawford designed an Irish bi-cameral sovereign legislature, a House of Lords and a House of Commons, which should guarantee “perfect freedom of trade” between Great Britain and Ireland, and participate in the costs and responsibilities of military and foreign Imperial policies under the responsibility of an Imperial Parliament, including Irish representatives.⁴⁴

“The principle of self-government by representation,” Crawford remarked, should have been “carried out through every institution of the State.” Local taxation should have been “imposed and managed...by a body representing the locality,” and the whole “kept under control and regulation, by the central power of Imperial representation.”⁴⁵

Crawford’s attempt to give, through the application of the federal principle, to the Irish question a British dimension, and to the British problem an Irish dimension, met the opposition of both the British Liberals and O’Connell himself. Federalism was then seen as an alternative to repeal, and with some exceptions—like Thaddeus O’Malley, who became well-known as the Irish ‘father of federalism’—it remained essentially a Protestant idea, based on the Canadian model.

⁴² B. A. Kennedy, “Sharman Crawford’s Federal Scheme for Ireland,” in *Essays in British and Irish History*, Cronne, Moody and Quinn, 236 7.

⁴³ Kennedy, “Sharman Crawford’s Federal Scheme,” 239 42.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, 246, 248 51.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 246; for details of the scheme, see *ibidem*, 250 51.

O'Connell then abandoned his initial openings to federalism, since he was an interpreter of the aspirations of Ireland which, according to Thomas Davis, were "for unbounded nationality." "Federalists, I am told, are still talking and meeting," O'Connell noted, "but I don't expect any good from it...they are none of my children, I have nothing to do with them." Federalism as it was then commonly understood," Gavan Duffys observed in 1880,

meant little more than the creation of a Legislative Council with fiscal powers somewhat in excess of the fiscal powers of a grand jury, but not authorised to deal with the greatest concerns of a nation—domestic and international trade, the land code, education, national defences, and the subsidies to religious denominations.⁴⁶

O'Connell's early endorsement of the federalist solution aimed to respond to the polarization of Irish politics. As soon as he realized that the federal option raised criticism within the Repeal Association, he abandoned federalism and reverted to simple repeal.

6. Isaac Butt, and the federalist option

The federal scheme was rescued by Isaac Butt, an Irish Protestant who tried to keep together the "safety of England" with the "happiness and tranquillity of Ireland." The congested Westminster Parliament was manifestly unable to give "adequate attention to the affairs of every part of the United Kingdom," and to meet the "sacred grounds" of the Irish national claims. Irish home rule should have however preserved the United Kingdom "as a general power among the nations of the world."⁴⁷

Butt became a prominent figure of the movement for Irish independence, with his appointment as President of the Amnesty Association, founded in late 1868 to seek clemency for jailed Fenians. It sponsored large public demonstrations, following the Dean of Limerick's initiative in 1868 of a Declaration signed by 1600 clerics, for the repeal of the Union and the call by the Bishop of Cloynes for the creation of an independent Irish political party to defend 'national' interests.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Quoted in Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, *Young Ireland: A Fragment of Irish History* (London: 1880), 591, 599, 575 609, 577.

⁴⁷ Isaac Butt, *Home Government for Ireland. Irish Federalism! Its Meanings, its Objects, and its Hopes* (Dublin: 1874), iii ix, 13.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland*, 130; E. D. Steele, "Cardinal Cullen and Irish Nationality," *Irish Historical Studies*, 19, (March 1975), 258; Patrick J. Corish, "Cardinal Cullen and the National Association of Ireland," *Reportorium Novum*, 3, (1961 62), 55; K. T. Hoppen, "National Politics and Local

The increasing identification of home rule as a Catholic agenda brought Protestants to consider the envisaged Dublin Parliament “as an instrument to promote the aims of majoritarian Catholic society.” “Butt and subsequently Parnell,” O’Day observed, “tried to deal with the dilemma of winning Catholics to the home rule platform without alienating Protestants.” The resort to home rule “as a reconciling force” however failed, since for Catholics and Protestants it had profoundly different meanings.⁴⁹

The initiative came from forty-nine gentlemen—mainly Protestants—meeting at the Bilton Hotel in Dublin on May 1870 to discuss the question of Irish self-government, adopting federalism, on Butt’s proposal, as a constitutional model. Even if federalism appeared to Butt “no great matter at the present stage,” it was “important and indispensable...that the popular intellect should get hold of the project generally, and try it by the unfailing test of examination and discussion.” According to Butt, it was “a mere question of time when we...ought to strain every nerve to achieve for Ireland national independence.” For national independence Butt did not mean separation but self-government, giving the Irish “the entire right to manage our own affairs.”⁵⁰

Butt’s ideas were outlined in 1870 in the pamphlet *Irish Federalism: Its Meaning, Its Objects and Its Hopes*, based on the British North America Act of 1867. Federalism was, according to Butt, able to offer a political expression to repeal, and offer Ireland an opportunity for “independence without breaking up the unity of the Empire, interfering with the monarchy, or endangering the rights or liberties of any class of Irishmen.” Ireland would then “enjoy all of the self-government and distinct national rights which would be necessary for full development of her national life.” Butt suggested the extension of the federal model to England and Scotland, “a matter entirely for themselves to decide,” and its

Realities in Mid Nineteenth Century Ireland,” in *Studies in Irish History*, Art Cosgrove and Donald McCartney eds. (Naas: 1979), 218; *Annual Register* (1868), 44 45.

⁴⁹ Alan O’Day, *Federalism, Home Rule and Self government Ideas of Irish Nationalism in the Age of Isaac Butt and Parnell*, in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 277.

⁵⁰ *The Nation*, 20 Nov. 1869; Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 397; A. M. Sullivan, *New Ireland: Political Sketches and Personal Reminiscences, or Thirty Years of Irish Public Life* (Glasgow: 1877), 9th ed., 339 51; *The Nation*, 1 Oct. 1870. The term federalism was soon replaced by the home rule slogan. According to Foster this was much due to “Butts notion of federalism” as “too constitutionally sophisticated for British opinion,” Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 398.

immediate application to Ireland. If the Imperial Parliament would retain control over the national debt, civil list, military and foreign relations, “the Irish Parliament...would have supreme control in Ireland.” The Irish House of Commons would be composed of 250 or 300 members elected on a franchise which should have been defined. The Upper Chamber would be composed of life Peers.⁵¹

The Imperial Parliament in Butt’s scheme would be composed of English, Irish and Scottish representatives, and in charge of Imperial foreign, military, and commercial policies, continuing to levy taxation for these purposes. The Irish Parliament should be elected separately from the Imperial Parliament, on the basis of the existing franchise, including representatives from the universities, “and some other bodies of that nature.” The Irish House of Lords should be composed of peers chosen by the Queen, guaranteeing the Irish resident gentry to be represented in “the council of the nation.” Such a bi-cameral system would produce legislation of its own, “except in those matters which the federal Constitution might specially reserve to the Imperial Parliament.”⁵²

With the application of the federal principle, the Irish people would have been responsible for running their own internal affairs, continuing to share Imperial responsibilities with the British people. Butt’s argument against simple repeal was that it would prevent Ireland from being represented in the Imperial Parliament and cause the loss of its interests abroad. Butt was not sure “whether the word Federalism,” was “the most appropriate term to express what is proposed,” but it offered an alternative to simple repeal.⁵³

Butt addressed his plan to those “who occupy the higher stations in Irish society to take their part with the people in seeking our own Parliament and in moulding and determining the forms which the Federal Constitution is to assume.” If they did not contribute “in the coming victory of the Irish nation,” they would have produced “an injury to the cause of Ireland,” which would also have been “a far deeper and heavier calamity to themselves.” Ireland’s “effort to obtain self-government,” was for Butt not just an end in itself, but a moral accomplishment. The Irish people should have become “fit...for it.” “To bring together in one combined national effort the separated classes of Ireland,” would mean,

⁵¹ Isaac Butt, *Irish Federalism: Its Meaning, Its Objects and Its Hopes* (Dublin: 1974), 4th ed., xiii, iv, 15 16, 37, 39 40.

⁵² Butt, *Home Government for Ireland*, 16 17, 29, 32, 35, 37, 39. On Butt’s plan see Kendle, *Ireland and the Federal Solution*, 11 15.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, 15 16.

according to Butt, “to reconstruct the Irish nation...to re-form the broken and scattered elements of Irish society.”⁵⁴

“The value of free parliamentary institutions” was, according to Butt, “not to be measured even by the amount of good government which they may directly produce.” Their “highest and their noblest function” was “to be found in their encouragement of public spirit, in their training of the sentiments of independence, of self-reliance, and of national pride, which are the only real Reparations for good government, and which insure it.” Irish people “will learn to manage” their own affairs only exercising self-government in a national parliament, “in which national sentiment will find its expression,” and “in which Irishmen, when they differ, will be forced to discuss their differences with the consciousness that it is only Ireland, their common country, that must arbitrate between them.”

Self-government would educate the Irish people in “national dignity and mutual self-respect,” in the same way as it did for Ireland “in the years that followed 1782,” as it had been “for the Italian republics in the middle ages,” and “for Belgium since 1831.” The passage “from a State of dependence to self-government...would stimulate all enterprise, nerve every industry, and give impetus to every improvement...elevate every man in the community, and, in giving him a pride in his country, it would give him a new power to serve his country and himself.” “Give to Ireland free Parliamentary institutions,” Butt claimed, “and whatever be deficient in our constitution, a public opinion enlightened and a public sentiment kindled by these institutions, will soon learn to supply.”⁵⁵

Butt’s plan appealed to Catholics, who by autumn 1870 outnumbered Protestants in the Committee of the Home Government Association, which in 1873 called a National Conference to discuss a common strategy to achieve self-government, with adoption of federal home rule as a final goal. The Home Rule League which emerged from the Conference was a ‘broad church’ organization, asking members to subscribe to self-government, leaving them free to advocate other causes. Justin Huntley McCarthy—a Parnellite parliamentary candidate and son of John, the Irish party vice-Chairman—argued in 1885 that the Home Rule League “did not want Grattan’s Parliament. They wanted something much more. Grattan’s Parliament would never satisfy the lost aspirations of an awakened Nationality.” They wanted instead “a Parliament suited for a free Catholic country.”⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Patricia Jalland, *The Liberals and Ireland: The Ulster Question in British Politics to 1914* (Brighton: 1980), 42 3; Butt, *Irish Federalism*, viii, 55, 56.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, 38 39.

⁵⁶ *The Freemans Journal*, 4 Feb. 1879; *Newry Reporter*, 26 Nov. 1885.

7. Charles Parnell and Gladstone's Home Rule Bill

Butt's principle of "self-government, in union with England," became the expression of a political design as soon as it received backing from Irish nationalism, expressed by Charles Stewart Parnell. "We cannot ask for less than the restitution of Grattan's Parliament, with its important privileges and wide and far-reaching constitution," Parnell claimed in 1885. The "progress of Ireland's nationhood" depended on the determination of Irish people "to obtain for Ireland the fullest measure of her rights," since nobody could "fix the boundary to the march of a nation."⁵⁷

It was the Catholic initiative for mass action and the Fenian call for a republic, which persuaded Gladstone to act. The weakness of Irish social cohesion, and the lack of self-governing institutions, brought to Westminster the social and political representation of conflicting interests, influencing the British political struggle at large. The conflict between Irish Catholics and Protestants, landlords and tenants, aggravated in fact the dimension of social conflict in Great Britain.⁵⁸

Gladstone felt "oppressed day and night with the condition of Ireland, with the sad and painful spectacle it exhibits to the world." "For our purpose & duty," Gladstone was determined "to endeavour to draw a line between the Fenians & the people of Ireland, & to make the people of Ireland indisposed to cross it."⁵⁹

Gladstone's sympathy for Irish self-government brought him to state, during his only visit to Ireland in 1877, that he was

persuaded that we are at one in holding that these three kingdoms should be one nation in the face of the world...and that an Imperial Parliament should give effect to that principle in all things that fell legitimately within its scope....I do not believe that anything has contributed...to the solidity of British institutions as the fact that the people are trained politically in the habits of self government, that they understand political rights and understand political duty, and understanding the relations which prevail

⁵⁷ From a speech delivered in Cork by Charles Stewart Parnell, 21 Jan. 1885, *The Times*, 22 Jan. 1885.

⁵⁸ Lord Spencer's support for home rule was an additional factor which persuaded Gladstone to act in 1885. John MacCarthy, a supporter of Butt movement, in 1871 expected from federalism "the most important practical advantages to the various interests which under the present system, are either neglected or injuriously affected," quoted in John George MacCarthy, *A Plea for the Home Government of Ireland* (London: 1871), 85.

⁵⁹ Quoted in H. C. G. Matthew ed., *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. 7 (Oxford: 1982), 158.

between right on the one side and duty on the other, they carry with them a talisman which is a safeguard in the main and in the long run invaluable against those dangers which have threatened and those mischiefs which have lacerated other great nations.⁶⁰

Gladstone's support for home rule, giving the Irish self-governing institutions, aimed to appease the Irish, and to settle the Anglo-Irish conflict. Gladstone's intentions, as stated in an election address of 17 September 1885, were "to maintain the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and all the authority of Parliament necessary for the conservations of that unity," while granting to "portions of the country...enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs." This was not, Gladstone concluded "a source of danger but a means of advertising it", and was "in the nature of a new guarantee for increased cohesion, happiness and strength."⁶¹

Gladstone's quasi-federal 1886 home rule scheme was designed in conformity with Parnell's ideas, contemplating the restoration of the Irish Parliament under conditions which would have prevented the difficulties which arose in 1782. In granting a number of symbolic and largely rhetorical concessions to the Irish, Gladstone put forward a scheme which looked radical but was essentially conservative and imperial. Assisted by Bryce, Gladstone brought together a simplified version of Grattan's Parliament with the devolutionary model applied to regions by the British North America Act. The scheme had the advantage, from the British point of view, that Ireland like Canada would not send any MPs to Westminster, emancipating the British Parliament for the conduct of Imperial and British business only.

Gladstone's devolutionary plan was then surpassed by Joseph Chamberlain's scheme for a British federation, to which Gladstone's Home Rule Bill was claimed to be just an anticipation. Chamberlain was initially in favour of granting Ireland just some degree of self-government, but over the question of the creation of a completely independent Irish Parliament he broke with Gladstone and the Liberal party. His initial suggestion was to achieve the decongestion of Westminster through the creation of "Country Boards" (responsible for the management of British affairs) and "National Councils" (responsible for the affairs of England,

⁶⁰ E. D. Steele, *Irish Land and British Politics: Tenant Right and Nationality, 1865 1870* (Cambridge: 1974), 2; *The Freemans Journal*, 26 Jan. 1874; *The Times*, 8 Nov. 1877.

⁶¹ Butt, *Home Government for Ireland*; David Thornley, *Isaac Butt and Home Rule* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1964), 98 9. On Gladstone's plan, see Sir Wemyss Reid ed., *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone* (London: 1899), 698.

Ireland, Scotland and Wales) on a devolutionary basis, leaving therefore Westminster sovereign in the last instance. But this had met little support throughout the country, particularly in Ireland.

As it became apparent that Gladstone was prepared to go a long way off and grant Ireland home rule, Chamberlain launched the adoption for the United Kingdom of the American Constitution. He suggested the creation of distinct legislatures for England, Scotland, Wales, Ulster and the rest of Ireland, dealing with domestic affairs, and a federal legislature responsible for foreign and Imperial affairs, with a Supreme Court as constitutional guarantee for the implementation of the federal compact. Chamberlain was a leading figure of the radical wing of the Liberal Party, and opposed Gladstone's scheme since he feared that it would produce the alienation of Ireland from Great Britain. Chamberlain also aimed, according to Rembold, to "dish the Whigs and challenge Gladstone's position as party leader."⁶²

The contradictions in Gladstone's scheme were inherent in the questions of parliamentary sovereignty and taxation. Since initially he decided to exclude Irish representatives from the Westminster Parliament—while asking the Irish to contribute to Imperial defence and foreign policy without a transfer of the income of custom and excise duties to the proposed Irish Parliament—he, in fact, produced, according to Kendle, a "hybrid colonial-federal plan that had inherent and pervasive weakness." The Irish were therefore treated on a different basis from the English, Scottish and Welsh—who were financially contributing to the conduct of Imperial affairs and represented at Westminster—and from the self-governing colonies, which were not represented at Westminster. Moreover, they had full control of taxation and did not contribute to Imperial responsibilities and liabilities. The inevitable failure of Gladstone's 1886 plan—as well as of his 1893 plan—left the way open to

⁶² Kendle, *Ireland and the Federal Solution*, 24 31, 39 40. For a discussion, see: Richard Jay, *Joseph Chamberlain: A Political Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); id., "Nationalism, Federalism and Ireland," in *Federalism and Nationalism*, Murray Forsyth ed. (New York: St Martin's Press, 1989), 209 49; Travis L. Crosby, *Joseph Chamberlain: A Most Radical Imperialist* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 170 171; Elfie Rembold, "'Home Rule All Round': Experiments in Regionalising Great Britain, 1886 1914," in *Political Reform in Britain, 1886 1996: Themes, Ideas, Policies*, Ulrike Jordan and Wolfram Kaiser eds. (Bochum: Universitätsverlag N. Brockmeyer, 1997), 170 171; Wolfgang Mock, "'The Function of Race' in Imperialist Ideologies: The Example of Joseph Chamberlain," in *Nationalist and Racialist Movements in Britain and Germany Before 1914*, Paul Kennedy and Anthony Nicholls eds., (London and Basingstoke: 1981), 190 203.

just a devolutionary ‘home rule all round’. In the place of self-governing legislatures with a clear allocation of sovereignty, as demanded by the Irish Nationalists—but also by the Scottish and to a lesser degree by the Welsh—there were created, Kendle observed, local institutions with enhanced administrative and legislative powers, delegated by Westminster, within a unitarian system of government.⁶³

The rejection in 1896 by the House of Lords of Gladstone’s second Home Rule Bill brought the Conservatives back to power for a decade and a general unwinding of the debate on home rule and Imperial federation. The Imperial Federation League—as will be discussed later—had ceased to exist as an independent organization in 1893, and advocates of a federal solution such as Lord Thring, Lord Brassey, J. A. Murray Macdonald, a number of Scottish Liberal MPs and the young David Lloyd George, remained without an organized political backing. They remained isolated voices, while the paralysis of Westminster continued and, according to Thomas Alfred Spalding, author of the first scholarly study on Imperial federation, the contradiction of advocating “a federal government under the guise of unity” was becoming more and more apparent.⁶⁴

⁶³ For a contemporary debate on home rule for Scotland, see: W. Scott Dalglish, “Scotland’s Version of Home Rule,” *Nineteenth Century*, (1883), 14 26; Arthur D. Elliot, “Home Rule for Scotland,” *Nineteenth Century*, (1886), 466 75; [Anon.], “Home Rule for Scotland,” *Scottish Review*, 8, (1886), 1 20; W. Mitchell, “Scotland and Home Rule,” *Scottish Review*, 11, (1888), 323 46; W. Wallace, “Nationality and Home Rule, Irish and Scottish,” *Scottish Review*, 12, (1888), 171 87; B. D. MacKenzie, “Home Rule for Scotland,” *Westminster Review*, 12, (1889), 553 65. For scholarly debate, see: Kendle, *Ireland and the Federal Solution*, 57 85. On Wales, see: G. Osborne Morgan, “Welsh Nationality,” *Contemporary Review*, (1888), 84 93; id., “The New Round Table: Home Rule for Wales,” *Westminster Review*, 133, (1890), 394 416; Kendle, *Federal Britain*, 61. Joseph Chamberlain proposed in April 1886 a federation for the United Kingdom to solve the Irish problem, Nicholas Mansergh, *Ireland in the Age of Reform and Revolution: A Commentary on Anglo Irish Relations and on Political Forces in Ireland, 1840 1921* (London: 1940), 150.

⁶⁴ Lord Thring, “Home Rule and Imperial Unity,” *Contemporary Review*, 51, (1887), 305 26; T. A. Brassey, “Imperial Government,” in *Problems of Empire: Papers and Addresses of the Ho. T. A. Brassey* (London: Longmans, 1904), 1 13; id., “Federal Government for the United Kingdom and the Empire,” *Nineteenth Century*, (1901), 190 201. On Lloyd George’s early Welsh home rule attitude, see: D. Savage, “‘The Parnell of Wales has become the Chamberlain of England’: Lloyd George and the Irish Question,” *Journal of British Studies*, 12, (1972); David Lloyd George, “National Self government for Wales,” *Young Wales*, 1, (1895), 231 40; Thomas Alfred Spalding, *Federation and the Empire: A Study in Politics* (London: 1896), 19 20. See also Edward Salmon, “Imperial Federation:

This contradiction is evident in the same words which Macdonald used in a letter to *The Times* on 19 September 1904. He acknowledged the fact that the United States were a “true federation” and candidly admitted that the “loosely use of the words ‘federal’ and ‘federation’ in relations to suggested changes in the machinery of our Constitution,” was “for convenience.” “No One,” he sharply stated, “has ever suggested that we should in these changes follow the lines of a true federal system.” The British case was “the very reverse”: “The Imperial authority, under any scheme of devolution would be the delegating authority, and would remain, after the delegation had taken effect, as absolutely and as completely supreme as it had been before.” It would retain the right “of refusing assent to measures passed by the Colonial Legislatures”, and would never “deprive itself of concurrent legislative power on any matter within the legislative jurisdiction of the National Legislatures.” The Imperial authority would be “absolutely unfettered in its power of determining whether any action of a National Legislature interfered with Imperial interest, and of dealing with that action either by legislation or by administration, or by both, as freely and as fully as Imperial interests required.”⁶⁵

British federalism is, according to Boyce, “an Irish invention.” It was a means “of pushing power out from the centre to the Celtic fringe...uniting the fringe with the centre, through a uniform constitutional plan.” Federalism won converts, Boyce observed, “not because it was a practicable solution to British, Irish and Imperial governmental issues, but because it offered the parties good arguments against their opponents.” Federalism did not enter into the British political agenda, because it divided internally Liberals and Unionists alike, weakening them in front of the “enemy, while not as yet promising a real and acceptable solution to the Irish question.”⁶⁶

Irish federalism, Boyce remarked, was not “really a matter of dividing powers and establishing institutions for the sake of good government.” In the end it was “a political problem and...a very explosive one indeed. It raised the question of British and Irish nationhood.” With the restoration of “ancient glories,” and the creation of an Irish nation “once again, via

The Condition of Progress, *Fortnightly Review*, 74, (1900): 1009 19. For a survey, see D. Boyce ed., *The Crisis of British Power: The Imperial and Naval Papers of the Second Earl of Selborne, 1895 1910* (London: 1990).

⁶⁵ J. A. Murray Macdonald, “The Liberal Party and Imperial Federation,” *Contemporary Review*, 7, (1900): 644 55.

⁶⁶ George Boyce, *Federalism and the Irish Question*, in *The Federal Idea*, Bosco, vol. 1, 119, 129.

federalism...the role and problem of the Protestant minority, especially that strong regional minority in the north, would become acute, and possibly destabilizing.”⁶⁷

The unsettled Irish question continued however to represent a major political issue in Great Britain, and to poison British political life, until the first decade of the Twentieth century, when its solution became impossible to delay.

8. *Federalism and the debate on reform of Imperial relations*

Various proposals for strengthening and maintaining the unity of the Empire were put forward from the 1820s, but only in the 1850s were they referable to a new and definite school of thought, which openly advocated the creation of an Imperial federation as the only possible viable alternative to Imperial disintegration and the end of Great Britain as leading world power. The first call for an Imperial ‘confederation’ in order to promote a better and more stable Imperial defence was raised in the *Westminster Review* in 1852. In fact, a mere advisory Council, composed of colonial representatives, British ministers and civil servants, was suggested. A proposal for the creation of an “Imperial Senate” as the legislative organ of an “Imperial Federation” was launched by an anonymous writer the following year, in the *London Quarterly Review*. In order to survive, the Empire needed a constitutional reform, embodying “organic laws” able to give political representation to “the real British provinces,” i.e. colonies capable of self-government, excluding “Plantations”—the West Indies and Mauritius—“subject countries”—India and Ceylon—and “Stations,” Gibraltar and St Helena. The United Kingdom, the writer suggested, should have merged “in the greater and juster [*sic*] idea of the British Empire.”⁶⁸

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, 212 17.

⁶⁸ [Anon.], “Our Colonial Empire,” *Westminster Review*, 58, 114, (1852): 214 34; [Anon.], “Our Australian Possessions,” *London Quarterly Review*, 1, (1853): 517 57; W. A. Forbes, “Imperial Federation,” *London Quarterly Review*, 64, (1885), 320 35. For a discussion on the debate on Imperial federation, see: Keith Sinclair, *Imperial Federation: A Study of New Zealand Policy and Opinion* (London: Athlone Press, 1955); Ged Martin, “Empire Federalism and Imperial Parliamentary Union, 1820 1870,” *Historical Journal*, 16, 1, (1973): 65 92; id., “The Idea of ‘Imperial Federation’,” in *Reappraisals in British Imperial History*, Ronald Hyam and Ged Martin eds. (London: Macmillan, 1975), 121 38. The term ‘Imperial federation’ was first used in 1853 by William Arthur, a Wesleyan clergyman, and

The debate on the future of the Empire, in Great Britain and the colonies, intensified as a consequence of the decision by Gladstone's First Government (1868-74) to withdraw troops from the colonies and not to back new colonial ventures. Auberon Herbert, MP for Nottingham and leading anarchist, proposed to divide the House of Commons into an "Imperial" and a "Provincial House," to deal respectively with Imperial and domestic affairs, on the base of British constituencies only. The question of the size of the constituencies raised crucial issues, since it addressed the fundamental question of the hegemonic influence of England in Imperial and domestic affairs. The question of Imperial reconstruction was, according to Herbert, an unavoidable "national instinct" of survival, and it touched

the minds of men, even if they are only a handful in the crowd...feeling confident that a cause which appeals to our wisest and noblest patriotism, must eventually triumph over an opposition that finds its stronghold in the instinct of provincial selfishness.⁶⁹

"Something ought to be done," warned in 1870 Herman Merivale, former Permanent Under-secretary at the Colonial Office, to prevent the disintegration of the Empire. The problem was that since the Westminster Parliament was still "politically omnipotent," it could not "possibly abdicate its own omnipotence." The application of the federal idea to the Empire "would involve too great a change in our general institutions," which had evolved so strongly unitarian, to expect such a revolution to happen by itself.⁷⁰

With the creation of the Canadian federation it became apparent that some new institutional link had to be found with the United Kingdom in order to prevent complete independence of the former colonies, and therefore the breaking-up of the Empire. Aware of this crucial issue, Arthur Mill observed in 1869 that the British had "to fear, and if possible to guard against" the "constant peril of a three-fold conflict of authority, implied in the very existence of a federation of dependencies, retaining, as now proposed, any considerable share of inter-colonial independence." It was not enough, according to Mill, to define the limits of the Imperial and

it entered public debate after 1871, to encompass the idea of closer union of the constituent parts of the Empire. In late 1870s it was widely used in the debates at the Royal Colonial Institute and in periodicals and pamphlets of mid Victorian literature.

⁶⁹ Auberon Herbert, "The Canadian Confederation," *Fortnightly Review*, 7, (1876): 480-90.

⁷⁰ Herman Merivale, "The Colonial Question in 1870," *Fortnightly Review*, 13, (1870): 152-75.

domestic legislatures. The success and “permanence of a constitution, necessarily clogged with checks and counterpoises,” had eventually to depend on “the accuracy and sharpness with which the prerogatives of the federal executive are defined...the concurrent authority of both governments,” and to equitably adjust “financial disabilities.” Since “the essence of all good government” was “to have somewhere a true sovereign power,” and therefore the federal government should be “armed with a sovereignty which may be worthy of the name,” it was apparently impossible to keep for ever as a dependency within the British Empire a newly formed federation, which would otherwise eventually seek complete independence in the conduct of economic and foreign affairs.⁷¹

The need for the existence in Great Britain and the colonies of an organized movement of opinion supporting publicly the federal idea was advocated in 1871 by Edward Jenkins in the *Contemporary Review*, a magazine which gave prominence to the debate on the future of the Empire. “At present it is for the Federalist,” Jenkins observed, not to put forward any detailed plan for federation, but “simply to show his doctrine to be reasonable, his suggestions to be *primâ-facie* practical, his system to be desirable, and to demonstrate that it deserves to be made the subject of a united conference and negotiation.” “The leading object of pure Federalism” was, according to Jenkins, “to secure for each party to the federal compact the utmost independence in its own affairs, while it aims at combining into one central authority such forces as are best adapted to secure the common welfare and common defence.” Federalism was the antidote to “overpowering and centralized despotism” in the domestic life, while producing abroad “a single and serried front.” If applied within the United Kingdom, it would “let the Irish people manage their domestic affairs for themselves,” with the “re-establishment of a provincial government” with limited but real powers, “as Federalism must necessarily leave them.” The federal principle appeared “capable of embodiment in a form at once promoting unity, protecting personal liberty, and fostering local independence,” while in enlarging the scope of Imperial splendour, it gave “strength to the play of Imperial loyalty.”⁷²

The increasing congestion of parliamentary affairs and the growing demand for Irish home rule brought the matter of separation of domestic from imperial, foreign and military policies to the forefront of political debate. The question was the size and nature of parliamentary representation and control. The United Kingdom had still, by far, a demographic

⁷¹ Arthur Mill, “Our Colonial Policy,” *Contemporary Review*, 11, (1869): 216-39.

⁷² Edward Jenkins, “Imperial Federalism,” *Contemporary Review*, 16, (1871): 165-88; id., “An Imperial Confederation,” *ibidem*, 17, (1871): 60-79.

preponderance against the white colonies, and England exercised, within it, a hegemonic role since its creation in 1707. The English would never have accepted loss of control over their own interests at home and abroad, or even negotiation with the Scottish, the Welsh, the Irish and the self-governing colonies a significant redistribution of representation and power. The political recognition and safeguard of Scottish nationality would “not only be just to Scotland,” W. Scott Dalgleish pointed out, but would also “strengthen the Empire of which Scotland forms an integral part.”⁷³

The separation of local, national and Imperial policy did not just have the advantage of relieving the congestion of Westminster, but the creation of an “imperial federated democracy” would also, according to an anonymous writer in the *Westminster Review* in 1880, mark the indivisibility of “the questions of Empire and citizenship.” “If we want to maintain our Empire,” he far-sightedly observed,

we must maintain and advocate our citizenship; if we want to maintain and advance our citizenship, we must maintain our Empire. Within we must adjust our Empire according to the preparedness of the races whom we rule, to rise from subjects into citizens. Our colonists and colonies everywhere must be regarded as the complement of citizenship and Empire.⁷⁴

The fact that the colonists, British citizens “of our own race, lineage and language,” remained “to this day unrepresented as if they were aliens” was, according to J. N. Dalton, writing in 1884 on the *Nineteenth Century*, absolutely unacceptable and, in the long run, a source of development of nationalism and centrifugal forces at the periphery of Empire. “The jealous care of national sovereignty,” George Baden-Powell remarked in 1884, at a speech at the Royal Colonial Institute established in 1868, would have produced, both in the United Kingdom and the colonies a trend towards the consolidation of “national unity” at home and Imperial fragmentation at the periphery. The “tendency and spirit of British developments” appeared therefore “fully in accord with the development of national as opposed to Federal union.” History was in fact showing that there was “a completeness and finality in National unions.” Federal unions seemed “mere historic stepping-stones from separate independent existence to national unity.”⁷⁵

⁷³ W. Scott Dalgleish, “Scotland’s Version of Home Rule,” *Nineteenth Century*, 13, (1883): 14 26.

⁷⁴ [Anon.], “Imperium et Libertas,” *Westminster Review*, 223, (1880): 43 52.

⁷⁵ George Baden Powell, “National Unity,” *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, 16, (1884 5): 43 94.

Intervening in the debate the same year, Sir Charles Adderley, a former Under-secretary at the Colonial Office during the Conservative Administration of 1866-1868, joined Baden-Powell in criticising the proposed federal reform of British institutions:

There is about as much chance of the English people turning their ancient Parliamentary system into such a Constitution, as of their deliberately restoring feudalism or the Heptarchy...A Minister coming down to the House with a proposal for abolishing Parliament, and issuing writs for a Federal Congress, would be immediately consigned to Bedlam.⁷⁶

Francis de Labilliere—who would become a prominent figure of the Imperial Federation League—at a lecture at the Royal Colonial Institute the following year, counterbalanced the negative approach of Baden-Powell with a militant declaration of faith:

Imperial Federation will consolidate, organize, crown, the greatest colonizing achievement the world has ever seen or can ever see. It will be the noblest union of free men, of self governing communities, who, by their own free will, will find themselves in one indissoluble, world wide nationality, under one flag, under one sceptre, in order that they may enjoy the greatest blessing of security, power and peace.

Intervening in the debate following the lecture, Sir Frederick Young observed that since it was a “great national question,” it was worthy of “a sort of roving Royal Commission” on the example of Lord Durham’s mission to Canada in 1838, enquiring among representatives of the economic and political life of the self-governing colonies about the feasibility of the project.⁷⁷

In order to be realized, Sir George Ferguson Bowen pointed out at a lecture at the Royal Colonial Institute in 1886, that federation had to “proceed primarily from the Colonies”, and that without “their previous and full consent,” any attempt at achieving it was doomed to failure. If somebody asked what was meant by Imperial federation, Henry Thring observed in 1886 in *Nineteenth Century* that the answer would be that it was “a matter of detail and the inquiry itself indicated a ‘parochial mind’ in the inquirer”, and a hostility to federalism. If the question was about federalism, the answer would have been to take the Constitution of the United States as a model: “there will be found both principles and details capable of being adapted to a system of Imperial Federation.” The conclusion of Thring was that it was dangerous to enunciate principles “in

⁷⁶ Sir Charles Adderley, “Imperial Federation: Its Impossibility,” *The Nineteenth Century*, 16, (Sept. 1884): 505-516.

⁷⁷ F. de Labilliere, “Imperial Federation,” *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, 17, (1885-6): 319-42.

which all men concur under guise of something new and unusual,” and adding to those enunciations “loose hints of schemes which were incapable of realization,” because it would have achieved an opposite result.⁷⁸

The self-governing colonies seemed however reluctant to surrender to a central federal authority some of the powers which they had very recently and hardly won. The significant distances, which separated an Empire otherwise united by the seas, were moreover not yet overcome by the steam engine and the telegraph. The raising of revenues and their allocation in a policy of redistribution appeared as a crucial question. The hegemonic position of the United Kingdom within the suggested federal institutions was seen, by non-British citizens of the Empire, as a powerful deterrent from pushing the matter further. The fear of the periphery of becoming involved, unwillingly, in Imperial wars and Continental European entanglement resulted in rejecting forms of colonial direct association in managing Imperial affairs at the legislative and executive levels. The British, on their side, feared the loss of their total control of Parliamentary affairs. The vertical and horizontal division of powers of the federal government would have moreover weakened the authority of the executive.

The abandonment of the British constitutional tradition of an unwritten and therefore flexible Constitution for a rigid written federal compact would have alienated the vast majority of the Conservative party, and also of the newly formed Labour party, more interested in social rather than constitutional reforms. Fears of paralysis of the federal executive, having to be subjected to the judiciary in any circumstance it might be called into question, appeared overwhelming to the decision-making élites of the United Kingdom. A federal Parliament would be directly influenced by representatives of regions of the world remote from the centre of European power politics, and therefore it would prevent Great Britain from continuing to play its traditional role in the European balance of power. Instead of being a factor for closer union, federalism could turn into a threat to the unity of the Empire.

The problem of the place and role of India, still a long way off from dominion status, within the suggested Imperial federation remained

⁷⁸ Sir George Ferguson Bowen, “The Federation of the British Empire,” *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, 17, (1885 6): 281 315; Henry Thring, “The Fallacy of ‘Imperial Federation’,” *Nineteenth Century*, 19, (1886): 22 34. See also Samuel Wilson, “A Scheme for Imperial Federation,” *Nineteenth Century*, 17, (1885), 590 8; W. A. Forbes, “Imperial Federation,” *London Quarterly Review*, 64, (1885): 320 35.

unsolved. The Empire could not afford to lose India and other Dependencies for the sake of federalism. Instead of promoting a higher degree of democracy and prosperity, the federal system was seen as an instrument for the conservation of economic and political privileges all around the Empire. In order to foster economic and social reforms, a centralized government seemed to serve the purpose in a much more efficient and reliable way.

British economic interests were often divergent from those of the colonies, which were largely based on agricultural products, and were at an earlier stage in the industrial revolution. The creation of a more integrated internal market would have produced a division of labour within the federation, and fostered production and exchanges of goods, but it would have largely prevented the Dominions from adopting independent commercial policies according to their geo-political interests. A federal union would undoubtedly have increased the concentration of capital in the City of London, strengthening its financial worldwide leadership, by draining resources from the periphery to the centre. The relocation of financial burdens and responsibilities would have transferred financial burdens from British taxpayers to those of the former colonies. The federation was generally seen, on the economic and financial level, as an immense gain for the British, and an overall loss for the former colonies.⁷⁹

Officials at the Colonial Office were well aware that federalism would require them to manage a revolutionary approach to the question of self-government of the colonies and their relations with the London Government. Studying the American model, they tried to advise the decision makers in Whitehall, Westminster and Downing Street about the potentials but also the weaknesses of the federal system. The strength of federalism was identified by the Colonial Office as achieving unity “while protecting and ensuring both diversity and democracy.” The weakness was

⁷⁹ For a contemporary discussion on the constitutional reforms of the Empire, see: George R. Parkin, *Imperial Federation: The Problem of National Unity* (London: Macmillan, 1892); F. de Labilliere, *Federal Britain: Or, Unity and Federation of the Empire* (London: Sampson Low Marston and Company, 1894). For scholarly study, see: Seymour Ching Yuan Cheng, *Schemes for the Federation of the British Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), 227–49. The League was unable to solve the question of India within the proposed federation, S. R. Mehrotra, “Imperial Federation and India, 1868–1917,” *Journal of Comparative Political Studies*, 1, 1, (1961): 29–40. The Dominions were generally reluctant to share with Britain the control of India and other Dependencies, and this was, according to Kylie, the “real crux” of the Indian question, (Kylie to Kerr, 16 Oct. 1910, RTP, Kylie file).

that federal institutions seemed “cumbersome,” and a possible source of conflicts “in the division of political powers and the apportionment of financial obligations.” In fact, federalism could work only if legislature represented “the principle of population as well as of State sovereignty.” Conflicts between the federal and State governments could be avoided only “by making out for each an exclusive field of jurisdiction.”⁸⁰

9. The Imperial Federation League

Federalism entered into the forefront of British political debate however only in 1884, with the creation of the Imperial Federation League. For almost a decade federalism gained an increasing support among the British public as the most suitable institutional model to achieve closer Imperial union between Britain and her white self-governing colonies. The League was active between 1884 and 1893, sponsoring numerous publications and promoting the creation in 1887, as a result of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886, of the Imperial Institute, a centre for research on the economic, industrial, and social development of the populations of the Empire.

Aiming to “secure by federation the permanent unity of the Empire,” as stated at the Inaugural Conference held at the London Westminster Palace Hotel on 29 July 1884, the League offered membership to any British citizen at the annual registration fee of one shilling. The participants to the Conference included, above long standing advocates of the federal scheme such as Francis de Labilliere, Frederick Young, Sir Charles Clifford, and William Westgarth, prominent representatives from the Liberal and Conservatives parties such as Lord Rosebery and the Marquis of Normanby (former Governor of Nova Scotia, Queensland, New Zealand, and Victoria); the MPs James Bryce, Joseph Cowen, Sir Henry Holland, Serjeant Simon, W. H. Smith, and Sir Eardley Wilmot. The colonies were represented by D’Alton McCarthy (Canadian Conservative MP), Oliver Mowatt (Premier of Ontario), Sir Charles Tupper (Canadian High Commissioner in London), William Gisborne of New Zealand, and by two Agents General, Captain Charles Mills of Cape Colony, and Sir Saul Samuel of New South Wales.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Gibson, “The Colonial Office,” 292; “Minute on a Federal Government for the Australian Colonies,” 8 May 1857, COP, CO 201/500, ff. 289-94.

⁸¹ William Edward Forster, Chairman at the Conference, preached the gospel of a “complete and equal and perfect federation,” and recorded in his diary the event as a “real success.” *The Times* referred to the July Conference as “sign of the times.” In the late summer of 1885 Forster wrote enthusiastically that the movement was

In his opening remarks W. E. Forster, Chairman of the Conference, explained that

in using the word ‘federation’ we do not by any means bind ourselves to a particular form of federal parliament. It may be effected by representation in the Imperial Parliament or it may be by a Council of Representatives of the Colonies. We want to convey the notion that ultimately, hereafter, there must be a union, in some way or other, of England with her colonies, on terms of perfect equality to the Colonies as well as to England, and I do not know any word which will better express that notion than the word ‘federation’.

Foster admitted that it would take “years before we arrive at some conclusion” about a specific plan, and that for the time being “it would be most unwise to take the thing into our own hands at once and to sketch out any particular plan.” The main object of the League’s campaign was, according to Foster, to educate public opinion according to the agreed aims of the organization:

1. That the object of the League be to secure by federation the permanent unity of the Empire; 2. That no scheme of federation should interfere with the existing rights of local parliaments as regards local affairs; 3. That any scheme of Imperial Federation should combine on an equitable basis the resources of the Empire for the maintenance of common interests, and adequately provide for an organized defence of common rights; 4. That the League use every constitutional means to bring about the object for which it was formed, and invite the support of men from all political parties. 5. That the establishment of periodical Conferences of Representatives of the Self Governing Communities of the Empire should be the first aim of the Imperial Federation League.⁸²

The second Conference took place at the Westminster Palace Hotel on 18 November of the same year, and was attended by one hundred and twenty-three participants, including eighteen British MPs and several prominent colonial figures such as the Canadian Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir Charles Tupper—Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and future Prime Minister—the former New Zealand Prime Minister Sir William Fox, the Agent General for New Zealand Sir Francis Dillon Bell, the Agent General for South Australia Sir Arthur Blyth, the Agent General for Queensland J. F. Garrick, and the Hon. J. X.

growing and that “the idea possesses men’s minds”, W. E. Forster, “Imperial Federation,” *The Nineteenth Century*, 17, (Feb. 1885): 201–218. Forster was born a Quaker and became a Liberal MP for a quarter of a century.

⁸² The last point was added at a special meeting of the General Council of the League on 14 November 1889.

Merriman, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Cape Colony. The Conference established as organs of the League a General and an Executive Committee, which included ninety-four members, of whom thirty-four were British MPs (twenty Liberals and fourteen Conservatives). Parliamentary support for the Imperial federation, especially within the Liberal party, opposed the Little Englanders' doctrines which had gained support in Britain before 1868.⁸³

Early schemes for Imperial federation had however been launched in Australia, rather than in Britain, in the 1840s, late 1860s, and early 1870s. The idea of an Imperial federation was seen as an alternative to rising Australian nationalism and radical republicanism. The first branch of the Australian Imperial Federation League was established in Melbourne Town Hall on 5 June 1885, "an outpost of Empire," in the belief that the "manifest destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race" would bring "civilisation and liberty wherever they go."⁸⁴

The objects were the same as those of the British League:

To secure by Federation the permanent unity of the Empire. That no scheme of Federation should interfere with the existing rights of Local Parliaments, as regards local affairs. That any scheme of Imperial Federation should combine on an equitable basis the resources of the Empire for the maintenance of common interests, and adequately provide for an organised defence of common rights.

The movement should not be directly involved in party politics but single politicians were admitted as members.⁸⁵

Melbourne was the first and strongest branch of the League, being Australia's financial, economic and political centre, from which the question of vulnerability to foreign attack was more acutely perceived than in Sydney, where the presence of the Royal Naval Squadron gave to New

⁸³ *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, 11, (1884): 90-132. Sir Thomas Brassey (later Lord Brassey) was an intimate of Milner and in 1895 was appointed Governor of Victoria, playing an important role in the creation of the Australian federation in 1900. Brassey had been treasurer and an active member of the League. Among the supporters of the League was George Goschen, who was close to the Cecil family, and he appointed Milner as his private secretary.

⁸⁴ C. S. Blackton, "Australian Nationality and Nationalism: The Imperial Federationist Interlude, 1885-1899," *Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand*, 7, 25, (Nov. 1955): 1-2.

⁸⁵ Imperial Federation League, Victorian Branch, *Addresses Etc., 1885-1909* (Melbourne: 1909), La Trobe Library, Melbourne, 3-4; C. A. Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism* (London: 1960), 205.

South Wales a different awareness of the question of security, delaying the establishment of a branch of the League.

Alfred Deakin and Henry D'Esterre Taylor, founding members of the Australian Native Association (ANA), played a leading role in advocating both Australian federation and closer Imperial union. Other ANA members were active supporters of the League, in the conviction that Australian interests would be better served within the Empire. By 1890 both the League and the ANA were directly involved in the Australian federation movement, seen as "a great stride upwards to the wider union of the Empire." The Australian League contributed to the British League with many wealthy Australian-born expatriates, and British colonists who returned to England from Australia.⁸⁶

With the creation of the League and the formation of 31 branches throughout the country, and in Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand—totalling over 2,000 members—the British federalists had a formidable instrument with which to launch a political offensive both at home and on the Imperial front, at a time of acute Anglo-Irish crisis and growing Anglo-German rivalry. The League did not however have a single view and strategy to convey. Its followers were drawn mostly from academic and political circles—mainly liberal-minded—and were therefore inclined to express their views with a strong independence of mind. According to a leading figure, Labilliere, its followers resorted to federalism "simply because it is the most convenient word we can find to represent the idea we have in view—the idea of some organization which shall efficiently give us that which we want to maintain—the strength and security of the Empire."⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Taylor was a League delegate to the crucial ANA Corowa Conference in 1893. M. Aveling, "A History of the Australian Natives Association, 1871 1900," (PhD diss., Monash University, 1970), 207, 230; L. Foster, "The Imperial Federation League in Victoria after Australian Federation," (BA honours diss., Monash University, 1979), 6; John La Nauze, *Alfred Deakin: A Biography* (Melbourne: 1965), vol. 2, 477.

⁸⁷ *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, 12, (1885): 346 391. Between 1885 and 1892 thirty one branches were established in England and Scotland. In the colonies branches were created in Australia, New Zealand, Cape Town, Barbados, British Guiana and Canada, where from 1887 to 1891 the idea of Imperial Federation, as opposed to the attraction towards the United States, won increasing support, expanding the number of its branches to thirty one.

10. *Edward Freeman and the League*

Freeman was the first who understood the contradiction in terms of the concept of 'imperial federation', and showed its intrinsic weakness. Freeman's attack on the League was launched in the article "Imperial Federation," which appeared in the April 1885 issue of *MacMillan's Magazine*. "First, there is the name," Freeman observed, then there is the thing." The name was "altogether meaningless, or rather" it was "a contradiction in terms." "What is 'Imperial'," Freeman pointed out, could not "be 'federal', and...what is 'federal' could not be 'Imperial'."

The union between the colonies and the mother country was, Freeman argued, not voluntary, and the colonies were not independent States maintaining some powers for themselves and granting other powers to a central authority of their own creation. Britain was such central authority, existing before the colonies, which were exercising certain powers granted to them. A colony was a subject political unit which had a voice in foreign matters only through a process of devolution of powers, whereas an American State exercised a joint control, with the other member States in foreign affairs having pooled their sovereign powers in the federal authority. The British colonies had always been in a condition of subjection towards the mother country and they could exercise national sovereignty only through independence. On the contrary, the American States were independent before they chose federation and continued to exercise their sovereignty directly at the national level and indirectly at the federal one.⁸⁸

"Shall an 'Empire' break up," Freeman argued, addressing the fundamental issue at stake, "or shall it be changed into a federation?" It was not the case "of changing an imperfect federation into a perfect one," or "to change a lax confederation into a closer one," but "to bring in federation, as a perfectly new thing, where at present there is no federation, but its opposite, subjection." The League "proposed to bring in federation, not only as a perfectly new thing, but under circumstances utterly unlike those under which any of the present or past confederations of the world ever came into being," and acutely remarked:

The proposal that a ruling State...should come down from its position of Empire, and enter into terms of equal confederation with its subject communities, is a very remarkable proposal, one which has perhaps never before been made in the history of the world.

⁸⁸ Edward A. Freeman, "Imperial Federation," *MacMillan's Magazine*, (April 1885): 430.

In fact, “no ruling State,” Freeman observed, had “ever admitted its subject States into a federal relation”.⁸⁹

The British Empire had been built on the unitarian model and did not have any federal element within it:

There is no voluntary union of independent States, keeping some powers to themselves and granting other powers to a central authority of their own creation. There is instead a number of independent bodies, to which a central authority older than themselves has been graciously pleased to grant certain powers. This State of things is not federation, but...subjection.

The aim of the League seemed therefore completely against the course of history which saw the making and breaking-up of empires. The condition for creating a federation was that “certain States must agree to give up certain independent defined powers, foreign relations pre-eminently among them, to a central authority.” The States entering into this kind of agreement, “remaining independent” for certain purposes, ceased to be independent States “for certain other purposes.” Freeman could foresee that the introduction of federalism at the Imperial level with the creation of a federal parliament would necessarily bring about the break-up of the United Kingdom itself, since Scotland, Ireland and Wales would ask for home rule, with the creation of separate and independent local legislatures.

The federal principle was according to Freeman more applicable to England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales rather than the Empire, since their existence as former separate States, which under the spell of circumstances had chosen or were forced to choose the unitarian principle, allowed them to revise their form of union. Nationalist sentiment would have, however, accepted the application of the federal principle, with the creation of independent legislatures and executives, just as a transitional phase towards total independence. England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales would each have then sunk to the political condition of a Swiss canton or an American State.⁹⁰

Moreover, Imperial federalists, Freeman argued, did not take into account the question of Indian membership, India being “the choicest flower of the Empire, the brightest jewel in the Imperial crown,” completely under British rule, and having by itself a population exceeding all of the other

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, 435 436.

⁹⁰ Freeman, “Imperial Federation,” 440. Between 1886 and 1890 the federal idea was associated with nationalist and separatist forces in Ireland and Scotland, and to a lesser degree in Wales, see K. O. Morgan, *Wales in British Politics, 1868 1922* (Cardiff: 1970).

components of the British Empire. If federalism was applicable only to the white self-governing colonies, then all the rest of Empire—which represented the largest share of its population—had to be subjected to the United Kingdom and the white self-governing colonies. The eventual application of the federal principle to just a small portion of the Empire—populated only by the white race of Anglo-Saxon origins—leaving the rest to an Imperial arrangement, showed that federalism was not, by itself, a universal solution to the reform of Imperial relations. Also, he pointed out, “not one” Imperial federalist “in a thousand” had “ever stopped to think” what federation meant. It was, according to Freeman, a lost cause.⁹¹

The League would argue that India was not mature enough for self-government, and therefore British rule was legitimate. They forgot however to explain why federalism was applicable only to the white populations, and to say what kind of relationship they would envisage between the federation and the Dependencies when they reached maturity for self-government. In an Imperial Parliament which included India and other colonies of coloured populations and which attained self-government, a majority of Hindus or Muslims would have been able to outvote the white Anglo-Saxon peoples.⁹²

Writing to Bryce in December 1886, Freeman confirmed that Imperial federation seemed “to be not an intelligible proposal which one deems unjust or inexpedient, and therefore argued against, but a mere heap of vague, meaningless and contradictory phrases,” a “pure and mere babble in short.” “What is Imperial federation?,” Freeman asked:

Some say a federation of the British Empire, the Queen’s dominions, or something of that kind. That means a federation in which we all shall be outvoted by Hindoos and Mahometans. Some say (as if it meant the same thing) a federation of the English speaking people. That, indeed, gets rid of the barbarians; but it implies the partnership of the United States, which will hardly be got for an ‘imperial’ concern...In either case, the Kingdom of Great Britain and its Parliament will have to sink to the level of the State of Rhode Island and its Legislature.⁹³

⁹¹ Freeman, “Imperial Federation,” 430 45.

⁹² S. R. Mehrotra, “Imperial Federation and India, 1868 1917,” *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, 1, (1961): 29 40; F. Young, *Imperial Federation* (London: 1876), 64; id., *A Pioneer of Imperial Federation in Canada* (London: 1902), 148 149; F. Labilliere, “The Political Organisation of the Empire,” 14 June 1881, Paper read at the Royal Colonial Institute, 12, (1880 1881): 355 356.

⁹³ Freeman to Bryce, 16 Dec. 1886, BP, 7, ff. 256 258. This letter can also be found in W. R. Stephens, *The Life and Letters of E. A. Freeman* (London: 1895), vol. 2, 356 357.

Freeman supported the idea of a “lasting friendly union of the English and English-speaking folk.” However, he underlined the theoretical and practical contradictions of a scheme which before being earnestly discussed needed to be properly revised. Such revision was necessary not just on the question of terminology, which could not be used in a loose and imprecise fashion, but also on the question of substance: it was ambiguous, for instance, to refer to ‘Anglo-Saxon unity’ or ‘English-speaking-union’ without considering the inclusion of the United States into the federation.⁹⁴

While accepting Freeman’s criticisms of theoretical imprecision and practical feebleness, Bryce thought however that the League was “not mere babble, although it is admittedly at present vague. There is a sound idea at the root, and only to that idea is anyone who joins it committed.”⁹⁵

Arguing against one of the slogans of the League, which gave the title to a publication by Sir Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain*, Freeman seemed to side with his former colleague Goldwin Smith. Smith was Regius Professor at University College, Oxford, until 1866, and writer of a series of letters published in the *Daily News* in 1862 and collected in the volume, *The Empire*, the following year:

Is the people of Great Britain, is the Parliament of Great Britain, so delighted with the existence of what in the cant of the day is called a ‘Greater Britain’, as to be ready to give up to that Greater Britain all that has hitherto made Britain great in a wider sense than the original one of being geographically greater than the lesser Britannia of the mainland?⁹⁶

Greater Britain had been published by Dilke in 1865 in order to oppose the growth of the ‘Little Englander’ Movement, which developed in England thanks above all to Smith and to Sir Frederick Pollock, another Oxonian adversary of the Imperial federal idea. Dilke’s vision of the Empire was of a geo-political community of races kept together by the supremacy of Anglo-Saxon civilization, which would gradually assume the characteristics of a true federation. Among the non-Oxonian supporters of Imperial federation there were also Sir George Walter Prothero, and

⁹⁴ Freeman, “Imperial Federation,” 445.

⁹⁵ Bryce to Freeman, 24 Dec. 1886, BP, 9, 259–262.

⁹⁶ Freeman, “Imperial Federation,” 440. For a comprehensive study of the academic and political debate on the Imperial federal idea, see Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860–1900* (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 2007).

three successive directors of the London School of Economics, William Pember Reeves, William Hewins and Sir Halford John Mackinder.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain* (London: 1865); Goldwin Smith, *The Empire* (London: 1863). Sir Frederick Pollock (1845 1937), was a jurist best known for his *History of English Law before the Time of Edward I* (London: 1895), written with F. W. Maitland, and his lifelong correspondence with US Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. Dilke's *Greater Britain* had, according to Ernest May, "more buyers in the United States than at home, probably because it said so much that Americans wanted to believe," Ernest May, *American Imperialism: A Speculative Essay* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 119. Sir George Walter Prothero (1848 1922) was an English writer and historian, and President of the Royal Historical Society. In 1894, he became the first Professor of Modern History at the University of Edinburgh. He held this position for five years before taking the place of his brother, Lord Ernle, as editor of the *Quarterly Review*. He was editor of the *Cambridge Historical Series*, and with A. W. Ward and Stanley Mordaunt Leathes he edited the *Cambridge Modern History* between 1901 and 1912. Following the outbreak of World War I, Prothero served as Historical Advisor to the Foreign Office, and in this capacity attended the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. William Pember Reeves (1857 1932) was a New Zealand politician, historian and poet who promoted social reforms. During the premierships of John Ballance (1891 93) and Richard Seddon (1893 1906), he served as Minister of Labour (1892 96), Minister of Education (1891 96), Minister of Justice (1891 92, 1893, 1895 96), and Commissioner of Stamp Duties (1892 96). As Minister of Labour he introduced the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1894. In January 1896 Reeves left New Zealand for London, where he was Agent General (1896 1905), and High Commissioner (1905 08). While in Britain, Reeves joined the Fabian Society and the Coefficients. Reeves was Director of the London School of Economics (1908 19) and President of the Anglo Hellenic League (1913 25). William Alfred Samuel Hewins (1865 1931) was a British economist, Conservative politician, and the first Director of the London School of Economics from 1895 to 1903. He joined Joseph Chamberlain's campaign for tariff reform, becoming MP for Hereford in 1912. He served in the Coalition Government of David Lloyd George as Under Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1917 to 1919. Sir Halford John Mackinder (1861 1947) was an English geographer, academic, the first Principal of University Extension College, Reading (which became the University of Reading), and Director of the London School of Economics (in 1903 and in 1908). He is regarded as one of the founding fathers of both geo politics and geo strategy. Among his major works, there is *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* (New York: Holt, 1919). He was a member of the Coefficients Dining Club, set up in 1902 by the Fabians Sidney and Beatrice Webb, bringing together social reformers and advocates of national efficiency. On the Coefficients, see Scally, *The Origins*, 73 95; Semmel, *Imperialism*, 53 82; E. Green and M. Taylor, "Further Thoughts on Little Englandism," in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National*

11. *The League's 'Federal Plan'*

One of the most significant achievements of the League was the creation of a network of private and official contacts between centre and periphery of the Empire, by means of periodic Imperial Conferences. The first of these took place in London in April 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's jubilee. On its agenda there was a plan for a customs and military Imperial union, which should have opened the way to the federation. Supporters of a commercial union of the Empire—an Imperial *Zollverein*—which would not however undermine free trade with the rest of the world found common ground with supporters of a political and military union—an Imperial *Kriegsverein*—with the creation of an Imperial federal government. Opposition from Canadian and Australian representatives—aiming to defend and increase their independence from London—brought about the collapse of the proposal, and with it of the first attempt to create an Imperial federation.⁹⁸

The second attempt by the League to reform Imperial relations was made in 1892 with the production of a 'Federal Plan', a specific scheme capable of winning the majority of its members. The 'Federal Plan' of 1892 represented, according to Martin, a milestone in the evolution of the federal idea towards a more mature conceptual articulation and practical proposal.⁹⁹

The origins of the 'Federal Plan' came from a meeting of June 1891 between an official deputation of the League and Lord Salisbury, urging the Prime Minister to summon a second Imperial Conference, following the 1887 Conference. Salisbury's reply that it could be done only on the basis of "some definite scheme of our own," was instrumental in the appointment—at the initiative of Sir Charles Tupper, Canadian High

Identity, vol. 1, *History and Politics*, Raphael Samuel ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 103–09.

⁹⁸ For a discussion, see: Duncan Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations* (London: 1950), 62; Michael Burgess, "'Forgotten Centenary': The Formation of the Imperial Federation in the UK," *The Round Table*, 289, (1984): 76–85; id., "Imperial Federation: Continuity and Change in British Imperial Ideas, 1869–1871," *The New Zealand Journal of History*, 17, 2, (April 1983); L. Burt, *Imperial Architects* (London: 1913); C. A. Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism* (London: 1924); J. E. Tyler, *The Struggle for Imperial Unity, 1868–1895* (London: 1938); J. D. B. Miller, "The Utopia of Imperial Federation," *Political Studies*, 4, (1956): 195–7.

⁹⁹ For a discussion see Michael Burgess, "The Federal Plan of the Imperial Federation League 1892: Milestone or Tombstone?" in *The Federal Idea*, Bosco, vol. 1, 139–53.

Commissioner to the United Kingdom—of a Special Committee in order “to submit to the Council, for the consideration of the organization of the League throughout the Empire, definite proposals by which the object of Imperial Federation may be realized.” Created in July 1891, the Special Committee—formed by four MPs (James Bryce, Sir John Colomb, Sir Lyon Playfair, and James Rankin); the lords Reay, Brassey, and Lamington; Sir Daniel Cooper, H. O. Arnold-Forster, Sir Rawson Rawson, and Tupper himself—solicited the opinions of thirty-nine people “specially qualified” to raise “the principal points involved in any form of federation.”¹⁰⁰

The survey of élite opinion and their replies to the questions raised by the League Special Committee on the federal scheme, and the political strategy required to achieve it, outlines an intellectual exercise which offers us the key to comprehending the background of the political culture expressed by the League and its Victorian Liberal opinion makers. The points raised in August 1891 by the Special Committee for consideration by the selected panel were: “(a) To broadly define what are the essentials of the federation to be aimed at; (b) To suggest by what gradual process they can be approached; (c) To indicate the steps in that process which it is now practically possible to take.” The enquiry aimed to outline “the principal points involved in any form of federation”.

On the question as to whether it was “desirable to have contributions from the self-governing colonies to Imperial defence,” Lord Lamington, James Bryce, Sir William Farrer, Arnold-Forster, S. V. Morgan, W. M. Ackworth, S. B. Boulton, Rev. W. P. Gressell, Achibald McGoun Jr., Sandford Fleming, and Talbot Baines agreed that colonial contributions to Imperial defence were “essential” and thought that responsibility and power should be shared by Great Britain and her colonies. Major-General Sir Richard Harrison agreed on the maintenance of local forces, in improving facilities for inter-colonial migration and the introduction of a

¹⁰⁰ The selected panel of the enquires was composed of W. M. Ackworth, Sir William Anson, Edward A. Arnold, Talbot Baines, Sir Henry Barkly, Robert Beadon, E. W. Beckett MP, S. B. Boulton, J. C. Bourinot, T. A. Brassey, Oscar Browning, Rev. Canon Dalton, E. A. Freeman, R. R. Dobell, Lord Dunraven, Maj Gen. Sir J. Bevan Edwards, Farrer, Sandford Fleming, Sir Alexander Galts, Principal George Grant, Rev. William P. Gressell, Maj Gen. Sir R. Harrison, Lt. Gen. Sir W. Jervois, Capt. C. Johnson, D’Alton McCarthy, Archibald McGoun Jr., S. V. Morgan, Prof. A. S. Napier, George Parkin, Prof. Cyril Ransome, G. W. Rusden, Prof. J. R. Seeley, James Service, V. Smith, Sir Leonard Tilly, Sir Julius Vogel, Sir Frederick Young, D. Wark, and T. Belshaw, (Burgess, “The Federal Plan,” 144).

10% preference tax on British goods to finance the Royal Navy. Professor Cyril Ransome thought that contributions were not desirable until the Central Representative Body had been formed. Sir Henry Barkly agreed on the principle of contributions, but thought that the point should not be pressed until the Council had been formed.¹⁰¹

On the issue of “what should be included in a proper scheme of Imperial defence,” Lamington, Bryce, Sir Frederick Young, Brassey, and Major General Sir J. Bevan Edwards thought that it should include the creation of a single Navy. Lord Lamington, Farrer, Bryce, Young, H. O. Arnold-Forster, and Brassey proposed the protection of ports and coaling stations. Lamington, Farrer, and Rev W. P. Gresswell suggested the defence of trade routes. Lamington, and Young proposed the disposal of land forces. Lamington, Ransome, Brassey, and Bevan Edwards included plans of attack and defence, Arnold-Forster the defence of India.¹⁰²

Regarding the rates of contributions, Farrer, S. V. Morgan, Ransome, Barkly, S. B. Boulton, Archibald McGoun Jr., Arnold-Forster, Ackworth, and Rev. William P. Gresswell agreed that they should be apportioned on the basis of population. Boulton, A. McGoun Jr., and Brassey suggested the principle of tonnage entering and leaving British ports. McGoun Jr., and Edwards proposed that of aggregate trade. If McGoun Jr. envisaged the principle of risk, Talbot Baines, Bryce, and Gresswell suggested the principle of the established resources and wealth of each country.¹⁰³

Concerning the method which should be adopted for raising the necessary resources, Major-General Sir R. Harrison, S. V. Morgan, Ransome, A. McGoun Jr., Arnold-Forster, Ackworth, and Sandford Fleming thought that they should be collected on the basis of the proposals advocated at the 1887 Colonial Conference. Farrer proposed to draw resources from specially appropriated revenues from each country. Morgan and Arnold-Forster proposed duties on drink. Ransome, Barkly, Baines, Bryce, W.M. Smith, Gresswell, and Edwards agreed that each country should find its own contribution in the way it considered appropriate.¹⁰⁴

To the question of what system of administration should be adopted in order to give the self-governing colonies a share in it, Harrison proposed an Imperial Council of Delegates. Farrer proposed an Imperial Council of Delegates for foreign policy followed by a Common Council for all purposes. Morgan suggested two Imperial Houses: an Upper by nomination,

¹⁰¹ Imperial Federation League Papers, Add 62783, 6.

¹⁰² Burgess, “The Federal Plan,” 145.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, 146.

and a Lower by election. Boulton proposed a Council of State with colonial representation. McGoun Jr envisaged a “Representative Executive Government,” responsible to an Imperial Parliament. Bryce and Brassey proposed an Imperial Council of Defence. Ackworth envisaged a Committee of Defence with colonial representation. Greswell indicated constitutional representation for all component parts of the Empire.¹⁰⁵

Finally, to the question of whether colonies should take a share in the control of foreign policy Harrison, Farrer, Morgan, Ransome, Boulton, Talbot Baines, Bryce, Arnold-Forster, Brassey, Ackworth, and Fleming answered in the affirmative, while Lamington expressed his opposition. Barkly answered yes to an extent, and McGoun Jr. answered “eventually.”¹⁰⁶

Regarding the administration of the colonies Farrer proposed to follow the American example, while Ransome thought that it would be a competence of the Imperial Parliament when constituted, and beforehand of the Colonial Committee of the Privy Council. If Barkly and S. B. Boulton proposed the creation of a Council of the Empire, McGoun Jr. thought that control should be exercised by an Imperial Council advised by colonial representatives. Arnold-Forster, on the contrary, proposed the creation of a Colonial Council and the introduction of colonists into the administrative and diplomatic posts of the Empire. James Rankin suggested developing the principle of representation; Brassey proposed colonial representation in the Council of Defence; Ackworth thought that it should stay under the British Government acting under the advice of the colonial Representatives, and Edwards thought that it should be decided by the Constitutional Conference.¹⁰⁷

The replies received from most of the thirty-nine experts involved in the exercise formed together “an important collection of opinions upon the main points connected with the federation of the Empire,” and could be grouped in four main issues:

I. Common Citizenship. II. Common Action for Common Objects. III. The organization of the Empire as a whole against foreign powers or in the words of the League’s Constitution: ‘The combination of the resources of the Empire for the maintenance of common institutions and the defence of common rights’. IV. The principal object to be attained is the strengthening of the Empire by unity of action and the principal object to be avoided is the break up of the Empire which is the inevitable result of the continuance of the present system.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibidem.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, 147.

Imperial federation, the exercise indicated, could be achieved through “representation combined with responsibility and the delegation of certain powers by individual States within the Empire to a common executive for the common good of the Empire.” The main issues brought out by the enquiry related to:

- I. The preservation of the unity of the Empire. II. The inauguration of a common foreign policy. III. The organization of a common system of defence. IV. The institution of a Representative Assembly dealing with a common fund. V. A Supreme Judicial Tribunal.¹⁰⁹

In addition to these broad issues, some individual contributors proposed the establishment of an Imperial *Zollverein*, “either immediately or ultimately,” and “the regulation of Commercial and Criminal Law.” All contributors “agreed in recommending that there should be no interference whatever with the internal administration of any part of the Empire save by the direct consent of its inhabitants.”¹¹⁰

It was agreed that “a preliminary conference should be summoned to make arrangements for a permanent Council to be created subsequently,” composed “either of representatives of the United Kingdom and the Agents General or, in lieu of the latter, delegates provided *ad hoc* by the Colonies.” The aim of the Conference should be “to discover a basis upon which a permanent body could be created...to deal primarily with questions of Imperial defence and secondarily with all such questions as may from time to time fall within its scope.” The experts suggested also the appointment of “a Council and a Minister of Defence,” and the addition of Colonial Judges to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and advocated “a greater share in the administration of Imperial affairs to be given to the Colonies.” It was “generally held that while Defence should take a first place, other matters, such as preferential tariffs, and the regulation of emigration should ultimately be dealt with.”¹¹¹

On the basis of these replies the Special Committee drafted a scheme embodying “the main principles that must prevail in any federal or quasi-federal organization of Britain and her colonies.” In presenting the proposals, the Committee did not consider “whether there exists a desire on the part of the various countries concerned to form a federation,” assuming “a general wish for a consolidation of the Empire.” Neither did the Committee consider whether “any particular feature in the proposals will or will not be acceptable to any particular country or countries”; but it

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, 148.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*.

had in mind “only the welfare of the Empire as a whole.”¹¹²

The “essentials of a Federated Empire” were thus based on the principles:

- (a) That the voice of the Empire in peace, when dealing with foreign powers, shall be the united voice of all its autonomous parts. (b) That the defence of the Empire in war shall be the common degree of all its parts, by the forces and resources of all its parts.

As “measures conducive but not essential to Federation,” the Committee added, as

immediately practicable on the fulfilment of the essential conditions... (a) The admission of colonial securities to the involvement of British Trust Funds. (b) The Imperial guarantee of local loans raised for purposes subservient to Imperial ends, such as dry docks, strategic cables, railways etc. (c) The opening of the administrative services of the Empire, outside the UK, by holding local examinations for the Indian, Diplomatic and Consular services, as now done for the Army and Navy and the appointment to Governorships and other high posts of fit persons in whatever part of the Empire they may be domiciled. (d) Uniformity in certain branches of Statute Law, especially commercial law, such as Bankruptcy and Merchant Shipping, including facilities for the execution of legal processes etc. (e) Uniform Imperial Postage and special arrangements for telegraphic service under the control of the Council. The uniformity contemplated under heads (a), (d) and (e) can only be attained by local legislation at the invitation of the Council, since these matters are at present subjects of local legislation, with which no scheme of *Britannic Confederation* should interfere.¹¹³

The June 1892 ‘Federal Plan’ envisaged the creation of a Council of the Empire, composed of members directly appointed by Great Britain (the British Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Colonial Secretary, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretaries of State for War and India) and her three self-governing colonies. The Council had to deal primarily with the coordination of Imperial naval and military defence and foreign policy, leaving the raising of taxation to contributions from each individual self-governing colony. The development of the colonies as self-governing “States” and their increasing economic power would bring them to “a proper share in the control and expenditure of the common fund.” The cost for defence would be, the Committee pointed out, smaller than the cost which they would have to face if they chose complete independence from Great Britain. The

¹¹² *Ibidem*, 149.

¹¹³ *Ibidem*.

call for union, as opposed to separation, came from “the identity of the populations of the Mother Country and the self-governing Colonies in all the *essentials of a common nationality* and from the existence of a *common danger* which united defence alone can avert.”¹¹⁴

Such a general scheme could be realized only after the summoning of an *ad hoc* Imperial Conference, when the British Government thought that the moment had come. Describing the report as “the most important advance made in the history of the Imperial Federation movement,” the monthly journal of the League, *Imperial Federation*, launched in January 1886, also acknowledged the existence within the movement of a consistent body of opinion which had been opposed to supporting a particular scheme, privileging the education of public opinion.¹¹⁵

In fact, in April 1893 Gladstone rejected both the plan and the request for an *ad hoc* Conference. Failing to agree upon an alternative policy for the 1890s, the League collapsed in December 1893. “Without a groundswell of support for the federal idea,” Kendle observed, “no politicians and certainly no political party would waste time on its promotion” either in the United Kingdom or the colonies. In spite of some sympathies by the Liberal Prime Ministers Gladstone and Lord Salisbury, the federal plan “was never publicly endorsed by any major political figure in Great Britain and only received occasional, flirtatious support, usually for parochial political reasons, from senior colonial politicians.”¹¹⁶

Bryce, Liberal MP for Tower Hamlets, remarked that “certain members of the advanced section of the Liberal Party” feared that “Imperial Federation” was intended to imply “something like a subjection both of Colonial Chambers and of our own parliament to a central authority similar to that existing in the United States.”¹¹⁷

Following the collapse of the League in 1893, gradually all the overseas branches of the Imperial Federation League in South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, New Zealand and Canada wound up; but the Melbourne branch of the League continued to exist because of the efforts of Henry D’Esterre Taylor, honorary secretary from 1895 to 1907. After the dissolution of the London League, the Victoria branch became an independent organization by itself and was renamed “Imperial Federation League of Victoria.” The aims were thus amended: “1. To maintain the Unity of the British Dominions. 2. To strengthen it in the future by SOME FORM OF FEDERATION,” emphasising the need for a system of

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 150.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 151.

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁷ Kendle, *Federal Britain*, 57.

common defence “devised and eventually controlled by representatives from all parts of the Empire”.

The establishment of Imperial Conferences to promote co-decision was considered a fundamental step. Taylor’s call for Imperial federation in essays and addresses had the support of conservative papers in Melbourne, and was strongly opposed by radical ones. Radical Nationalists were also against Australian federation, on the ground that it would have benefited business and financial élites, and would be a step towards Imperial federation.¹¹⁸

Federalism appeared to Australian federalists as an innovative political formula able to reconcile the trend towards a higher degree of independence with the need of union for strategic reasons and political stability. The problem was that it represented the opposite to the unitarian principle, which was too well rooted in Great Britain to be replaced in the space of a decade. The phrase ‘imperial federation’ could be regarded just as a slogan to foster closer Imperial union and draw in the colonies to bear the burden—financial and military—of Imperial defence at a time of rise of nationalism and power politics in Europe. Beyond the academic debate, the “monolithic aim” of the League had the historical merit, according to Ged Martin, of producing a “broader collection of Empire federalist ideas” in an innovative and non-conformist fashion. Imperial federation was, according to Martin, an integral part of British imperialism since the creation of the Canadian federation. Rather than being “a late nineteenth century phenomenon which grew out of a supposed reaction against earlier anti-imperialism,” there has been a continuity, in the debate on the future of Imperial cohesion, in the idea of a federal reform of Imperial relations.¹¹⁹

The ambiguity in which the federal idea was discussed and proposed, in the guise of simple devolution, was a consequence of the contradiction in terms of the concept of Imperial federation, where Imperial was just the opposite of federation. Within the League there certainly coexisted

¹¹⁸ L. Foster, “Taylor, Henry D’Esterre (1853 1909),” *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: 1990), 12, 181; Ronald Hyam and Ged Martin, *Reappraisals in British Imperial History* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1975), 130; R. Norris, *The Emergent Commonwealth* (Melbourne: 1975), 5, 32, 39 40; Blackton, “Australian Nationality and Nationalism,” 14; Imperial Federation League, Victorian Branch, *Addresses Etc., 1885 1909*, Melbourne, 1909, La Trobe Library, Melbourne, 3; Foster, “The Imperial Federation League,” 40.

¹¹⁹ Martin, “Empire Federalism and Imperial Parliamentary Union,” 65 66, 121 138; id., “The Idea of Imperial Federation,” in *Reappraisals in British Imperial History*, Hyam and Martin, 121 38.

conflicting schools of thought; but it encompassed the need to find an alternative to the method of Empire, in order to keep together countries which were growing up in economic power and political awareness, but were separated by the seas and by increasingly conflicting economic interests. Centrifugal forces would have won, in the end, over the reasons for keeping alive the connection with the mother country.

CHAPTER II

OXFORD, RHODES, MILNER, AND SOUTH AFRICAN UNIFICATION

1. *Oxford and Cecil Rhodes*

Oxford had a long tradition in forming Prime Ministers—George Grenville, William Petty (Earl of Shelburne), William Henry Cavendish (Duke of Portland), William Pitt (Earl of Amherst), Robert Jenkinson (Lord Liverpool), George Canning, William Gladstone, Sir Robert Peel, Robert Gascoyne-Cecil (Lord Salisbury), Archibald Primrose (Lord Rosebery)—and Indian Governors-General—Richard Colley Wesley (Lord Wellesley), Gilbert Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound (Earl of Minto), Lord William Bentinck, George Eden (Earl of Auckland), James Bruce (eighth Earl of Elgin), Victor Alexander Bruce (ninth Earl of Elgin), Thomas Baring (Earl of Northbrook), Frederick Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood (Lord Dufferin), Edward Wood (Lord Halifax), Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice (Lord Lansdowne), George Curzon (Marquess Curzon of Kedleston) and Frederic Thesiger (Lord Chelmsford)—being, according to Symonds, “the most important single factor in bringing India and Britain nearer to each other in the field of knowledge.”¹

Oxford became the intellectual capital of the Empire however only after the creation of the Rhodes Scholarship programme, and the Chair and lectureship in colonial history, endowed by Alfred Beit, colleague and friend of Cecil Rhodes, from his diamond and gold profits in South Africa. Oxford’s South African connection—based on a combination of “successful company promotion, financial intrigue, and the harmonious co-operation with metropolitan Liberals by a wealthy and adroit colonial politician”—represented the fundamental and vital link between the Imperial Federation League and the Round Table movement, with an

¹ Richard Symonds, “Oxford and India,” in *Oxford: and the Idea*, Madden and Fieldhouse, 49.

innovative contribution to the articulation of Imperial ideology, not only in its contents, but also and in particular in the means which were employed.²

Rhodes was, in fact, a colonial politician with an exceptional talent for making capital work in underdeveloped areas. The basis of Rhodes' wealth came from diamond mining: he had a monopoly in production by amalgamation at Kimberley, with financial assistance from Alfred Beit and Lord Nathaniel M. Rothschild (Lord Rosebery's cousin-in-law). It was through Lord Rosebery and Sir Hercules Robinson (former High Commissioner of South Africa), and particularly through Rothschild, that Rhodes succeeded in establishing his British South Africa Chartered Company on 29 October 1889. He presented to the Government a plan which aimed at the mineral exploitation of the territory that became Rhodesia (included now in Zimbabwe and Zambia), in return for the building of railways to reach the Zambesi river. On suggestion of the Colonial Secretary Salisbury, Rhodes appointed the Duke of Abercorn as Chairman, and the Duke of Fife (son-in-law of the Prince of Wales), Sir Horace Farquhar, and Albert Grey (cousin of the future Lord Halifax, and Sir Edward Grey) to the Board of the Company. "One very attractive feature about Empire-building," H. T. Lloyd remarked, "was that it cost so little"; but that feature changed during the Second Anglo-Boer War, when Great Britain's expansion without costs came to an end. As trading and banking facilities expanded, the Empire went on the defensive against competition from France and Germany.³

² Colin Newbury, "Cecil Rhodes and the South African Connection: A Great Imperial University?" in *ibidem*, 84. Rhodes exerted in fact his greatest influence among the Liberals of Gladstone's fourth administration from late 1892 to 1894, (Robert I. Rotberg, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). Alfred Beit, German by birth like Milner, was an intimate friend of Rhodes, Milner and Lord Rosebery. He left £1,200,000 to the Beit Railway Trust and in 1906 was persuaded by Milner to create out of this Trust a Beit professorship and lectureship in colonial history at Oxford, Carrol Quigley, *The Anglo American Establishment* (San Pedro, Ca: GSG, 1981), 87 8. The holders of the Beit lectureships were: W. L. Grant (1906 10), J. Munroe (1910 12), Lionel Curtis (1912 3), Reginald Coupland (1913 8), E. M. Wrong (1919 24), K. N. Bell (1924 7), W. Morrel (1927 30), V. T. Harlow (1930 5), Kenneth C. Wheare (1935 40). The first holder of the Beit Chair was Hugh Egerton in 1905, (Frederick Madden, "The Commonwealth, Commonwealth History, and Oxford, 1905 1971," in *Oxford and the Idea*, Madden and Fieldhouse, 10). The Beit lectureship and professorship in colonial history fell under the control of Milner and his disciples.

³ John Flint, *Cecil Rhodes* (Toronto: Brown and Company, 1974), 110; T. O. Lloyd, *From Empire to Welfare State. English History 1906 1967* (Oxford: 1970), 3. The

The idea of an Imperial scholarship was promoted by the editors of *Greater Britain* in 1891, and the scheme for funding a hundred scholars at Oxford University from all the major colonies was drawn up by the Australian academic T. Hudson Beare, who proposed also some graduate travelling scholarships, enabling British scholars to undertake research on the economic life of the colonies, especially India. On his return to his colony, Beare envisaged, each student would form a nucleus around which would gather “all that was best, and each would form another of those invisible ties, stronger than any which can be devised by the cunning of law-makers, which will, we hope, keep together, for good or ill, the Anglo-Saxon race”.⁴

The Rhodes Scholarship—the first Rhodes Scholar arrived at Oxford in 1903—was perhaps the most successful manifestation of the hegemonic role which Oxford came to play in the creation of a common Imperial ideology, transforming Oxford into an international university, and imbuing Rhodes scholars with the fundamentals of the British political tradition, of which the federal idea is one. The spread of a common Imperial ideology, within political communities divided by the oceans and by national feelings, was for Imperial federalists a preliminary condition for the success of policies of co-operation among Imperial institutions. Oxford played a decisive role both in the production and the dissemination of this ideology, and in the consolidation of that co-operation beyond the point of no return. For the success of this strategy Imperial federalists relied on the infiltration of Rhodes scholars into positions of power within their own country of origin.⁵

In theorizing and practising a “parallel policy of co-operation,” Imperial federalists obtained a remarkable success at least in the short term. “As long as men like Smuts, Botha...Duncan, Feetham, or Long were in influential positions in South Africa,” Quigley observed, “as long

Second Anglo Boer War cost the British Empire over £200 million and 21,942 casualties, Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (New York: Random House, 1979), 572.

⁴ Newbury, “Cecil Rhodes,” 84.

⁵ On the Rhodes Scholarship, see Thomas J. Schaeper and Kathleen Schaeper, *Rhodes Scholars, Oxford, and the Creation of an American Elite* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998); Philip Ziegler, *Legacy: Cecil Rhodes, the Rhodes Trust and Rhodes Scholarships* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008). On the formation of the Imperial ideology, see Karl Rohe, “The British Imperialist Intelligentsia and the Kaiserreich,” in *Nationalist and Racist Movements in Britain and Germany Before 1914*, Paul Kennedy and Anthony Nicholls eds. (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1981), 130–42.

as men like Eggleston, Bavin, or Dudley Braham were influential in Australia; as along as men like Glazebrook, Vincent Massey, Joseph Flavelle, or Percy Corbett were influential in Canada in a nutshell...the technique of the parallel policy of co-operation would be the easiest way to reach a common goal." As soon as federalist organizations "grew older and weaker," Quigley concluded, "it could not be expected that their new recruits in England...could continue to work on a parallel policy with the newer arrivals to power in the Dominions." Since such organizations had failed shortly before "creating institutionalized links" between Great Britain and the Dominions, because of the refusal by the Dominions to engage themselves in closer union, when the time came for a new generation to replace the pioneers it would be extremely difficult for it to hold the influential positions won by its predecessors.⁶

The Rhodes scholarships program was so successful that Harold Laski proposed in 1917 to his former tutor H. A. L. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, to extend the Rhodes' scheme to American PhD students, allowing a number of them to spend a year at Oxford, Cambridge, or Manchester. "In less than a generation," Laski remarked, "we could without difficulty exercise on American life the influence, intellectually and socially, that Germany has exercised in the last 25 years." Laski was "immensely anxious that the people who care about the influence of Oxford should think about what it can effect for the future of international relationships."⁷

At Oxford Rhodes was very much influenced by Winwood Reade, who in *The Martyrdom of Man* extended Darwinism to social sciences, and by John Ruskin, prominent theorist of the Imperial ideology. From those authors, Rhodes derived his conception of the British as "the finest race in the world," and that "the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race." "The absorption of the greater portion of the world under our rule," would have meant, according to Rhodes, "the end of all wars." "To forward such a scheme what a splendid help a secret society would be," Rhodes wrote on 2 June 1877, becoming a member of the

⁶ Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 151 2. Massey was son in law of Parkin.

⁷ Laski to Fisher, 20 Jan. 1917, MP, 133, 50 2; Richard Symonds, "A 'Powerhouse of Imperial Studies' The Early Search for a Role for Rhodes House," *The Round Table*, (1983): 484 93. Moving from the assumption that federalism could not be applied until the class war had been won, Laski offered an extensive analysis of both the internal, decentralist, and the external, unifying aspects of federalism, Harold J. Laski, *Studies in the Problem of Sovereignty* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1917); id., *The Foundations of Sovereignty and other Essays* (London: 1921); id., *A Grammar of Politics* (London: 1925).

Masonic Lodge. Such a society would be “not openly acknowledged,” would work in secret, and should “have its members in every part of the British Empire working with one object and one idea.” Rhodes’ “Society of the elect” included Stead, Reginald Brett—later to become Lord Esher, and a very influential figure in the shaping of pre-war British foreign policy—Arthur Balfour—nephew and political heir of Lord Salisbury—Lord Selborne—son-in-law of Lord Salisbury—and Alfred Milner.⁸

The influence of the Oxford cultural environment of the late 1870s on the young undergraduate Rhodes is manifest in his first will of 1877, aiming at the creation of a ‘secret society’ on the Jesuits model, to promote “the extension of British rule throughout the world, the perfecting of a system of emigration from the United Kingdom and the colonization by British subjects of all lands,” wherein the means of livelihood were attainable “by energy, labour, and enterprise.” Rhodes’ ultimate goal was the

recovery of the United States of America as an integral part of the British Empire, the consolidation of the whole Empire, the inauguration of a system of Colonial Representation in the Imperial Parliament which may tend to weld together the disjointed members of the Empire, and finally the foundation of so great a power as to hereafter render wars impossible and promote the best interests of humanity.⁹

Rhodes argued, writing to Stead, that “if we had not lost America...the peace of the world [would have been] secured for all Eternity!” The political union between Great Britain and her former thirteen rebel colonies would “take the government of the whole world,” Rhodes wrote in his third Will, leading to the “cessation of all wars and one language throughout the world.”¹⁰

Rhodes’ vision was based on social Darwinism, according to which the Anglo-Saxon race developed the most advanced forms of political

⁸ Winwood Reade, *The Martyrdom of Man* (London: 1872). Rhodes confessed that Reade’s work “made me what I am,” (Flint, *Cecil Rhodes*, 23). About Reade, see J. D. Hargreaves, “Winwood Reade and the Discovery of Africa,” *African Affairs*, (Oct, 1957), 306–316.

⁹ Aydelotte, *The Vision of*, 5.

¹⁰ Rhodes to Stead, quoted in Sarah Gertrude Millin, *Rhodes* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1952), 172; Rhodes’s Will quoted in Robert I. Rotberg and Miles F. Shore, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 666. On Rhodes, see also Anthony Thomas, *Rhodes* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1997); John S. Galbraith, “Cecil Rhodes and His ‘Cosmic Dreams’: A Reassessment,” *Journal of Commonwealth and Imperial History*, (Winter 1972–73).

institutions, from local self-government to supranational governance. Accordingly, the English-speaking peoples had a moral duty in the administration of backward peoples, training them in the art of self-government, and establishing with them permanent economic and political ties, in the form of a commonwealth. The convergence of geo-political interests between the British and the American Commonwealths was based on the assumption that American national security depended on the hegemonic role of the Royal Navy in the Atlantic, while the security of the British Empire depended on the hegemonic role of the American Fleet in the Pacific, once the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had dissolved. This echoed a doctrine put forward by the American strategist Alfred T. Mahan, which gained wide support on both sides of the Atlantic, and which provided the strategic foundation for the consolidation of the doctrine of an “Atlantic system.”¹¹

The concept of an Atlantic system was first conceived and presented by Henry Adams as a strategic counterbalance against a possible alliance between Germany and Russia, in defence of the liberal and democratic values denied by continental autocracies. It represented an elaboration of ideas shared by three ‘founding fathers’ of American democracy, Thomas

¹¹ For an analysis, see: Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); Stuart Anderson, *Race and Rapprochement: Anglo Saxonism and Anglo American Relations, 1895 1904* (East Brunswick, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1981); Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1955), 170 84; David S. Healy, *US Expansionism: The Imperialist Urge in the 1890s* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 13 16, 29 33, 38 42, 123 4; Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and US Foreign Policy* (New Haven: CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 77 9; Bradford Perkins, *The Great Rapprochement: Britain and the United States, 1895 1914* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 74 83. Alfred T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power in History* (London: 1880); id., *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1897), 27, 49 51, 55, 107 34, 185 90, 257 9; id., *The Interest of America in International Conditions* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1910), 35 124, 158 85. For a discussion, see: Philip A. Crowl, “Alfred Thayer Mahan: The Naval Historian,” in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Peter Paret ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 444 77; Bernard Semmel, *Liberalism & Naval Strategy: Ideology, Interest, and Sea Power during the Pax Britannica* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1986), 90 95; Jon Tetsuo Sumida, *Inventing Grand Strategy and Teaching Command: The Classic Works of Alfred Thayer Mahan* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1997), 80 92; Warren Zimmermann, *First Great Triumph: How Five American Made Their Country into a World Power* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), ch. 3.

Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe. Modern democracy, according to Adams, had developed on the two shores of the Atlantic, and the United States had to build a “shield” to prevent European imperialism from interfering in the Americas, threatening their independence. “In the great struggle of the epoch between liberty and despotism,” Madison wrote to Monroe, “we owe to ourselves to maintain the former, in this hemisphere, *at least*.” The proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine, even if it was unilateral, had the endorsement of Canning—who could declare at Westminster to have successfully “called the New World into being to redress the balance of the Old”—and represented the first act in the building of the Atlantic system. In fact, it could not achieve its aims without the active involvement of the British Navy as guardian of the Atlantic. The American Navy alone would have failed the task.¹²

“The Federation of the English-speaking world,” would have been, according to Rhodes, “strong enough in its command of all the material resources of the planet to compel the decision of all international quarrels by a more rational method than that of war.” If a federal union between the United Kingdom and the United States proved out of reach, Rhodes would even have contemplated “the absorption of the British Empire in the American Union,” if “the unity of the English-speaking race...could be not secured any other way.” The “English-speaking re-union” was, for Rhodes, according to William Stead, “so great an end in itself...to justify even the sacrifice of the...existence of the British Empire.”¹³

Mahan fully endorsed Rhodes’ vision, supporting in 1894 in the *North American Review* the need for a “popular impulse” behind the project, which could be boosted by the movement for Imperial federation. American history was seen by Mahan as “a distinct branch of European history,” and the creation of an Atlantic federation would have completed the process of unification of the English-speaking peoples. This was a view sustained also by Andrew Carnegie, who thought that “the only course for Britain seems to be reunion with her giant child, or sure decline

¹² Worthington Ford ed., *Letters of Henry Adams, 1892 1918*, vol. 2 (Boston, MA: 1938), 447; Forrest Davis, *The Atlantic System. The Story of Anglo American Control of the Seas* (New York: 1941), xi iv; James Young, *Henry Adams: The Historian as Political Theorist* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2001); Garry Wills, *Henry Adams and the Making of America* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2005). The Naval Act of 1890 created the nucleus of the American Navy, consisting of three units, and had in Mahan its inspirer.

¹³ W. T. Stead, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil John Rhodes* (London: 1902), 73.

to a secondary place, and then comparative insignificance in the English-speaking race.”¹⁴

An Anglo-American League was established in Great Britain on 13 July 1898, drawing its members—including Albert Venn Dicey, Andrew Carnegie, and James Bryce, who became its Deputy President in August 1918—from both sides of the Atlantic. Considering “that the peoples of the British Empire and of the United States of America are closely allied in blood, inherit the same literature and laws, hold the same principles of self-government, recognize the same ideals of freedom and humanity in the guidance of their national policy, and are drawn together by strong common interests in many parts of the world,” the League promoted, “in the interest of civilisation and peace...the most cordial and constant co-operation between the two nations.”¹⁵

Among his followers in the United States, Mahan could count Theodore Roosevelt, who confessed to Mahan himself that he took his views “absolutely, as indeed I do on foreign policy generally.” Theodore Roosevelt’s recognition that Mahan stood “head and shoulders above the rest of us” was also shared by Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had been strongly influenced by Mahan, particularly on the principle of not dividing the American fleet between the Atlantic and the Pacific, thus recognizing the fundamental complementarity between the British and the American fleets. As Assistant Secretary to the Navy, it was for the young Roosevelt to organize Mahan’s funeral.¹⁶

¹⁴ Alfred T. Mahan, “Possibilities of an Anglo American Reunion,” *North American Review*, 159, 456, (Nov. 1894): 551 63; id., “Motives to Imperial Federation,” *National Review*, (May 1902), reprinted in *Retrospect & Prospect* (New York: 1968): 89 135; Mahan to John B. Sterling, 3 Feb. 1896, quoted in Tiziana Stella, *Federalismo e atlantismo nella politica estera degli Stati Uniti. Il contributo di Clarence Streit*, PhD diss., University of Pavia, 1999, 56; Andrew Carnegie, “A Look Ahead,” *North American Review*, 156, 439, (June 1893): 683 710. Alfred T. Mahan called also for Anglo Germanic American cooperation against Slavic aggression in a relationship “founded upon the rock of common interest, and cemented by the ties of blood,” Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Problem of Asia and its Effects upon International Policies* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1900), 133. For a discussion, see Dirk Bönker, “Admiration, Enmity, and Cooperation: U.S. Navalism and the British and German Empires before the Great War,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 2, (2001): 17.

¹⁵ BP, 22.60, undated, c. 1900.

¹⁶ Davis, *The Atlantic System*, 83; William L. Neumann, “Franklin Delano Roosevelt: A Disciple of Admiral Mahan,” in *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, 78, (July 1952): 713 19; Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Age of*

Rhodes aimed at the creation of “a church for the extension of the British Empire,” a “religious brotherhood” among men “of ability and character.” Only in 1892 with his fifth Will did Rhodes supplement the idea of a ‘secret society’ with the creation of an educational institution offering scholarships to first class students from all over the Empire to study a year at Oxford, and be imbued with the Imperial ideology. Its members should be, according to Frank Aydelotte, American Rhodes Trust Secretary,

men of ability and enthusiasm who find no suitable way to serve their country under the current political system; able youth recruited from the schools and universities; men of wealth with no aim in life; younger sons with high thoughts and great aspirations but without opportunity; rich men whose careers are blighted by some great disappointment.¹⁷

After Rhodes’ death, Stead recollected that it was Rhodes’ intention to support, through his Trust, “the dispatch of emissaries on mission of propaganda throughout the Empire,” the creation of lectureships and the “acquisition of a newspaper...to be devoted to the service of the cause.” Stead first met Rhodes in 1889, and the intimate friendship which developed during the years among them became the base on which the Imperial federation idea continued to be fought for, after the collapse of the League. The creation of the *Review of Reviews*—a journal which aimed to promote the closer union of the English-speaking peoples—and of the Rhodes Trust, owed much to their convergence of thought and action.¹⁸

Oxford University expressed gratitude for the establishment of the scholarship programme and a grant to Oriel College—where Rhodes had studied—of an endowment fund of £200,000, conferring on Rhodes, on 21 July 1899, an honorary doctorate in civil law, together with Victor Bruce, and Herbert Kitchener. Vain was the public opposition of 92 professors—including the master of Balliol, E. Caird, the reader in Indian Law, Sir William Markby, the reader in Indian History, S. Owen, Dicey, and H. A. L. Fisher, later to become a Rhodes Trustee—expressed in a letter to the Vice-Chancellor D. B. Monro, Provost of Oriel, after the finding by a Parliamentary Committee of Rhodes’ involvement in the notorious Jameson Raid. Goldwin Smith, prominent exponent of the ‘Little

Roosevelt. The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919 1933 (Boston, MA: 1957), 349; James MacGregor, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (San Diego, CA: 1984), 61.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 73 4; Frank Aydelotte, *The American Rhodes Scholars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1946); id., *The Vision of*, 10.

¹⁸ Stead, *The Last Will*, 75 7; Anthony Kenny, *The History of the Rhodes Trust, 1902 1999* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Englanders', took this opportunity to deplore "the adoption of Oxford as a pedestal for a trophy of Cecil Rhodes."¹⁹

2. *Alfred Milner*

Born in Germany of an English mother and a German-English father, Milner entered Balliol in 1872 and fell under the spell of Benjamin Jowett. The gain of a prize-fellowship at New College of £200 a year, on condition he remain a bachelor, gave him a stable source of income since he had no personal fortune to rely on. After a brief career at the bar, Milner in 1881 joined the *Pall Mall Gazette*—financed by Rhodes and finally acquired in 1892 by William Waldorf Astor for £50,000—where he became assistant editor to Stead. The journal was a liberal magazine of small circulation, but very influential in London political circles, advocating controversial social reforms, and a specific "doctrine of imperialism," which identified a kind of "national religion" in the civilizing mission of the Empire. The preaching of the "gospel of creative imperialism" developed as the passion of his life, and gave him the chance to distinguish himself as a very efficient and sober administrator.²⁰

Milner was one of "the half dozen men who ran Egypt" between 1889 and 1892 as part of "a wonderfully strong crew" under the leadership of Sir Evelyn Baring, following the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. Milner's *England in Egypt*, which went through five editions in eighteen months, contained the doctrine of the 'new imperialism', and was regarded by the young Winston Churchill as "more than a book." Churchill saw in it "the trumpet-call which rallies the soldiers after the parapets are stormed, and summons them to complete the victory." Churchill became, after that reading, a follower of Milner.²¹

Milner was however "not anxious to extend the bounds of an Empire already vast or to increase responsibilities already onerous." The limitation of "the sphere of our actions abroad," should have produced a "more and

¹⁹ Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 86, 93. The seventeenth and last Will of 1899 nominated Lord Rosebery, Lord Grey, William Stead, Alfred Beit, Lewis Michell and Starr Jameson as his trustees.

²⁰ Vladimir Halpérin, *Lord Milner and the Empire: The Evolution of British Imperialism* (London: 1952), 10.

²¹ J. Marlowe, *Milner* (London: 1976), 17; Alfred Milner, *England in Egypt* (London: 1892); W. S. Churchill, *The River War* (London: 1899), 90. Milner's appointment in 1889 as Under secretary of Finance in Egypt owed much to George Goschen to whom Milner had been private secretary when in 1887 he became Chancellor of the Exchequer.

not less vigorous, resolute and courageous” British foreign policy. Like Seeley, Milner focused his interest on the British-settled parts of the Empire, identified as ‘Greater Britain’, and had little interest in India or the African and other tropical colonies. “If I had to choose between an effective union of the great self-governing states of the Empire without the dependent states,” Milner declared in 1908, “and the retention of the dependent states accompanied by complete separation from the distant communities of our own blood and language,” he would have chosen the former. Milner’s imperialism was centred on the union of British peoples. Even Egypt, where he served for three years, did not interest Milner, as shown by his dealing with the Egyptian settlement of 1920.²²

There were three figures who played a major influence, both spiritually and intellectually, on Milner: the Canadian George Robert Parkin, Stead, and Arnold Toynbee. Pioneer and secretary of the Imperial Federation League in Canada, Parkin was eight years older than Milner. They first met in Oxford in 1873, at a debate of the Oxford Union on the desirability of Imperial federation. In spite of the fact that the motion in support of the reasons in favour was rejected by fifteen votes against eleven, from that moment the question of institutional reforms of an Empire that still seemed to enjoy good health became part of the existence of those young students, who would play, within two decades, a prominent role in the political and economic life of the Empire.²³

At Oxford Milner arrived as an undergraduate, and Parkin was a non-Collegiate student. Parkin became later a leading figure of the League, and after the collapse of the League in 1893 Milner helped Parkin to raise funds to continue in solitude his campaign for Imperial federation, until he offered Parkin in 1902 the post of the first Organizing Secretary of the Rhodes scholarship scheme, a position which he kept for eighteen years. Writing to Parkin on 28 April 1897, on his way to South Africa to take up the post of High Commissioner, Milner confided: “My life has been greatly influenced by your ideas, and in my new post I shall feel more than

²² Milner to R. Bucknell, 4 July 1884, quoted in Eric Stokes, “Milnerism,” *Historical Journal*, 5, 1, (1962): 49; Speech on “The Two Empires,” printed in *The Nation and the Empire*, 293. For a discussion, see: J. Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East: Imperial Policy in the Aftermath of War, 1918 1922* (London: 1981).

²³ Oxford Union Library, “Rough Minute Books,” 1873 6; 1876 84; Colin Newbury, “Cecil Rhodes and the South African Connection: ‘A Great Imperial University?’” in *Oxford: and the Idea*, Madden and Fieldhouse, 79.

ever the need of your enthusiasm and broad, hopeful view of the Imperial future.”²⁴

Stead was a Liberal whose pledge to causes secured him much celebrity and influence in the last two decades of the Nineteenth century. As assistant—from 1880 to 1883—and then editor—from 1883 to 1890—of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and editor of the *Review of Reviews*, he promoted the application of the federal idea to the Empire, Ireland and Europe, a doctrine which became well-known as the “gospel according to the *Pall Mall Gazette*.” If the Empire had to “federate or perish,” Irish home rule appeared to Stead “even more important than the federation of the Empire.” Ireland and the Empire, according to Boyce, divided in fact the federalists in three ways: those like Seeley who were for Imperial federation but against home rule; those, like Freeman, who were for home

²⁴ George Parkin, *Imperial Federation, or the Problem of National Unity* (London: 1892); id., *Round the Empire* (London: 1892); id., *The Great Dominion* (London: 1895); John Willison, *Sir George Parkin: A Biography* (London: 1929); Arnold Toynbee, *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution of the XVIIIth Century in England* (London: 1898); Leo Amery, *The Empire in the New Era* (London: E. Arnold & Co, 1928), 240; Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 42. Parkin was born in Canada in 1846. After graduation at Oxford in 1874 he became Chancellor of the University of Brunswick, Canada, and in 1889 Secretary of the Imperial Federation League in Canada. Parkin was the first Secretary of the Rhodes Trust (1902–20). He was followed by Geoffrey Dawson (1921–2), Sir Edward Grigg (1922–5) and Lord Lothian (1925–1939). Members of the Board of Trustees were, with Milner: Lord Rosebery, Lord Grey, Starr Jameson, Alfred Beit, Lewis Michell, B. F. Hawksley, Otto Beit, Rudyard Kipling, Leo Amery, Stanley Baldwin, Geoffrey Dawson, H. A. L. Fisher, Sothern Holland, and Sir Edward Peacock, former colleague of Parkin as teacher of English and house master at Upper Canada College, 1895–1902, then international financier, expert at the Genoa Conference of 1922, representative of the British Treasury at the British Embassy in Washington during the Second World War, (Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 87). Reginald Sothern Holland was private secretary to Jameson in 1904 and head of the Prime Minister’s Department (1905–8), in charge of the supply of munitions at the War Cabinet and Ministry of Munitions from 1915 to 1918, and Rhodes trustee in 1932. Lewis Lloyd Michell (1842–1928) was Rhodes’s banker, a director of the British South Africa Company, and Rhodes’s biographer, see his *Life of Rhodes* (London: 1910). Alfred Beit (1853–1906) handled Rhodes’s business. Lord Rosebery and Lord Rothschild (being his father in law) were associates of both Rhodes and Milner. On Lloyd George’s rearmament programme, see R. J. Q. Adams, *Arms and the Wizard: Lloyd George and the Ministry of Munitions* (London: 1978).

rule but against Imperial federation; and those like Stead, who were in favour of both.²⁵

“The special role of English statesmanship” was, according to Stead, the establishment of the United States of Europe. The “English mission abroad” was “to maintain the European Concert...that germ of the United States of Europe.” Stead passionately involved himself directly in this cause, launching in 1898 an International Peace Crusade, echoed in Henry Osborne’s Crusade for World Government half a century later. Following a peace initiative by Tsar Nicholas II in 1898, Stead made a highly publicised journey round Europe, meeting political leaders on his way to and from meeting the Tsar. On returning to London he organized public meetings, founded a new weekly, *War against War*, which called for a million volunteers for the crusade, and published *The United States of Europe on the Eve of the Parliament of Peace*. The calling of the Peace Conference which was held at The Hague from May to July 1899, and which resulted in conventions on arms limitation, mediation and arbitration, owed much to his initiative. That should have been, according to Stead, a step towards a European federation, “an embryo in the latter stages of gestation.”²⁶

Peace would have been achieved, according to Stead, only “when the armed anarchy of a world split up into forty-six sovereign and independent states becomes a single great federation with but one army and one navy to maintain order and enforce the law.” In the perspective of the political union of mankind in a world federation, the “English mission abroad” was, beyond Europe, “to unite all branches of the English-speaking race in an Anglo-Saxon Bund.” First, the British people had to save their own Empire, through the ‘Americanization’ of its Constitution. Nobody, according to Stead, “could ignore the fact that many of the strongest Imperialists are at heart and soul in favour of seeking the British Empire and the American Republic merged in the English-speaking United States of the World.” The “Americanization of the world,” for Stead meant the

²⁵ Frederic Whyte, *The Life of W. T. Stead* (London: 1925), vol. 1, 322 7; Boyce, *Federalism and the Irish*, 129.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, vol. 1, 155; William T. Stead, *The United States of Europe on the Eve of the Parliament of Peace* (London: 1899), 9, 15; Whyte, *The Life of*, vol. 2, 147; Stead, *The United States*, 41. The “question of the United States of Europe” had been, Stead confessed, “one of the ideals towards which I have constantly, in fair weather and in foul, directed my course,” *ibidem*, 32. On Henry Osborne’s crusade, see Henry Osborne, “A History of the British Parliamentary Group for World Government,” in *The Federal Idea. The History of Federalism since 1945*, Andrea Bosco ed. (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1993), vol. 2, 113 31.

“Americanization of the citizens of the world,” an historical process through which, “the rest of civilized mankind” was “forced to move,” since the Americans discovered “the type of institutions” which guaranteed the peaceful and constitutional solution of conflicts among States.²⁷

Stead found on the other side of the Atlantic in Andrew Carnegie a strong supporter of the creation of a “British-American Union.” “We are heading straight to the Re-united States,” Carnegie re-assured Stead: “It is coming faster than you people in the Old World realise.” The idea of Atlantic re-unification was discussed and launched by Carnegie in two essays, “An American View of Imperial Federation,” and “A Look Ahead.” Other American supporters of an Atlantic federation, led by the United States, had been Francis Vincent, with his *Essay Recommending the Union of Great Britain and her Colonies and the United States, and the Final Union of the World into One Great Nation*, and John Fiske, author of *The Destiny of Man* and *Manifest Destiny*, very influential and controversial works, which offered for more than a generation an ideological basis for the consolidation of American power politics and imperialism. Among Fiske’s estimators—especially for his *The Critical Period of American History, 1783-1789*—there were Philip Kerr (later to become Lord Lothian) and Clarence Streit.²⁸

Considered by Tompkins as “one of the most prominent of the imperialist torchbearers,” Fiske exerted a significant influence on Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, producing a general theory of international relations centred on the assumption that during the Twentieth century the United States would have become the centre of a

²⁷ Whyte, *The Life of*, vol. 2, 286; William Thomas Stead, *The Americanization of the World, or the Trend of the Twentieth Century* (London: 1902), 33, 153, viii, 14, 6, 61, 7, 18; Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 1988 edition, vol. 1, 72.

²⁸ Stead, *The Americanization*, 154; Andrew Carnegie, “An American View of Imperial Federation,” *Nineteenth Century*, (September 1891); id., “A Look Ahead,” *North American Review*, 156, (June 1892); Francis Vincent, *Essay Recommending the Union of Great Britain and her Colonies and the United States, and the Final Union of the World into One Great Nation* (Wilmington: 1868); John Fiske, *The Destiny of Man: Viewed in the Light of His Origins* (Boston, MA: 1884); id., “Manifest Destiny,” *Harper’s Magazine*, 70, (March 1885), 578-90; id., *The Critical Period of American History, 1783-1789* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1899); id., *American Political Ideas, Viewed from the Standpoint of Universal History* (New York: 1885). For a critical analysis, see Robert Wheelwright, “19th Century Federalist,” in *Freedom & Union*, (October 1948): 28-9; E. Berkeley Tompkins, *Anti Imperialism in the United States: The Great Debate, 1890-1920* (Philadelphia, PA: 1970).

process of “political aggregation immeasurably surpassing in power and dimensions any empire that has yet existed.” Through the “gradual concentration of the preponderance of physical power into the hands of the most pacific communities, the wretched business of warfare,” would become, according to Fiske, “obsolete all over the globe.” Since history showed “the successive union of groups of men into larger and more complex aggregates,” Fiske foresaw the constitution of “one huge federation,” celebrating Tennyson’s “parliament of man and the federation of the world.” Then it would be possible “to speak of the United States as stretching from pole to pole.” That accomplishment represented the fulfilment of the American revolution—achieving the “substitution of law for violence between states that were partly sovereign”—in the “still grander convention...between states that have been fully sovereign.”²⁹

If Parkin was instrumental in instilling in Milner an Imperial ideology, Stead was the fundamental link between Milner and Rhodes, in spite of a crisis in their relationship, when Stead opposed the drift towards war of Milner’s policy in South Africa. Stead in fact opposed the Second Anglo-Boer War from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, on the ground that it showed how the Hague conventions fell short of what would be required to ensure peace.³⁰

As a consequence of Stead’s opposition to the Anglo-Boer War, Rhodes removed him as a trustee in April 1900. In writing to Stead on his attitude to the war, Rhodes also acknowledged about the existence of his ‘secret’ Society: “How can our Society be worked if each one sets himself up as the sole judge of what ought to be done? Just look at the position here. We three are South Africa, all of us your boys. I myself, Milner and [F. Edmund] Garrett, all of whom learned politics from you—and yet instead of deferring to the judgment of your own boys you fling yourself into violent opposition to the war.”³¹

Toynbee influenced Milner in his conception of the history of the British Empire as the embodiment and the manifestation of the idea of freedom. Every man’s duty and moral obligation were, according to

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 7 8; Fiske, *American Political Ideas*, 139, 151 2; id., *The Critical Period of American*, 302. In the spring of 1879 Fiske was invited by Professor Huxley to deliver a series of lectures on the subject at the London University College, and the following year at the Royal Institution, raising a good deal of interest among the British public, indirectly contributing to the creation of the Imperial Federation League, (Fiske, *American Political Ideas*, 5).

³⁰ Whyte, *The Life of*, vol. 2, 286.

³¹ Quoted in Miles F. Shore, “Cecil Rhodes and the Ego Ideal,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 10, 2, (Autumn 1979): 256.

Toynbee, to serve the Empire as best as he could. From this perspective, the task of the most privileged classes was to promote the enhancement of the working classes through social work. Toynbee provided Milner not only with a model of civic behaviour, but also with a method of making disciples. As explained by Benjamin Jowett, master of Balliol, in his preface to the 1884 edition of Toynbee's *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution*, Toynbee

would gather his friends around him; they would form an organization; they would work on quietly for a time, some at Oxford, some in London; they would prepare themselves in different parts of the subject until they were ready to strike in public.

After leaving Oxford in 1877 Milner put in practice Toynbee's ideas by starting social work in East London, where he met Samuel A. Barnett, social reformer and curate of St. Jude's at Whitechapel. Following the early death of Toynbee, Milner contributed to the creation of Toynbee Hall in 1884, a settlement house in East London.³²

Milner was a man of the radical Right who had strong sympathies for socialism. Behind its "odious form...that attacks wealth and lives upon class hatred," in socialism there was, according to Milner, "a generous sympathy and a lofty and wise conception of what is meant by national life." "We are not merely so many millions of individuals, each struggling for himself," Milner thought, "but literally a body politic." The attempt "to raise the well-being and efficiency of the people," was not "philanthropy but business." Social reforms could, in Milner's view, be paid for by tariff reform and Imperial federation, which would have rebalanced Imperial relations and provided a relief for British taxpayers.³³

Milner admired Bismarck's Germany and supported governmental commitment to social reforms, the interventionist role of government in economics, 'national efficiency', and national service. There could not be any "enduring Empire" without its union, and Milner was aware that "these islands by themselves cannot always remain a Power of the very

³² Quoted in Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 10. It was through Barnett that Milner got in touch with George J. Goschen, becoming in 1884 his private secretary. On Toynbee Hall see Asa Briggs and Ann Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First One Hundred Years* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984); Standish Meacham, *Toynbee Hall and Social Reform 1880 1914: The Search for Community* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987).

³³ John Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of Empire* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1976), 183. On British rearmament, see Nicholas A. Lambert, *Planning Armageddon: British Economic Warfare and the First World War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

first rank,” and that in order to continue to play a leading role, Great Britain had to “ensure the safety and the prosperity of all the States composing” the Empire, which could not endure without its union.³⁴

Milner’s conception of the Empire was of a multi-faceted entity, a group of *sister* nations spread throughout the world, *united* and not divided by the ocean, each *independent* in its own concerns, all *indissolubly allied* for a common purpose, *all free and willing subjects* of the most ancient and august monarchy in the world.

Milner had been a strong supporter of Joseph Chamberlain’s tariff policy, intended to create a block of Imperial preferences, certainly favourable to Great Britain, but linked to the concept of a “cooperative Commonwealth, in which each member State, while developing independently on its own lines, is yet bound to contribute whatever it can to the development of the rest.” Having been a disciple of Cobden and free trade from an early age, and having then studied List and the German economy, Milner was convinced of the need to apply protectionism to the Empire, so as to take advantage of the potentials of Imperial co-operation. Convinced also that Great Britain had to “remain a Great Power,” he warned all those who were trying to promote social progress without at the same time developing “national strength” that they were “building their house upon sand.”³⁵

Milner’s patriotism was centred on the world hegemony of the British Empire: “I am a nationalist...not a cosmopolitan.” A British, “indeed primarily an English” nationalist. “If I am also an Imperialist and not a Little Englander,” he declared in *The Times* on 27 July 1925, in a sort of farewell statement, “it is because the destiny of the English race...has been to strike fresh roots in distant parts.” Milner’s patriotism knew “no geographical but only racial limits,” and it was based on British cultural and political accomplishments. He believed that the “competition between nations, each seeking its maximum development,” was “the law of human progress...the Divine Order of the world, the law of Life.”³⁶

Since the Empire had been built by the British race, it was up to “the undivided British race” alone to “uphold it.” “Deeper, stronger, more

³⁴ Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of*, 184; Alfred Milner, *Speech at Manchester*, 14 Dec. 1906, printed in Milner, *The Nation*, 140.

³⁵ Speech given on 28 Oct. 1901 in Durban, (Headlam, *Milner Papers*, 287); Milner, *The Nation*, 140; id., *Questions of the Hour* (London: 1925), 168 70; André Sigfried, *Le Canada, Puissance Internationale* (Paris: 1939), 158 9.

³⁶ Milner, *The Nation*, xxxii, xxxv. Milner’s ‘Credo’ was published after his death in *The Times*, 27 July 1925, and in a final collection of his speeches and articles, (*Questions of the Hour*).

primordial than those material ties” was, according to Milner, “the bond of common blood,” a common language, common history and traditions. “I am more than ever impressed,” Milner wrote to Lionel Curtis in 1908 “by the fact that the only real and permanent tie of Empire is race.” “Without a strong and enduring British heaven,” Milner argued, “a large mass of the population to whom British traditions, British history, and the British language are dear, it is impossible permanently to retain any great white community in political connection with the mother country.”³⁷

In spite of the fact that the inhabitants of England, Scotland and Ireland were “of various stocks,” it was, according to Milner, “not only convenient,” but “in accordance with broad political facts...to speak of them collectively as the British race.” “Community of language and institutions, and centuries of life together under one sovereignty,” did not “indeed obliterated differences,” but had “superadded bonds, which are more than artificial, which make them in the eyes of the world, if not always in their own, a single nation.”³⁸

Milner fully endorsed a federal scheme for the Empire and the United Kingdom, put forward by Brassey, former leader of the Imperial Federation League, in *A Policy on Which All Liberals May Unite*, requiring the creation of “separate parliaments for Imperial and local business.” Milner however proposed

not to create a new body *over* the so called Imperial Parliament, but...to create new bodies, or a new body *under* it for the local business of Great Britain and Ireland, leaving it to deal with the wider questions of Foreign Policy, the Defence of the Empire and the relations of the several parts.

The colonies would have been represented in the Imperial Parliament, “which would thus become really Imperial...really effective as an instrument of Imperial Policy,” and it should be reduced in number of members. Milner offered Brassey his and Parkin’s personal commitment, to “help enormously, almost decisively indeed,” providing “an amount of illustration and argument to bring to bear of the subject, *drawn from practical experience*, which would logically smash the opposition.” Their “difficulty in the old days,” the days of the Imperial Federation League, was that they “were advocating a grand, but, as it seemed, an impractical

³⁷ Milner to Curtis, 1 Dec. 1908, quoted in May, *The Round Table*, 26. On Milner, see John Evelyn Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner: The Man of No Illusions 1854 1925* (London: 1958); Edward Crankshaw, *The Forsaken Idea: A Study of Viscount Milner* (London: 1952); A. M. Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics: A Study of Lord Milner in Opposition and in Power* (London: 1964).

³⁸ Milner, *The Nation and*, xxxv vi.

idea,” which in the meantime had become “an urgent practical necessity.”³⁹

In spite of the fact that the existing Imperial institutions were inadequate, “and so are the statesmen they produce (except in accidental cases like Chamberlain),” Milner thought that the time was “ripe to make a beginning,” and for such a move it appeared necessary to win over the pessimism of leaders such as Rosebery, “who could carry through such a policy if any man could.” Rosebery had been, in fact the first prominent British statesman to use in 1884 the term ‘Commonwealth of Nations’ in a speech at Adelaide, Australia. Die-hards like Rosebery pleaded for a “dictator, a tyrant...a man of large mind or iron will who would see what had to be done and do it.”⁴⁰

Milner drew his power and influence on the formation of British Imperial and foreign policy from heterogeneous social forces, of which he was a sort of intersection point. On one side Rhodes represented the embodiment of capitalist exploitation and accumulation of wealth in colonial Britain. On the other, there were Stead and Parkin, who offered Milner the foundations of an Imperial ideology, which provided a base of legitimacy for and perpetuation of an Empire that included within its borders one fourth of world’s surface and of its population, by and large completely subject to the rule of a British Parliament and Cabinet. Then, Milner could rely upon Reginald Baliol Brett—later Lord Esher, intimate of Rhodes, foreign and military policy adviser of Edward VII and George V—who facilitated the rise of the ‘outsider’ Milner into the British foreign and Imperial policy decision-making inner circle.⁴¹

³⁹ Headlam, *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 159 60.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, 267; H. C. G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists. The Ideas and Politics of a post Gladstonian Elite* (Oxford: 1973), 146. According to Sir Charles Tupper, in 1891 Lord Rosebery considered Imperial federation “so remote that during the coming century it is not likely to make any very great advance.” In 1899 Rosebery had concluded that “Imperial Federation in any form is an impossible dream,” see Duncan Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations: A Study of its Past and Future Developments* (Toronto: University of Toronto Libraries, 2011), 70 1.

⁴¹ Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 3. Reginald Baliol Brett (1852 1930) was educated at Eton where he was taught by William Johnson, whose pupils included Lord Rosebery and at Trinity College, Oxford, where Brett was influenced by William Harcourt, Professor of International Law. Brett began his political career in 1880, as Liberal MP for Penryn and Falmouth. He was Parliamentary Private Secretary to Lord Hartington Secretary of State for War 1882 85 and was instrumental in the Jameson Raid of 1895. On this occasion he became an intimate of Rhodes. During the Second Anglo Boer War, Brett as Lord Esher settled the dispute between Lansdowne and General Wolseley, about the

The social base of Milner's power coincided mainly with the power of the Cecil family, and to a less degree of other families such as Lyttelton (Viscounts Cobham), Wyndham (Barons Leconfield), Grosvenor (Dukes of Westminster), Balfour, Wemyss, Palmer (Earls of Selborne and Viscounts Wolmer), Cavendish (Dukes of Devonshire and Marquess of Hartington) and Gathorne-Hardy (Earls of Cranbrook). The influence of the Cecil family in British society had been built up by the Third Marquess of Salisbury, Robert Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, Prime Minister from 1895 to 1902, recruiting men of ability mainly from All Souls and placing them in positions of power in the fields of politics, education—Eton and Harrow—and journalism, particularly at the *Quarterly Review* and *The Times*.⁴²

The Times had been controlled by the Cecil family since 1884 without ownership and from 1912 it fell under the influence of Milner through Lord Northcliffe. Rhodes' dream was however completely realized only in 1922, when it was acquired by the Astor family—Waldorf, a member of Milner's Kindergarten, and Colonel John Jacob—as a consequence of the acquisition—with the financial assistance of Lazard, through another of Milner's disciples, Robert Brand—of the Harmsworth estate. Geoffrey Dawson, a further Milner disciple, was its editor from 1912 to 1941, apart

responsibilities for military failures. Esher was involved in pre World War I military reforms including the creation of the Committee of Imperial Defence, becoming a permanent member of it in 1905 and in the establishment of the *Entente Cordiale*, playing a prominent role in all War Office appointments from 1904. Through Major General Douglas Haig, Esher influenced Haldane's military reforms, including the creation of the British Expeditionary Force and the Territorial Army. For a discussion, see: James Lees Milne, *The Enigmatic Edwardian: The Life of Reginald, 2nd Viscount Esher* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1986); Walter Reid, *Architect of Victory: Douglas Haig* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006).

⁴² Lord Salisbury, Prime Minister from 1885 to 1902, was fellow of All Souls from 1853 and Chancellor of the University of Oxford from 1869 to 1903. Salisbury was the uncle of Arthur J. Balfour and Gerald W. Balfour; father in law of Lord Selborne; grandfather of Lord Wolmer (who married the daughter of Viscount Ridley, and was MP from 1910 to 1940, occupying junior positions in various Conservative governments since 1916, and Minister of Economic Warfare from 1942 to 1945), and of Lady Mabel Laura Palmer (who married the son of Earl Grey); grandfather of Viscount Cranborne (elder son of the Fourth Marquess, MP from 1929 to 1941, then in the Lords; Under secretary for Foreign Affairs 1935 8, Minister for Dominion Affairs, 1940 2, leader of the Conservative party in the Lords 1942 5); father of Lord William Cecil (Bishop of Exeter, 1916 36 and chaplain of Edward VII); father of Lord Robert Cecil (MP from 1906 to 1923, Parliamentary Under secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1915 16, Minister of Blockade, 1916 18, and Lord Privy Seal, 1923 4).

from 1919 to 1922, during which interval he resigned as a result of a conflict of views with Lord Northcliffe, chief proprietor from 1908 to 1922. If at the beginning of the century the circulation of *The Times* was of 35,000 copies, at the outbreak of World War I it increased to 50,000, to reach in 1936 the figure of 187,000. Among the ‘quality’ press *The Times*, *The Times Literary Supplement* and *The Observer*—acquired by Waldorf Astor in 1911—exercised an unchallenged leadership in shaping British foreign and Imperial policy, because of the close connection of Milner and his followers with opinion making and governmental inner circles.⁴³

Arthur Balfour perpetuated to some degree the political and social power of the Salisbury family, but it was Milner, after the deaths of Rhodes, Stead and Brett who was to become, through ambition and determination, the heir of Salisbury, shifting the base of power from family connections through marriages—expression of an epoch of limited social conflicts, and a limited extension of democracy—to ideological consent to a specific and limited set of ideas. The control of the ‘quality press’ for the formation of consent behind these ideas was the fundamental strategic device—an expression of the rise of economic and political democracy—which replaced the family-based Salisbury’s network. The Salisbury ‘cluster’ represented primarily a social rather than a political power, since until 1890 it included also Gladstone, and it became merely political after the split of the Liberal party in 1886, when the Lytteltons, the Wyndhams and the Cavendishes become Unionists.

Milner exercised his influence, like Salisbury, on All Souls, New College and Balliol, through its wardens and Committees, over which he exercised an indirect control. These three colleges—and to a lesser degree Brasenose and Magdalen—became for Milner recruiting places for disciples, offering them an income with some minor academic duties in order to carry out research and teaching on Imperial history according to an ‘orthodox’ outlook. Once young and promising undergraduates were noticed, they were admitted to All Souls, where their loyalty was tested, and opportunities of careers offered at *The Times*, *The Observer*, the universities, Chatham House, and at the Foreign and Colonial Offices.⁴⁴

⁴³ J. Lee Thompson, *Politicians, the Press, and Propaganda: Lord Northcliffe and the Great War, 1914 1919* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2000).

⁴⁴ All Souls fellows who gravitated around the ‘outer ring’ of Milner’s group were, according to Quigley: William George Stewart Adams (Gladstone Professor of Political Theory and Institutions, 1912 33; member of the Advisory Committee to the Irish Cabinet, 1911; officer at the Ministry of Munitions, 1915; Private Secretary to Lloyd George 1916 9; warden of All Souls 1933 45); Kenneth Norman Bell (fellow of All Souls, 1907 14; tutor and fellow at Balliol, 1919 41;

All Souls was a very peculiar academic institution, which offered scholars a life-long fellowship to study history, philosophy, classics and law, with minor academic duties. Fellows who would leave the college for professions or public life in the service of the Empire would retain the fellowship until the expiration of the seventh year, and then would become 'quondam'. "There are a number of them abroad," Alfred L. Rowse observed, "but whenever they wonder, they still belong to the company" of fellows, "and when they come home, they come home to All Souls." Common to resident fellows and *quondam* was "the sense of public duty," Rowse remarked. "There was nothing they would not do if they were convinced it was their duty. This was the air they breathed." Charles W. Brodribb, *The Times* leader writer, went further to suggest that they took "upon themselves no less a task than that of forming an unofficial committee for running, or helping to run, the destinies of the British Empire." Charles P. Snow came to the conclusion that it was "to some extent" due to the very existence of All Souls that Oxford, during the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, "has been more intimately linked to English governing circles" than Cambridge, "considerably bigger and more handsomely endowed."⁴⁵

Beit lecturer 1924 7); Harold Beresford Butler (fellow of All Souls 1905 12; member of the Labour Commission at the Paris Peace Conference; Deputy Director, 1920 32, and Director of the International Labour Office of the League of Nations, 1932 8; Minister in charge of publicity at the British Embassy in Washington, 1942 6); Isaiah Berlin, R. D. O. Butler, F. Clarke, E. Corbett, C. R. M. F. Cruttwell, H. W. C. Davis, G. C. Faber, J. G. Foster, M. L. Gwyer, W. K. Hancock, C. R. S. Harris, H. V. Hodson, C. A. Macartney, R. M. Makins, J. Morley, C. J. Radcliffe, James Salter, D. B. Somerwell, A. H. D. R. Steel Maitland, B. H. Sumner, L. F. Williams, E. L. Woodward. If Francis W. Pember, warden from 1914 to 1932, was closer to the Cecil family rather than to Milner, W. G. Adams, warden from 1933 to 1945 belonged to the 'outer ring' of the Kindergarten. Links with New College were kept by Milner through H. A. L. Fisher, and with Balliol by A. L. Smith, Master from 1916 to 1924. Almost every prominent member of the Round Table's inner circle was a fellow of one of these three colleges, (Quigley, *The Anglo American Establishment*, 89 90). In 1918 A. L. Smith contested Curtis election as Rhodes Trust trustee on the ground that "perhaps, great man as he is, he may be too prophetic," (A. L. Smith to Milner, 13 Aug. 1918, MP, 471, 224 5.)

⁴⁵ Alfred L. Rowse, *The English Past: Evocations of Persons and Places* (New York: 1952), 10; id., *Appeasement: A Study in Political Decline, 1933 1939* (New York: 1961), 2; Charles W. Brodribb, *Government by Mallardry: A Study in Political Ornithology* (London: 1932), 8; C. Snow, *New York Times Book Review*, 24 Dec. 1961, 3.

A measure of the influence which the Cecil family, Milner and his disciples, exercised within Oxford University is offered by the list of Chancellors between 1869 and 1933: Lord Salisbury (1869-1903); Lord Goschen (1903-1907); Lord Curzon (1907-1925); Lord Milner (1925); Lord George Cave (1925-8); Lord Grey of Fallodon (1928-33), and Lord Halifax (1933).

Milner and his disciples gave much importance to the study and teaching of history, exercising control on the *Dictionary of National Biography* through H. W. C. Davis and J. R. H. Weaver. They also played a major influence, according to Quigley, in the nomination of chairholders of the Stevenson Professorship of International Relations at the University of London; the Rhodes Professorship of Imperial History at Birkbeck College; the George V Professorship at Cape Town University; and the Wilson Chair in International Politics at Aberystwyth. In Canada the Round Table was influential in academic nominations at the University of Toronto and Upper Canada College.⁴⁶

3. Transvaal, Milner and the Second Anglo-Boer War

The Transvaal was one of the four British South African colonies originally created by Dutch farmers in the 1830s with an economy based on agriculture until the discovery in the 1870s of gold deposits. These attracted a considerable number of British immigrants—the so-called *Uitlanders*, 44,000 in the mid-1890s, living mainly in Johannesburg—who were however a minority amongst the descendants of early Dutch settlers, the so called *Afrikaners*. Transvaal was granted a degree of self-government by the British Government in the 1850s—except for a period, between 1877 and 1884, during which the British regained full political control of the colony. Following the German annexation of South West Africa in 1884, Paul Kruger, President of Transvaal from 1880 to 1899, decided to try and achieve total independence. The fear was that unification between Transvaal and South West Africa would isolate southward Cape Colony, loyal to Britain, and give Germany a strategic advantage, able to dominate all of Africa south of the Zambezi river.

The controversy between the Boers and the British—which in 1881 culminated in an uprising, and the defeat of the British at Majuba Hill, settled by the Pretoria Convention—started over the political rights and economic treatment of the urban British minority in the two republics dominated by *Afrikaners*, Transvaal and Orange Free State. But this was

⁴⁶ Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 87 8.

just a veil which hid a wider and deeper conflict between European powers. The *Uitlanders* represented the majority of the males of British descent, paid high taxes, and had to do military service, but in order to obtain citizenship and political rights needed fourteen years of residence.

This protracted discrimination by the Transvaal Government towards colonists of British descent brought Rhodes, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, to support *Uitlanders* to take control of Transvaal by the notorious and failed 'Jameson Raid' of 29 December 1895. This should have initiated a revolt by Johannesburg miners, aided by an armed force led by Starr Jameson—a director of Rhodes' British South Africa Company in Rhodesia—and financed by Rhodes and other Rand magnates.⁴⁷

In order to achieve the union of the South African colonies under British rule, Rhodes needed to establish, once he became Premier of the Cape, a customs union with Transvaal. Kruger's reiterated rejection of Rhodes' offers, and his decision to build a railway to the Portuguese Delagoa Bay in order to give Transvaal access to the sea, brought Rhodes first to try and persuade the British Government to buy the port of Delagoa Bay, and then—following the failure of such a move—to resort to force.⁴⁸

The involvement in the Jameson Raid of the British High Commissioner in Cape Town, Sir Hercules Robinson—another director of Rhodes' Chartered Company—reinforced the suspicion of tacit support from the new Prime Minister Salisbury, and his Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain. It was also a major cause of the deadlock in negotiations between the British Government and the Boer Republics to revise the concessions to self-government made by the 1881 Pretoria and by the 1884 London conventions. This created a polarization of the conflict, bringing to the Boer Republics the open support of Germany, and of *Afrikaners* living within the two South African British controlled colonies, Natal and Cape. The question at stake was the political unification of

⁴⁷ S. G. Millen, *Rhodes* (London: 1934), 341 2. Leander Starr Jameson (1853–1917) was Rhodes' doctor and his closest friend. After Rhodes's death, Jameson became leader of his party at Cape, Premier (1904–8), member of the National Convention, a director of the British South Africa Company and Rhodes Trustee. On Jameson, see Chris Ash, *The If Man: Dr Leander Starr Jameson, the Inspiration for Kipling's Masterpiece* (Pinetown: 30 Degrees South Publishers, 2011).

⁴⁸ S. J. Marais, *The Fall of Kruger's Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 61, 68–9; Jean Van der Poel, *The Jameson Raid* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 170; Jeffrey Butler, *The Liberal Party and the Jameson Raid* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 265–6.

South Africa under British or German rule. The replacement of Robinson—who became Lord Rosmead in 1896—with Lord Milner—then Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, and highly respected by both Salisbury and Chamberlain—in February 1897 produced an acceleration of the crisis. Stead claimed the major credit for the appointment of Milner as High Commissioner—bringing him to the forefront of political power from a position of relative secondary administrative responsibility—through his personal connections and bipartisan consent. He was chosen by Joseph Chamberlain instead of Sir Harry Johnston, who suspected the decisive influence of Rhodes himself behind the appointment.⁴⁹

Milner was a long-standing acquaintance of Chamberlain. They had fought against Irish home rule at the 1886 General Elections, during which Milner unsuccessfully fought for a seat in Parliament. They had worked together in Egypt in 1889. They were both strong imperialists and social reformers. Milner supported Chamberlain's policies as Colonial Secretary in the period between 1895 and 1903, especially in advocating a new tariff policy based on Imperial preference, as well as the creation of the new Jamaica Constitution of 1899, the federation of Malay States in 1895, and the Australian federation in 1900.⁵⁰

Rhodes—who during his Oxford days never met Milner or attended the relevant Union debate in May 1878 on the desirability of Imperial federation—had total trust in Milner. “Always trust Milner. You don't know yet what you have got in him,” Rhodes urged Edmund Garret, an intimate of both Rhodes and Milner, who during the Second Anglo-Boer War became the vehicle of confidential and secret communications between them. “You will support Milner in any measure,” Rhodes ordered Stead when he opposed the Second Anglo-Boer War from the *Pall Mall Gazette*: “I support Milner absolutely, without reserve. If he say peace, I

⁴⁹ Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 183.

⁵⁰ On Milner's contribution to the reconstruction and unification of South Africa see: S. Marks and S. Trapido, “Lord Milner and the South African State,” *History Workshop*, 8, (1979); id., “Lord Milner and the South African State Reconsidered,” in *Imperialism, the State and the Third World*, M. Twaddle ed. (London: 1992); S. Marks, “Southern and Central Africa, 1886 1910,” in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, R. Oliver and G. N. Sanderson eds., vol. 6 (Cambridge: 1985); M. Chanock, *Unconsummated Union: Britain, Rhodesia and South Africa, 1900 1945* (Manchester: 1977); D. Denoon, *A Grand Illusion: The Failure of Imperial Policy in the Transvaal Colony During the Period of Reconstruction, 1900 1905* (Harlow: 1973); Donal Lowry, “‘Shame upon Little England while Greater England Stands’: Southern Rhodesia and the Imperial Idea,” in *The Round Table, the Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy*, Andrea Bosco and Alex May eds. (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1997), 305 40.

say peace; if he say war, I say war. Whatever happens, I say ditto to Milner.”⁵¹

Following the publication in 1897 of the Parliamentary Report on the Jameson Raid, Rhodes had, in fact, to follow Chamberlain’s advice and to “lie low for a time.” Since Milner’s arrival in South Africa, Rhodes had become, according to Marais, “his principal lieutenant,” leaving to Milner himself the leadership of the Cape’s Progressive Party and the South African League.⁵²

With a distaste for party and parliamentary politics—the ordinary voter, according to Milner, should not have any “share in the creation of Imperial policy”—and autocratic by temperament, Milner regarded South Africa as “the weakest link in the Imperial chain,” and divided between “two wholly antagonistic systems.” “A mediaeval race oligarchy”—he wrote in 1898 to Lord Selborne, Under-secretary at the Colonial Office—“and a modern industrial State, recognizing no difference of status between various white races.” The “race-oligarchy” had, according to Milner, “got to go,” and since there were “no signs of its removing itself,” it had to go by war. War in fact broke out on 11 October 1899, after the breaking down of negotiations which Milner conducted without conviction. “There is only one possible settlement,” Milner told Johannesburg *Uitlanders*, “war! It has to come.”⁵³

Milner carries the main responsibility for the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference, Kruger having accepted British demands on the question of *Uitlanders*’ representation and franchise. In fact, it was Milner who on 5th June declared that the Conference was “absolutely at an end,” and there was “no obligation on either side arising from it.” Smuts

⁵¹ A. M. Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics. A Study of Lord Milner in Opposition and in Power* (London: Anthony Blond, 1964), 34; Edmund Garret, “Milner and Rhodes,” in *The Empire and the Century* (London: 1905), 478; Stead, *The Last Will*, 108; A. N. Porter, *The Origins of the South African War: Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1895-1899* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 146. Stead opposed the Boer War on the ground that it showed how far the Hague conventions fell short of what would be required to ensure peace, and continued to propagate the federal idea.

⁵² Quoted in John Cafferky, *Lord Milner’s Second War. The Rhodes Milner Secret Society, the Origin of World War I and the Start of the New World Order* (Lexington, KY: 2013), 28; Marais, *The Fall of Kruger’s*, 208.

⁵³ Speech at Johannesburg, 31 March 1905, printed in *The Nation*, 89-90; Milner to Parkin, 23 April 1897, quoted in Walter Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men. The “Kindergarten” in Edwardian Imperial Affairs* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970), 17. Milner’s powers were strengthened in 1900, when he became Governor of Orange River and Transvaal colonies.

described Milner attending the Bloemfontein Conference “as sweet as honey,” but noticed that there was “something in his very intelligent eyes which tell me he is a very dangerous man.”⁵⁴

Kruger, by then well aware that “it is our country you want,” did not have any alternative than to reject the British Cabinet’s ultimatum of 29 September—asking something which went beyond the questions discussed at Bloemfontein, and sounding like a request for an unconditional surrender—issuing a counter-ultimatum on 9 October, offering the British the occasion to declare war. “Accept my felicitations,” the Secretary of War Lord Lansdowne wrote to Chamberlain, “I don’t think Kruger could have played our cards better than he has.” British soldiers were “in ecstasies.” According to Stokes, Milner’s influence over Chamberlain had been a fundamental factor in the British Government’s decision to declare war on the Boers.⁵⁵

In London, Milner could count on Selborne’s support at the Colonial Office, and direct access to Prime Minister Balfour—who was Selborne’s father-in-law—and on George Wyndham, who on 18 May 1899 reassured Milner that the British press was “ready” to support the war, and “under complete control.” George Wyndham—Under-Secretary of State for War—guaranteed Milner that he could “switch on agitation at your direction.” At the War Office they were “in your hands and we shall wait and be patient, or change home, just as you decide.”⁵⁶

Having been himself a journalist, and a disciple of Steed, Milner was quite sensitive on the question of the handling of the press. He directly intervened to secure a post at the *Pall Mall Gazette* for an old Balliol friend, E. T. Cook, who wrote later a book supporting Milner’s policies in South Africa. Moreover, he urged Percy FitzPatrick to leave South Africa for London in June 1899, to “work on” the press, and to publish *The Transvaal from Within*, which was instrumental in building the support of British public opinion for the war.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Byron Farwell, *The Great Anglo Boer War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 46; Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of*, 73.

⁵⁵ Farwell, *The Great Anglo Boer War*, 47; Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), 68; Stokes, “Milnerism,” 47–60. The British Cabinet’s ultimatum asked for the repeal of all legislation relative to the *Uitlanders’* rights, to grant home rule to the Rand’s inhabitants, arbitration without third parties in all disputes, the stop on arms imported via Mozambique, and disarmament of the Transvaal.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Pakenham, *The Boer War*, 87.

⁵⁷ A. N. Porter, “Sir Alfred Milner and the Press, 1897–1899,” *Historical Journal*, 16, 2, (1973); I. R. Smith, *The Origins of the South African War, 1899–1902*

Milner was successful in gaining bipartisan support for the war. Herbert Asquith—then deputy leader of the Liberal party—assured Milner that he should not “need to be told” that he had “the sympathy and good wishes of your old friends in your difficult task.” Asquith in fact warned the Leader of the Liberal party, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, that an attack on Milner would have split the party between ‘radicals’ and ‘imperialists’. The Liberal Sir Edward Grey declared at the House of Commons on 1 February 1900 that the British were “right in this war.” It was “a just war” which was “forced upon this country.” When Milner landed in Southampton on 24 May 1901 for a visit aimed at strengthening and better coordinating the war effort, Sir Edward Grey was at the docks waiting for his arrival. Reporting a Peterborough speech by Grey, *The Times* on 18 July 1901 stated that the war in South Africa had “been conducted by more humane and more civilized methods than previous wars.”⁵⁸

Milner, in fact, did not “yield to the temptation to leave a vestige, or a fragment, of a Boer state anywhere.” Even if it took “2 years of guerrilla warfare,” the British should aim to treat the Boers as the Romans treated Cartago: “*delenda est*” should be the outcome of the war. They owed it “to the unborn generations.” According to S. B. Spies, 27,927 Boer women and children died in the concentration camps, being almost double the number of soldiers killed in action, and 14% of the Transvaal and Orange River Boer population.⁵⁹

Writing to Sir Percy FitzPatrick on 28 November 1899, in the middle of the warfare, Milner identified the “ultimate end” of the struggle in the creation of “a self-governing white Community, supported by *well-treated* and *justly governed* black labour from Cape Town to Zambezi.” On the treatment of the coloured population of South Africa Milner was however “an unrepentant heretic,” supporting Rhodes’ principle of “equal rights for all civilised men,” which was “not to throw all coloured people, from the highest to the lowest, into one indiscriminate heap, but to study closely the differences of race, of circumstances, and of degrees of civilisation, and to

(London: 1996).

⁵⁸ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, 87; John Wilson, *CB: A Life of Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman* (London: Constable, 1973), 301; Marlowe, *Milner*, 104 5. On Grey, see Michael Waterhouse, *Edwardian Requiem: A Life of Sir Edward Grey* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2013).

⁵⁹ Wilson, *CB: A Life*, 328; S. B. Spies, *Women and the War. The South African War: The Anglo Boer War 1899 1902* (London: Longman, 1980), 166.

adapt your policy intelligently and sympathetically to the several requirements of each.”⁶⁰

On the basis of “equality all round,” the English had, however, “to prevail.” The four colonies should unite and become “*one Dominion* with a common government” for common affairs, while “a considerable amount of freedom should be left to the several States.” The aim of the war was the perpetual breaking-up of the Boer political predominance, which would become permanent only if the British population of Transvaal increased again, thus guaranteeing to the mother country a “loyal majority.” “First beaten, then fairly treated,” the Boers should be left with “the greatest amount of individual freedom,” a policy officially advocated by Salisbury and Chamberlain.⁶¹

At the conclusion of the war, Milner seemed to hold in his hands the control over the region for which Kruger and Rhodes had contended, being the man responsible for setting many of the features which went into the making of Twentieth century South Africa as a racially segregated society under white minority rule. Both Milner and Kruger based their political strategies on gold mining. If Kruger, according to Lavin, “had tried to play off concessionaries and capitalists against each other,” Milner, “the socialist autocrat” as Smuts called him, “looked to a policy of statism emphasising public interest rather than private profit.”⁶²

4. Milner, the recruitment of the ‘Kindergarten’ and South African reconstruction

Success in the war—even if according to Corelli Barnett, in South Africa “almost all aspects of the British military system had been found wanting in a war against the part time commandos of 50,000 farmers”—was however for Milner only a step in the realization of the full British control of South Africa, which required the predominance of British colons by immigration. Central to Milner’s strategy was his emphasis on British immigration. “I attach the greatest importance of all to the increase in the British population,” he wrote, as early as December 1900:

⁶⁰ Milner to Selborne, quoted in Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 18; W. Beinart and S. Dubow eds., *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth Century South Africa* (London: 1995).

⁶¹ Stokes, “Milnerism,” 47 60; Headlam, *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, 35 6, 39 41.

⁶² W. K. Hancock, *Smuts*, vol. 1, *The Sanguine Years* (Cambridge: 1962), 171; Lavin, *From Empire to*, 36.

British and Dutch have to live here on equal terms. If, ten years hence, there are three men of British race to two of Dutch, the country will be safe and prosperous. If there are three of Dutch to two of British, we shall have perpetual difficulty...We not only want a majority of British, but we want a fair margin, because of the large proportion of ‘cranks’ that we British always generate, and who take particular pleasure in going against their own people.⁶³

In order to promote “the better sort” of British settlers to migrate to South Africa, and to outnumber the Boer population, Milner put through a scheme of Government acquisitions of land which could then be allocated to the immigrant settlers and paid for by them in instalments. Milner also tried to boost the immigration of British women, through assisted tracks, to work as domestic servants, and possibly form English-speaking families with local farmers. In spite of the fact that the white population of South Africa between 1891 and 1904 increased from 621,000 to 1,117,000, by the time Milner resigned in 1905 the results were unsatisfactory. British emigrants would find North America or Australia more attractive to settle, especially in the rural areas.⁶⁴

In order to encourage immigration, Milner put through a programme of economic and social reconstruction which required a centralized direction. Having little confidence in the existing colonial bureaucracy, Milner surrounded himself with a team of young Oxford graduates, placing them in key positions of the South African administrative apparatus, both to deal with the corruption and incompetence of the Boer bureaucracy, and also to try to carry out his autocratic plans. According to Amery, Milner wanted

to avoid a cut and dried administrative system; he was determined to enlist the very best brains and the greatest possible energy and adaptability for

⁶³ Corelli Barnett, *Britain and her Army, 1509 1920* (London: Allen Lane, 1970), 344; Milner to Hanbury Williams, 27 Dec. 1900, quoted in Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, vol. 2, 242. Milner had in Kipling and Robert Baden Powell strong allies in trying to persuade British people to settle in South Africa. In October 1901 Kipling wrote to Rhodes from Cape Town: “England is a stuffy little place, mentally, morally and physically”; while Baden Powell declared: “It beats me why any Briton continues to live in say, Wigan, when South Africa is open to him,” quoted in Preben Kaarsholm, “Kipling and masculinity,” in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, Raphael Samuel ed., vol. 3 (London: 1989), 217; Tim Jeal, *Baden Powell* (London: 1989), 419.

⁶⁴ See R. V. Kubicsek, *Economic Imperialism in Theory and Practice: The Case of South African Gold Mining Finance, 1886 1914* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979).

the unique task before him; he could not hope in every case to secure ripe experience as well.⁶⁵

The first young man to be appointed was J. F. ('Peter') Perry, New College graduate and Fellow of All Souls—who replaced Milner's 'Imperial Secretary', George Fiddes—who in August 1900 took up the administrative supervision of the native reserves of Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland, and of the relations between the Colonial Office and Southern Rhodesia. Two months later, another New College graduate, Lionel Curtis, followed, and was appointed as one of Milner's private secretaries. "The limits of my willingness to serve you are only physical," Curtis wrote to Milner in January 1902. A characteristic picture of the young Curtis is offered by his own recollection, that once he received Milner for tea in his "old green Norfolk jacket," which was "rather ragged with a blue flannel collar," realising only afterwards that in haste he "had put on socks of different colours."⁶⁶

Perry and Curtis soon discovered that another Oxonian, Basil Williams, a graduate from Brasenose, was working at Cape Town Government House, and established contact. Patrick Duncan—a Balliol graduate and formerly Milner's private secretary at the Board of Inland Revenue—joined them at the time of the transfer of Milner's headquarters to Johannesburg in March 1901, and took up the post of Treasurer of the Transvaal Government.⁶⁷

During his home leave of the late spring 1901—which recorded a personal triumph, and the gaining of the title of Baron of St. James's and Cape Town—Milner continued to recruit, enlarging his group of young men in disguise of colonial administrators, and added Geoffrey Robinson

⁶⁵ Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, 21. Symonds argued that Milner could not afford to pay more experienced administrators, see Symonds, *Oxford and Empire*, 63.

⁶⁶ Curtis to Milner, 8 Jan. 1902, reprinted in Lionel Curtis, *With Milner in South Africa* (Oxford: 1951), 336, 331. Commenting to Duncan on Curtis's attitude of mind Lady Selborne observed that he was "really the person who regulates his life most in accordance with common sense...He only spends his money on what really interests him, and he wears the clothes he wishes to, and disregards all social conventions that he does not see the use of. I wish I had the strength of mind to do the same," (Lady Selborne to Duncan, 26 Nov. 1909, quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 103).

⁶⁷ Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, 22 5. J. F. ('Peter') Perry, Fellow of All Souls, had been sent out the previous year by the Colonial Office as Assistant Imperial Secretary with special responsibility for native territories. Curtis had first come to South Africa during the war as a bicycle messenger in the City Imperial Volunteers.

(an official from the Colonial Office), John Buchan (later Lord Tweedsmuir) and Hugh Wyndham (later Lord Leconfield).⁶⁸

With the appointment of Curtis as Town Clerk of Johannesburg—the heart of the mining industry and with the highest concentration of urban population in South Africa, but completely lacking of infrastructures—four new recruits followed: Basil Williams (appointed Curtis's personal assistant), Lionel Hichens (appointed town Treasurer), Richard Feetham (appointed Johannesburg Assistant Town Clerk) and John Dove, another New College graduate. The administrative competences at town level soon had to be extended to colonial level. The transfer of Curtis to Pretoria as Assistant Colonial Secretary—to promote reform of the Transvaal's municipal governments—brought a shift in the duties of Milner's young men: Feetham took up the post left vacant by Curtis; Williams become responsible for the reform of the Transvaal's educational system; Hichens became Colonial Treasurer of Transvaal, and Patrick Duncan become Colonial Secretary. The nucleus of Milner's 'brotherhood' was therefore laid down, and within it Curtis exercised a leading role as driving force behind a definite Milnerite plan, and also as the vital link between two distinctive groups of young men: the employees of the city of Johannesburg, and Milner's direct collaborators at colonial level.⁶⁹

While Duncan occupied the highest place of responsibility, Perry, Milner's 'Imperial Secretary', had to deal with the most controversial and critical issue of the post-war Transvaal, the question of imported Chinese labour, brought in to meet the need for restoration of Rand prosperity, which was a condition for British immigration. Shortage of labour in the mining fields made Perry resort to Chinese labour in order to reduce

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, 25 8. Hugh Wyndham remained in South Africa (farming in South West Transvaal), along with Richard Feetham and Patrick Duncan, both members of the Johannesburg Bar, and active in South African politics. Wyndham was a cousin of Milner's friend George Wyndham, from 1900 to 1905 Chief Secretary for Ireland. After a year training as a lawyer in London, Buchan, on the recommendation of an Oxford contemporary, Leo Amery, was appointed as Assistant Private Secretary to Lord Milner. Buchan left for South Africa in September 1901, along with Hugh Wyndham, a New College contemporary. Geoffrey Robinson arrived a month after Buchan, to serve first as Secretary of Municipal Affairs and then, from April 1903, as Milner's Private Secretary. Robinson changed his name to Dawson in 1917, upon inheriting from his mother large properties in Yorkshire.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, 30 4. Dove was appointed upon the recommendation of Sir William Anson, warden of All Souls and Minister of Education from 1902 to 1905. Curtis was portrayed in his functions as Town Clerk by the *Transvaal Critic* as "a malapert young gentleman sitting on the necks of the Town Council as he dictates to the universe," *Transvaal Critic*, quoting Sir William Marriott, 13 Feb. 1903.

salaries and increase dividends, under conditions which solicited a public protest. The question was raised in London by Liberal opposition as “Chinese slavery,” or “yellow peril,” and seriously challenged the credibility of the newly appointed Colonial Secretary Alfred Lyttelton, and contributed significantly to the landslide Liberal victory at the British General Elections of January 1906.⁷⁰

Robert Brand, another graduate from New College and fellow of All Souls, joined the group on Perry’s suggestion and was appointed secretary of the Inter-colonial Council, set up in May 1903, in order to promote the creation of an efficient police and railroad networks for the former Boer colonies, Transvaal and Orange River. Brand immediately won the trust and confidence of both the group, becoming a leading member, and Milner himself, who regarded him as “a fellow of real ability” with “a great mastery of all the rather complicated details, but a good grasp of the general policy.” Philip Kerr, undergraduate at New College while Brand himself was at All Souls, arrived in South Africa in March 1905, on suggestion of Brand, and was appointed his assistant after a few months spent in Pretoria as assistant of the private secretary to Sir Arthur Lawley (later Lord Wenlock), administrator of Rhodes’ British South African

⁷⁰ Leo Amery, *My Political Life* (London: 1953), vol. 1, 324. Among the group, Robinson was the most intimate to Milner. He remained in South Africa until September 1910 as editor of the *Johannesburg Star*, and was very active in the Unionist party campaign. He became editor of *The Times* in September 1912, supported by Lord Northcliffe who had contributed to saving the paper by injecting fresh money in 1908 and replaced George Earle Buckle with a new generation of journalists. The job was first offered to Leo Amery (author of the seven volume *Times History of the Boer War* and *The Times* foreign correspondent) who rejected the offer, having to resign as MP in order to accept the post. He then recommended to Northcliffe the name of Robinson (Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 36 8). From June 1904 to January 1907, fifty four thousands Chinese were employed in the Rand, raising the output from less than £13 to more than £27 million, L. M. Thompson, *The Unification of South Africa 1902 1910* (Oxford: 1960), 14. On the issue, see Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour in the Transvaal* (London: 1982). The 1906 Liberal victory was made possible by the ‘desistence’ pact which the Liberal party Chief Whip, Herbert Gladstone, negotiated in 1903 with Ramsay MacDonald, head of the Labour Representation Committee: to withdraw Liberal candidates in certain seats in order to favor the election of Labour candidates, in return for the withdrawal of Labour candidates in other seats to help Liberal candidates. This attempt to undermine and outflank the Conservatives, which would prove to be successful, formed what became known as the ‘Gladstone MacDonald pact’.

Company, and Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal from June 1902 to 1905.⁷¹

Kerr's arrival coincided with Milner's final departure, in time however to attend his farewell speech, in which he espoused his *credo* by saying:

I shall live in the memories of men in this country, if I live at all, in connection with the struggle to keep it within the limits of the British Empire. And certainly I engaged in that struggle with all my might, being, from head to foot, one mass of glowing conviction of the rightness of our cause...If you believe in me defend my works when I am gone...I care for that much more than I do for eulogy, or, indeed, for any personal reward...I for one shall always be steadfast in that faith, though I should prefer to work quietly and in the background, in the formation of opinion, rather than in the exercise of power...When we, who call ourselves Imperialists, talk of the British Empire, we think of a group of States, independent of one another in their local affairs, but bound together for the defence of their common interests and the development of a common civilization, and so bound, not in an alliance for alliances can be made and unmade, and are never more than nominally lasting but in a permanent organic union...The Dutch can never owe a perfect allegiance merely to Great Britain. The British can never, without moral injury, accept allegiance to any body politic which excludes their motherland. But British and Dutch alike could, without loss of dignity, without any sacrifice of their several traditions, unite in loyal devotion to an Empire State, in which Great Britain and South Africa would be partners, and could work cordially together for the good of South Africa as a member of the great whole. And so you see the true Imperialist is also the best South African. The road is long, the obstacles are many. The goal may not be reached in my lifetime, perhaps in that of the youngest man in the room. You cannot hasten the slow growth of a great idea of that kind by any forcing process. But you can keep it steadily in view, lose no opportunity of working for it, resist like grim death any policy which draws you away from it. I know that to be faithful in this service requires the rarest of combinations, that of ceaseless effort with infinite patience.⁷²

Speaking in 1917 about his farewell speech, Milner confessed to J. L. Garvin, editor of *The Observer*, that it "still expresses my views better

⁷¹ Milner to Selborne, 14 April 1905, quoted in Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, 41 2.

⁷² Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, 543 7. Brand recalled that the key members of the Kindergarten were himself, Curtis, Dove, Duncan, Feetham, Hichens, Perry and Dawson. More peripheral members were Sir Herbert Baker, John Buchan (Later Lord Tweedsmuir), George Craik, William Marris, James Meston (later Lord Meston), and Hugh Wyndham (later Lord Leconfield).

than I could reproduce it.” Recognizing that Milner stood “forth as the intellectual leader of the most progressive school of Imperial thought throughout the Empire,” George L. Beer identified in Milner’s imperialism “all the depth and comprehensiveness of a religious faith.” Its significance was “moral even more than material.” According to Kendle, the Empire was for Milner “a substitute religion.” Milner’s young men drank “deeply” at his ideological well, Kendle observed, “and for the rest of their lives their basic ideas and ideals owed much to Milner’s beliefs and convictions.” The new Liberal Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannermann described these views as “*religio Milneriana*.” Those who were engaged in worship of Milner offered the evidence, according to Campbell-Bannermann, for the “psychological infirmity of the Oxford mind.”⁷³

The Oxford approach to Imperial questions was in fact very peculiar:

The Oxford style seemed unmistakable Ronald Robinson argued the high moral tone, the lofty view which Mansergh called ‘largess of mind’, and Hancock ‘span’; the penchant for tracing philosophical antithesis through long historical perspectives, for presenting the Imperial record teleologically in terms of an ideal end. In the fenland climate, where philosophy was linguistic and secular scepticism poured on religiosity, the Oxford Imperial tradition seemed to offer more faith than science.

Patriotic and moral values were “imported from the present to the past, which as a result tended to be surveyed as background to current Imperial problems on *a priori* assumptions.”⁷⁴

Even in terms of lifestyle, Milner was a model figure to everybody around him, especially to Kerr and Curtis. Not having parents to help him—his mother had died when he was fifteen and his father had neglected him—Milner had been able to dedicate his life to the Empire thanks to the support of Jowett—Master at Balliol—who enabled him to win a fellowship with a remuneration of £200 per annum and, entailing only modest administrative duties at New College, tenable until his wedding day. Milner eventually married in 1921 at the age of 67, when he resigned from Lloyd George’s government, retiring once and for all from

⁷³ Milner to Garvin, 27 May 1917, quoted in Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 130. Writing to Parkin on 13 September 1901, Milner noted that “the existing Parliaments, whether British or Colonial, are too *small* & so are the statesmen they produce” (*ibidem*, 131). Thornton, *The Imperial Idea*, 131; Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*, 4, 10; J. A. Spender, *Life of Campbell Bannerman* (London: 1923), vol. 1, 264.

⁷⁴ Ronald Robinson, “Oxford in Imperial Historiography,” in *Oxford and the Idea*, Madden and Fieldhouse, 42 3.

public life. With the exception of fifteen years, during which he held administrative and governmental responsibilities, Milner never really had a true salary. Like Milner, Kerr remained a bachelor, led a frugal existence—made possible by salaries from the Round Table and the Rhodes Trust—until 1930, when he inherited a title and considerable wealth. Curtis married late in life, receiving a salary first from the Round Table, from the Colonial Office for a brief period, and then from All Souls.⁷⁵

Milner's nobility of mind, "his entirely natural charm of manner, his lofty idealism, the complete absence of ambitious scheming or of anything approaching self-conceit in his character, and his broad and vigorous patriotism, made him," according to Bruce Lockhart, "the ideal inspirer of youth." With young men Milner "was at his best. He liked to surround himself with them. He believed that they should be given their chance." Lockhart found it hard to write about Milner "in anything but superlatives." Lockhart had been "one of the last of the young men to worship at his feet" and there he had remained. Milner stood out to the country "as the ideal public servant."⁷⁶

According to Leo Amery, Milner

approached his conclusions cautiously. But few men have in the same degree had the intellectual courage to accept them unreservedly and follow them out with unflinching tenacity. He was thus at heart a radical, always ready for far reaching changes of outlook and method. But he was a constructive radical, thinking in terms of concrete action and not of phrases, and with none of the ordinary radical's optimism and gift of self deception. On the contrary he was by temperament a pessimist, doing what he knew to be right, but far from sure whether he would succeed or had succeeded...Above all he was an idealist, a man with a vision to which he dedicated his life and in the light of which he shaped all his conclusions. It was that forward looking idealism which naturally drew younger men to look to him as their leader.

Amery admitted that Milner was his "spiritual chief" to the end of his days.⁷⁷

Milner was venerated by his disciples as "H. E." or "his triple X." Buchan wrote that "loyalty to Milner and his creed was a strong cement

⁷⁵ Halperin, *Lord Milner*, 46; Kendle, *The Round Table*, 16. Curtis, according to Kendle, "made many mistakes in South Africa and in his later ventures, but there was no doubting his sincerity, his passionate idealism, and his strange hypnotic power of making others work for his ends," *ibidem*.

⁷⁶ Vladimir Halperin, *Lord Milner and the Empire. Evolution of British Imperialism* (London: 1952), 199.

⁷⁷ Leo Amery, Foreword to *Lord Milner*, by Halperin, 22 3.

which endured long after our South African service ended.” Buchan thought of South Africa as “a great new country” given into their hands, “like a lump of clay, to be modelled.” His post “under that MAN” was “the post in the whole world for a man of your age and training, made for real politics (not parliamentary rotting) but not trained for them.” Buchan found Milner “incomparably a bigger man than Joseph Chamberlain.”⁷⁸

Writing in 1940, Buchan retrospectively reflected, with extraordinary insight and honesty, on his early South African days:

Those were the days when a vision of what the Empire might be made dawned upon certain minds with almost the force of a revelation...I dreamed of a world wide brotherhood with the background of a common race and creed, consecrated to the service of peace; Britain enriching the rest out of her culture and traditions, and the spirit of the Dominions like a strong wind freshening the stuffiness of the old lands. I saw in the Empire a means of giving to the congested masses at home open country instead of a blind alley. I saw hope for a new afflatus in art and literature and thought. Our creed was not based on antagonism to any other people. It was humanitarian and international; we believed that we were laying the basis of a federation of the world. As for the native races under our rule, we had a high conscientiousness: Milner and Rhodes had a far sighted native policy. The ‘white man’s burden’ is now an almost meaningless phrase; then it involved a new philosophy of politics, and an ethical standard, serious and surely not ignoble.⁷⁹

“I mean to have young men,” Milner told Percy FitzPatrick:

There will be a regular rumpus and a lot of talk about boys and Oxford and jobs and all that...Well, I value brains and character more than experience. First class men of experience are not to be got. Nothing one could offer would tempt them to give up what they have...No! I shall not be here for very long, but when I go I mean to leave behind me young men with plenty of work in them.⁸⁰

According to FitzPatrick, Milner possessed “not only power (and powers of patronage for young men with careers to make) and a high reputation. His intensity of conviction and incisive intelligence were also combined with a remarkably selfless nature and considerable personal

⁷⁸ Buchan, *Memory Hold*, 99; Janet Adam Smith, *John Buchan* (London: 1965), 109, 106 7, 121.

⁷⁹ Buchan, *Memory Hold*, 120, 124 25.

⁸⁰ Halperin, *Lord Milner*, 199. On Milner and the Round Table, see: Robert Brand, “Philip Kerr. Some Personal Memories,” *The Round Table*, 199, (June 1960), 234 245; Iain R. Smith, “Milner, the ‘Kindergarten’ and South Africa,” in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 38.

magnetism.” Twenty years after he first met him, FitzPatrick declared “I am still a ‘Milner man’, heart and soul and every fibre of me.”⁸¹

Nine out of the twelve members of Milner’s coterie came from New College, and three were fellows of All Souls, and with few exceptions they came from all levels of the aristocracy and the Anglican Church. In Oxford, where they had as tutors mainly classical scholars, they absorbed the Imperial ideology of the late Victorian age. The dominant ideas at that time included Burke’s theory of organic unity, social Darwinism, the unquestionable certainty of the superiority of the English-speaking peoples, the sense of responsibility towards non-Europeans, and finally the idea of Imperial mission. Writers who most influenced their intellectual formation were Freeman, with his theory of the linear development of the principle of self-government from classical Greece to the Anglo-Saxon experience of the parliamentary system, and T. H. Green, with his Hegelian concept of the State as a rational and positive entity. The philosophical foundations of the ‘new liberalism’ were established by Green in a series of lectures at Oxford during the 1870s, and published as *The Principles of Political Obligation* in 1900. State and society were presented not as distinct, but as moments of a phenomenological process. Government and civil society were not seen in competition, but as elements of the social organism. The state was conceived by Green as a moral entity promoting the well-being of the community as a whole, not just of its most well organized and influential groups or classes.⁸²

From Hegel they derived the conviction that the real and the rational are two aspects of the whole, or that the reality—the course of history—had a rational character, and it was moving towards an end, the full accomplishment of all its potentials: everything which was rational—

⁸¹ Percy FitzPatrick to Amery, 14 Jan. 1917, MP, 73; Amery, *My Political Life*, vol. 1, 151; R. H. Bruce Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent* (London: 1934), 207. Vansittart commented that “Milner seemed frigid to those who knew him but slightly, though more people would probably have gone round the world with or for him than anyone else in the mist procession” of famous men he had encountered in a long lifetime of public service, Robert Vansittart, *The Mist Procession* (London: 1958), 183.

⁸² On Burke and Green, see: Melvin Richter, *The Politics of Conscience: T. H. Green and His Age* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964); Jesse Norman, *Edmund Burke: The First Conservative* (London: Basic Books, 2013); Yuval Levin, *The Great Debate: Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, and the Birth of Right and Left* (London: Basic Books, 2014); Geoffrey Thomas, *The Moral Philosophy of T. H. Green* (London: Oxford University Press, 1988); Maria Dimova Cookson and William J. Mande eds., *T. H. Green: Ethics, Metaphysics, and Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2006).

which had a reason to exist in itself and by itself—was also real, and it was embodied in a historical process. Toynbee's ideas on social reforms as moral duty, which strongly influenced Milner, left a permanent mark on many of his disciples. As graduates, Curtis, Duncan and Feetham in 1895 had joined the Haileybury school mission and the Oxford University Settlement in Bethnal Green.⁸³

According to Wyndham the nickname 'Kindergarten' was first used by Milner himself in a fatherly way, and then employed by his opponents like Sir William Marriot and J. X. Merriman, who first used the term attacking Milner in September 1902 in the Cape Parliament for "setting up a sort of kindergarten of Balliol young men to govern the country." Smuts sarcastically referred to them as the "finest flower of Varsity scholarship": "It is such a comfort to have a little 'Kindergarten' show of dolls — all your own, moving at your sweet will, not asking inconvenient questions, not making factious opposition...That is the way we are ruled here."⁸⁴

According to F. P. Fletcher-Vane, they were "hard-working, intelligent, well-meaning and tactless." Goldman had the impression of a "small band of fledglings," with "a display of superiority and assertiveness foreign to the custom of colonial life." Referring on 8 September 1905 to the appointment of Kerr as Assistant Secretary to the Inter-Colonial Council, the *Transvaal Critic* ridiculed the choice

of depriving the school of English youth of a young man who might have become one of its ornaments, if allowed to stay there. The policy of running this country on Kindergarten lines and giving youngsters our public undertakings as toys to play with, has not *yet* been cast aside.⁸⁵

⁸³ Kende, *The Round Table*, 16 8. On Milner's decision to turn to young and able Oxford graduates instead of trained civil servants to rebuild the South African administration, see Donald Denoon, *A Grand Illusion: The Failure of Imperial Policy in the Transvaal Colony During the Period of Reconstruction, 1900 1905* (London: 1973), 43 58; Kende, *The Round Table*, 18. There were however many key members of Milner's staff who were not members of the Kindergarten, such as: E. B. Sargent (Director of Education); Godfrey Lagden (Commissioner of Native Affairs); F. B. Smith (Director of Agriculture); and Richard Solomon (Attorney General and the Lieutenant Governor of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony).

⁸⁴ W. Basil Worsfold, *The Reconstruction of the New Colonies under Lord Milner* (London: 1913), vol. 2, 219; W. K. Hancock and J. Van Der Poel eds., *Selection from the Smuts Papers*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: 1966), 151; Smuts to E. Hobhouse, 28 Feb. 1904, in *ibidem*; Curtis, *With Milner*, 342.

⁸⁵ F. Fletcher Vane, *Pax Britannica* (London: 1905), 277; R. Goldman, *A South African Remembers* (Cape Town: n.d.), 132; Kerr to his sister Anne, 10 Sept. 1905, LP, 453, 48; W. K. Hancock, *Smuts, The Sanguine Years*, vol. 1 (Cambridge:

The Kindergarten accepted as their natural leader Duncan, who at the age of thirty one—the others being in their late twenties, Brand 24 and Kerr 23—was the eldest of them and, according to Kendle “presided over their discussions with wisdom and authority leavened by a caustic wit.” Kindergarten members who “formed themselves into a standing reading party” called themselves ‘the Moot’, partly to underline their Anglo-Saxonism and partly to stress the fact that they constituted a fraternity with the object of discussing ‘moot’, debatable issues which had not yet received clear-cut answers.⁸⁶

The Kindergarten strengthened their Oxford ties by living together near Milner’s headquarters at Sunnyside estate, in a house rented by Wyndham until Milner’s departure. Then they commissioned from the young architect Herbert Baker “Moot House”, a new building specifically designed to satisfy their private and social activities. Baker then became strongly associated with the Kindergarten, re-elaborating an early colonial style into a specific ‘imperial’ Edwardian style. Living in “almost exclusively a male set”—Perry was the only one to marry before they sailed for England—they could fulfil “an inner want for adventure” in the outdoor life and in public accomplishment. “The atmosphere of the house,” Brand wrote to Kerr’s mother Lady Anne in March 1908, at the time of the Inter-Colonial Conference, “is in a more fermented state than it was.” They lived “in a state of perpetual intellectual excitement.”⁸⁷

The romantic passions of these young men Bill Schwartz observed which could fuse the common room of All Souls and the veld into a single psychic reality, were organised by a high voltage conception of masculine friendship and duty, and found philosophical purpose under the tutelage of Milner in South Africa. After the muscular exertions conducted in carrying out their Imperial duties during the day, they duly dressed for dinner and for good conversation in the evening.⁸⁸

1962), 171. On the racial question, see William Beinart and Saul Dubow eds., *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth Century South Africa* (London: Routledge, 1995).

⁸⁶ Bill Schwartz, “The Romance of the Veld,” in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 96.

⁸⁷ Brand to Lady Anne Kerr, 21 March 1908, LP, 455.

⁸⁸ James Ramsay Montagu Butler, *Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr), 1882 1940* (London: 1960), 16. Perry remained in South Africa until 1911 as secretary of the Rand Native Labour Association. Returning to England he was not an active member of the Kindergarten (Kendle, *The Round Table*, 16). The ‘Moot house’ was built on Feetham’s property in the Parktown suburb.

The Kindergarten set about carrying out the final objective of Milner's plan, namely the political union of the four colonies, during a critical period for South Africa, since the new Liberal Government promised—with the endorsement of the King in his speech of February 1906—Transvaal and Orange River the immediate concession of self-government, with the inevitable rise to power of the *Afrikaners*. As soon as Prime Minister Campbell-Bannerman declared in the Commons that “without forcing it in any way,” the government was looking forward “to the federation of South Africa,” Milner immediately grasped the political implications of that declaration and warned Balfour—who saw in it “the most reckless experiment ever tried in the development of a great colonial policy”—of the dangers inherent in playing party politics with the national interests at stake. “South Africa once lost was lost forever,” Milner stated in the Lords.⁸⁹

South African political union had been a strategic objective of British governments for fifty years, for the purpose of maintaining Imperial supremacy in a region of vital strategic importance for the Empire. However, it could not be imposed on colonies which had many interests in common, but more reasons to be divided. Smuts and Merriman had started to contemplate political union in 1904, aiming however at opposite ends, in order to re-gain with political action what they had lost by military defeat. “The thing itself is very good,” Smuts wrote in January 1907 to Merriman about the idea of federation, “and if initiated in the proper spirit and form and on the right basis, a tremendous step in advance will be achieved.” When Curtis started in September 1906 his journey around the four colonies to collect information on the prospect of unification, he was surprised to realise how popular was the idea of federation. “When we first discussed the subject at Sunnyside,” Curtis wrote to Dougal Malcolm—Selborne's Private Secretary—“I thought you greatly overestimated the pace with which union of some kind might be forced in the country. I now think you underestimated it.”⁹⁰

The reaction of the Kindergarten to a political move which seemed seriously to threaten the fulfilment of their master's plan was hostile, although it was hoped that the Liberals would concede the right to vote on

⁸⁹ *Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., Commons, 163, 31 July 1906, col. 804; *ibidem*, 4th Ser., Commons, 152, 19 Feb. 1906, col. 169; *ibidem*, 4th Ser., Lords, 152, 26 Feb. 1906, col. 721; *ibidem*, 4th Ser., Lords, 152, 27 Feb. 1906, col. 930.

⁹⁰ Hancock, *Smuts*, 247; Lewsen, *John X. Merriman, Paradoxical South African Statesmen* (Johannesburg: 1982), 287; Smuts to Merriman, 25 Jan. 1907, *Smuts Papers*, Hancock and Van der Poel eds., vol. 2, 321; Curtis to Malcolm, 7 and 11 Sept. 1906, SP, 65.

the basis of the ‘Lyttelton Constitution’, which at least guaranteed a pro-British majority (albeit weak) in the legislative body. It was a bitter blow for the Kindergarten to learn on 31 July 1906 that Winston Churchill—Under-Secretary for the Colonies—had presented to Parliament a Bill inspired largely by the interim reports of the West Ridgeway Commission. This suggested a reform of the franchise, and the composition of constituencies to the advantage of the predominantly Boer rural population. Churchill, aware of the South African situation at first hand, having served in the Boer War, finally ruled out Milner’s plan once and for all.⁹¹

In a completely changed political situation, Milner’s work was carried out by his successor, Lord Selborne—Chamberlain’s Under-Secretary from 1895 to 1900, and prominent supporter of Imperial federation—who had to face a rapid and large reduction of direct control by Westminster on Transvaal affairs. Using their influence at governmental level and using the *Star*—a Johannesburg journal edited by the Kindergarten’s member Geoffrey Robinson, and owned by mining company directors, including Lionel Phillips, who had been involved in the Jameson Raid—as a vehicle for propaganda, the Kindergarten took an active part in the elections of 20 February 1907, supporting the Milnerian Progressive party. A total defeat—the alliance between the English-speaking Responsible party with the *Afrikaner* Het Volk won 43 out of the 60 seats of the Transvaal Assembly—forced all members of the Kindergarten—except Brand and Kerr, who remained secretary and assistant secretary of the Inter-colonial Council up to June 1908—to resign from positions held in the colonial government, and to deeply reshape their strategy. An even worse defeat came at the November elections in the Orange Free State, giving *Orangia Unie* the control of thirty out of thirty eight seats in the legislature. A Boer-oriented South Africa party also won the general elections at Cape, replacing at the head of the executive the ‘raider’ Jameson with Milner’s sworn enemy, J. X. Merriman.⁹²

⁹¹ Kerr to his father, 6 Jan. 1906, quoted in Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 19–20. In the Commons Sir Charles Dilke opposed the franchise provisions of the Bill, pointing out that over six million people were to be governed by an oligarchy such as had “never been established by us before” (*Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser., Commons, 9, 16 Aug. 1909, col. 974).

⁹² Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 68–71. For a discussion of South Africa party system see Thonpson, *The Unification of South Africa*, 20–9; T. R. H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond: The History of a South African Political Party, 1880–1911* (London: 1966); Kendle, *The Round Table*, 35. Selborne shared Seeley’s view that if Britain was “to maintain herself in the years to come in the same rank with the

Since the Boers “regained at the ballot-box all that they had lost on the field and conceded at Vereeniging,” the Kindergarten felt, like many other South Africans of British origin, “as if the ground had given way under their feet, and as if all the costs and sacrifice of the war, all the thought and effort of the reconstruction had been thrown away utterly.” The political division of the English-speaking population into Responsible and Progressives, as well as the ‘recklessness’ of party politics in Britain brought about, according to Amery, “the repetition on a larger scale of the disastrous folly of the Majuba surrender.” Writing to Robinson in September 1907—before the catastrophic results in the Orange River and Cape colonies—Milner also expressed all his deep disappointment for such dramatic reversal of fortunes. “The policy to which we devoted years of labour,” he sourly admitted, “must be regarded as a thing of the past.” “The disaster,” he acknowledged, “has been more rapid and more complete than I imagined,” largely because of “a deadly fire from behind...when the whole power & influence of the British Gov. were thrown into the scale against the solution of the S. A. question in a British sense,” and therefore overwhelming the “feeble forces” displayed by the Kindergarten and the Progressives. Since the elections had settled once and forever the question of Boer predominance, which had to be accepted in order to avoid “beating the air and flogging dead horses,” Milner instructed his Kindergarten to organize “a vigilant, alert critical opposition, denouncing every injustice, exposing every job, but...leaving the door open to bargains...and always looking to the possibility of ultimately becoming master of the situation.”⁹³

Curtis and Feetham were appointed by Selborne to the Upper House of the Transvaal legislature—the Legislative Council—and joined the opposition with the Progressive party representatives of the Lower House. At the time Curtis left the Colonial Secretary Department in 1906, the *East Rand Express* revised its initial sharp criticism of Curtis’s work, acknowledging his “masterly handling” of the Financial Relations Commission, and commenting that it would have been “a well-nigh irreparable loss to the municipalities.” “From being one of the most unpopular members of the government,” the paper recognized that Curtis had “become the most popular.” A view reported by Selborne to Lord

US, Russia and Germany, the unit must be enlarged from the UK to the Empire,” (Selborne to E. Prettyman, 19 Sept. 1903, SP, 73, 5 6).

⁹³ Leo Amery, *The Times History of the War in South Africa* (London: S. Low Marston, 1900 9), vol. 4, 196; Milner to Robinson, 14 Sept. 1907, (quoted in Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner*, 268 9).

Elgin, Colonial Secretary, recommending Curtis for his nomination to the Transvaal Legislative Council:

Lionel Curtis is a very fine character, and a very able man. His manner is against him, and when he first came to the Transvaal as Town Clerk to the Johannesburg Municipality everyone was against him; but his four years of work here have effected a wonderful revolution in the estimate of those who know him. As Assistant Colonial Secretary he is the founder of the whole municipal system in the Transvaal, and its success is quite extraordinary...He has acquired the personal friendship of such different men as Sir George Farrar, Mr H. C. Hull and Mr J. C. Smuts...He has nothing but the public interest at heart. He has attracted himself to no political party...and he could be trusted to look after the interests of the Civil Service, of which he was a distinguished member, in a wholly legitimate manner, should the occasion arise.⁹⁴

Curtis's appointment raised however a negative reaction from Frank B. Smith—agricultural adviser to Milner and member of the Transvaal Indigency Commission and the Land Settlement Board—who told the historian Basil Williams that “the trouble—even danger” was that Curtis after leaving the Service had “so ingratiated himself with the High Commissioner that to say the least of it he exercises far too much power.” The role of the fifteen appointed members of the Transvaal Upper House was, in fact, one of constitutional balance, taking into consideration “the unrepresented interests in the country,” which included people of colour and the indigent white population.⁹⁵

5. The Kindergarten and the creation of South African Union

The Kindergarten, well aware that the inevitable drift towards self-government would bring the Boers to power, attempted to master the changed situation by promoting the political unification of the four former colonies, which they thought would create the economic conditions for British immigration, and an eventual transfer of political leadership from the Boers to the British. FitzPatrick could not better summarise the meaning of the Kindergarten's attempt to master the altered circumstances: “both races hope for prosperity, prosperity means expansion, expansion means immigration, immigration means British!” The Kindergarten apparently became a strenuous supporter of unification in spite of Milner's own reservations, and opposition from most leaders of both British and

⁹⁴ *East Rand Express*, 8 Aug. 1906.

⁹⁵ Smith to Williams, 3 March 1907, quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 81.

Boer opinion. The Kindergarten did not need just the moral support of their old mentor, but also and more urgently some financial help. This was to allow Curtis to travel extensively around the country to gather information and even go to the United States, Canada and Australia to review a draft Constitution of the envisaged South African federation “in the light of experience gained in those countries.”⁹⁶

The first step that the Kindergarten took was to inform Milner in July 1906 of their intention of becoming more actively involved, asking him for substantial financial support through the Rhodes Trust. Without disguising a certain scepticism towards the likelihood of the plan’s success, Milner nevertheless made the Rhodes Trust allocate a contribution of £1000, on condition that Curtis dedicated himself completely to the undertaking, and that Selborne acted as supervisor. Thanks to the generosity of both Sir Abe Bailey, mining magnate, and Selborne himself, the funds of the Rhodes Trust were not used in that circumstance, and the Kindergarten gave Geoffrey Robinson the job of informing Milner of the decision, since “their fear is that someday hereafter the thing might leak out and a capitalist job be suspected.”⁹⁷

Milner in fact did not take an active part in the project. On the first of September it was presented to an initially prudent Selborne, who became increasingly enthusiastic about it, putting the whole of his weight behind it until the creation of the Union of South Africa. Writing to Duncan in November 1907, Selborne observed that “those who urge delay about Federation on the ground of the present political preponderance of the Dutch,” were “most short-sighted.” Economic stability would be a consequence of political stability and not the other way round: “there can be no expansion without stability; and there can be no stability without

⁹⁶ Thompson, *The Unification of South Africa*, 176 7; Frederick Scott Oliver, *Alexander Hamilton: An Essay on American Union* (London: 1906); Stephen Gwynn ed., *The Anvil of War: Letters between F. S. Oliver and His Brother, 1914 1918* (London: 1936), 16; Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 78 80. Speaking of Oliver’s biography of Hamilton, Curtis stated that “he came into our lives as a great inspiration at the moment when we most needed it in South Africa.” Amery remarked that “*Alexander Hamilton* became the Bible of the young men of Milner’s Kindergarten,” (Amery, *My Political Life*, 268). Milner started reading the *Federalist Papers* just after finishing Oliver’s *Alexander Hamilton*, in 1906, (Kendle, *The Round Table*, 24).

⁹⁷ Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 78 80; Robinson to Milner, 3 Feb. 1906, MP, 76.

Federation.” With Selborne’s approval, the Kindergarten set to work, thus realizing Rhodes’ vision as a “deadly secret Ctee.”⁹⁸

The lively discussion which led to the final draft of the memorandum on which Curtis was working gave the Kindergarten the opportunity of making full use of Milner’s ideas by studying in detail the conditions and all the implications of union. In the absence of their master, who had departed to Great Britain more than a year before, they turned to *The Federalist* of Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison, discovering there not only the solutions to the practical problems in making the union, but also a criterion for the interpretation of an historical process which brought in North America and Continental Europe to the enlargement of the orbit of democratic government from one to more States. It was this, more than their university education, that represented the cultural experience which most influenced their lives. They had found an ideal and a practical solution to the problems which were emerging at the conclusion of an historic era, and also a principle for political action. Their discovery of Hamilton was made easier by the reading of Alexander Hamilton’s biography by the Scotsman Frederick Scott Oliver, a leading figure of the Unionist Party. The book reached Johannesburg in September 1906, soon after the members of the Kindergarten had decided to dedicate themselves to the task of achieving South African unification, and it exerted a strong influence on them, especially on Curtis and Kerr. Milner also appreciated Oliver’s interpretation of the Hamilton figure and his work, and after reading it, began his study of *The Federalist*.⁹⁹

“Federation is what will ultimately come,” Kerr wrote to his mother in early 1907:

It is really only a matter of time. But I think it will come sooner than people imagine. Unification is practically speaking impossible. You could not now destroy the inter colonial boundaries if you tried. Besides there are a number of departments of government which it would be impossible for a single central government to manage, as the problems are local, and particular in each different colony...Railway Unification is a different thing and is equally attainable either under Unification or Federation. It simply means that the railways should be administered by a single authority instead of five different ones.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Selborne to Duncan, 30 Nov. 1907, quoted in Thompson, *Unification of South Africa*, 80; Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 80 1; Dawson diary, 1 Sept. 1906, DP, 12.

⁹⁹ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 24.

¹⁰⁰ Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 23.

Curtis completed the drafting of the memorandum on the political union of the four colonies only after each line was submitted for criticism to “the Federation Committee” or, as Robinson called it, “the Conspiracy”. This was composed of Duncan, Hichens, Feetham, Brand, Kerr, Robinson and Curtis himself, who later commented that the result was “just like a bill which has been redrafted from the beginning to end in the course of its passage through committee, and by which all the members are prepared to stand as a result.” The “Federation plot” was presented to Selborne in its final form in mid-December 1906, just a few weeks before the feared Transvaal elections, and it underwent severe scrutiny by the High Commissioner, who was keen to remove from it all possible sources of misunderstanding and irritation by the Boer and British communities.

According to Nimocks, Selborne injected into the memorandum “a humanitarian idealism which was altogether missing in the draft submitted by Curtis and his friends.” Selborne’s editing was in fact completed at the beginning of January, and the result was a formidable document analysing the historical, economic, social and political reasons behind the call for a federal union of the four former colonies. In sending the memorandum to the four colonial governments on the 7 January 1907, Selborne stressed the fact that “no healthy movement towards federation can emanate from any authority other than the people of South Africa themselves.” While giving credit for the contents to an unspecified group, Selborne in fact took the full share of responsibility for the initiative and for agreement on the conclusions outlined.¹⁰¹

The memorandum, “A Review of the Present Mutual Relations of the British South African Colonies,” became available to the press and known to the general public in January, through Francis S. Malan—prominent leader of the *Afrikaner Bond* of the Cape and editor of *Ons Land*—who officially raised the issue of unification in front of the Cape Parliament. Recording in the London *Times* the impact which the memorandum had in the country, Robinson—by then South Africa correspondent of the newspaper—stated that it had been welcomed “as the most notable pronouncement of the sort since Lord Durham’s historical report on Canada.” There was “a consensus of opinion” behind the advocacy of South African political closer union, shedding “a new light on the whole

¹⁰¹ Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 82 7. Kerr’s memorandum on “South African Railway Unification and its effect on Railways Rates” was distributed to the four colonial governments in late January. By mid 1906 the war of rates between the railways lines from the coastal colonies into the interior from Cape Town to Durban and from Transvaal to the Portuguese Delagoa Bay caused a major obstacle to the prospect of Customs Union of the four colonies.

subject,” crystallizing “ideas which hitherto have often been vaguely and indefinitely expressed,” and giving “a strong stimulus to a wider and more careful consideration of South Africa federation as an immediate practical policy instead of a remote ideal.” According to Kendle, “it was a propagandist memorandum...and it served the purpose of stimulating an interest in union.”¹⁰²

The battle to achieve South African political unification was however just beginning, and in order to carry it out the Kindergarten set up an inter-party organization, able to convey to the project universal popular and substantial financial support. Since the Kindergarten could not rely only on the Rhodes Trust—whose financial help would in any case have to remain secret—they decided to turn to the South African magnate Abe Bailey—land owner, mining promoter, leader in Progressive circles and owner of the *Rand Daily Mail*—who was to play a fundamental role in the realization of the Kindergarten’s projects. The occasion was a dinner which Bailey offered on the 21 January 1907, in the middle of the Transvaal electoral campaign, to delegates of an inter-colonial conference to discuss security against native rebellions. The Kindergarten thought to exploit this social event by inviting leading representatives of all parties, in order “to consider whether a movement can be made at the present time...to help forward the cause of union.” Even if the dinner did not serve the broad purpose of launching a cross-party campaign for political union, it produced the effect of persuading the participants to offer subscriptions “on the spot to cover preliminary expenses” for the campaign. The Kindergarten could rely also on the £1,000 offered by the Rhodes Trust to cover the expenses for the production of the Selborne Memorandum, which had not been used.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 88–90; *The Times*, 6 July 1907; Kendle, *The Round Table*, 30. *Ons Land* between August and September 1906 published six articles advocating South African political unification.

¹⁰³ Duncan to Botha, 8 Jan. 1907, quoted in Thompson, *The Unification of*, 69; Curtis to Kerr, LP, 15. Sir Abe Bailey (1864–1940) was the largest landowner in Rhodesia, major mine owner in Transvaal, and main financial supporter of the Kindergarten. He was an intimate friend of Milner to the point of naming his son John Milner and one of the chief plotters of the Jameson Raid. He took over Rhodes’s seat at the Cape Parliament from 1902 to 1907, was a member of the Parliament of South Africa Union from 1910–24, and a member of the Reform Committee. Bailey remained a loyal supporter of Botha and Smuts from 1915 to 1924. With the creation of the ‘Bailey Fund’, which amounted to £250,000, he became a major financier of Chatham House, with a perpetual endowment of £5,000 a year from 1928, and of the Round Table, with £1,000 a year from 1940. “Bailey did not just sign cheques,” Curtis later acknowledged, “but also played a

Inviting Botha, head of the Boer party *Het Volk* at the Bailey dinner, Duncan wished that men of all political parties could join to help forward the cause of union. Although both Smuts and Botha were in favour of union, they decided to await the outcome of the elections that were to take place between February 1907 and February 1908 in the Transvaal, Orange River and Cape, before accepting the Kindergarten's invitation.¹⁰⁴

Botha and Smuts rejected the invitation, feeling that there were "sinister influences at work—submarine operations which have to be carefully watched." Smuts thought that Bailey wanted "to run Federation as a sort of Barnum policy to advertise himself," and that the Kindergarten wanted just "to achieve their ambitious hopes," while the British Rand magnates had "purely personal ends to serve." The defection of Botha and Smuts forced the Kindergarten to revise their plans, and focus on British circles only, and "to form a small private committee in each colony to help Curtis in collecting materials." The "formation of a league", or "any public propaganda," would be postponed after the research had been carried out. Beyond the call for the support and involvement of leading Progressives such as Sir George Farrar from Transvaal, C. P. Crewe from Cape, and J. G. Maydon from Natal, the Kindergarten decided to re-organize the activities of the Fortnightly Club—created by the Kindergarten on 4 October 1906 during the drafting of the Selborne Memorandum to widen among the British community the base of support for their undertaking—and concentrate their efforts in Transvaal. From April to September 1907 the Club had regular meetings open to a selected public to discuss matters introduced by a member of the Kindergarten.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, the Kindergarten was able to produce two books published anonymously which played a significant role in the public debate on unification, and particularly in the drafting of the Constitution. The first, *The Framework of Union: A Comparison of Some Union Constitutions*, edited by Basil K. Long—an Oxford acquaintance who became a member of Cape Parliament, and remained for a long time an associate of the Kindergarten—contained a comparative study of existing federal constitutions. The second, *The Government of South Africa*, produced by

vital rôle in the election of Jameson as Prime Minister of the Cape and in persuading the British community in South Africa to accept union," (Curtis to Kerr, 6 Dec. 1936, LP, 15).

¹⁰⁴ Curtis to Smuts, 7 Jan. 1907, quoted in Hancock and Van Der Poel, *Smuts Papers*, vol. 2, 314 7; Duncan to Botha, 8 Jan. 1907, quoted in Thompson, *The Unification of*, 69.

¹⁰⁵ Smuts to J. X. Merriman, 25 Jan. 1907, quoted in *ibidem*, 74; Robinson to Milner, quoted in Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, 94.

Curtis—assisted by Duncan, Brand, Kerr, and William Marris, another associate of the Kindergarten—was a two-volume survey of the historical, economic, social, racial, and political facets of South African society from the perspective of closer union.¹⁰⁶

The initial form in which political union could be attainable was envisaged by the Kindergarten as a federal system; but as soon as it became apparent that only a unitarian system would provide a stable and lasting union, they shifted to the unitarian model. This contradiction is apparent in Curtis's work, and is admitted in the introduction to the volume, stating that he "felt obliged...to state conclusions which have been, as it were, forced upon...in spite of preconceived ideas."¹⁰⁷

The shift in the institutional model adopted by the Kindergarten came as soon as they realized that *Afrikaners*, having won control of three out of four colonies, were prepared to accept immediate unification only on condition it was unitarian. The creation of a federal system would have been burdensome for a country not yet fully recovered from the war, and dependent, in case of controversies among member States and between them and the federal government, on the Privy Council in London. The Kindergarten became aware of this fundamentally changed political situation in early May 1908, while the comparative study on federal constitutions was getting ready for publication, and Curtis was finalizing the second volume of *The Government of South Africa*. On 4th May they read in the press a statement by Merriman, according to which the delegates from the four self-governing colonies, gathered in Pretoria at an inter-colonial conference on rail and customs issues, "adopted the principle of closer union." They undertook "to submit certain resolutions to their Parliaments in reference thereto," and "to recommend to their Parliaments the appointment of delegates to a National Convention for the purpose of framing a draft Constitution" which, according to Botha and Smuts, should be unitarian, not federal.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ B. K. Long, *The Framework of Union: A Comparison of Some Union Constitutions* (Cape Town: 1908); Lionel Curtis ed., *The Government of South Africa* (South Africa: 1908).

¹⁰⁷ Robinson to Milner, 20 Jan. 1907, MP, 193; Marris was sent to South Africa from the India Office to reorganize the civil service, *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1941 1950, 575 76; Curtis, *The Government of South Africa*, vol. 1, x; Closer Union Societies, *Proceedings at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Closer Union Societies at Johannesburg, March 3,4 and 5th, 1909* (Johannesburg: 1909), 3.

¹⁰⁸ Thompson, *The Unification of*, 70 5, 92, 102 5; Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, 139 40, 144.

Merriman's announcement enabled the Kindergarten to take up once again the idea of a bi-partisan Anglo-Boer movement, initially named "National Union," to be organized throughout the major centres of the four colonies, in support of the union. The aim of the movement would be to provide information and figures to citizens and local governments, as well as preparing papers on the model of *The Federalist*. Moreover, the organization should assist the National Convention to draft the Constitution.

Writing to Smuts on 7 January 1907 outlining the Kindergarten's plan, Curtis proposed to create an organization with a "non-political character," formed by "persons who believe in superseding the present system of divided government by a National Union extending from Tanganyika to the Cape of Good Hope." In spite of Smuts' refusal to be involved in the campaign, Curtis continued to offer Smuts his services. "All I want," Curtis wrote to Smuts on 24 January, "is leaders to serve as a Junior, in the legal sense, or perhaps I might say, Counsel for whom I may work as a Solicitor." It appeared necessary to set up branches in every urban settlement of the country in order to gain popular support for the union. The annual subscription from members should be 5s, and a ceiling of £50 per year should be fixed for each supporter, thus guaranteeing its democratic character.¹⁰⁹

The first local group of the new organization, finally named Association of Closer Union Societies, was formed in Cape Town in May 1908. In the space of eleven months its number rose to more than sixty, which meant the coverage of all urban centres. "Much of the credit" of bringing together local opinion leaders of both Boer and British origin, should go, according to Nimocks, to Curtis, who "badgered essentially apolitical farmers and businessmen into participation in the closer union," with such a fervour and zeal which "later became a subject of amusement." Curtis was, according to Nimocks, "incapable of being objective about a matter in which he was deeply involved." He was "a propagandist in spite of himself," and once he defined a target, he employed all available energies and means to reach it. Before the creation, in early October 1908, of the nucleus of the Association—bringing together eleven groups—it was Curtis who acted as a source of inspiration, providing the groups with the necessary propaganda materials and with speakers to promote debates.

¹⁰⁹ Curtis to Smuts, 24 Jan. 1907, quoted in Hancock and Van Der Poel, *Smuts Papers*, vol. 2, 319-20.

Visiting the Kimberley group in December 1908, Curtis reassured the English-speaking minority about the prospect of unification, which would bring about the creation of national parties on the basis of interests rather than cultural identities. The British colonial settlements were held together, according to Curtis, “not like a number of heterogeneous stones bound together with iron ties, but like an arch, because each stone would be made in a shape that fitted into every other.” British and Dutch had therefore a special role to perform in the creation of a great South African nation, within a greater political union, which Curtis already started to call “Commonwealth.”¹¹⁰

The inaugural meeting of the Association appointed William Schreiner—leader of the *Afrikaner Bond* and former Prime Minister of Cape—as President. Curtis and W. H. Low were nominated Joint Honorary Secretaries of the movement, respectively responsible for the North and the South of the country. By organising debates on the implications of unification of the four colonies, the groups in favour of union played a very important part in convincing the local British community that union would create the favourable political and economic conditions needed to attract British settlers to South Africa, in order to balance their numbers with the Boers. The decisive role played by these groups is borne out by the fact that the Transvaal Delegation, made up of both British and Boers, presented a common programme at the Convention.¹¹¹

6. *The State and the creation of the Union*

The Kindergarten also decided to produce in English and Dutch a monthly journal, *The State*, which would be the first to circulate through all four colonies. Its aim would be to promote “Federation in every possible ways,” and spread the voice of the movement throughout the country, offering reports of the activities of the branches of the Association. While members of the groups would be self-supporting in their activities, *The State* was published with the financial support of Bailey, who advanced £3,000 to cover the initial costs, and of Selborne himself, who transferred to the Kindergarten £2,000 initially made available by Lord Salisbury to support the movement. The Dutch edition however lasted only for seven

¹¹⁰ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 15 Dec. 1908.

¹¹¹ William Philip Schreiner, “The Closer Union Societies and Their Work to Date,” *The State*, 1, (Jan. 1909); Kerr to his parents, quoted in Butler, *Lothian*, 28; Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 96; [Anon.], “Sir Abe Bailey,” *The Round Table*, 120, (Sept. 1940): 743 4; Kendle, *The Round Table*, 44.

issues, and then ceased for lack of support, making a loss to the proprietors of over £1,000. The influence of *Het Volk*, *De Zuid Afrikaan* and *Ons Land* on the Dutch-speaking population was consolidated along with the independent magazine *De Goede Hoop*, which served the interests of 'loyalist' and 'liberal' Dutch-speakers in the Cape.¹¹²

Kerr was appointed editor and the first number appeared in January 1909, selling 10,000 copies, of which 1,000 were in the Dutch edition. *The State* was, according to Kerr, "a propagandist paper," the mouthpiece of the closer union societies around the country, which had to prepare the ground "for the growth of a South African nationalism...to enable South Africans to meet together and devise in concert what service they can give and what sacrifices they are called on to make in order that by uniting as a State they may create themselves as a nation."¹¹³

Each monthly issue of *The State* opened with an editorial survey by Kerr or Curtis on the political work of the movement, bringing "into common currency, so far as the necessary limits of its space permit, papers produced by the local societies." It aimed also "to provide a common medium through which the advocates of union in the different colonies" could correspond with each other, endeavouring "to give unity to the movement," and encourage all those were engaged in it "to think on a national instead of on a racial or colonial plane." "A handful of leaders may fashion a state but they cannot create a nation," the *State* remarked in its first issue. In forming a new Closer Union Society "every citizen might do something for the cause of National Union."¹¹⁴

Over its forty-eight issues—Basil K. Long succeeded Kerr as editor in July 1909 when the Association of Closer Union Societies relinquished control of the magazine—*The State* contained articles which contributed to the development of a specific South African 'national' identity.¹¹⁵

The State mirrored Edwardian South African society, highlighting associations of financiers, architects, artists and writers. The early issues included articles on the questions of railway union, Imperial defence, the

¹¹² *The State*, Jan. 1909; Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, 109–11. The Kindergarten named the journal *The State* in preference to *New Federalist*, as they initially thought.

¹¹³ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 18, 28.

¹¹⁴ Peter Merrington, "The State and the 'Invention of Heritage' in Edwardian South Africa," in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 127–33.

¹¹⁵ Basil K. Long graduated at Oxford and traveled to the Cape in 1905, practising at the Cape Bar. He joined the Cape Parliament in 1908, serving as a law adviser at the National Convention. He then worked fourteen years as editor of the *Cape Times*, followed by eight years as a member of the South African Parliament.

differences between union and federation, “union and the native protectorates,” a report by Lord Curzon on his impressions of the country, several contributions by Howard Pim on the “native franchise,” a discussion by Julia Solly on “the enfranchisement of women,” and related topics. Further issues were devoted to a wide range of articles on topics ranging from a national language, a national anthem, a national university, botanical gardens and art galleries to the choice of a capital city for the union. There was a monthly photographic competition organised and judged by Lancelot Ussher, and a competition to design a union flag.¹¹⁶

The journal gave a special emphasis to old Cape architecture and antiquities, and to the related question of a suitable national architecture for the new State. Herbert Baker wrote an essay on “the architectural needs of South Africa,” in which he paid homage to the aesthetic taste of the early Cape Dutch builders, and located a new South African architecture within the universalizing aesthetic of Greco-Roman neo-classicism. Baker interpreted this aesthetic “as a kind of Imperial ethic of timeless greatness and broad vision, based on a geographical scheme which, in turn, imitates various geo-climatic facts and historical pretensions that recur in the emerging discourses of the period concerning the Dominions.” J. M. Solomon wrote an essay on Baker himself, “the architect of the union buildings,” and his colleague Francis Masey produced a series on architecture and antiques called “the beginnings of our nation.” “The phenomenon of Cape revival architecture,” led by Baker and his colleagues, Merrington observed,

attained the status of a cult, a particular kind of Cape Imperial iconography, with its emphasis on age, elegance, European antecedents, settlement and domestic economy (rather than violent conquest), on antiquarianism, connoisseurship, and horticulture. It was regarded as valuable in its uniting of Cape Dutch and British sentiment. It entailed the identifying and propagating of a particular sense of space, dignified by a particular kind and status of cultural discourse.¹¹⁷

The Kindergarten played a fundamental role also in the drafting of the Constitution, and this was not just in providing updated information on the economic and social questions with *The Government of South Africa*. It was also through the work of Brand who, as Secretary of the National Convention, succeeded in persuading the delegates to adopt proportional representation, the only way of “softening...the sharp line between town

¹¹⁶ A national flag was adopted in 1927, although a version of the British naval ensign with the union coat of arms in the corner was taken into service in 1910 as the standard of the governor general.

¹¹⁷ Merrington, “The State and the ‘Invention’,” 127 33.

and country,” mitigating “the asperity of racial conflicts” between Boers and British and, above all, leaving open the possibility of a future political change once British immigration outnumbered the Boer population. To this end Brand turned for advice, through Curtis, to Leonard Courtney, Chairman of the Proportional Representation Society in Great Britain.¹¹⁸

Even if Curtis did not officially take part in the official proceedings of the Convention, he assisted the Cape Delegation, “clucking like a hen that has laid an egg she is very proud of,” Selborne wrote to his wife. He accompanied Kerr’s and Brand’s New College tutor, H. A. L. Fisher, lecturing around the country on the historical background of the union between England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Curtis also introduced Basil Williams, special correspondent for *The Times*, to report on the Convention to Merriman—who spoke “most highly of the work Lionel Curtis had done for unification”—and to Sir John Henry De Villiers, who recognised Curtis’ “quiet unobtrusive work.”¹¹⁹

Following the conclusion of the work of the National Convention with the draft Constitution—which as a whole represented a satisfactory compromise between the parties involved and was accepted by the Kindergarten—a second meeting of the Association of Closer Union Societies was urged by Curtis in order to guarantee its ratification by colonial parliaments. It took place from 3 to 5 March 1909 in Johannesburg, with the participation of 111 delegates from 53 local groups. It was “the first, the largest and really the only South African assembly to discuss and express its opinion on the constitution.” After three days of debate, which raised a number of objections to single articles or provisions of the draft Constitution, a resolution by Duncan, recommending the adoption by colonial legislatures of the Constitution without amendments, was approved unanimously. Both at local and national level, the movement had a bipartisan character even if, according to Kendle, it “had more impact on the British than on the Boer community...All in all their impact was considerable.”¹²⁰

Public recognition of the work done by Curtis came from John W. Quinn—close friend of Curtis, member of the Johannesburg Reform Movement, and later to become Major of Johannesburg—who amused the audience by stating how Curtis “made himself a public nuisance by his enthusiasm,” dragging the delegates from their homes “at all hours of the

¹¹⁸ *Cape Times*, 26 Sept. 1908; Thompson, *The Unification of*, 126 35, 134, 372 4.

¹¹⁹ Selborne to Lady Selborne, 13 Oct. 1908, SP, 101; Basil Williams, *Convention Diary*, 29 and 30 Sept. 1908, quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 90.

¹²⁰ Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 117 8; Kendle, *The Round Table*, 43; “The Closer Union Association Conference,” *The State*, 1, 4, (1909): 359.

day and night,” to “meetings innumerable and resolutions by the dozen.” All that “with no hope of material reward, but for love of country.” And concluded: “If we fail in doing honour to such public services, we fail to do justice to ourselves.”¹²¹

The battle of the Kindergarten was however not completely won until June, after they had neutralized, with the assistance of Boer Transvaal leaders, the attempt by the Cape Legislature to break up the compromise on which the Constitution was based. This Legislature voted in amendments to drop proportional representation and instead create rural constituencies 30% smaller in number of voters than those of urban areas, thus giving rural voters a way of consolidating permanently Boer rule in the country. Only the acceptance by the delegates to the third session of the National Convention, convened at Bloemfontein on 7 May, of the proposal by De Villiers—President of the Convention—to maintain in the Constitution the principle of equal size of urban and rural constituencies, overcame the deadlock, opening the way to the final ratification of the Constitution by colonial and Imperial parliaments. The Constitution came into effect on 31 May 1910 on the occasion of the eighth anniversary of the Treaty of Vereeniging.¹²²

Having started “this wild campaign two years and a month ago,” Curtis confessed to Richard Jebb with complacency on 30 September 1908—just before the National Convention assembled in Durban—that he would have “scarcely dreamed that the movement could make so much progress in so little time.” “The grass was very dry,” Curtis observed, and concluded: “the flames ran the moment the match was dropped into it.” The flames would not however have run if the Kindergarten and among them, above all, Curtis had not committed the necessary political leadership to build the necessary bipartisan support for such a definite project.¹²³

The success of the Kindergarten in bringing about South African political unification under the British crown depended greatly on objective conditions—the trend toward political unification at the peripheral level of colonies which were scattered over wide spaces and which belonged to the

¹²¹ *Proceedings at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Closer Union Societies at Johannesburg*, 3, 4, 5, March 1909, quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 94 5.

¹²² Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, 118 20. The House of Commons passed the second reading of the South African Bill in 1909 without a division. The Conservatives could claim credit for Milner's legacy, and the Liberals for the policy adopted by Campbell Bannerman. For an analysis of the passage of the Bill through Parliament, see Thompson, *The Unification of South Africa*, 416 32.

¹²³ Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, 108.

multicultural evolving political and economic entity which was the Edwardian British Empire. Without the subjective element, however, the political leadership and organization of the Kindergarten, the historical process would have remained dependent on accident or case. Rightly Paul Knaplund could state that “without the aid of the young Britons trained in the neo-imperialistic school of Chamberlain and Lord Milner, the union could not have come into existence at this early date.” Or, according to Sir Evelyn Wrench, that “it is impossible to over-estimate the importance of the part played by the members of the Kindergarten, in paving the way for closer union of South Africa after Milner left.” The Round Table shared, according to David Watt “the normal assumptions of the Edwardian Imperialist faction” believing in “the destiny of the British people...to civilise and rule,” as a matter of duty.¹²⁴

“South African union is in itself a great step,” Brand wrote in 1909 on his way back to Britain, but “the Empire’s fate may well depend on the creation of some form of Imperial union within the next twenty or thirty years.” Curtis seemed to be well aware of the necessity to unite the Empire even before Brand. Writing to Jebb in December 1908 he stated that “it has always been our idea to unite South Africa & then try to make some scheme for closer Imperial Union grow out of it.” The movement started in South Africa would give an “important impetus towards closer Imperial Union,” and in any case it gave the Kindergarten “some practice in the art of uniting communities.”¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Paul Knaplund, “The Unification of South Africa: A Study in British Colonial Policy,” *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*, 21, (1924); Wrench, *Geoffrey Dawson*, 53; David Watt, “The Foundations of ‘The Round Table’,” *The Round Table*, 160, (Nov. 1970): 427.

¹²⁵ Robert Brand, *The Union of South Africa* (Oxford: 1909), 12; Curtis to Jebb, 6 Dec. 1908, quoted in Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 124.

CHAPTER III

THE FOUNDATION OF THE ROUND TABLE MOVEMENT

1. Milner and the rise to power of the Liberal League

In spite of the fact that on his return to England in March 1905 Milner was “the most unpopular figure of the day,” he received offers to succeed Chamberlain—who had a stroke in July—as leader of the Tariff Reform movement, and to challenge Balfour for leadership of the Unionist party. Pro-tariff MPs were in fact in the majority in the party, ahead of Balfour’s mild support for tariffs. Milner repeatedly turned down offers by Balfour of the post of Colonial Secretary, following Chamberlain’s resignation on tariff reforms in 1903. Apparently Milner made its acceptance conditional on the introduction of compulsory military service, a measure which would never have been accepted by the electorate during a relatively fluid period of peace-time. Apparently Milner turned down also the invitation by Balfour to replace Curzon as Viceroy of India, a post which never interested him.¹

A measure of Milner’s controversial character is given by the censorship motion by the House of Commons on 21 March 1906, affirming the “condemnation of the flogging of Chinese coolies in breach of the law,” for which Milner was responsible. In defending his censure motion against Milner, the Radical MP William Byles stated that “if the country was deceived, if illegality was condoned, if high officials were screened and if injustice and cruelty were allowed to go unreproved...the highest interests of the country were in danger.”²

Chamberlain defended Milner stating that he was “a greater man I have never known,” while Winston Churchill, Parliamentary Under-secretary for the Colonies, remarked that Milner would leave his mark “for good or for ill, extensively upon the pages of history.” However

¹ David Billington Jr., *Lothian: Philip Kerr and the Quest for World Order* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), 18; Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, 76 121.

² *Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., Commons, 154, 21 March 1906, cols. 464 65.

he was now a retired civil servant, poor, without a pension and without any influence on political decisions, and with no authority. His imperialism had been discredited by the 1906 Liberal landslide victory: “The very idea and forces to which we were opposed,” Churchill observed, seemed “to have melted away, as if they had never been.” *The Times* described Churchill’s intervention as “insolently patronising,” and argued that the effects of the debate were disastrous, and that the vote of 355 against 155 would have been seen in South Africa as evidence that the leadership of the Empire was “at the present moment in the hands of a number of fanatics.”³

In order to counterbalance the stand by the Commons, the Lords passed, on the initiative of Edward Wood (later to become Lord Halifax), a resolution of appreciation for the work done by Milner in South Africa. The resolution passed by 170 votes to 35, in spite of pressure by the government for a withdrawal in order to avoid “a mischievous and unseemly and wholly unnecessary conflict between the Houses.” On Imperial issues, there was emerging an uncompromising divide between Liberals and Conservatives and between Commons and Lords.⁴

Wood had entered in contact with Milner and the Kindergarten on the occasion of his visits to South Africa in 1904 and 1905. He was a Fellow of All Souls from 1903 to 1910. Among the public figures of his family who played a prominent role in advocating a federal solution to Imperial questions were Lord Grey—his great grandfather, and father of the Reform Bill of 1832—and Lord Durham, his grand-uncle, and author of the Report which opened the way to Canadian federation. His grandfather Charles Wood had been Lord Grey’s private secretary and son-in-law, and Secretary of State for India from 1859 to 1866. From the moment Wood began to play the role of the ‘institutionalized’ arm of Milner and his disciples, his political career—including the posts of Parliamentary Under-secretary for the Colonies (1921-22), President of the Board of Education, (1922-4, succeeding H. A. L. Fisher, intimate of Milner, warden and tutor of Kerr at New College), Minister of Agriculture (1924-6), Viceroy to India (as Lord Irwin, 1926-31), President of the Board of Education (1932-5), Secretary of State for War (1935), Lord Privy Seal (1935-7), Lord President of the Council (1937-8), Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1938-40), and British Ambassador to Washington (1941-6, succeeding

³ *Ibidem*, col. 485; *The Times*, 22 March 1906; *Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., Commons, 154, 21 March 1906, cols. 487-500; *The Times*, 22 March 1906.

⁴ Campbell Bannerman to Edward VII, 26 March 1906, CABP, CAB 41/30/51, Harvester Press Microfilm; *Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., Lords, 154, 29 March 1906, cols. 1410-1504.

Lothian)—owed much in fact to Milner, Dawson and other members of the Kindergarten, particularly Brand and Lothian.⁵

In spite of the Commons' censorship, Milner nevertheless received public support during official ceremonies—as witnessed by the 24 May 1906 dinner given in his honour and presided over by Chamberlain himself—and by thousands of personal letters. In spite of this public recognition, Milner was however aware of having left his work in South Africa only half accomplished: he knew that the new Liberal Administration would have granted Transvaal and Orange River a full degree of self-government, with the inevitable rise to power of the *Afrikaners*.⁶

On meeting Milner in 1905, Beatrice Webb concluded that he was “sufficient of a fanatic not to see that there was a genuine cleavage of opinion among the thinking people, that it was not merely a knot of cranks that disapproved of his policy.” A year later, Webb found Milner “brooding over South Africa,” where he felt his whole “house of cards” was tumbling down, and commented, with her usual sharpness: “A God and a wife would have made Milner, with his faithfulness, persistency, courage, capacity and charm, into a great man: without either, he has been a tragic combination of success and failure.”⁷

Milner reached South Africa as an ‘outsider’ of the decision-making inner circle of British foreign policy. He exploited his new role on the front line as a war leader to become an ‘insider’. With the replacement in 1899 of Donald Mackenzie Wallace, foreign editor of *The Times*, with Valentine Chirol—a Milner intimate—and the appointment in 1906 of the Unionist Sir Charles Hardinge—an intimate of both Milner and Chirol—to Permanent Under-secretary of the Foreign Office, Milner could exercise his control indirectly on the most influential ‘quality’ British newspaper, and widen his influence over the British diplomatic machinery. The year before, the Liberal Sir Edward Grey had been appointed Foreign Secretary. Hardinge’s early diplomatic career as first Secretary at Tehran in 1896, and at Saint Petersburg in 1898, as well as his appointment as British Ambassador to Moscow in 1904, owed much in fact to Lord Esher—deputy-Governor of Windsor Castle and adviser of Edward VII—an intimate of Rhodes and Milner himself. Hardinge’s pro-Russian and anti-German feelings represented a guarantee for Edward’s concerns about

⁵ Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 73.

⁶ Amery, *My Political Life*, 298 9; Amery, *The Times History of the War*, vol. 4, 178 9.

⁷ Beatrice Webb, *Our Partnership* (London: Longmans, 1948), 312; Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie eds., *The Diary of Beatrice Webb* (London: 1984), 3, 49.

Wilhelm's hegemonic designs. The Liberal Grey and the Unionist Hardinge thus realized Milner's idea of a bipartisan convergence on foreign policy aims, implementing for a decade a coherent foreign policy strategy which aimed at closing the net over the heads of the Germans—to use a famous expression of the Kaiser—and offering the Russians a free hand in the Balkans.⁸

Aware of the weakness of the Balfour Government and of the likely Liberal victory at a probable early General Election in the autumn of 1905, Milner worked behind the scenes, trying to limit the damage which a 'radical' Liberal Campbell-Bannerman could do to British Imperial interests, particularly in South Africa. The so-called 'Regulas Compact'—a pact between Asquith, Grey and Haldane made in September 1905 at the village of Regulas, in Moray, to force Campbell-Bannerman to the Lords, to secure the leadership of the Liberal party in the Commons with the Exchequer going to Asquith, the Foreign Office to Grey and the War Office to Haldane—was, in fact, blessed by Lord Knollys, Edward VII's private secretary, and implemented with the active involvement of Esher.⁹

The decision by Balfour on 4 December to resign and not to ask the King to dissolve Parliament implemented the first stage of the 'Regulas Compact', forcing Campbell-Bannerman to form a minority government within the old Parliament, and giving Asquith and Grey—who were in control of a large number of Liberal MPs and peers—a crucial role to play within the new government. Campbell-Bannerman's reluctance to form a minority and therefore weak government, when he knew he could easily gain a large majority over the Conservatives at a General Election, was defeated by the King's threat, through the Liberal MP Lewis Vernon Harcourt, to ask the 'old guard' Lord Rosebery—founder and leader of the Liberal League—to form the government. The price Campbell-Bannerman had to pay to the Liberal imperialists was to accept Asquith's demands for key positions for himself—the Chancellorship of the Exchequer—and for the other 'Regulas Compacters'—the Foreign Office to Grey, and the War

⁸ Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo German Antagonism, 1860 1914* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1980), 253, 266, 270. "The net has suddenly been closed over our head," the Kaiser declared on the eve of war, "and the purely anti German policy which England has been scornfully pursuing all over the world has won the most spectacular victory...Even after his death Edward VII is stronger than I, although I am still alive!" quoted in *ibidem*, 402.

⁹ John Wilson, *CB: A Life of Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman* (London: Constable, 1973), 429. Writing to Haldane, Milner claimed "to be myself, at bottom, a Liberal. My 'Imperialism' is too liberal, too advanced, to be understood to day," (Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, 263).

Office to Haldane—however reluctant he was, “sore and wounded,” to accept the King’s invitation to be “kicked upstairs,” to the House of Lords.¹⁰

Campbell-Bannerman also resisted *The Times*’ offensive of 5, 6, and 7 December, pressing him to be ‘upgraded’ to the Lords and presenting Grey as “the chief guarantee to the country” for continuity in foreign affairs. Campbell-Bannerman’s suspicions of an orchestrated conspiracy against him grew when Haldane rejected his offer of the Home Office, asking instead for the War Office. Haldane’s appointment to the War Office was strongly supported by the Milnerite George Clark, Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID), as “the greatest appointment that has been made for a generation,” and by Lord Esher himself, who expressed to Haldane “the pleasure with which personally” he saw “the idea which germinated” at Balmoral—the King’s residence in Scotland—“come to fruition.” The King was “delighted,” Esher commented.¹¹

On taking over the War Office, Haldane was helped by Colonel Gerald Ellison, Esher’s former private secretary, to continue the reform of the British Army initiated after the conclusion of the Second Anglo-Boer War, in the light of a prospective Continental war. Two Royal Commissions had been established in 1902, the Esher Committee—which called for wide-ranging reforms in the administration of the Army and the War Office—and the Norfolk Commission, which declared the auxiliary forces unfit for service. They had recommended various practical reforms alongside the highly controversial conscription. Hugh Arnold-Forster, Conservative Secretary of State for War in 1904-5, in vain tried to introduce the reforms, which were at last implemented by Haldane with the support of Lord Esher, and which prepared the British Army for World War I.¹²

The appointment of General Sir Henry Wilson as Director of Military Operations (MO) at the War Office in 1910 owed much to Haldane and

¹⁰ Wilson, *CB: A Life of*, 426 34, 442.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 446, 450; Sir Maurice Frederick, *Haldane 1856 1915: The Life of Viscount Haldane of Cloan* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), 154; Peter Fraser, *Lord Esher: A Political Biography* (London: Hart Davis, 1973), 426. Haldane’s unpopularity within the Liberal party is testified by Harcourt, who recorded that “the feeling against Haldane being in the Cabinet” was “very strong within out ranks and file.” Harcourt had the feeling that it was the King, because of Esher pressure, who wanted Haldane “somewhere in the inner circle,” (quoted in *ibidem*, 443). Once the Liberals returned into power, Asquith, Grey and Haldane left domestic matters to the traditional and left wings of the party (Scally, *The Origins*, 135 36; Semmel, *Imperialism*, 134 36).

¹² Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo German*, 392 4, 449.

Grey. It also had the support of Arthur Nicolson, Permanent Under-secretary of the Foreign Office, William Tyrrell, Secretary of the CID, Sir Eyre Crowe, Senior Official at the Western Department of the Foreign Office, and Leo Amery. Wilson believed that his most important duty as Director of MO was to draw up detailed plans for deployment of an expeditionary force to France, in accordance with the CID's decisions of 23 August 1911, which sanctioned the shift of the British Government's stance to abandon isolation. At the meeting Asquith had excluded the radical Liberal Cabinet members who supported the views of the former First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir John Fisher, against the employment of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in Continental Europe in support of the French army. Wilson hoped also to get conscription brought in, but failed in the face of radical Liberal opposition.¹³

In order to overcome the Admiralty's resistance to transporting the troops onto the Continent, Asquith on 23 October 1911 switched Reginald McKenna, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Churchill, Home Secretary, who, according to Williamson "was fully in favour of the Continental strategy of Wilson." The change in naval leadership guaranteed British commitment to the Wilson strategy of Continental intervention. Wilson in his diaries recollected "how 'amazingly' well" he, according to Haldane, had done, and how he "impressed his colleagues at the meeting of August 23." If Asquith, Haldane, Lloyd George, Grey and Churchill were aligned in support of Continental intervention, Wilson testified that "Morley,

¹³ Basil Collier, *A Biography of Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1961). On the CID, see Ivone Kirkpatrick, *The Inner Circle* (London: Macmillan, 1959); Franklyn Arthur Johnson, *Defence by Committee: The British Committee of Imperial Defence, 1885 1959* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960); Zara S. Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy 1889 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); F. H. Hinsley ed., *British Foreign Policy Under Sir Edward Grey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Sibyl Crowe and Edward Corp, *Our Ablest Public Servant: Sir Eyre Crowe, 1864 1925* (Devon: Merlin, 1993); Zara S. Steiner and Keith Nelson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* (London: Macmillan, 2003). On Amery, see David Goldsworthy, *Colonial Issues in British Politics, 1945 1961* (Oxford: University Press, 1971); John Barnes and David Nicolson eds., *The Leo Amery Diaries, 1896 1929* (London: Hutchinson, 1980); Stephen Constantine, *The Making of British Colonial Development Policy* (London: Routledge, 1984); William Rubinstein, "The secret of Leopold Amery," *Historical Research*, 53, 181, (June 2000): 175 196; Deborah Lavin, "Amery, Leopold Charles Maurice Stennett (1873 1955)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); David Faber, *Speaking for England: Leo, Julian and John Amery: The Tragedy of a Political Family* (London: Free Press, 2005).

Crowe Harcourt, McKenna and some of the small fry were mad that they were not present...and were opposed to all idea of war,” to the point that McKenna at last was “kicked out for his pains.”¹⁴

The creation of the BEF—based on six infantry divisions and their supporting units—was the first major innovation in British military tradition. It would be organized in peacetime, prepared to mobilise in the United Kingdom, and employed on the Continent in support of the French army. The *entente* with France was thus implemented, even if the BEF had been officially created for the defence of India’s northern borders against a possible Russian invasion. With the Anglo-Russian agreement of August 1907, the Indian borders were safe. Without Russia being within the British security network, BEF intervention on the side of France, in the event of a Continental war, would have been worthless. Haldane had in fact presented the Territorials as a home defence force, instead of as a reserve force for the BEF.¹⁵

With the taking over of the Treasury, the CID, the Foreign and War Office, the Liberal League’s control over British financial, foreign and military policy was complete. Campbell-Bannerman later regretted having been forced to include in his government the most prominent figures of the Liberal League, and Admiral Fisher went so far as to argue that “had Campbell-Bannerman only known what a literally overwhelming majority he was going to obtain at the forthcoming election, he would have formed a very different Government from what he did, and I don’t believe we

¹⁴ Samuel R. Williamson Jr., *The Politics of Grand Strategy: Britain and France Prepare for War, 1904 1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 194 5; Charles Edward Callwell, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: His Life and Diaries* (London: Cassell, 1927), 106 7; Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo German*, 449. For a general discussion on British naval strategy, see Sir Reginald Hugh Bacon, *The Life of Lord Fisher of Kilverstone* (London: 1929); Stephen McKenna, *Reginald McKenna, 1863 1943* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948). The reforms were embodied in the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act of 1907, which passed the Commons with little opposition, abolishing the existing Volunteers and Yeomanry, and creating a new Territorial Force of fourteen infantry divisions, fourteen cavalry brigades, and a large number of supporting units, all raised, organised and financed by local organisations, but liable for service under the War Office Command.

¹⁵ Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo German*, 449, 461 2; Keith M. Wilson, *The Policy of the Entente: Essays on the Determinants of British Foreign Policy, 1904 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Peter Hart, *Fire and Movement: The British Expeditionary Force and the Campaign of 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

should have had the War.”¹⁶

In his first public speech as Prime Minister on 22 December 1905, Campbell-Bannerman launched the Liberal election campaign, focusing on the traditional Liberal platform of “peace, retrenchment and reform.” *The Annual Register* described the Liberal victory in the general election of January 1906 as “the most exciting and startling” since Gladstone’s triumphant assault on Beaconsfieldism in 1880. Both victories in fact represented the Liberal reaction to Conservative imperialism, as manifested in the First and Second Anglo-Boer Wars. If Joseph Chamberlain attacked the Liberals as Little Englanders, Campbell-Bannerman defined “the policy and spirit” of Salisbury’s government as “the very antithesis of that of their opponents,” which would be based on “justice and liberty, not privilege and monopoly.”¹⁷

The ideology which inspired the historical bloc of ‘radical’ Liberal landowners, city financiers, merchants, insurers, and industrialist, has been defined “Gladstonian liberalism” or, the “Manchester School,” based on a combination of *laissez-faire* at home, and unrestricted free trade in addition to anti-imperialism abroad. Little Englanders wanted a better-governed Empire—not necessarily a smaller one—relieving Great Britain from the financial and military burdens of its defence. Vested interests in the Dominions and Dependencies were seen as the sources of corruption and of illiberal and undemocratic practices at home.¹⁸

The imperialists’ struggle against the Manchester School went beyond the traditional divisions between left and right, involving all traditional political organizations. The formation of an imperialistic cross-party majority—led by Milner, the Fabians, and a number of other

¹⁶ Fisher to Lord Esher, 21 March 1909, quoted in G. A. Farrer, *England under Edward VII* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922), 237–45.

¹⁷ *The Annual Register* (London: 1907), 1. A. K. Russell identifies “the climax of the move against imperialism” as a key factor of the Liberal victory in his *Liberal Landslide: The General Election of 1906* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973), 206. Ronald Hyam, *Elgin and Churchill at the Colonial Office, 1905–1908: The Watershed of the Empire Commonwealth* (London: 1968), 50.

¹⁸ J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688–1914* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), 204–05; Ged Martin, “‘Anti Imperialism’ in the Mid Nineteenth Century and the Nature of the British Empire,” in *Reappraisals in British Imperial History*, Ronald Hyam and Ged Martin eds. (Toronto: Macmillan, 1975), 88–120. On the Little Englander movement, see Richard Gott, “Little Englanders,” in *ibidem*, 90–102; E. Green, and M. Taylor, “Further Thoughts on Little Englandism,” in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, vol. 1, *History and Politics*, Raphael Samuel ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 103–09.

organizations—was a consequence of the Second Anglo-Boer War. The issue at stake appeared to be whether Great Britain would be the “nucleus of one of the world-empires of the future” or if it would “be reduced to a tiny pair of islands in the North Sea.”¹⁹

2. Milner, Leo Amery, and the creation of an Imperial network

Back in England, Milner intended to keep himself “absolutely free from all political engagements,” leaving “very open” the question of whether he might in future “re-enter public life in any shape or form.” His distaste for party politics and Parliamentary democracy caused Milner to prepare his return to power through the creation of a network of organizations and influence on the national press, which could exercise a decisive role at a moment of political crisis. “The unresolved problem of Lord Milner’s life,” Kerr observed in 1925, was “how to reconcile” the “great tradition” of Imperial “administrative ideals...with democracy.” Milner lacked, according to Kerr, the “passionate conviction that it is better for men to govern themselves badly and to learn from their mistakes than to be administered with supreme wisdom by somebody else.” The gulf between Milner and his most promising disciple did not relate just to the question of democracy or party politics—Kerr himself repeatedly turned down offers to stand for Parliament. It became over the years more generally, as will be discussed later, a question of a general political, historical and ethical outlook in response to implementing the same vision, that of Cecil Rhodes.²⁰

In order to realize Rhodes’ idea of the creation of a select and cohesive group of young imperialists, determined to fight for the unity of the Empire and the ultimate recovery of the United States, Milner turned to his South African disciples, and with an annual grant of £1,200 from the Rhodes Trust employed Amery—until his election to Parliament in 1911—as administrative assistant to deal with his various commitments, while completing *The Times History of the War in South Africa*. Amery

¹⁹ Scally, *The Origins of the Lloyd George*, 29 72; G. R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899 1914* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 107 41; Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social Imperialist Thought, 1895 1914* (London: 1960), 53 82; Andrew S. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics c. 1880 1932* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 47 48, 183.

²⁰ Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 61; Philip Kerr, “Lord Milner,” *The Nation and the Athenaeum*, 37, (23 May 1925): 227.

spent most of his time in trying to develop, under Milner's supervision, the Compatriots' Club, an organization which Amery himself had created in January 1904 with Milner as President, promoting Imperial tariff reform. Using the Rhodes Trust's funds, Amery collected more than a hundred influential tariff reformers in the United Kingdom, and created a branch of the club in Johannesburg, with the support of some members of the Kindergarten—Brand, Dove, Kerr, Perry, and Wyndham—and tried to establish a branch in Sydney with the help of the historian and correspondent of *The Times*, Arthur Jose.²¹

The aim of the organization was to strengthen “a real brotherhood of those interested in Imperial unity,” which might “prove immensely useful at every great crisis,” or during the time of an Imperial Conference, “when opinion required moulding.” The Club consisted, according to Milner, of “the most active and forward of the younger ‘Imperialists’, the people who believe in a frank partnership of the several States of the Empire.” “If the vision was Rhodes,” Amery observed, “it was Milner who over some twenty years laid securely the foundations of a system whose power in shaping the outlook and spiritual kinship of an ever-growing body of men throughout the English-speaking world it would be difficult to exaggerate.”²²

Milner and Amery did not succeed however in aligning the “Co-efficients” to support closer Imperial political union. This organization had been created by Sidney and Beatrice Webb to promote public debate on the development of Imperial relations in support of tariff reform, and was joined by H. G. Wells, Lord Haldane, Sir Edward Grey, Sir Michael Sadler, Leo Maxse, and Clinton Dawkins. Disappointment also came to Milner from the Pollock Committee, an organization undertaking a study to improve Imperial cohesion, on the issue of preference.²³

Working from a detached position, Milner tried to influence the 1907 Colonial Conference, publishing in the *National Review* a plan for reforming Imperial relations which contemplated the removal of the Secretariat of the Conference from the control of the Colonial Office, and the separation of the affairs of the Dominions from those of the Colonies, with the appointment of a new Ministry for the Dominions. In spite of the

²¹ Leo Amery, Forward to *Lord Milner*, Halperin, 16. On the Compatriots, see Scally, *The Origins*, 110–15; Semmel, *Imperialism*, 92.

²² Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, 146–7; Amery, *My Political Life*, 265, 298–9; The Committee of the Compatriots' Club, *Compatriots' Club Lectures* (London: 1905); Kendle, *The Round Table*, 51. Amery was trustee of the Rhodes Trust from 1919 to 1955.

²³ Halperin, *Lord Milner*, 154.

support which Milner gained from Jameson, Prime Minister of the Cape, Alfred Deakin, Australian Prime Minister, and Joseph Ward, Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Conference ended in a failure to reach agreement on Milner's plans.²⁴

The failure of Milner's first attempt, detached from the centre of power, to promote a reform of Imperial relations was followed, a year later, by Amery's failure to transform the Compatriots' Club into a political movement rooted in all the major centres of the Empire to bring about tariff reform. Amery's attempt to involve in the undertaking enthusiastic imperialists such as Stephen Leacock, Fabian Ware, Richard Webb, and Halford Mackinder fell short of achieving concrete results.²⁵

The employment with Rhodes Trust money of another young recruit, Arthur Steel-Maitland, as his 'political private secretary', brought Milner, in a two months tour around Canada in the autumn of 1908, to the crux of the Imperial problem, in his attempt to lay down the foundation of an indigenous organization promoting tariff reform. Milner addressed meetings in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal, with attendance figures ranging from 600 to 800. Milner wished "to see all our common affairs the subject of common management in peace as much as in war," and suggested the initiative to create an Imperial system of "sister States" should come from the Canadians. Milner's lectures raised however more scepticism than enthusiasm in the audiences, sensitive to any sermon coming from an English-centred ardent imperialist, one with a complete lack of political tact. Milner's tour proved however very useful for the establishment of personal contacts—especially with Arthur Glazebrook, Ernest Du Vernet, and the academics Hugh Egerton, Edward Kylie, and Keith Feiling. These later proved to be of fundamental importance in Curtis' tours to establish Round Table groups in Canada.²⁶

²⁴ Alfred Milner, "Some Reflections on the Coming Conference," *The National Review*, (April 1907): 193 206; Milner to Deakin, 25 Feb. 1907, (Kendle, *The Round Table*, 46 8). Alfred Deakin was an enthusiastic Milnerite.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 46 50. Fabian Ware (1869 1949), worked with Milner in South Africa as Director of the Department of Education in Transvaal from 1903 to 1905 and was Editor of the *Morning Post* from 1905 to 1911, a newspaper strongly committed to the imperialist cause.

²⁶ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 50 55; Milner diary, 9, 15 Oct. 1908, MP, 79; Alfred Milner, *The Nation and the Empire* (London: 1913), 312 1, 327. Hugh Egerton first Beit Professor at the University of Oxford from 1905 to 1920 commenting on his relationship with Curtis Beit lecturer from 1912 to 1913 ironically confessed that he felt like a country rector with the Prophet Isaiah as his curate.

The impact of Milner's visit produced however an enthusiastic reaction by the Governor-General of Canada, Earl Grey. "You have sown some Imperial seeds," Grey remarked, "destined I believe to have a healthy and rapid growth in every city you have visited." According to Joseph Chamberlain, Milner had "done good service both to Canada and the motherland in his tour...which I have taken much interest in following." The visit had been, according to Glazebrook, "an absolute success." In Toronto

he struck a new note...of earnestness and simplicity and freedom from cant.

His remark...that when he thought about the Empire he did not feel very much like waving the flag or singing 'Rule Britannia', but rather that he would like to go off into a corner and pray, fairly lifted the house.

"There is in reality an army of 'Milnerites' who depend on you," Glazebrook reassured Milner later in 1914, "you give us not only guidance and inspiration, but affection."²⁷

While in Toronto, Milner stayed with Glazebrook, a friend of Milner since 1873 and future leading figure of the Round Table. The "maintenance and strengthening of the *political union* between Great Britain and her colonies," was according to Milner, "the greatest of all political questions. Otherwise Anglo-Saxon civilisation, which is on the whole the best (and of which the more than hybrid United States cannot be regarded as a sure support) will be elbowed off the platform by the greater material power of others." Citizens of the Empire "should habitually... think of ourselves as one people, and of our differences as mere domestic and family differences."²⁸

Shortly after Milner visited Canada in 1908, Glazebrook created in Toronto a group of "eight or nine members," including John Willison, editor of the *Toronto News*, George Wrong, Chairman of the University of Toronto, and Edward Kylie, a Balliol College graduate, who served as President of the Union during his stay in Oxford, "a dignity conferred for the first time on a colonial." In writing to Milner in 1911, Glazebrook liked "to feel" that Vincent Massey—Kylie's former student and future Governor General of Canada—"could become definitely and by knowledge a Milnerite."²⁹

²⁷ Grey to Milner, 6 Nov. 1908, MP, 35; Chamberlain to George Denison, 9 Nov. 1908, MF, MG 29E29, Vols. 11 and 12; Glazebrook to Richard Jebb, 2 Nov. 1908, quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 53; A. Glazebrook to Milner, 21 Dec. 1914, MP, 349.

²⁸ Milner to A. Glazebrook, 30 June 1896, MF, MG 30A43.

²⁹ Claude Bissell, *The Young Vincent Massey* (Toronto: 1981), 96; Eayrs, "The Round Table Movement in Canada," 2. Milner met Willison and Kylie on 24 Oct.

In spite of a “long talk with Henri Bourassa” on 30 October 1908, Milner failed to mitigate Bourassa’s negative attitude towards closer Imperial union. He was aware that “at least on Imperial questions, Bourassa spoke for French Canadians,” and publicly intervened to oppose Milner’s views. In vain Milner tried to persuade Bourassa in 1912 about the genuine character of his imperialism:

I feel sure you will help me to prevent from being misunderstood, especially by French Canadians, with whom your influence is deservedly so great. I am, as you know, not animated by any but the most friendly and respectful feelings towards them, and my imperialism does not take the form of a militant or aggressive Anglo Saxondom.³⁰

Bourassa had good reasons to consider as manifestation of British arrogance Asquith’s decision to close “to the ‘overseas Dominions’ the door of the committees which formulate foreign policy,” such as the CID, seen by Bourassa as a “source of wars to which the *beastly colonials* will go to be massacred for the glory of the mother country, the greatness of the Empire and the universal triumph of the Anglo-Saxon race.”³¹

Milner’s failure to create an organization equally rooted in Britain as well as in the Dominions, was directly dependent on his failure to realise that with the Second Anglo-Boer War an era in British Imperial history had come to an end, and that the foundations for the growth of a new form of imperialism had to be created through a long process of cultural revision of the paradigms on which Imperial relations were based. Although the decline of the Empire, which extended over a quarter of the earth’s surface and comprised an equal share of the world population, did not appear clearly during the last decade of the Nineteenth century, it became more apparent by the end of the Second Anglo-Boer War, during which British power had been stretched to its limits by the resistance of Boers and Britain was completely isolated on the international scene. That

1908, (*Milner Diary*, MP, 79). Willison was editor of the *Toronto Globe* from 1890 to 1902, and after that editor of the *Toronto News*, and Canadian correspondent for the *London Times* from 1910. Glazebrook to Milner, 22 Sept. 1911, quoted in Carroll Quigley, “The Round Table Groups in Canada, 1908 1938,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 43, 3, (1962): 213; Milner to A. Glazebrook, 30 June 1896, MF, MG 30A43.

³⁰ *Milner Diary*, 30 Oct. 1908, MP, 79; Casey Murrow, *Henri Bourassa and French Canadian Nationalism: Opposition to Empire* (Montreal: 1968), 57; Cook, “Triumph and Trials,” 402; Milner to Bourassa, 9 Oct. 1912, MF, MG 27IIE1, Reel M722.

³¹ Henri Bourassa, *La Conférence Impériale et le rôle de M. Laurier* (Montreal: 1911), 69.

war in fact represented a desperate and failed attempt to halt by force the process of disintegration of the British Empire.

At the end of the Second Anglo-Boer War, a new language of imperialism had to be invented. It became a social-imperialistic language, able to fuse the rising social question with Imperial vested interests. Liberal imperialists aimed to shape a coalition between the aristocratic and working classes against the middle classes, on the basis of a programme of Imperial expansion and social reforms at home.³²

Even after South African unification had been accomplished, the defence of the Empire seemed vital in order to prevent German penetration in Africa and elsewhere, which would have allowed Wilhelmine Germany to become a world power. The problem of defending the Empire both from external attacks and from centrifugal forces within it could not be solved by means of simple Imperial preferences. The burden of defending the Empire was shouldered by Great Britain alone, and any decision concerning the Dominions was taken by a Government which depended only on a metropolitan Parliament and electorate. This was a situation which could not last. Any financial or constitutional reform of the Empire had to take into account both the new forces which were emerging within its periphery and the rising Anglo-German international rivalry.

The British Empire was for Milner and his disciples the most advanced expression of human civilization. In the political field it brought peace to a quarter of the world's population, and representative government to the larger portion of world's population, transforming a subject into a citizen, with the progressive enlargement of the sphere of self-government to native populations. In the economic and financial fields, it established the largest free trade and economically integrated area of the world, producing an unprecedented development of the forces of production, exchange and consumption at a global level. The pound was its single currency, and also played the role, on the basis of the gold exchange standard, of the world's reserve currency. The City of London was its financial centre and attracted most of the world's available capital, generating investments within the Empire itself and in the world at large. In military terms, since Trafalgar, the Royal Navy had been for more than a century unchallenged by any naval power, creating that preponderance

³² Michael W. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 283 88, 293 95; Richard Koebner and Helmut Dan Schmidt, *Imperialism: The Significance of a Political Word 1840 1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 81 249; Andrew S. Thompson, "The Language of Imperialism and the Meanings of Empire: Imperial Discourse in British Politics, 1895 1914," *Journal of British Studies*, 36, (1997): 147 77.

of force—the role of ‘policeman of the world’—which prevented the enlargement of local conflicts into a world one.

In the fields of scientific, cultural and social developments, the so-called *Pax Britannica* provided the material conditions for the most spectacular leap forward of human civilization in scientific and technological discoveries. This era of relative economic and political stability favoured the emancipation of the arts, and the enjoyment of their products by an increasing proportion of world’s population. During the so-called ‘British century’, the spread and consolidation in Europe of the Liberal revolution—with the affirmation of the representative system as a universal political mechanism—and the appearance of new ideologies like socialism and democracy marked the most dynamic epoch of political development for mankind. The *Pax Britannica* was, according to Niall Ferguson, the “nearest thing there has ever been to a world government.”³³

Their active involvement in the process of South African unification taught the Kindergarten that nothing short of a federal system was the answer to the problem of the political and economic integration of the various component parts of the Empire. Such a system would entail the division of government into two spheres, each accountable to the electorate within its own competence, and neither responsible for nor superior to the other. In order to define the dividing line between the powers to be exercised by the government representing peoples as citizens of the Empire and those representing them as citizens of a member State, the Kindergarten proposed a competent central authority for foreign affairs and for the defence of the Empire, accountable to a Parliament elected directly by the people of Great Britain and its Dominions. Domestic matters would remain the concern of national parliaments. Federalism was, for them, a political and constitutional form to be filled with an historical content, the British Empire. Unaware of the apparent contradiction revealed by Freeman, between the federal idea and its opposite, the Imperial idea, they become ardent federalists because they were ardent imperialists.

3. The Kindergarten and the founding of the Round Table

The surprising speed of the constitutional process in South Africa led the Kindergarten to turn its attention to the consequences of South African Union for the Empire, especially as far as the German threat and defence

³³ Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), xxiii.

of the Empire were concerned. Aware that Great Britain could no longer support the whole financial burden by herself, the Kindergarten came to believe in the necessity of direct involvement of the Dominions in the development of Imperial foreign policy, and assigned Curtis the task of informing Milner that they were now ready to “push the Imperial cause” from South Africa, as long as there were “men enough like Jebb and Amery to push it from England.”³⁴

After the publication of *Studies in Colonial Nationalism* in 1905, Jebb was in fact regarded by the Kindergarten as an ally. Curtis could not “think of any one idea that has made such a deep impression” on his mind as Jebb’s “idea of Nationalism has done.” Kerr thought that the book was “extraordinarily good,” and that Jebb was “absolutely right in his general thesis,” considering colonial nationalism not as an obstacle to Imperial union, but as a contribution to closer political union of the Empire. Jebb knew Curtis from his South African days as correspondent of the *Morning Post*.³⁵

Writing to Selborne in October 1907, Curtis had already started to consider South Africa as “a microcosm and much that we thought peculiar to it is equally true of the Empire itself...When we have done all we can do and should do for South Africa it may be that we shall have the time and the training to begin some work of the same kind in respect of Imperial Relations.” Selborne welcomed Curtis’s offer, being persuaded by Seeley’s argument that if Great Britain had “to maintain herself in the years to come in the same rank with the U.S., Russia, and Germany, the unit must be enlarged from the U.K. to the Empire.” Related to this belief was the fear that Britain’s resources might be insufficient to hold on to India and the Dependencies, which Curtis described as “volcanoes upon which Great Britain is obliged to sit.”³⁶

Writing to Milner a year later, Curtis confessed that it became more and more apparent every day to his mind “that the various countries included in the Empire must come to some definite business arrangement for the support and control of Imperial defence and foreign policy or the Empire must break up.” In his diaries Milner in fact defined the proposal for an Imperial federation movement as the “Curtis’s scheme.” Milner endorsed Curtis’ initiative on the basis of its utility for his own ends: “I am

³⁴ Amery, *My Political Life*, 347.

³⁵ Curtis to Jebb, 31 Dec. 1906, Jebb Papers, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London; Kerr to father, 1 April 1906, LP, 454, 16; Curtis to Milner, 31 Oct. 1908, MP, 195, 155-58.

³⁶ Curtis to Selborne, 18 Oct. 1907, SP, 71, 127; Selborne to E. Prettyman, 19 Sept. 1903, SP, 73, 5-6.

an out and out imperialist and a great admirer of our friend L. C. But it is his work I admire not his philosophy. And I hate all kinds of flapdoodle more than words can say."³⁷

Curtis expressed a retrospective awareness about Milner's attitude towards the Kindergarten when, thirty years later, he tried to direct the energies of the three young founders of the Federal Union Movement—Charles Kimber, Derek Rawnsley, and Patrick Ransome—towards the creation of a trans-Atlantic federalist movement, in conjunction with the American journalist Clarence Streit. Writing to Lothian on 2 April 1939, Curtis suggested that they should model their "attitude towards these young men on the way in which Lord Milner treated us when we were founding the Round Table." Since everyone connected with the Round Table was "up to their necks and over with war work," Curtis had "so preached to Ransome and his friends the importance of not starting separate organizations that I should hate not to carry them along with us." The problem was that Kimber and the other founders of the Federal Union were working for the establishment of a European federation, based on the initial Anglo-French nucleus, while Curtis was trying to joining forces with Streit in the creation of an Atlantic federation based on an initial Anglo-Canadian-American nucleus. Only in the late forties did Curtis come to support the project of a European federation inclusive of British membership.³⁸

In order to implement the new strategy outlined to Milner, the Kindergarten was studying a plan to guarantee the election of Curtis to the South African Senate, thus allowing him to travel to the different centres of the Empire with an official capacity, making his mission more incisive. "I think he may be able to exert," Kerr wrote to Lady Selborne,

³⁷ Curtis to Milner, 31 Oct. 1908, MP, 195, 155 8; *Milner Diaries*, 26 Aug. 1909 and 4 Sept. 1909, MP, 80; Milner to Oliver, 22 June 1914, Oliver Papers, 86, 40 1. British defence expenditure was the highest in the world, being in 1910 £67.8 million, compared to the Russian (£62.8), the German (£61.4), and the French (£52.4). All the Dominions, except South Africa, had significantly increased their defence expenditure in the five years before 1914. On British rearmament, see Steven E. Miller, Sean M. Lynn Jones, and Stephen Van Evera eds., *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Roger Parkinson, *The Late Victorian Navy: The Pre Dreadnought Era and the Origins of the First World War* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008); Matthew Johnson, *Militarism and the British Left, 1902 1914* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

³⁸ LP, 386.

partly by his own personal action, and partly through people like Duncan and Quinn and Mackie Niven and Chaplin a great influence on the start...In any case the power of Duncan, Feetham etc. goes up to the Nth when he is behind them to prick them along.³⁹

The Kindergarten abandoned the plan at the end of August 1909, asking Curtis to set up the embryo of the new movement in England. "It was clear," Lady Selborne wrote to her husband, "that his duty was now to die for the Empire, though on the whole not to die in the Transvaal." The decision was taken during a dinner given by Jameson on 23 July 1909 at the Bachelors' Club in London, present Milner, Robinson, Brand, Curtis, Craik, Oliver and Richard Martin Holland, during which was discussed "the formation of a body of men in all parts of the Empire co-operating to bring about Imperial Unity." The movement would offer, "from Lord Milner downwards...a medium through which the same train of thought can be set in motion through all the self-governing colonies of the Empire at the same time."⁴⁰

Aware of the revolutionary nature of the changes which were necessary to save Great Britain and the Empire from disintegration, the Kindergarten as soon as they returned to England enlarged its compass to include Amery, Edward Grigg (later Lord Altrincham), Oliver, Graeme Paterson—an Oxford graduate who worked at the Round Table central office as assistant to Curtis—Ramsay Muir, and Steel-Maitland. Waldorf Astor (later Viscount Astor) would be introduced into the group by Kerr in 1911, Alfred Zimmern and Reginald Coupland in 1913. If Milner was responsible for introducing most of the non-Kindergarten members into the new organization, it was Lady Selborne—daughter of Prime Minister Lord Salisbury—who introduced into the group her brother Lord Robert Cecil, who attended most of the meetings and was the spokesman for the movement in the House of Commons, while Lord Lovat became their spokesman in the Lords. Through Lady Selborne, the Kindergarten could

³⁹ Kerr to Lady Selborne, 14 Aug. 1909, quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 100.

⁴⁰ "Memorandum of conversations which took place between a few English and South African friends at intervals during the summer of 1909," LP, 11; Duncan to Curtis, 23 Aug. 1909, LP, 11; *Milner Diary*, 23 July 1909, MP, 272; Lady Selborne to Selborne, Mar. 1910, quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 101. Answering Curtis on 1 Dec. 1908, Milner complimented his disciple, observing that the federalist project was "for all Britons the great political question of the next twenty years," (Kendle, *The Round Table*, 57). Richard Jebb founded in May 1914 and edited until 1918 the *Britannic Review*, as a counterweight to the "centralists" of the Round Table, which, according to Jebb, "was founded for the purpose of combating the ideas and influence" of the school supporting tariff reform, (quoted in Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, 196).

meet Lord Grey and Austen Chamberlain at weekends at Blackmoor, or send memoranda directly to Balfour, Churchill, and Bonar Law.⁴¹

These young neo-imperialist enthusiasts, who had not yet entered fully into their country's political life, and who were to play a prominent part in British public life for about thirty years, had in Milner their undisputed leader. However, during a period of five years without a charismatic leader—Selborne remained at the fringe of the Kindergarten—they increased their independence of thought and autonomy of action. Curtis and Kerr enjoyed the widest recognition by the group as the most dynamic and creative members, and being also the executive arms of the small

⁴¹ H. V. Hodson, "The Round Table, 1910 1981," *The Round Table*, 284, (Oct. 1981): 308 11. On Cecil's affiliation see Lady Selborne to Bob Cecil, 4 Aug. 1909, CeP, 51157, ff126 7. On Astor's affiliation see Michael Astor, *Tribal Feeling* (London: John Murray, 1964), 54. Reginald Coupland (1884 1952), fellow and lecturer in ancient history at Trinity College, Oxford, 1907 14; Beit Lecturer in Colonial History 1913 8; editor of *The Round Table* 1917 9, and 1939 41; fellow of All Souls 1920 48, and 1952; Beit Professor in History of the British Empire at Oxford 1920 48; fellow of Nuffield College 1939 50; member of the Palestine Royal Commission 1936 7; member of Cripp's mission to India in 1942. On Coupland, see Thomas G. Fraser, "Sir Reginald Coupland, the Round Table and the Problem of Divided Societies," in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 407 20. Alfred Zimmern (1879 1957), lecturer in ancient history; fellow and tutor at New College 1903 9; staff inspector at the Board of Education, 1912 5; officer at the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, 1918 9; Wilson Professor of international politics at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth 1919 21; professor of international relations at Oxford, 1930 44. Ramsey Muir (1872 1941), lecturer and then professor of modern history at the University of Liverpool, 1899 1913; author of *Nationalism and Internationalism* (London: 1916), *National Self Government* (London: 1918), and *A Short History of the British Commonwealth*, 2 Vols. (London: 1920 2). Edward Grigg (New College graduate) was a life associate to the Round Table and from June 1913 to 1918 acted as joint editor of the journal in Kerr's absence. He joined *The Times* in 1899, and became secretary of George Buckle, editor of *The Times*, in 1903. He left *The Times* in 1905 (spending a year as assistant to J. L. Garvin, at that time editor of the *Outlook*), and returned in 1908. According to the *History of the Times*, "Grigg was responsible for Imperial affairs, and most of the leading articles on the Empire which appeared between 1909 and 1913 were from his pen." From mid 1913 to the outbreak of the war, Grigg had a double employment with *The Round Table* and *The Times*. In Victorian times the paper "took little pleasure in 'painting the map red'," from the beginning of the new century the paper "foresaw that British civilization, prosperity and power, firmly established in the four corners of the earth, would justify itself in its capacity as a guarantor of peace," *The History of The Times: The 150th Anniversary and Beyond, 1912 1948, Part 1: 1912 1920* (London: Printing House Square, 1952), 4, 17, 1 2.

organization they became a very unusual 'dyarchy'. Curtis and Kerr were, according to May, "the Castor and Pollux of the movement, its spokesmen, ideologues and evangelisers." "I am only a blade in the scissors," Curtis wrote to Kerr in 1927, "and cut nothing unless I am hinged with you." But the relationship was never easy. Curtis tended to patronize his friend ten years younger, who thought that Curtis had "a complex." According to Hitchens, Curtis "imposed a spirit into the Kindergarten which they would never have had" without him. "His passionate sincerity and energy," Amery noted, "as well as the indisputable logic of his arguments, tended to dominate our councils."⁴²

Having obtained generous financial assistance from the Lords Selborne, Lovat, Howick (heir of Earl Grey, and son-in-law of Lord Selborne) and Wolmer (son and heir of Lord Selborne), and from Bailey, Lady Wantage, and the Rhodes Trust, the Kindergarten, with Milner as "President of an Intellectual Republic," assembled officially between 4 and 6 September 1909 at Plas Newydd, Welsh country home of Lord Anglesey, to found the movement. Those present were Milner, Curtis, Kerr, Brand, Oliver, William Marris, George L. Craik (New College graduate who had participated in some of the Kindergarten's activities in South Africa), Richard Martin Holland, and the Lords Lovat, Howick and Wolmer. The minutes record that "it was agreed that the principle of co-operation was insufficient as a means of holding together the Empire...that in the long run some form of organic union was the only alternative to disruption," and "that it was important to examine what form of organic unity was likely to be best suited to the facts of the situation."⁴³

However, for the time being, and until the situation "was ripe for some constitutional measure," every effort should be made "to extend the principle of co-operation." Organic unity would have probably only been possible "when people realized that the principle of co-operation works only temporarily in overcoming obstacles," but was doomed, "sooner or later" to break down. The priority of the movement was to discover which forms of federation "shall be at once effective and desirable—by comparison with disruption—to the various Dominions." Until the moment was ripe for a Constitutional Convention, the Kindergarten would

⁴² [Anon.], "Edward, Lord Altrincham," *The Round Table*, 182, (March 1956): 110 2; May, *The Round Table*, 54; Curtis to Kerr, 23 May 1927, LP, 227, 132 4; Kerr to Lady Anne Kerr, 16 Sept. 1914, LP, 464, 43; Hitchens to Curtis, 19 Dec. 1910, quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 123; Wm Roger Louis, *In The Name Of God, Go! Leo Amery and the British Empire in the Age of Churchill* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992), 42.

⁴³ Watt, "The Foundations of 'The Round Table'", 425 33.

however encourage the principle of co-operation, replacing colonial subordination with Imperial coordination.⁴⁴

They chose the name ‘Round Table’ because of its Anglo-Saxon connotations, but also to stress the egalitarian nature of the movement, the idea that representatives of the Dominions should discuss political and strategic matters on a basis of equality with Great Britain.⁴⁵

4. *Lionel Curtis’s first ‘imperial mission’*

The immediate consequence of Plas Newydd’s decision was to entrust Curtis, Marris and Kerr—affectionately called ‘*les trois mousquetaires*’ because of their pioneering spirit—with the mission of creating the nucleus of the movement in Canada, the first colony to gain self-government. Much depended on Canada for the success of the whole enterprise, because of its well-developed nationalistic forces, and its being culturally much closer to the United States than to Great Britain. The official purpose of the tour, Curtis emphasized, should be “genuine enquiry.”⁴⁶

Les trois mousquetaires left for Canada on 7 September 1909, armed with letters of introduction from Grigg and Steel Maitland, who described them as “good imperialists,” with the task of sounding out Canadian public opinion on questions concerning the development of Imperial relations. In introducing Curtis confidentially to Arthur Glazebrook, Milner expected that his friend, who was a Toronto banker, and like Curtis himself had been educated at Haileybury, would have felt “rather uneasy” about him:

He is a bit of a visionary and an idealist, and he has great schemes. But I think he is thoroughly impressed with the necessity of caution...and with all his great ambitions, wh. are not in the least *personal*, he is an essentially

⁴⁴ Lord Lovat (1871–1933), was Parliamentary Under secretary at the Dominion Office, 1922–8; Chairman of the Overseas Settlement Committee, 1927–9; and trustee of the Rhodes Trust, 1917–33. Bailey made a lump sum donation of £2,000, and an annual contribution of £500 to the support of the Round Table. The Rhodes Trust provided a £ to £ basis four years donation (Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 36). Kendle, *The Round Table*, 59–61.

⁴⁵ *The Round Table in Canada. How the Movement Began. What it Hopes to Accomplish* (Toronto: 1917), 4; Brand to Quigley, 18 Nov. 1961, RTP, c867, 113–15; Curtis to Kerr, 21 July 1910, LP, 1, 59–81.

⁴⁶ “Memorandum,” RTP, c776, 60–63. This memorandum, known as the “Auckland Memorandum,” was printed and distributed to prospective members of all the Dominion groups.

modest man (his pedantic manner quite belies him), anxious to learn, exceedingly ready to take advice, + not in the least resenting a friendly hint or contradiction. And he has two very level headed travelling companions. And he is a man of energy and power of work almost amounting to genius, so he is worth helping.⁴⁷

William Oliver, after meeting *les trois mousquetaires*, reported from British Columbia to his brother Frederick in London:

We all liked the three Imperialists but I wish they weren't quite so nebulous...I was with them all the time they were here and was finally shown in a mysterious and secret fashion a document which I expected to be at least written in letters of blood...It was one of the most innocent documents I ever saw in my life...If you are ever going to do anything about Imperial Federation there should be no delay. Every year makes it so much more difficult.⁴⁸

No information concerning the birth of the movement should in fact have been leaked to the press until a proper organization was effectively laid down. Among the three, Kerr played a central position, being appointed full time General Secretary with an annual salary of a thousand pounds. In accepting the post, Kerr was aware of being at a turning point in his life, rejecting repeated offers to stand for Parliament as a Conservative candidate. The London headquarters were located from early 1910 in a suite of seven rooms at 175 Piccadilly, and from 1913 six employees worked there with annual salaries ranging from five hundred to seventy one pounds. Curtis' annual salary was of a thousand pounds, and he had his own office and secretary at his home in Ledbury, Herefordshire.⁴⁹

In Canada *les trois mousquetaires* were introduced by Governor General Lord Grey to political and business circles in Vancouver, Seattle and Ottawa. Kerr soon realised that given the choice between independence and Imperial federation, Canada would choose independence, and that federation would only be accepted after years of education of the public opinion through ever closer Anglo-Canadian co-operation. Canada would not get further away from the United Kingdom, Kerr thought, "but for the life of me I can't see why it should want to get any closer." Britain could not "offer her anything that the United States can't offer just as well." In the "surrender of autonomy which is entailed in the creation of an Empire organization," there were, according to Kerr, "certain obvious disadvantages," which were likely to turn the Canadians

⁴⁷ Milner to Glazebrook, 16 Sept. 1909, quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 109 10.

⁴⁸ Billington, *Lothian: Philip Kerr*, 20.

⁴⁹ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 62 5. Kerr salary was increased to £1,500 p. a. after the war.

towards full independence. The Kindergarten had to devise a “scheme of Imperialism” which would attract “men’s imaginations as worth having,” translating “the idea of the federation into practical politics.” In order to “disperse the fog” in which they found themselves, they had to confront the problem of transition from the existing situation of disunion to that of “organic unity.”⁵⁰

“Most of the factors tell both ways,” Kerr noted on his return to England. Quebec and Canadian nationalism were “at present a hindrance to progressive Imperialism,” but were “also a safeguard against Americanization.” Canadian politicians seemed “ready to follow a lead from the country, but their extreme readiness to do so, under the circumstances,” prevented “a lead being given.”⁵¹

During the journey, Marris fell, once more, under Curtis’s spell, founding him “splendid”:

He...stimulates the interest of all these shrewd but narrow businessmen and raw university students in the most admirable manner. I think more and more highly of him...This journey has been a great education, opened my eyes to my immense ignorance and futility and made me more dissatisfied with myself than ever. All of which is largely the unintended result of Curtis’s companionship I must say I love him for it.⁵²

The Canadian visit showed up, on the other hand, differences between Kerr and Curtis, not only in outlook but also in temperament, making relations between them difficult for a time, with inevitable repercussions on the Kindergarten. Kerr described the split in a letter to Brand from Ottawa in November 1909:

at the present moment we disagree so profoundly about Imperialism and the work our association is to do, that it looks as if all our plans might fall to the ground...Lionel believes that the only hope for the Empire lies in ‘organic unity’. That is to say the creation of a central sovereign authority directly elected by the people of the Empire which shall control policy and

⁵⁰ Kerr to Brand, Sept. and Oct. 1909, LP, 16; Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 37 8. Among the most active imperialist groups there were the Victoria League, the Imperial Co operation League, and the Workers’ Educational Association. For a discussion, see Roger Fieldhouse, *The Workers’ Educational Association: Aims and achievements, 1903 1977* (Syracuse, NY: 1977); Stephen K. Roberts, *A Ministry of Enthusiasm: Centenary Essays on the Workers’ Educational Association* (London: Pluto Press, 2003); Bernard Porter, *The Absent Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Edward Beasley, *Mid Victorian Imperialists: British Gentlemen and the Empire of the Mind* (London: Routledge, 2015).

⁵¹ Round Table Minutes, 15 18 and 23 Jan. 1910, LP, 11.

⁵² Marris to Brand, 14 Nov. 1909, BrP, 185.

services such as army and navy, and raise taxation through its own officers. I think, now, that 'organic unity' of that kind is impossible, at any rate until science has revolutionised communications and transportation, and that to try to bring on a movement of that kind would be almost certain to break up the Empire. It would get a certain amount of support just enough to enable it to do damage. If Lord M. and he intend to work for the federation of the Empire in the strict sense I should, unless Lord M. can modify my opinions, feel forced to sever my connection with the whole business, if not actively to oppose it.⁵³

The recognized leaders of the movement, Kerr and Curtis were very different both in personality and vision. If Curtis urged immediate propaganda, Kerr thought that "we have lots of time in front of us." Kerr thought that Curtis had "a narrower and therefore more conviction carrying mind than I have," recognizing his prophetic gift, and confessing he had never met a man who had "so big a furnace in his belly." It was "so fierce that the fumes overwhelm his brain at times. But it scorches all whom he encounters and hounds them (to break the metaphor) to greater thoughts and greater deeds." Kerr did not seem to share Curtis' conviction that every political action was inspired by divine will, and thought his veneration for the Empire to be a kind of idolatry: "it is a noble thing but not fit to be a God. To unite it is part of God's work, and one which we are all called to help. But I cannot worship at its shrine alone." Kerr could not share Curtis' "transcendental confidence that one is divinely inspired in one's political operations."⁵⁴

Kerr's inner feelings of exasperation about Curtis surfaced from time to time. Writing to Brand in 1912 he censured Curtis' fanaticism:

Lionel's present idea really means that he is to go as a prophet with a new gospel of citizenship, plus a plan of Imperial Union, collect no more than 12 disciples fanatics like himself and preach the word to the British world, trusting to the truth winning his way in the end. This is one method I admit and not a bad one. But it is not the R.T. idea, which is rather the practical one of omitting everything which is non essential, and trying to get as great a multitude as possible agreed upon one or two fundamentals in order that they may be put through as speedily as possible.⁵⁵

According to Deborah Lavin, Curtis was the "prophet and evangelist of the new Commonwealth." The "religiosity of his concept of a 'civitas dei' permeated the distinctive Oxford school of Empire historiography into

⁵³ Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 37 8. Brand joined Lazard in 1909 and was its managing director until 1944, and a director until 1960.

⁵⁴ Kerr to Brand, Feb. and Dec. 1912, *ibidem*, 38; Kerr to Curtis, 10 Aug. 1910, LP, 2, 91.

⁵⁵ Kerr to Brand, Sept. 1912, (quoted in Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 51 2).

the 1930s and 1940s.” The British Commonwealth was, for Curtis, “more than the Church,” the place in which Christ’s precepts “were best being practiced.” A deep sense of duty, characteristic of evangelical Anglicanism, animated the whole of his existence: “My task in life,” Curtis confessed in 1910 to Lady Selborne, “seems to be that of a pipe which collects the spare energies of a lot of people and concentrates them in one stream strong enough to generate electricity. If I married, much of the spare energies would go to waste for want of the pipe and turbine which I supply.” In the world there was work which, according to Curtis, could be done “only by unmarried men.” “One often shudders to think,” Curtis told Lady Selborne, “what one would do if one was put to the torture to reveal a secret. Just so one shudders to think what would happen if I had the same desire to marry anyone else who was willing to marry me.”⁵⁶

After the death of his mother in 1913, Curtis became more interested in the company of women, as he witnessed to Nancy Astor:

Till lately I have lived in an atmosphere of unpopularity especially amongst women due to believe entirely to my being self centred. It is only since Lady S taught me how to behave and since I have been less badgered that I have got on with women at all, and I may as well say it flatly, I think it an enormous compliment to have earned your friendship and am trying all I know not to be conceited about it.⁵⁷

Curtis was aware, according to Lavin, “of his tendency to monopolize the lives of others,” and the Kindergarten had to “accept Curtis’s ardour for action and his brief fanaticism as the accompaniment of his energies and ability.” They “regarded him with affection as the life and soul of the party,” even if Brand found that “ideas crowd upon him and grow like mushrooms to maturity in a night, the next morning being treated as facts with a lot of other little mushrooms facts surrounding them.” Curtis needed to be looked after by “some of his cold calm critical and unimaginative friends,” and then he was “splendid.” Brand found however Curtis “the most generous and unselfish fellow alive, the only natural communist” he had ever met. He treated his own property “as if it were at the entire disposal of his friends + vice versa.”⁵⁸

According to Lavin, “through patronage and clientship, the Round Table linked members of the high aristocracy and big business looking for a cause, with young men of promise...who could provide them with a

⁵⁶ Deborah Lavin, “Lionel Curtis and the Idea of Commonwealth,” in *Oxford and the Idea*, Madden and Fieldhouse, 97 8, 101; Curtis to Lady Selborne, 18 Aug. 1910, quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 117.

⁵⁷ Curtis to Nancy Astor, n.d., quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 117.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 84; Brand to Lady Anne Kerr, 25 Dec. 1907, BrP, 185.

moral crusade to serve.” The early Round Table years were “significant for Curtis, since they gave him his friends, his philosophy, the means of his influence, and the framework of his life after he left South Africa.” The method which they employed was to define a problem, and Curtis would then “produce hundreds of interleaved mimeographed copies of a draft for circulation and written comment among groups throughout the Dominions, and in the light of the replies would produce an anonymous final version.” The published results “reflected the highest common factor of agreement: contentious issues left unresolved were either published separately or—more usually—omitted.” This system developed into the highly successful, extraordinary influential, and universally imitated so-called “Chatham House method,” the most sophisticated method of moulding opinion.⁵⁹

Curtis, who was ten years older than Kerr, tried to show respect and affection to his promising disciple and close friend; but being impatient and anxious to begin the battle for federation, criticised Kerr sharply for having wasted a month in the United States after the Canadian trip, carrying out a pointless survey on the problem of the coloured population and for not having shown enough zeal in his day to day work. Writing to Brand on 4 January, he complained:

our time is paid for by people who have subscribed liberally for a certain object. Our duty is to fit ourselves for that object and to place it above all others...So far as Philip is concerned, Imperial Union is his business and the Negro question is a hobby. Philip would have trained himself far better for the work in hand if he had gone more slowly, taken more time to think, aimed at making fewer acquaintances and more friends...This constant craving for the excitement of change is Philip’s great danger, and he must somehow be made to understand, that not only the humdrum duties of life but fitness to perform those duties should be his dominant motive.⁶⁰

The extension of the journey to the United States gave Kerr the chance to meet—through Lord Eustace Percy, a British diplomat in Washington, and Robert Grosvenor Valentine—Felix Frankfurter and Loring Christie, establishing with them a life-long friendship, which in the future much benefited the cause of the Kindergarten. Through Valentine, Kerr also established useful relations with Herbert Croly and Walter Lippmann, founders of the *New Republic*, a journal inspired by the thought of John

⁵⁹ Lavin, *From Empire to*, 106.

⁶⁰ Curtis to Oliver, 16 August 1910, LP, 2. Curtis added that “the only real results I have ever produced in life are by calm, deliberate and rather slow work.” Anything in the shape of Philip’s meteoric rushes are wholly impossible to me,” (*ibidem*).

Dewey and which developed—as will be discussed later—strong and stable relations with *The Round Table*.⁶¹

The new responsibilities and tensions with Curtis produced in Kerr signals of strain, which would invariably appear in the future when, forced by events, he was compelled to overwork. “As you may imagine,” Kerr wrote to Brand in November 1909,

we have been in a whirl of brilliant ideas, altered plans and desperate anxiety to be at work. However things are shaping themselves gradually. I always seem to play the part of the drag on the coach. It is a thankless one, but I am fit for no other. One feels hopelessly useless and second rate, if one can only see difficulties, and counsel delay, and never suggest how the work may be hurried or obstacles overcome.⁶²

A report of the Canadian journey was presented to a meeting of the movement held at Ledbury from 15 to 18 January 1910, although Milner, the new London recruits, and the movement’s sponsors were not present. Those who were—the South African Kindergarten, Duncan, Feetham, Hichens, Curtis, Marris, Brand, Kerr and Craik—constituted the central nucleus of the movement. They were joined by a growing number of influential new recruits who were, however, never really completely assimilated into the original group. This peculiarity of the movement, together with its lack of a true leader—Milner preferred to remain in the background and intervene only at critical moments—contributed to the definition of a strategy. But it was also the cause of its ultimate failure, since the anomalous ‘dyarchy’ between Kerr and Curtis marked, and in time deepened, differences of view and action among the ‘inner circle’.

The aim of the organization was to achieve, according to the Ledbury minutes, “an organic union...by the establishment of an Imperial government constitutionally responsible to all the electors of the Empire, and with power to act directly on the individual citizens.” The method contemplated:

(a) the preparation and eventual publication of a scheme of union if possible a constitution; (b) the encouragement of intermediate steps by the promotion of public measures contributing towards the consolidation of the

⁶¹ For a description of American Liberal and progressive circles, see: Eustace Percy, *Some Memories* (London: 1958), 40; Felix Frankfurter, *Reminiscences* (New York: 1960), 105 12; Michael Parrish, *Felix Frankfurter and His Times: The Reform Years* (New York: 1982), 51 53; Peter Manicas, “American Democracy: A New Spirit in the World,” in *War and Democracy* (Oxford: 1989), 103 25; Charles Forcey, *The Crossroads of Liberalism, Croly, Weyle, Lippmann and the Progressive Era, 1900 25* (Oxford: 1961).

⁶² Kerr to Brand, 9 Nov. 1909, BrP, 182.

Empire, and the education of public opinion in the truth about Imperial affairs, and the necessity for Union.

If there was unanimity regarding the strategy, differences of opinion emerged about the method: it was questioned if the publication of studies, either in book form or as articles, on the state of Imperial relations and their possible evolution towards organic unity, and the creation of branches like the South African ‘Closer Union Societies’ in all parts of the Empire should take the form of propaganda or pure enquiry.⁶³

The Ledbury ‘inner circle’ envisaged the establishment of an Imperial Cabinet responsible to a directly elected Imperial Parliament—in order to avoid “the evils and even deadlock incidental to the discussion of Imperial affairs by the national legislatures”—with exclusive competence on foreign and military affairs, and able to fix the amount and distribution among the component parts of the Empire of revenues to carry out those duties, leaving to local governments the task of collecting them from citizens. In case of default by national governments, the Imperial Cabinet would exercise the power to levy taxation directly. The Imperial government would also be responsible for the administration of India and other Dependencies, and for granting them some form of representation within the Imperial legislature. The Round Table advocated the development of programs of naval rearmament by colonial governments—in order to raise awareness of the strategic issue of Imperial defence—and the association of the Dominions with the British Government in the negotiation of treaties with foreign countries.⁶⁴

Milner and the London ‘outer ring’ of the movement—Oliver, Amery and Lovat—were informed of the decisions taken at Ledbury on 23 January. Strong reservations were raised by Milner and his closest disciples on the disclosure that the ultimate aim of the movement was the creation of a fully-fledged federal government. A compromise was finally reached on the 25 January, leaving it undefined, and presenting the movement as just as an association of individuals keen on “making a study of Imperial relations,” to publish a magazine “as a means of communicating ideas and information between persons interested in the British isles and the overseas dominions.” This fracture over strategy and tactics widened during the following years, causing the progressive detachment of Milner from the movement, which gravitated more and more towards the charismatic influence of Curtis and Kerr. This was also a

⁶³ Minutes of a meeting held at Ledbury, 15 18 Jan. 1910, LP, 11; Kendle, *The Round Table*, 65.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*.

major cause in the weakening of the Round Table's effectiveness in achieving Imperial reform before the outbreak of the war.⁶⁵

"Like the wider Round Table organisation as a whole," according to May, "the 'Moot' was a broad church, encompassing a variety of views":

The 'Moot' was far from united when it came to defining 'imperial federation' at the outset, and the process of attempting to give precision to the expression appears only to have exacerbated the differences. The 'Moot' was unable to agree on any statement of the Empire federalist case, and therefore put forward none. There were profound disagreements over the scope and powers of any new Imperial government—in particular, the constitution and powers of any second chamber, the relations between the legislature and the executive, and between Imperial and national governments, the raising of taxation, and the control of India and the dependencies.

Curtis' principle of the Commonwealth was for Brand "poison to the Anglo-Saxon mind," an attempt to moralise the Empire. The Dominions Round Table groups were not prepared to commit themselves to any scheme of Imperial federation, especially one which embodied the proposals on taxation, representation, and control of India and the Dependencies.⁶⁶

5. The Round Table and the British press

At Ledbury it was also decided that the time had come to reveal to the public the nature and aims of the movement, since a substantial amount of funds had been raised by a considerable number of persons—who desired in any way to remain anonymous—and the challenges facing the survival of the Empire could not any longer be dismissed. The creation of a quarterly journal "devoted entirely to Imperial affairs," which would be produced by the London office in collaboration with colonial editors, and "to which all workers and all important statesmen in the Dominions could be induced to subscribe," would launch the movement and become "the recognized organ of the groups in all parts." The magazine would be a journal of opinion rather than of information, aimed at influencing those in

⁶⁵ *Milner Diary*, 14 6, 20, 23, 25 Jan. 1910, MP, 273; "Minutes of a meeting held in London on Jan. 23," LP, 11.

⁶⁶ Alex May, "The London 'Moot', Dominion Nationalism and Imperial Federation," in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 226 7. See Minutes of Round Table meetings, Plas Newydd, 4 to 6 Sept. 1909, LP, 11, 1 6; Ledbury, 15 to 18 Jan. 1910, *ibidem*, 7 11; London, 23 Jan. 1910, *ibidem*, 12 13; Brand to Kerr, 23 July 1912, BrP, 182.

a position to influence public opinion. It was an elitist journal which provided “food for thought,” having in each issue three or four lead articles, with the addition of chronicle articles from each Dominion.⁶⁷

According to Curtis, the journal was “not intended so much for the average reader, as for those who write for the average reader. It is meant to be a storehouse of information of all kinds upon which publicists can draw.” “No attempt,” Kerr argued, would be made “to obtain a large circulation among the general public by popular methods or flag-wagging.” Even if, Kerr insisted, “we lose in quantity...we shall gain by keeping the Magazine semi-private.” The journal would invariably “be run at a loss, for unless sold at a fairly low price it would fail to reach a large number of those for whom it is intended.”⁶⁸

Curtis’ original plan for a network of almost independent journals edited in each Dominion and Britain, publishing some common articles provided by a London-based clearing-house, was put aside for a single journal aiming to “serve as a ‘link between the students of the Imperial problem within each group’,” to foster the recruitment of “believers in Imperial Union who are not known to the members of the group,” and to “correct ‘false impressions and misunderstandings’” by disseminating “those facts, figures and ideas, which must become the commonplaces of public opinion, before it is ready to receive the true gospel.”⁶⁹

The method for producing articles able to give coherence of view to the journal, presenting a common judgement on a specific topic, was a point of strength. The editorial committee would select a writer who would produce a draft, which would then be “circulated and thrashed out again.” *Round Table* articles were subject to strict editorial control, representing the political doctrine of the inner circle. However, as Amery pointed out, it “still left play for a good deal of individual outlook on the part of the various authors.” The anonymity concealed the fact that the

⁶⁷ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 65. In spite of a high subscription rate (10s pa until 1920 and £1 pa until 1948) the *Round Table* broke even in the late 1920s, and during the Second World War. None of the funds raised in Britain were sent to the Dominion branches, which were financially independent (*ibidem*). Articles in *The Round Table* were anonymous. The attributions in this study are taken from May, “The Round Table, 1910 66,” Appendices F and G.

⁶⁸ Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 74; Lavin, “Lionel Curtis,” in *Oxford and the Idea*, Madden and Fieldhouse, 106. Coupland became editor of the *Round Table* when Kerr left for a period. In his *American Revolution and the British Empire* (London: 1930), Coupland supported the idea of a federal union of the English speaking peoples. Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 74; Kerr to Seton, 21 Dec. 1910, RTP, c 823, 15; Undated typed manuscript, RTP, c 844, 163 164.

⁶⁹ Kerr, *Memorandum*, LP, 11, 46 58.

journal was the product of a quite small number of individuals. The views expressed were “taken as being those of a body of men with a certain reputation.” Curtis wrote a number of articles only after 1918, having to overcome resistance by Reginald Coupland, who feared that he would produce “some particular thesis of his own” only, completely aloof from “practical politics.”⁷⁰

According to the Kindergarten, there existed “a real necessity for some regular and comprehensive survey of the affairs of the Empire to display events in their true relation, and to show their effect upon the organisation as a whole.” The “fundamental basis” of the journal was, according to Kerr, to produce a comprehensive study of Imperial problems, leaving each part of the Empire to make its own contribution. That “was the best means of working for that end.” Imperial correspondents had to be “trustworthy,” and provide “inside information.” Most of them were co-opted by the London group because of their intimate connections with governmental circles.⁷¹

The journal should facilitate “the discussion by persons possessed of real knowledge, of the various problems which face the Empire at the present time.” Widespread dissemination of information was seen as a key to public education which, in turn, would promote Imperial cohesion. The “proper management of public opinion through the press,” was seen by the Round Table as a fundamental instrument to foster the movement’s aim and the journal was “literally the one organ which is in any sense common to the Empire as a whole.”⁷²

London was in fact, at the beginning of the century, the centre of a world-wide system of metropolitan political journalism, having a free press at the heart of an Imperial system at its apogee. Daily newspaper circulation increased four-fold between 1896 and 1914. In 1920 the combined sales of national dailies stood at 5 million, and in 1923 their

⁷⁰ Curtis to Arthur Salter, 17 Apr. 1930, LP, 251, 596 99; Amery to J. Conway, 21 Feb. 1952, RTP, Committee file; Dove to Brand, 23 June 1933, LP, 276, 608 11; Coupland to Kerr, 17 Jan. 1919, LP, 17, 480.

⁷¹ Kerr to A. Whitworth, 17 June 1915, RTP, c 791, 112 113. See the advertising sheet for the Round Table, *ibidem*, 126.

⁷² RTP, c 808, 121; Draft Memorandum by Curtis on the conduct of the Round Table’s work during the war, *ibidem*, 116 133. Contributors to the Round Table, were by the mid war years receiving remuneration at the rate of £2 per page (360 words) for main articles, limited to a maximum of £25 per article (Coupland to Curtis, 30 June 1917, RTP, c 810, 91).

circulation exceeded, for the first time, the combined circulation of the provincial press.⁷³

The formation of political opinion in Edwardian Britain much depended on editors like Garvin, Strachey, Spender, and Dawson, “journalists for Empire,” who made the Empire “one of the...commanding subjects of the time and extended the parameters of discussion about it.” They provided “the ‘live rails’,” as Curzon stated, “for connecting the outskirts of Empire with its heart.”⁷⁴

Political reviews such as the *National*, the *Nineteenth Century and After*, the *Quarterly*, the *Fortnightly*, and the *Contemporary* were formidable instruments, able to shape political opinion and influence the formation of decision-making processes. They provided indispensable platforms for the expression of new political agendas, even if most alleged impartiality. The *Westminster Gazette*, for example was, according to J. A. Spender “first of all and very deliberately an ‘organ of opinion’,” which served its readers “quite as much for its views as for its news.” “To catch this kind of reader it was necessary,” Spender confessed “to abjure...popular appeal and to write for him and him alone.” The appeal, therefore, was purposely to the few.⁷⁵

The Round Table was the only journal completely devoted to Imperial and foreign policy. Other journals like the *Westminster*, the *Edinburgh* and the *National Reviews*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and *Blackwoods* only occasionally dealt with Imperial and foreign policy, while the Royal Colonial Institute’s *Proceedings* were mostly academic. “None of these,” May observed, attempted “to provide a regular, comprehensive and consistent survey of the Imperial position, to balance information with argument, and to pursue an agenda of considerable controversiality with subtlety and discrimination.”⁷⁶

The first number of the journal appeared in November 1910, and its print-run was of 3,500 copies, gradually increasing to 6,500 by June 1914. The “Special War Issue” of September 1914 ran to 13,000 copies. Up to

⁷³ Donald Read, *Edwardian England, 1901-15* (London: 1972), 60; Chandrika Kaul, “The Round Table, the British Press and India,” in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 359. For wartime official propaganda relating to India in Britain, see Chandrika Kaul, “A New Angle of Vision: The London Press, Governmental Information Management and the Indian Empire, 1900-22,” *Contemporary Record*, 8, 2, (Autumn 1994): 222-224.

⁷⁴ James D. Startt, *Journalists for Empire* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1991), 214; Desmond M. Chapman Huston ed., *Subjects of the Day* (London: 1915), 10.

⁷⁵ J. A. Spender, *Life, Journalism and Politics* (London: 1927), vol. 2, 134.

⁷⁶ May, *The Round Table*, 82.

the end of 1920 the average print-run was of about 10,000 copies. The number of subscribers reached a stable level of just over 3,000 by the end of 1912. Subscribers were more numerous in the Dominions than in the United Kingdom. At the end of 1914, there were 935 subscribers in the United Kingdom, 614 in Canada, 360 in Australia, 227 in South Africa, and 799 in New Zealand. Most sales were through bookshops. Large numbers of complimentary copies were sent out to Buckingham Palace, leading politicians, all national newspapers and quality journals, leading provincial papers, shipping lines, hotels, and London dining clubs.⁷⁷

According to Richard Jebb—an imperialist who was very critical of Milner’s concept of the Empire—the journal had for the first two years “already become indispensable by virtue of intrinsic merit.” Walter Page—American Ambassador to London and a former magazine editor—believed that the Round Table group was “perhaps the best group of men here for the real study and free discussion of large political subjects,” and that the journal was “the best...I dare say, in the world.” Page thought that Kerr’s view about closer Anglo-American relations was “red hot for a close and perfect understanding between Great Britain and the United States.” In reviewing Burton J. Hendrick’s biography of Page in *The Round Table*, Kerr remarked that “when anyone” talked to Page

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, 80 1; RTP, c 844, 123; c 845, 55 74; c 844, 210; c 846, 228; c 782, 202. The Round Table could not support its expenditure with income generated by subscriptions to the journal, but relied on donations from private individuals and Rhodes Trust on a £ to £ basis. In the years 1909 10, income (£5,210 from donations, £4,255 from Rhodes Trust and £159 from other sources, mainly subscriptions to the journal) exceeded expenditure (£4,439). In 1911 expenditure (£4,283) exceeded income (£225 from donations, £2,000 from Rhodes Trust and £1,416 from other sources). In 1912 income (£3,715 from donations, £2,000 from Rhodes Trust and £1,731 from other sources) exceeded expenditure (£6,322). In 1913 income (£4,580 from subscriptions, £1,206 from Rhodes Trust and £2,415 from other sources) exceeded expenditure (£7,018). In 1914 income (£2,501 from donations, £4,580 from Rhodes Trust and £2,279 from other sources) exceeded expenditure (£7,508). In 1915 income (£2,183 from donations, £2,190 from Rhodes Trust and £3,676 from other sources) exceeded expenditure (£7,243). In 1916 expenditure (£7,849) exceeded income (£2,762 from donations and £4,360 from other sources). In 1917 expenditure (£7,992) exceeded income (£2,138 from donations and £4,475 from other sources). In 1918 expenditure (£8,269) exceeded income (£713 from donations, £2,762 from Rhodes Trust and £4,532 from other sources). In 1919 expenditure (£8,129) exceeded income (£426 from donations and £4,447 from other sources), May, *The Round Table*, 67. According to Quigley the Round Table between 1910 and 1921 was mainly financially dependent on the Rhodes Trust, receiving some £24,000.

about the aloofness or remoteness of America, he used to retort that the real aloofness was in Britain, which still thought itself the centre of gravity in the world, while the centre of progress had really shifted to North America. Britain had to be willing to learn of America before there could be a real ‘union of thought’.⁷⁸

As editor of *Atlantic Monthly*, Page published Mahan’s essays on a regular basis, and as American Ambassador played a prominent role in favouring American intervention in the European conflict. “The English would hold fast in our favour,” Page wrote to Wilson with a sharp vision, “and whenever we choose to assume leadership of the world, they’ll grant it—gradually—and follow loyally.”⁷⁹

According to the *Spectator*, *The Round Table* in two years of publications passed “from an adventure into an institution.” If the *Daily Chronicle* thought that *The Round Table* was “indispensable to all serious students of politics,” the *Pall Mall Gazette* stated that there was “no publication that surpasses it in clearness of thought and statement.”⁸⁰

6. *The Round Table, the Navy League and the question of Imperial defence*

The subjects dealt with in the first few articles by Kerr included the growing Anglo-German rivalry, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the problem of the defence of the Empire, and the Balkan question. By applying the South African experience to the general world situation, Kerr identified the source of nationalism in national sovereignty, and supported the view that only a world federation could prevent another war in Europe and the rest of the world. In the period of transition towards world federation,

⁷⁸ Memorandum by Curtis, RTP, c 776, 62; “The Round Table,” *Spectator*, (14 Sept. 1914): 364. According to Joseph Caillaux the *Round Table* promoted “the restoration of the tottering power of the caste to which they belong and the strengthening of the supremacy of Great Britain in the world,” quoted in John Dove, “The Round Table: A Mistry Probed. Notes for a History of the Round Table,” 2, RTP. Hodson, *The Round Table*, 308 33; Richard Jebb, *The Britannic Question* (London: 1913), 77 8; Page to Arthur W. Page, 25 July 1915, quoted in Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co, 1922), vol. 2, 84 7; Philip Kerr, “Walter Page,” *The Round Table*, 13, 50, (March 1923): 292 3.

⁷⁹ Forrest Davis, *The Atlantic System. The Story of Anglo American Control of the Seas* (New York: 1941), 209.

⁸⁰ RTP, c 845, 131 4, 175 9.

every effort had to be made to strengthen the British system, as opposed to the Bismarckian one.

This was a theme which characterized Kerr's public stance for the rest of his life. In December 1914 he returned to it, advocating as war's "distant end," that "voluntary federation of free civilized nations which will eventually exorcise the spectre of competitive armaments and give everlasting peace to Mankind." Until there was reached "the stage when the constitution of a real government for the world has entered the sphere of practical politics," Kerr thought that "the only security for international peace and liberty will be the determination of the most civilized Powers to uphold the sanctity of international agreements and right, in the first place by all peaceful means, but in the last resort by the sword." "The cure for war" was not, according to Kerr, "to weaken the principle of the state, but to carry it to its logical conclusion, by the creation of a world state." The "creation of a world state," governed by "a responsible and representative political authority," would consider "every problem presented to it from the point of view of humanity and not of a single state or people," and be able to enforce its decisions, and to override the "spirit of national bigotry." The "British Commonwealth" was "a perfect example of the eventual world commonwealth." It should begin with a "voluntary union of the most liberal states," to which "other Powers might gradually and voluntarily join themselves until it eventually embraced the whole world."⁸¹

In August 1911 Kerr remarked that behind the Anglo-German rivalry there was a struggle between "two codes of international morality," the British and the German. If the British Empire were not strong enough to prevail, "the reactionary standards of the German bureaucracy" would triumph, and it would be just "a question of time" before the British Empire were "victimized by an international 'hold up' on the lines of the Agadir incident." Unless the British people were strong enough "to make it impossible for backward rivals to attack them with any prospect of success," Kerr warned, they would have "to accept the political standards of the aggressive military powers."⁸³

"The central fact in the international situation to-day," Kerr stated, was "Anglo-German rivalry," which assumed the character of "an all-pervading reality," and in terms of power politics, was a renewal of the old

⁸¹ Philip Kerr, "After Four Months' War," *The Round Table*, 5, 17, (Dec. 1914): 9; id., "The Foundations of Peace," 612 3, 617; id., "The End of War," 773, 783, 787, 790, 792 3.

⁸³ Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 44; Philip Kerr, "The Balkan Danger and Universal Peace," *The Round Table*, (Aug. 1911): 422 3.

rivalry between the strongest military Continental Power and the insular one, “the great sea power of the world.” The Continental spirit was represented by Germany not only on the military scale, but also in the form of the centralized State, limiting the freedom of individual citizens, while the insular spirit was based on the political liberty of the citizen and of the self-governing communities. Germany could defeat Britain, but would “be beaten by the combined peoples of the Empire.” Neutrality, in the event of a war, was seen as secession. Its advocates were “hoping to be able to combine the advantages of membership of the British Empire, with avoidance of its risks and obligations.”⁸⁴

As long as Germany accepted its place just as the most powerful and influential nation within the European balance of power, she helped to maintain the stability of the Continental system, one centred on the world supremacy of the British Empire. As soon as German ambitions to establish an economic and political sphere of influence moved from Continental Europe to South West Africa and the Middle East, it was necessary to create a navy strong enough to defend the Britain’s communications with her overseas territories. With its 1898 and 1899 navy bills—largely increased in 1906, 1908, and 1910—Germany started a program of naval rearmament which would lead to the creation of the second-largest navy in the world—38 dreadnought battleships, 20 dreadnought cruisers, 38 cruisers, 144 destroyers, and a number of submarines. This was a challenge to the supremacy of the British fleet, and what the British called ‘the freedom of the seas’. On the basis of the deliberations of the 1909 Imperial Conference, which gave each Dominion full control of its own fleet, the safety of the Empire as a whole was, according to Kerr, at risk. This view was not supported, however, by Admiral Fisher, British First Sea Lord, who thought that since 1909 the Royal Navy had two fleets in home waters, each of which was “incomparably superior to the whole German fleet mobilized for war.”⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Philip Kerr, “Anglo German Rivalry,” *The Round Table*, (Nov. 1910): 7, 21 5; id., “The New Problem of Imperial Defence,” *The Round Table*, (May 1911): 231 62.

⁸⁵ Wilson, *CB: A Life of*, 468. On Anglo German military and naval race, see: David G. Herrmann, *The Arming of Europe and the Making of the First World War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Robert K. Massie, *Castles of Steel: Britain, Germany, and the Winning of the Great War at Sea* (New York: Ballantine, 2004); Peter Padfield, *The Great Naval Race: Anglo German Naval Rivalry 1900 1914* (Edinburgh: 2005); Patrick J. Kelly, *Tirpitz and the Imperial German Navy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011).

Great Britain alone was not able to support the costs of a navy scattered over all the oceans, and in the event of a war, “the conclusion,” according to Kerr, was “inexorable”: “Either the nations of the Empire must agree to co-operate for foreign policy and defence, or they must agree to dissolve the Empire and each assume the responsibility for its own policy and its own defence.” There was “no half-way house between the two positions,” and since the existing system could not continue, because it neither provided “for the safety of the Imperial system as a whole nor for the safety of the Dominions within it,” the component parts of the Empire had to come to an agreement “upon the interests they are to defend in common and frame a policy towards foreign powers and a system of defence which they are all committed to support.” As concrete measures in that direction Kerr suggested a more efficient system of liaison between London and the Dominion governments, by creating a Ministry for the Dominions independent of the Colonial Office.

The question of Imperial defence was a major concern not only of the Round Table but also of the Navy League, created in 1894 from the ashes of the Imperial Federation League to guarantee the continuance of British naval supremacy and advocate Imperial federation. In order to foster Dominion contributions to the Royal Navy, the League supported the reorganization of the CID, aiming for a closer association of Dominion representatives with the conduct of Imperial defence. As soon as it became evident that the Dominions would not be willing to share with Britain the financial burden of Imperial defence, but would rather build their own fleets, the League directed its efforts towards promoting their integration within the Royal Navy, suggesting the creation of a unified command structure and parallel training systems. The CID was created at the 1907 Imperial Conference on a proposal by Haldane, and it was meant to coordinate Dominion defence forces in an emergency. The CID came into operation however under the impulse of Lord Esher, who established within it a permanent Secretariat, which during the war became the Secretariat of the Imperial War Cabinet and Conference under the coordination of Maurice Hankey, Ernest Swinton, and William G. A. Ormsby-Gore (later Lord Harlech).⁸⁶

⁸⁶ While the leadership of the local branches of the Navy League was predominantly formed by retired naval officers, headmasters and solicitors, its central Executive Committee was composed of a mixture of publicists, naval officers, Liberal and Conservative MPs. *Minutes of the Navy League Executive Committee*, 10 Jan. 1895, SCAP; “Envoy to the colonies,” *The Navy League Journal*, (Feb. 1904); G. Hildreth, “Empire and the Navy,” *The Navy League Journal*, (Jan. 1907); Marshall J. Pike, “Are Our Wage Earners Imperialists?” *The*

In the later part of the Nineteenth century, the accent of Imperial defence policy had shifted from a single centralised Army and Navy to a system with which the self-governing Dominions arranged forces for their own defence, and took responsibility for strategic matters in their own regions. The results of this strategy were seen during the Second Anglo-Boer War, when contingents from the Dominions played a significant role in curbing the Boers' resistance. However, whilst the Imperial forces were developing locally, the goals of a comprehensive Imperial defence policy remained the constant concern of the Navy League and other imperialistic minor organizations.⁸⁷

The Navy League was opposed to the Tariff Reform League, and contributed to keeping free trade principles alive within the Unionists after the Free Food Club and Free Trade League had lost influence. A number of leading members of the Navy League had been strong supporters of Imperial federation and were involved in the Imperial Federation Defence Committee, formed in 1893 after the break-up of the Imperial Federation League.⁸⁸

The Navy League provided a platform not only to free traders but also to members of a number of late-Victorian and Edwardian organisations aiming to resist the expansion of government competences over economic and social life. The Chairman of the Navy League's Executive Committee, Lord Elcho, had been the founder of the Liberty and Property Defence League, aimed at resisting the increase of what seemed left wing legislation and restoring the primacy of voluntary organisations in the country's social life. Another member of the League's Executive Committee and its future President, W. W. Ashley, had been Chairman of

Navy, (May 1913); R. Yerburgh, "Presidential Appeal," *The Navy*, (April 1913); Lord Islington, "The Second Annual Conference of the New Zealand Branches of the Navy League," *The Navy*, (Dec. 1912); "The Problems of Imperial Defence," *The Navy*, (Feb. 1909); "One Fleet or Several," *The Navy*, (Oct. 1911): 255; "The World Wide Defence of the Empire," *The Navy*, (Sept. 1913). For a discussion on the creation of Dominion independent fleet, see: Eddy and Schreuder, *The Rise of Colonial*, 51; Geoffrey Till ed., *The Development of British Naval Thinking: Essays in Memory of Bryan Ranft* (London: Routledge, 2006); Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy: Finance, Technology, and British Naval Policy, 1889 1914* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2014).

⁸⁷ For a discussion of British naval strategies, see Ruddock F. Mackay, *Fisher of Kilverstone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); Nicholas A. Lambert, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution* (Columbia, MO: University of South Carolina Press, 1999); Martin Farr, *Reginald McKenna 1863 1916: Financier Among Statesmen* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

⁸⁸ For a discussion on imperialist organizations, see Thompson, *Imperial Britain*.

the Anti-Socialist Union, an organization dedicated to the defence of liberal values. Lord Brassey and Admiral Edmund Fremantle, leading figures of the Imperial Federation League and the Navy League, were prominent members also of the Industrial Freedom League, opposing the borrowing capacities of municipal authorities and increases in local governments' expenditures and taxation. Rising social expenditure was in fact seen as a threat to the obligations of the defence budget, and a complete waste of energies in the eventuality of a defeat of the Empire in a war.⁸⁹

7. The Round Table, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the question of migration

Kerr regarded the future of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance as one of the major open questions of British Imperial and foreign policy. In a *Round Table* article of 1911, Kerr complained about the fact that the Dominions had not been involved in the negotiations which led to the 1902 first Anglo-Japanese Alliance, aimed at containing Russian expansion in East Asia. The advantages of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance to the general strategic situation of the Empire were that the Royal Navy could decrease the number of its units in the Pacific, Chinese, Australian, and East Indian bases, and increase its control of the Mediterranean, the North Atlantic, the North and Baltic Seas, as a consequence of the threat posed by German naval rearmament.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Rempel, *Unionists Divided*, 24; Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists*, 165 6. For late Victorian opposition to State intervention, see: Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* (London: 1873); W. H. Mallock, *Aristocracy and Evolution* (London: 1898); W. Lecky, *Democracy and Liberty* (London: 1898). On Lecky, see D. McCartney, *W. E. H. Lecky: Historian and Politician, 1838 1903* (Dublin, 1994), 166 67; id., "Lecky's 'Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland,'" *Irish Historical Studies*, 14, (1964): 119 41. On the Liberty and Property Defence League, see: E. Bristow, "The Liberty and Property Defence League and Individualism," *Historical Journal*, 18, 4, (1975); N. Soldon, "Laissez Faire as Dogma: The Liberty and Property Defence League, 1882 1914," in *Essays in Anti Labour History: Responses to the Rise of Labour in Britain*, K. D. Brown ed. (London: 1974). On the Anti Socialist Union, see: A. Fox, *History and Heritage: The Social Origins of the British Industrial Relations System* (London: 1985), 194. For the campaign of the League's journal against social expenditure, see: *The Navy League Journal*, (Nov. 1908): 321; *The Navy*, (March 1912): 81; *The Navy*, (Dec. 1913): 344.

⁹⁰ Philip Kerr, "The Anglo Japanese Alliance," *The Round Table*, 1, 2, (Feb. 1911): 138 9. On the question of sea power in the Pacific, see William R. Braisted,

However, the question of Chinese, Indian, and particularly Japanese immigration into Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, would make “a continuance of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance impossible,” and it might range “Japan in definite hostility to the Empire.” Each Dominion, Kerr suggested, should negotiate an agreement with Japan, fixing a ceiling to Japanese immigration according to its internal demand for manpower. The immigration dispute with Japan was, according to Kerr, the main obstacle to renewal of the alliance. No one Dominion was strong enough to uphold the policy of exclusion of Asiatic immigration into its territories, Kerr pointed out, “in face of the force that could be brought to bear against it.” Great Britain was anyway not able to “settle the future of the Japanese Alliance in the light of her own interests alone,” because the Dominions had it “within their power to make the continuance of the alliance impossible by going to extremes over Asiatic immigration.” If the Empire, Kerr warned, did not “arrive at a common policy...it will disrupt.”⁹¹

If Japan decided to break-up the Alliance and move onto the German side—as a consequence of restrictive immigration policies by the Dominions, which were completely independent from Britain in that respect and desired to have free hands in China and the North Pacific—the British Empire would no longer be predominant on the seas and therefore would become vulnerable. The Dominions by themselves would not be able to resist Asian immigration into their territories without the implementation of a common Imperial foreign policy which would take into consideration the strategic and vital interests of the Empire as a whole. These were not just material interests but questions going to the heart of the nature of the British system as opposed to the Prussian one: the defence of democracy and free institutions against the threat from the autocratic and totalitarian idea of the State. The “real nature of the problem of Imperial defence” was, according to Kerr, linked to the very essence of the British Empire, which was not “an imperium but a system

The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909 1922 (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1971); Roger Dingman, *Power in the Pacific: The Origins of Naval Arms Limitation, 1914 1922* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976). On the Anglo German naval race, see Robert K. Massie, *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War* (London: Random House, 1991). On Anglo Japanese relations, see Ian H. Nish, *Alliance in Decline: A Study in Anglo Japanese Relations 1908 23* (London: Athlone Press, 1972).

⁹¹ Kerr, “The Anglo Japanese Alliance,” 138, 143.

of government which gives peace to one quarter of mankind and better government to hundreds of millions of backward people.”⁹²

“Already we suffer from the fact that the Unionists claim a monopoly of Imperial virtue,” Kerr observed, and “to be the only true Imperialists. This does a great deal of harm in making the Dominions feel that Imperialism is a party and not a national cry in England, and in driving the Liberals to a rather anti-imperial attitude which they do not really feel.” Imperial federation could not be imposed on the Dominions, but voluntarily chosen. The development of an “Imperial patriotism,” before a federation for the Empire could be created, was necessary. The Round Table should support “the path not of Imperial concentration but of Imperial co-operation.” The 1907 Imperial Conference already “recognised that the basis of Imperial organization was the co-operation of five nations, not the centralization of power in the hands of the British, acting as the Imperial Government.”⁹³

The 1911 Imperial Conference could “discuss the advantages and disadvantages of continuing the alliance,” considering, according to Kerr, “how the gap in the defensive system of the Empire is to be filled,” in the event of the unwinding of the alliance. “For the first time,” Kerr observed, the Imperial Conference was “confronted with the task of framing a common policy for the Empire, and of deciding on the means by which it is to be upheld.”⁹⁴

Kerr was however aware that the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister were against the inclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in the agenda of the Imperial Conference. Sir Arthur Nicolson, Permanent Under-secretary at the Foreign Office, had in fact stated to Sir Charles Ottley, Secretary of the CID, that the Alliance was “of such critical Imperial interest that its prolongation or otherwise should not be dependent on the views and opinions of the Dominions.” Sir Edward Grey was initially of the same opinion, and Asquith had declared that he could

⁹² Quoted in G. L. Craik, *Note on the Principle of Indian Representation*, July 1912, RTP, c828.

⁹³ Philip Kerr, “The Conference and the Empire,” *The Round Table*, (Aug. 1911): 389, 394.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, 143 9. Kerr’s suggestion was presented also to other members of the Kindergarten in a Memorandum of 29 July 1910, quoted in Peter Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan, 1911 15: A Study of British Far Eastern Policy* (London: 1969), 271.

not “conceive a more inopportune topic to bring before the Imperial Conference.”⁹⁵

Lewis Harcourt, Colonial Secretary, thought, on the other hand, that consultation with the Dominions would have been “educative.” Even Grey conceded that the Dominions’ Prime Ministers should be consulted privately when in London to attend the Imperial Conference. Nonetheless, in writing to his cousin Earl Grey, ardent Imperial federalist and Governor of Canada, he seemed to be aware of the global geo-political situation of the Empire, and that the Dominions had to realise “that, if we denounce the Japanese Alliance, we can no longer rely on the assistance of the Japanese Fleet and we must prepare for the possibility that Japan may enter into arrangements which may bring her into hostility with us.”⁹⁶

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was then renewed in 1911 without prior consultation with the Dominions. *The Round Table* had, anyway, played a significant role in investigating the strategic and political implications for the renewal of the Alliance. At the 26 May 1911 CID meeting, Dominion leaders were briefed on its implications, and warned that a negative attitude to Japan would have dangerous consequences. If the Alliance “came to an end owing to our giving notice to terminate” it, Grey observed, “not only would the strategic situation be altered immediately by our having to count the Japanese fleet as it now exists as possible enemies, but Japan would at once set to work to build a fleet more powerful than she would have if the alliance did not exist.” “Instead of keeping the modest squadron in Chinese waters which we do at the present time,” the Royal Navy

would have to keep if we are to secure the sea communications between the Far East and Europe and also between the Far East and Australia and New Zealand a separate fleet in Chinese waters which would be at least equal to a two Power standard in those waters, including in that two Power standard counted possibly against us not only the Japanese fleet as it is at the present time, but the fleet which Japan would certainly build if we put an end to the alliance.⁹⁷

Grey tackled the immigration issue by presenting Japanese policy, as confirmed by the Japanese-Canadian agreement, as being to encourage

⁹⁵ Minute by Nicolson to Ottley, 15 Jan. 1911, FOP, FO 371/1140; Asquith to Grey, 17 Jan. 1911, FOP, FO 371/1140, (quoted in Lowe, *Great Britain and*, 271).

⁹⁶ CID meeting, 26 Jan. 1911, CABP, CAB 38/1715; Sir E. Grey to Earl Grey, 27 Jan. 1911, FOP, FO 800/16.

⁹⁷ CABP, CAB 38/18/40, (quoted in Lowe, *Great Britain and*, 274). For a discussion on the 1911 Anglo Japanese Alliance, see *ibidem*, 17 57; Ian Nish, *Alliance in Decline: Anglo Japanese Relations, 1908 1923* (London: 1972).

Japanese people to emigrate towards “Korea and Manchuria and the parts neighbouring to herself in the Far East.” Grey persuasively concluded suggesting that Japan did “not want to encourage them to go abroad, though she has some difficulty in preventing them.”⁹⁸

The question of Imperial migration was much debated during Edwardian years, and Kerr had a direct knowledge of it. In April 1910 the Royal Colonial Institute formed a special Committee to promote migration within the Empire, acting on behalf of forty-nine emigration societies, chaired in succession by the Earl of Dundonald and the Duke of Malborough—Kerr being the joint Chairman—and composed by military officers, colonial administrators, publicists, editors, journalists and donors. The Committee convened the interests of organisations of religious and charitable character, those representing the professions and shipping companies, and those dealing with the emigration of children, women, and the unemployed. The increasing general trend of British migration—half of which had the Dominions as destination—during the first decade of the new century had, according to the Committee, to be strengthened, and all to be conveyed to the Dominions. It would have fostered, as strongly advocated by J. A. Froude in *Oceana, or England and her Colonies*, Imperial cohesion. The presence of British skilled workers and citizens trained in British values in the Dominions would represent a vital and enduring link with the mother country.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ CABP, CAB 38/18/40, (quoted in Lowe, *Great Britain and*, 274). Following a meeting with the Japanese Ambassador Kato Takaaki, Grey confirmed, writing to Sir Horace Rumbold, his views about Japanese immigration: “He entirely endorsed what I had said as to the policy of his Government with regard to Japanese emigration. He said that his Government were disposed by the alliance to do what they could to prevent movements of Japanese emigration that were disagreeable to us. If there were no alliance they might be less able to influence the free movements of Japanese,” (Grey to Rumbold, 26 May 1911, FOP, FO 262/1074, quoted in Lowe, *Great Britain and*, 297 8).

⁹⁹ J. R. Boose ed., *Royal Colonial Institute Yearbook* (London: 1912); RCSP, Meetings of the Emigration Committee, 18 and 25 April 1910; W. A. Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles, With Special Reference to the Development of Overseas Dominions* (London: 1929), 243 46; S. Constantine, “Empire Migration and Imperial Harmony,” in *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions between the Wars*, S. Constantine ed. (Manchester: 1990), 1; M. Anderson, “The Social Implications of Demographic Change,” in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750 1950*, vol. 2, *People and their Environment*, F. M. L. Thompson ed. (Cambridge: 1990), 9; J. A. Froude, *Oceana, or England and Her Colonies* (London: 1886), 10 14, 332, 338. Froude’s influence upon the emigration movement can be seen from the evidence given to the Dominions

Being aware that Dominions were generally very sensitive on the question of British immigration, the Committee outlined a policy based on the real need for skilled manpower in the Dominions. If the only possible basis for Imperial unity was an equal partnership, Dominions seemed however unwilling to take a direct and active part in the process of forming British Imperial and foreign policy, for fear of British interference with their own domestic affairs, and of being drawn into the internal struggles of British parliamentary life.¹⁰⁰

The Round Table returned to deal with the Japanese question in 1914, when it seemed that “the security of the British Pacific communities” was “not sufficiently considered in the scheme of British foreign policy at the present day.” Apprehensions about the preponderant Japanese power in the Pacific were growing in Australia and New Zealand. Massey regarded the Anglo-Japanese Alliance as “not sufficient protection for New Zealand,” and thought that New Zealand had to do “something for herself.” Britain and the Dominions should develop a “great fighting Navy in the Pacific.”¹⁰¹

With the replacement of the Empire-centred Reginald McKenna with the Euro-centred Winston Churchill in 1911 as First Lord of the Admiralty, Australia and New Zealand had in fact suddenly realized that their security depended, at least for the next decade, on the Royal Navy and on friendly relations with Japan. “If the British Fleet were defeated in the North Sea,” Churchill argued at the House of Commons in March 1914, “all the dangers which it now wards off from the Australasian Dominions would be let loose.” “If the power of Great Britain were shattered on the sea” in European waters, the Southern Dominions should turn, Churchill concluded, “to seek the protection of the United States.”¹⁰²

The Round Table supported Churchill’s arguments that the Southern Pacific was a ‘secondary theatre’ dependent, for its own stability, on the hegemony of the Royal Navy in the principal theatre in the North Sea, and on convergence of Anglo-Japanese strategic interests. The Southern

Royal Commission by W. Hazell, Lady Knightley, Katherine Grimes, C. Kinloch Cooke, and Colonel D. C. Lamb, Dominion Royal Commission, *Report from the Commissioners, 1912 13* (London: 1913), 123, 138 39, 141 42, 148, 173.

¹⁰⁰ “The Emigration Conference,” *United Empire*, New Series, 1, 7, (July 1910).

¹⁰¹ [Frederic Eggleston and Edward Grigg], “Naval Policy and the Pacific Question,” *The Round Table*, 4, 15, (June 1914): 393, 409. For a discussion, see R. H. Duus, H. Myers and M. R. Peattie eds., *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895 1937* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

¹⁰² *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th Series, Commons, 109, cols. 1931 4, 17 March 1914.

Dominions should not therefore undertake “inconsiderate and provocative action” driving “Japanese statesmen into the arms of a great European military Power.” During the war Japan remained in fact loyal to the alliance, helping to neutralize the German fleet in the Pacific and China Seas. In return, Japan asked for British non-interference in achieving their aims in China.¹⁰³

8. *The second Curtis’s ‘imperial mission’*

While Kerr dedicated himself full-time to the organisation of the central office of the movement, and to the development of the journal, Curtis, inspired by an ardent and zealous missionary spirit, left London at the beginning of February 1910 on a long journey to all the Dominions, in order to set up branches of the new organization. “Of all the groups, societies, and organizations founded in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries to promote Imperial union, the Round Table movement was,” according to Kendle, “the only one which succeeded in putting down firm roots in all the Dominions.”¹⁰⁴

First destination was South Africa, where Curtis renewed his contacts with old friends and started to draft a detailed study on the state of Imperial relations, and on the necessary constitutional reforms in order to adapt to the new international situation. Writing to his mother on 1st June 1910 when he was ready to leave for New Zealand, Curtis noted how “Union started here yesterday,” bringing “to a close the first chapter of our work.” Having “set the ball rolling” four years before, Curtis started to collect material for a new memorandum in the style of the *Selborne Memorandum*, which would soon become well-known, from the colour of its binding, as the *Green Memorandum*, aiming to carry on that work and to bring the struggle to the heart of the Empire. In drafting the Memorandum Curtis felt “in the position of a pigmy who has undertaken the work of a giant.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ [Eggleston and Grigg], “Naval Policy and,” 442 3.

¹⁰⁴ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 301.

¹⁰⁵ Curtis to his mother, 1 June 1910, CP; Curtis to Nancy Astor, 28 Sept. 1913, quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 120; John Kendle, “The Round Table Movement: Lionel Curtis and the Formation of the New Zealand Groups in 1910,” *New Zealand Journal of History*, 1, (1967): 33 50. Writing to his mother on 30 November 1910, Curtis saw himself as an instrument of God: “It is indeed impossible not to feel that this is the Lord’s doing...After all if in this world we accomplish anything of utility it is but as the tools of God, the strength and purpose must be His...how foolish the chisel and mallet would look if they could

The *Green Memorandum* was circulated to some 120 members, and their comments, written on the interleaved blank pages, were returned to Curtis and published as *Round Table Studies* First Series in 1911 and 1914, without identifying the authors of the comments, on the ground that “each student should feel the utmost freedom in expressing his views.” After Curtis received their comments, he was, according to May, “caught between the Dominion groups, which were reluctant to accept the whole of his proposals, and the Moot, which thought them not far-reaching enough, and had now saddled him with a scheme for which ‘public opinion today is nowhere ripe’.”¹⁰⁶

Curtis’s main argument supporting the case for a closer Imperial union was based on the growing Anglo-German rivalry, which represented a renewal of the traditional rivalry between the Continental and the insular systems, which in their essence were antagonist. If the Continental system was based on centralization of powers, autocratic and militaristic by nature, the British was based on the liberties of the individual citizen, decentralization and representative democracy. Continental pressure brought the British governments to slow down and limit the process of devolution of powers from the centre to the periphery of the Empire, which economically and politically was an evolving entity, bound to be re-defined on the basis of the principle of equal partnership.

The question of the defence of the Empire—and therefore the survival of British political culture and institutions—depended very much on the Royal Navy’s supremacy on the seas, challenged by the strongest Continental State at that time, Germany, as in the past it had been challenged by Spain and France. Great Britain could not any longer bear alone the cost of naval rearmament, which was not designed just to prevent a German invasion of the British coasts, but also to protect the independence of all component parts of the Empire, which had therefore to take a full share in this task. The protection which Britain had successfully offered the Dominions, giving them the possibility of developing their economies and self-government, was called into question by the pressure of events, which required them to assume direct responsibility for the maintenance of their own security and their free institutions.¹⁰⁷

The growing pressure from Continental power politics was compelling the British political institutions to face the alternatives of the end of Empire—with the consequent assumption of full responsibilities by the

speak and were to proclaim themselves the authors of the carpentry,” 30 Nov. 1910, CP, 2, 35.

¹⁰⁶ Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 43; May, *The Round Table*, 84 8.

¹⁰⁷ Lionel Cutis, *The Green Memorandum* (London: 1910), 60.

Dominions for their own security—or a dramatic constitutional reform, with the abandonment of the unitarian model for the federal one. Parliamentary congestion, increasingly overwhelming administrative burdens, demands for home rule by the three minority nationalities within the British isles, and over-taxation of the population of the British isles, were serious threats to the survival of the United Kingdom itself, at a time of international instability, when British leadership—Great Britain being still the only real world superpower—was very much needed in order to prevent the degeneration of a local conflict into a general one.

The new institutional architecture would be based on a lower house directly elected with proportional representation, and an upper house representing the member States with an equal representation of thirty peers each, with a turn-over of ten every five years, elected by proportional representation. The Imperial Parliament should not assemble only in London, but organize its sessions in succession at various centres of the federation. Matters of controversy between national and federal legislatures and governments would be left to a supreme court, whose composition Curtis left undefined, suggesting the creation within the upper house of a judicial committee including the speakers or presidents of the national lower houses, replacing the existing Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.¹⁰⁸

Relinquishing all foreign policy and defence matters to the federal parliament, the United Kingdom would enjoy the same legal status as the other member States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. The British parliament would thus be able to deal with the pressure for change from internal centrifugal and social forces. What Curtis called “the actual insolvency” of the existing unitarian system was perpetuated “by preserving and idolizing the symbols of union,” without “the strength which can only be derived from unity itself.” It was deceiving to think that the component parts of the Empire would “slip into union” through a progressive and mechanical process based on co-operation. The jump into a constitutional union would be guaranteed only by the calling of a Constitutional Convention on the model of the Philadelphia one.¹⁰⁹

The “fundamental difficulty” for the implementation of Round Table aims—a commentator of the *Green Memorandum* pointed out—was that Canada felt “entirely safe.” The United States would, in fact, “never try to conquer it.” Australia and New Zealand, on the contrary, completely depended for their security on a significant presence, as a deterrent, of the

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, 332.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, 352.

Royal Navy in the Pacific in order to prevent Japanese expansionist military and economic policies. The British Admiralty's priorities were however to deal first with the German naval scare, concentrating most of the fleet in the Mediterranean, Atlantic, Baltic and North Seas. Great Britain could evidently not face alone—without a direct American involvement—and at the same time, Germany and Japan.¹¹⁰

Because of the peculiar geo-political Pacific strategic situation, Curtis's second 'imperial mission' proved to be particularly productive in New Zealand—populated predominantly by colonists of British origin and being the most loyal of the Dominions—where he stayed for two and a half months, setting up branches in the country's four main centres—Wellington, Christchurch, Auckland, and Wanganui—and establishing useful contacts at Napier, Peel Forest, Mount Peel, Palmerston North, Bulls, and Fielding.¹¹¹

He recruited followers from academic, judicial, commercial and agricultural circles, always using the same technique: armed with letters of introduction from London, he would become acquainted with a certain number of people in each community, choosing "the best man for the job," to whom he would then hand over the *Green Memorandum* and other material. With the sheer magnetism of his personality, infectious optimism, and religious fervour—it was for Kerr's brother David to apply to Curtis the nickname of the 'Prophet'—he would involve the follower in the undertaking. He would then discuss with the new recruit what was needed locally to attract converts from among the "guiding spirits" of the community and, after a working dinner, would found a new branch.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ *Round Table Studies*, 265. It was Mahan, apparently, who inspired the German naval race. Kaiser Wilhelm II confessed to Bigelow that he was "just now not reading, but devouring Captain Mahan's" *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, "trying to learn it by heart. It is a first class work...constantly quoted by my captains and officers." Mahan taught the Germans how fateful were Louis XIV's and Napoleon I's decisions not to develop the French Navy to the size of the Royal Navy, (Davis, *The Atlantic System*, 25).

¹¹¹ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 80 1.

¹¹² Curtis, *The Green Memorandum*, 358; Kendle, *The Round Table*, 73 106. From the academic world, Curtis involved in the movement James Hight (1872 1958), professor of political economy and constitutional history at Canterbury College, Christchurch, and in 1927 New Zealand representative at the Geneva World Economic Conference; Francis Haslam (1848 1924), professor of classics at Canterbury College and president of the Navy League; Thomas Blunt (1876 1950), professor of modern languages at Canterbury College; Patrick Marshall (1869 1950), professor in geography at Otago University, Dunedin; Thomas Howell Laby (1880 1946), professor of physics at Victoria College, Wellington and from 1915

Curtis's power in making other people do what he wanted them to do was, as Arthur Salter recollected, overwhelming. Henry Hodson, who fell himself under Curtis's spell, recollected:

First, the object I almost wrote 'victim' was flattered with the insistence that he was uniquely able and fitted for the task; the whole enterprise, in...the future of the civilized world, turned upon him. Then the hypothetical consent became the assumed actual...Finally the required conduct would be indicated with as much assurance that it would be followed as a doctor assumes when he writes a prescription.¹¹³

Writing on 9 September 1910 to Lady Wantage, Curtis explained his technique for proselytism:

at the University of Melbourne. From the business world, Curtis attracted Harold Beauchamp (1858 1938), director of the Bank of New Zealand and president of a number of boards and companies; Henry Francis Wigram (1857 1934), chairman and director of various companies, chairman of the *Lyttelton Times*, mayor of Christchurch in 1902, member of the Legislative Council from 1903; Arthur Myers (1867 1926), chairman and director of a number of boards and companies, mayor of Auckland, member of the House of Representatives from 1910 to 1921, Minister of finance, railways and defence in 1912, Minister of customs, munitions and supplies in the National Government from 1915 to 1919; Michael Myers (1873 1950), lawyer and businessman, chief justice in 1929; William Reece (1856 1930), president of the Christchurch Chamber of Commerce and Mayor of Christchurch in 1900; Sir George Hugh Clifford (1847 1930), landowner, businessman, chairman of various companies and president of the Round Table Christchurch group. From the legal profession, Curtis drew Arthur Richmond Atkinson (1863 1935), lawyer and journalist, member of the New Zealand House of Representatives 1899 1902, contributor to the *Evening Post*, New Zealand correspondent of *The Morning Post*, 1907 11, and of *The Times*, 1911 21; Heinrich von Haast (1864 1953), barrister and solicitor, member of the Board of Governors of Canterbury College, secretary of the Wellington group of the Institute of Pacific Relations in 1929, delegate to the Shanghai Conference in 1931, representative at the British Commonwealth Relations Conference in Toronto, 1933; William Downie Stewart (1878 1949), mayor of Dunedin 1913 14, MP for Dunedin West 1914 35, Minister of internal affairs 1921 3, of customs 1921 8, of finance 1926 8, attorney general and acting Prime Minister in 1926, Minister of finance 1931 3, representative of New Zealand at the Ottawa Conference 1932. On the Round Table in New Zealand, see Leonie Foster, *High Hopes: The Men and Motives of the Australian Round Table* (Melbourne: 1986); John Kendle, "The Round Table, New Zealand and the Imperial Conference of 1911," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, 3, 2, (1965): 104 17; id., "The Round Table Movement, Lionel Curtis and the Formation of the New Zealand Groups," *New Zealand Journal of History*, 1, 1, (1967): 33 50.

¹¹³ Henry Hodson, Foreword to Lionel Curtis, *World War: Its Cause and Cure* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1992), v.

surely the sounder method is to establish a small nucleus of men all imbued with the same truths and uttering them as a matter of their own personal conviction to their own people. Then there is no need for outsiders like myself to come forward at all. The movement springs up from inside each Dominion among the people themselves, and becomes their own spontaneous movement. Our function, as I understand it, is not to feed these countries with flour as it were, which is gone as soon as it is consumed, but to bring them seed so that they may grow for food for themselves and have no limit to the supply.¹¹⁴

About Curtis's technique in making disciples, Lockhart stated that "if you wanted to argue with Lionel Curtis you should vehemently dispute his opening proposition, for, that admitted, the rest of his case forms an unbreakable chain of logic." Curtis would begin: "Let us get together and talk...and answers will be found to these awkward questions we have been asking'." Curtis's targeted converts did not know that "the answers were already written out and reposing in Lionel Curtis's pocket." "Human warmth and shrewd indoctrination" were, according to Sir Keith Hancock, two qualities employed by Curtis to make disciples. Hancock recalled Curtis sitting in the gardens of All Souls in the 1920s, urging his interlocutor: "Research! Research! I want all you young men to do research! No matter what conclusions you come to...Besides, I know what conclusions you *will* come to!" Dougal Malcolm referred resignedly to Curtis's "familiar principle of inviting criticisms on a draft from all and sundry and giving effect only to such as jump with his own original humour."¹¹⁵

Writing to Kerr in July 1921, Curtis admitted that "the spectre which I am always having to exorcise, is the notion so easily provoked in the Dominions, that people are to be lured into some propaganda, the final upshot of which they do not see." Curtis had to claim, therefore that the aim of the Round Table was "to apply the methods of scientific study to politics." When he was feeding his targeted recruits with the *Green Memorandum*, Curtis would ask them to pick up "holes" to be filled with new and original ideas. His approach "in dealing with people" was—"and must be" he reaffirmed—that the London group has "yet evolved no solution of the problem of our external affairs" and their South African

¹¹⁴ Curtis to Oliver, 15 Aug. 1910, LP, 2; Curtis to Lady Wantage, 9 Sept. 1910, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 81).

¹¹⁵ About the *Green Memorandum*, Lockhart argued that "the answers were already written out and reposing in Lionel Curtis's pocket," (Lockhart, *At the Feet*, 177). Lavin, "Lionel Curtis and the Idea," in *Oxford and the Idea*, Madden and Fieldhouse, 116; Malcolm to Duncan, 30 March 1943, RTP, c875, 65 68.

experience taught them that “if we sit down to get at the facts and to review them on their merits,” things were “likely before we have done, to be brought to conclusions which we little anticipated.”¹¹⁶

To reinforce this point, Curtis would show them copies of Round Table South African publications, which brought the proof of “how again and again, as a result of study, we had to discard ideas which we had long held,” like, for instance, when the Kindergarten was “in the middle of the ‘Government of South Africa’ and had to renounce federalism to which we had committed ourselves in the Selborne Memorandum and declared that our researchers had driven us into the fold of unification.” Curtis then would declare that he was “not prepared...to put forward any views except as hypothesis for discussion.”¹¹⁷

Curtis’s method of neutralizing in the Dominions the suspicion that he was trying to manipulate the people whom he was trying to involve in the Round Table towards the formation of a local group was candidly explained in a letter to Oliver of August 1910. Curtis presented to his audience “the very essence of our work” as to be aware of the existence of “an Imperial problem,” and of divergent opinions “as yet” about its solution. “Having established this point,” Curtis would go on to argue that the problem demanded accurate study. The next step would be to point out, “that such study to be worth anything” involved the collaboration of people who were “viewing the problem and the facts involved in it from the distinct standpoint of all countries concerned.” On that base Curtis would issue an invitation “to a few suitable people to join in these studies.”¹¹⁸

The official version of the origins of the Round Table was manipulated by Curtis, and then endorsed by all members of Round Table, as if the movement was “the outcome of suggestion from South Africa, subsequently endorsed by the approval of friends we have made in Canada.” It was vital for the success in the creation of local branches, Curtis thought, to avert the suspicion of being directed and manipulated by a small but influential and financially powerful group of ardent British imperialists. If Dominions recruits felt that “the whole thing was engineered from England and was just a repetition of the pattern so often attempted before and which have so often failed before,” their efforts would have been vain. What he was trying to suggest to his friends in Canada, New Zealand and Australia, was that “they should form little groups of students, similar to our South African group, and that we should

¹¹⁶ Curtis to Kerr, 21 July 1910, (quoted in Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 162 3).

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 163.

¹¹⁸ Curtis to Oliver, 15 Aug. 1910, *ibidem*, 163 4.

pursue these studies together, with a view to the development of a policy of mutual relations which would fit the circumstances of all." The problem was that Curtis was so deeply involved in his proselytizing campaign that he felt he was acting "with perfect sincerity." Curtis enjoyed the role so much that he liked to portray himself as a "colonialized Britisher."¹¹⁹

Curtis's attempt at "masquerading" himself as a South African produced criticism among his closest friends, like Hickens, but was successful. The accomplishment of colonial self-government in South Africa on the basis of political union reinforced Curtis's arguments supporting the case that having achieved that stage in Imperial development, the initiative for further advancement of the principle of responsible government was up to the Dominions. The London group was presented by Curtis just as "a common agent and clearing house of the four Dominion groups," which had, however, still to be formed in the two most difficult, but strategically fundamental Dominions, Canada and Australia. Curtis was trying to cover with a veil the fact that the movement had, at its core, a very compact and determined nucleus, as felt by Rodolphe Lemieux, former Minister in the Borden Administration: there was "an *inner circle* in that organization...I know it, I feel it."¹²⁰

Curtis had also to neutralize the feelings among his colonial recruits that in fact his "real object" was "to found a new organ to serve the political and even commercial interests of its founders," whom he represented. Curtis had to persuade his potential converts that the journal was not a commercial undertaking, and that it should rather be seen as an instrument to keep together study-groups scattered around the world. Curtis was able to form these groups on the basis of "a dozen introductions," but "seldom...more than half of them" were "of any use for the purpose in view." He found out that "very often the people who are the least use" were those to whom he was "most highly recommended." He had therefore to decide who was "the best man for the cause, and enlist his support." The "prominence and efficiency" of an established group, Curtis observed, largely in fact depended "on one strenuous leading spirit, who has got round him men who are congenial to himself." Once he found the leader, then he discussed

¹¹⁹ Curtis to Kerr, 21 July 1910, *ibidem*, 164, 184; Kerr to Curtis, 22 Dec. 1910, LP, 12, 162 9.

¹²⁰ Lionel Hickens to Curtis, 19 Dec. 1910, quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 160 1; Curtis to Kerr, 21 July, quoted in Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, 164; Lemieux to Wrong, 29 Aug. 1913, quoted in James Eayrs, "The Round Table Movement in Canada, 1909 20," *Canadian Historical Review*, 38, (1957): 5.

with him the others with whom he wishes to work, some of them may be included in the six just men I have already met, but nearly always there are other people outside, whom [sic] he thinks are as good or better, to whom he introduces me and about whom we consult.

Once he “tapped all these people,” Curtis asked “them all to dinner and thrash the thing out with them generally.”¹²¹

Sailing for Australia on 13 September, Curtis left behind him, according to Kendle, “the seeds of a strong organization,” which would offer a fundamental contribution to the development of the movement and the journal. From his New Zealand experience Curtis was impressed by how the inhabitants of the Dominions were “indisposed to disturb any state of affairs which for the time being seems convenient or pleasant,” since “the system” was “one which gives them all the material advantages of independent nations, while relieving them of the insurance which forms the first charge on the public revenue of such nations.”¹²²

In Australia Curtis’s freedom of action was limited by the fact that John Dove, sent officially from London to assist Curtis in the formation of groups, was essentially his watch-dog. The technique which turned out to be so successful in New Zealand was also employed in Australia, where he stayed for two months, establishing branches in Sydney—in spite of earlier resistance to the Imperial Federation League—Melbourne and Brisbane, with the help of Lord Chelmsford—Governor of New South Wales, who would later play a crucial role in the success of a fundamental Curtis’s achievement in India, as will be discussed below—and of the Archbishop of Brisbane, George Donaldson.¹²³

¹²¹ Curtis to Oliver, 15 Aug. 1910, quoted in Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 166 7.

¹²² Kendle, *The Round Table*, 93, 95; Curtis to Oliver, 14 Aug. 1910, LP, 2. John Dove was able to take an active part in the movement only after World War I, when in 1920 he became editor of *The Round Table* until his death in 1934. While in Australia, Curtis met the Labour Prime Minister Andrew Fisher and William Morris Hughes; but he disclosed the Round Table plans, handing over the *Green Memorandum*, only to the former Premier Alfred Deakin, an old friend of Milner, who had been informed of Curtis’s mission by Jebb and Amery (see Kendle, *The Round Table*, 95).

¹²³ Lord Chelmsford (1868–1933) was fellow of All Souls from 1892 to 1899, and a friend of many of the Kindergarten. He had been member of the London County Council, 1904–5, Governor of Queensland, 1905–9, of New South Wales, 1909–13, and as Viceroy of India from 1916 to 1921 played a crucial role in the Round Table’s activities in that country. In 1924 he was First Lord of the Admiralty, warden of Winchester College, 1930–2, and All Souls 1932–3. George Alfred Donaldson (1863–1935), Archbishop of Brisbane 1905–21, and of Salisbury in

Curtis's recruits in Melbourne included Imperial Federation League members, such as the banker O. M. Williams, the economic historian Edward Owen Giblin Shann, the constitutional lawyer Sir William Harrison Moore, Commonwealth statisticians Sir George Handley Knibbs and Sir Robert Garran, physiology professor W. A. Osborne, and Sir Frederic Eggleston, lawyer, politician, diplomat and writer, who became

1921, revised his negative attitude towards Jebb's *Studies in Colonial Nationalism* after reading the *Green Memorandum*, and became a prominent leader of the Round Table Brisbane group. From the academic world Curtis recruited Reginald Roe (1850 1926), headmaster of Brisbane Grammar School, 1876 1909, inspector general of schools and chief education adviser to the Queensland Government, 1909 19, first Vice Chancellor of the University of Queensland, 1910 16; Robert Francis Irvine (1861 1941), professor of economics at the University of Sydney from 1912; Mungo William MacCallum (1854 1942), professor of English literature and history at the University College of Wales from 1879, professor of modern languages at the University of Sydney from 1886 to 1920, Warden, Vice Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor and Chancellor at the University of Sydney from 1924 to 1934; George Arnold Wood (1864 1928), Challis professor of history at the University of Sydney 1891 1928, author of *The Discovery of Australia* (1922), and *The Voyage of the Endeavour* (1926); Tannatt William Edgeworth David (1858 1934), professor of geology and physical geography at the University of Sydney from 1891; William Harrison Moore (1867 1935), professor of law and dean of the Faculty of Law of the University of Melbourne 1893 1927, constitutional adviser to the Government of Victoria, 1907 10, Australian delegate to the League of Nations Assembly, 1927 9; George Handley Knibbs (1858 1929), professor of physics at the University of Sydney 1905, Commonwealth statistician, 1906 21, director of the Institute of Science and Industry, 1921 6; and Ernest Scott (1868 1939), collaborator of *The Globe* (London), *The Herald* (Melbourne), professor of history at the University of Melbourne, 1914 36, dean of the Faculty of Arts, 1919 24. From the legal professions Curtis involved A. B. Shand (1884 1956), member of New South Wales Bar and judge of Townsville; John Laskey Woolcock (1861 1930), judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 1927 and parliamentary draftsman, 1899 1927; Frederic William Eggleston (1875 1954), secretary of the most active Melbourne group and member of the staff of the Australian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference 1919, member of the Legislative Assembly, 1920 7, Minister for water supply and railways, 1924 6, Attorney General and Solicitor General, 1924 7, Australian envoy and Minister plenipotentiary to China, 1941 4 and to the USA, 1944 6. From the business circles Curtis attracted John Hubert Fraser Fairfax (1872 1950), owner of *The Sidney Morning Herald* and *Sidney Mail* and director of the Bank of New South Wales; Henry Yule Braddon (1863 1955), Australian business commissioner to the USA, 1918 19, appointed member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales in 1917, and elected member from 1933 to 1940; Cecil Gibson Nathan (1889 1959), wholesale wine&spirit merchant. Curtis, *Dyarchy*, xxvii.

secretary of the Australian Round Table movement. Alfred Deakin—President of the Australian branch of the Imperial Federation League—employed all his energies in helping Curtis to recruit “suitable men” in Melbourne. Among them there was Deakin’s former private secretary and future premier of New South Wales, Thomas Bavin, who became a lifelong leader of the Sydney group.¹²⁴

In Australia Curtis was able to build the movement on what was left of the Australian Imperial Federation League. In December 1909, a new Constitution had been adopted, changing the League’s name to “The Imperial Federation League of Australia.” “The object of the League” would be “the maintenance of a United Empire, and the development of constructive principles, securing the permanent co-operation of the United Kingdom and all the Dominions.” Being a non-partisan organization, members of the League could take an active and independent part in Australian political life.¹²⁵

Membership of the League was predominantly composed of politicians, educationalists and academics. Legal and commercial professions, high-ranking public servants, and military men—including John Monash, Maj.-Gen. John Hoad (Inspector General Military Forces of the Commonwealth), Capt. R. N. Collins (Secretary to the Commonwealth Defence Department), and the founder of the Australian Navy, Admiral William Creswell—were well-represented, as were Anglican and other Protestant clergymen. Membership of the League was politically oriented towards Conservative. The extension to women of the right to vote in federal elections from 1902 brought about the abandonment within the League of the ‘men only’ rule in 1905. The Australian League failed, however, “to influence public opinion,” Foster argued,

on the benefits of either Imperial federation or other formal ties. With its wealthy, influential, élitist membership, often anti Labour in its utterances, it was hardly the organisation to have a real impact on the Australian public, a large section of which was apathetic, anti élitist, anti privilege

¹²⁴ In Australia the Round Table groups included, according to May, a “very unrepresentative section of dominion populations,” being members of the social, cultural and political élites. Most of the Round Table members joined “because they saw in the Imperial connection the means to pursue their own agenda of national interests and nation building.” Of the 63 initial members enlisted by Curtis in Australia, 20 were academics, 9 public servants, 5 churchmen (including one archbishop and two bishops), “and the remainder were in almost equal measure lawyers, business and landowners,” (May, *The Round Table*, 71, 74).

¹²⁵ Committee Meeting, 15 Dec. 1908, Minute Book 2; “Addresses & Proceedings 1910,” *Political Science Pamphlets*, 102, Victorian State Library, Melbourne.

and in sympathy with Labour, the trade union movement and, for a time, especially in the 1880s and 1890s, republicanism.¹²⁶

Deakin took over the presidency of the Australian Imperial Federation League from Edward Holroyd in June 1905, at the time of the Japanese victory over Russia, keeping in the background the question of federation, and supporting the Pollock Committee's proposals for an Imperial Council and Permanent Secretariat as part of an ever closer consultative process within the Empire. Launching the slogan "integration or disintegration," Deakin supported the case for sharing with Great Britain the burden of "colonial constituencies," and the responsibility for security of the Empire at large, a stance which he would take at the Colonial Conference of 1907. At Joseph Chamberlain's call for "some proposals, or for a demand for a closer union," Deakin rejected Imperial preference as an instrument for Imperial closer union, and stressed the question of security. Widespread Australian support for the Second Anglo-Boer War, which involved the sending of volunteers, brought Holroyd to claim a role for those colonies which contributed to the war effort to be involved in the definition of peace terms, opening the way to consultation on all questions of Imperial foreign and military policies.¹²⁷

After becoming Australian Prime Minister, Deakin put pressure on the British Admiralty for the building of an independent Australian navy. He succeeded at the Naval Conference of 1909, which granted Australia a naval subsidy until 1913, when it was expected that the new contingent would be ready and integrated within the Imperial Navy.

In order "to complete the circle of the organisation," after the successful incorporation of the Australian branch of the Imperial Federation League within the Round Table, Curtis decided to return to Britain not via India and Egypt as he originally planned, but through Canada, "so as to organize a few groups there en route." In Canada Curtis arrived in early December 1910 and stayed for four months, organizing branches in Toronto and Montreal, in spite of the fact that he felt not able to use the *Green Memorandum* there "in its present form," since he feared that Canadians could detect a patronizing spirit within it. He thought that

¹²⁶ Foster, "The Imperial Federation League in Victoria," Appendix 3, 93; Leonie Foster, "The Victorian Imperial Federation League and the Genesis of the Australian Round Table," in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 187.

¹²⁷ Deakin Papers, Series 12, 4, Australian National Library, Addresses Etc., 2, 10 11, 19, 24; Imperial Federation League, Victorian Branch, *Addresses Etc., 1885 1909*, Melbourne, 1909, La Trobe Library, Melbourne, 23.

the Canadians were “far too sensitive” to be involved in any federalist organization originating from Britain.¹²⁸

In Canada there already existed a group of Milner’s disciples led by Glazebrook and Sir Edward Peacock willing to contribute to *The Round Table*, but they had “not been told the full import” of the Round Table’s activities. Peacock, who was in London at the time of Curtis’s visit to Canada, and played in later years a leading role within the Canadian Round Table movement, writing to the historian Adam Shortt, portrayed Curtis as a “very useful fellow,” who would produce “a great effect on things of that kind...through his enthusiasm and his persuasive persistence.” In general, Curtis was “sound enough but when he comes down to particulars,” he became “a bit dangerous through a wish to build the whole framework and exhibit it to the public for the sake of their education.” While in Canada, Curtis could not however resist showing copies of the *Green Memorandum* to Robert Borden—then leader of the Conservative opposition to the Liberal Government, and future Prime Minister from 1911 to 1920—Thomas White (prominent Conservative), Martin Burrell (future Minister of agriculture) and Colonel Sam Hughed who served in the Second Anglo-Boer War.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Curtis to his mother, 6 Nov. 1910, CP, 2; Curtis was well aware that the Round Table had to “face the question as to who is to be responsible for the great Dependencies under any new scheme of government,” and that “the collapse of British sea power means the collapse of British rule in India.” Curtis thought that the “consequences of such a catastrophe” were “immeasurable” and therefore wanted “to be on the spot,” Curtis to Oliver, 16 Aug. 1910, LP, 2.

¹²⁹ Kerr to Curtis, 14 Oct. 1910, LP, 12; Peacock to Shott, 3 March 1911 (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 105). Among the academic community Curtis attracted Edward Joseph Kylie (1880 1916), graduate of Balliol, lecturer and then assistant professor in history at the University of Toronto, 1904 15; Keith Feiling (1884 1977), history lecturer at the University of Toronto, 1907 9, lecturer and tutor at Christchurch College, Oxford, 1909 46, Chichele Professor of modern history at Oxford, 1946 50; George MacKinnon Wrong (1860 1948), history lecturer and then professor at the University of Toronto, 1892 1927, founder in 1897 of the *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada*, to become in 1920 the *Canadian Historical Review*; Sir Robert Alexander Falconer (1867 1943), Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, lecturer and then professor in the New Testament at Pine Hill College, Halifax, 1892 1907, president of the University of Toronto, 1907 32; Adam Shortt (1859 1931), economic historian at Queen’s University, 1885 1908. From business circles Curtis involved Arthur James Glazebrook (1859 1940), convenor of the Toronto group; Edward Robert Peacock (1871 1962), member of Dominion Securities Corporations of Canada and London, 1902 15, director of Baring and Co. and of the Bank of England, 1926 46, Rhodes Trustee 1925 62; Joseph Welsey Flavelle (1858 1939), financier, member

Curtis was warned that “to urge the formation...of...an Imperial Parliament would be to run some risk of ruining the whole scheme.” The general mood in Canada was “quite unprepared at present for any great constitutional change.” Canadian public opinion was “not yet ripe for any measure of Imperial organic union.” The Canadians appeared, on the other hand, to Curtis “deeply imbued...with the fear of presenting the really inevitable issues” because they were “distasteful.” Curtis believed that the Canadians “must have put in front of them a picture of their duties, even if these duties are unpleasant.”¹³⁰

Among Curtis’s Canadian recruits, the ones who would play a prominent role in the movement were Edward Kylie and G.M. Wrong—both historians of the University of Toronto—joining forces with the ‘old guard’ represented by Arthur Glazebrook—a Balliol friend of Milner—Edmund Walker—President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce—Edward Peacock—an old associate of Parkin and leading financier—and John Willison, Canadian correspondent of *The Times*. Curtis set up groups in Toronto and Montreal, for a total of 37 members—including 12 academics, 2 churchmen, 3 lawyers, 6 financiers and the remainder businessmen—of which only two were Francophones, Talbot Papineau and Senator R. Dandurant. By 1912 there were 102 members of the Toronto group, which paid for an office, and had Glazebrook and Kylie as convenors. A group was set up in 1912 in Newfoundland with Briand Dunfield as secretary. Representatives from the Labour party were a small minority.¹³¹

of the Board of Governors of the University of Toronto, chairman of the Imperial Munitions Board, 1915 20, of the Canadian Bank of Commerce and the National Trust (Kendle, *The Round Table*, 102 3).

¹³⁰ “Report of the Montreal Group on the Memorandum by Mr. Curtis,” 4 June 1911, RTP, c.795. “Round Table Studies,” 474.

¹³¹ Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 175. In commenting on his involvement with the Round Table, Wrong wrote in his diary on 15 February 1911 after having attended one of these founding dinners, at which Curtis asked him to act as Chairman of the Toronto study group: “About twenty of us are engaged in the study. If we can achieve anything our gathering to night will be epoch making in the history of the world. On beginnings so slight do great issues sometimes depend,” quoted in James Eayrs, “The Round Table Movement in Canada, 1909–1920,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 38, (1957): 2. See also Carrol Quigley, “The Round Table Groups in Canada, 1908–38,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 43, (1962): 204–24. On the activities of the Round Table in Canada, see also Walter Nimocks, “Lord Milner’s ‘Kindergarten’ and the Origins of the Round Table Movement,” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 43, (1964): 507–20.

The decision by the London group to place the control of the Canadian end of the journal into the hands of the Milnerites Willison, Walker, Glazebrook and Peacock irritated Curtis, who warned his friends that those people, even if being “second to none,” differed from the Kindergarten on the point of strategy:

Now if we succeed in getting this organisation to agree to the main features of our policy, well and good; but if not, we shall be put in the position of a definite rupture with some of our best friends, and we shall then have to set the work to create a separate organization.¹³²

The Dominion groups enjoyed in fact a semi-autonomous existence and became mainly editorial committees for the journal. The newly established movement appeared to Kerr as formed by “loosely correlated centres of constructive imperialism, each pursuing a course suited to the peculiar need of its own Dominion.”¹³³

9. ‘Constructive’ imperialists, tariff reformers, the Round Table, and the formation of an ‘imperial ideology’

It is possible to identify three main socio-historical interpretations in the study of Edwardian Imperial ideology. First, what has been called ‘social’ or ‘constructive’ imperialism, according to which the Imperial idea was the expression of a system of social discipline and class mediation, in the protection of the interests of the ‘establishment’. According to the Liberal journalist and economist John A. Hobson—who considered Curtis’s *The Commonwealth of Nations* as an “impudent piece of mental jugglery”—the formation of an Imperial ideology in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries acknowledged the emergence of the social question, in response to which the process of overseas expansion, and the formation of a political ideology supporting it, was fostered by specific social classes: armament and export industrialists, owners of shipping companies, leaders of professional groups, overseas investors, and financial speculators. With the publication in 1902 of *Imperialism: A Study*, Hobson’s views exercised a very attractive appeal to generations of historians, with minor variations of the theme.¹³⁴

¹³² Lionel Curtis, *Memorandum of 18 May 1910*, RTP, c 776, 64–72.

¹³³ Philip Kerr, *The Question of Policy*, 1910, LP, 14, 272–88. Simon J. Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System 1876–1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹³⁴ J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (London: 1902); RTP, c 817, 139–60.

The roots of British social imperialism lay, according to Semmel, in the Nineteenth century history of the working class, and the fact that from the 1880s Great Britain had to deal with the socialist question, which was “besetting the Continent.” In facing the socialist threats, a section of the aristocracy and the middle classes turned to social imperialism, “to draw all classes together in defence of the nation and the Empire,” and to prove that class interests were “inseparable from those of the nation.” MacKenzie has studied, in this regard, the crucial role played by late Victorian and Edwardian institutions (schools, armed forces, and the churches) in supporting the doctrines of Imperial unity and the superiority of the British race. Such doctrines aimed to give the working classes an alternative ideal to social justice, and to integrate them into a social order still dominated by an aristocratic upper class.¹³⁵

According to a second school, the Empire “was a form of aristocratic escapism.” Imperial service “helped indigent peers to restore their finances, and provided them with an opportunity to re-create overseas an idealised world of aristocratic supremacy already in decline in Britain.” Imperial service could also be seen—as Adonis has pointed out—as a special occasion to advance the political careers at home of aristocrats who would otherwise have found it difficult to emerge within the established and traditional parties. In both cases, the Imperial ideology “reinforced the image of the aristocracy as a governing class.”¹³⁶

A third school—represented by Cain and Hopkins—identifies in Imperial ideology the notion of “gentlemanly capitalism,” and locates the formation of consent “within the higher reaches of the service sector of the economy.” The representation of Empire was thus based on “gentility rather than industry,” portraying an Imperial world of “country life on estates and plantations, and social gatherings under tropical verandas.”¹³⁷

¹³⁵ On the close relationship between state interference in the economy to promote industrialisation in the context of a successfully appeased working class, and imperialism abroad, see Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform*, 13, 19, 22–24; J. M. Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880–1960* (Manchester: 1984), 254–58; J. M. Mackenzie ed., *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: 1986), 4.

¹³⁶ Andrew S. Thompson, “Imperial Ideology in Edwardian Britain,” in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 4; D. Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 391–93, 420–29, 558–59, 594–605; Andrew Adonis, *Making Aristocracy Work: The Peerage and the Political System in Britain, 1884–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 210–39, 276–79.

¹³⁷ Thompson, “Imperial Ideology,” 4; J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, vol. 1, *Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (Harlow: 1993), 45–46;

A challenge to a sociological interpretation of Edwardian imperialism has come from Andrew S. Thompson, who argues that instead of reflecting the influence of social and economic interests in the formation of an Imperial ideology, Edwardian imperialism was an “expression of a particular conception of Empire which came to the forefront of British politics in the years during and after the Boer war.” Edwardian imperialism was ‘Britannic’, in the sense that

it was rooted in a set of cultural assumptions about the affinities which were thought to exist within the Empire of settlement, animated by the fear of accelerating foreign competition, and predicated upon a belief that closer relations with the self governing Dominions would enhance Britain’s economic and military strength.¹³⁸

Edwardian imperialists were not organized into a single political movement, nor did they elaborate a unitarian political doctrine. They were scattered in a multitude of relatively small organizations, each fostering a specific agenda, and divided between two fundamentally rival forms of political action, both at the domestic and at the Imperial levels. Among these organizations, ‘constructive’ and ‘free trade’ imperialists were at the extremes of the spectrum, and the Imperial ideology provided them a common ground only for the consolidation of Anglo-Dominion relations for security reasons. In their fiscal, economic, political and philosophical outlooks these organizations marked a fragmentation of the Imperial ideology.¹³⁹

Green, E. H. H., “Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Economic Policy 1880 1914: The Debate over Bimetallism and Protectionism,” in *Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Imperialism: The New Debate on Empire*, Raymond E. Dumett ed. (London and New York: Longman, 1999), 44 67.

¹³⁸ Thompson, “Imperial Ideology,” 4; The term ‘Britannic Empire’ was used by the publicist, journalist and Imperial theorist, Richard Jebb, to refer to the self governing colonies. Jebb travelled through these colonies between 1898 and 1901 and again in 1906, and became an influential writer on the subject of colonial nationalism and its implications for Imperial affairs. In 1913 he published *The Britannic Question*, and the following year he financed the short lived journal *Britannic Review*. Although he was not the only imperialist to refer to the English speaking colonies as the “Britannic Empire,” others favoured Sir Charles Dilke and Sir John Seeley’s phrase, “Greater Britain”: Richard Jebb, “Imperial Organization,” in *The Empire and the Century*, C. S. Goldman ed. (London: 1905), 332 50.

¹³⁹ Thompson, “Imperial Ideology,” 4. Imperial policy in Edwardian Britain was discussed mainly in an extra parliamentary context, as shown by the proliferation of imperialist organisations outside organized parties. For a debate, see F. Coetzee, *For Party Or Country: Nationalism and the Dilemmas of Popular Conservatism in*

The rivalry between free trade imperialists—supporting Imperial unity, but opposing the direct involvement of the government in promoting it—and constructive imperialists—“harnessing the power of the State to mobilize more effectively the manpower and resources of the Britannic Empire”—weakened their impact on Imperial reforms. While the Navy League supported free trade, the Tariff Reform League was the leading organization of constructive imperialism. Groups like the ‘Co-efficients’, the Primrose League, the Overseas Club and the advocates of ‘national efficiency’ scuffled to find common ground.¹⁴⁰

Tariff Reformers advocated a change in the economic relations of the Empire, by the adoption of the tariff as an instrument “to consolidate and develop the resources of the Empire, and to defend the industries of the United Kingdom.” In opposing free trade they also raised strong reservations against the international role of the City of London as the main financial and trade centre of the world. Free trade was seen by them as a challenge to the consolidation of a ‘Britannic’ community, and as an instrument to expose the British market to the damaging effects of unfair foreign competition. Free trade would strengthen the centrifugal forces active on the periphery of the Empire, and bring the economies of the Dominions into a self-damaging competition.¹⁴¹

Edwardian England (Oxford: 1990); R. J. Scally, *The Origins of the Lloyd George Coalition: The Politics of Social Imperialism, 1900 1918* (Princeton, NJ: 1975).

¹⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, 9. Liberal Imperialists were in favour of free trade but played a marginal role in promoting Imperial unity during the Edwardian period, see: H. C. G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists. The Ideas and Politics of a Post Gladstonian Elite* (Oxford: 1973), 170 71; T. Boyle, “The Liberal Imperialists, 1892 1906,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 52, 125, (May 1979): 66 67. On tentative alliances of imperialist groups, see B. Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social Imperialist Thought, 1895 1914* (London: 1960); R. J. Scally, *The Origins of the Lloyd George Coalition: The Politics of Social Imperialism, 1900 1918* (Princeton, NJ: 1975); Anne Summers, “The Character of Edwardian Nationalism: Three Popular Leagues,” in *Nationalist and Racialist Movements in Britain and Germany Before 1914*, Paul Kennedy and Anthony Nicholls eds. (London: 1981); Andrew Thompson, *Thinking Imperially? Imperial Pressure Groups and the Idea of Empire in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain*, PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1994.

¹⁴¹ Constitution of the TRL, undated, MaP, 216, 398 9; W. A. S. Hewins, *The Apologia of an Imperialist: Forty Years of Empire Policy* (London: 1929), vol. 1, 5; J. Biggs Davison, *George Wyndham: A Study in Toryism* (London: 1951), 80; J. A. Thompson, “George Wyndham: Toryism and Imperialism,” in *Edwardian Conservatism: Five Studies in Adaptation*, J. A. Thompson and A. Mejia eds. (London: 1988), 119; Hewins, *The Apologia of an*, 52 3.

The Tariff Reform League aimed to transform the British Empire into a global economic bloc comparable to the United States, with the introduction of customs duties—25s per quarter on grain and flour, 5% on meat and dairy produce, 10% on manufactures—and the exemption of Empire products from all these charges. The Imperial preference agenda was abandoned in favour of simple protectionism following the 1910 defeat of the Conservative party.¹⁴²

Liberal Imperialists were committed to free trade, maintaining that it was efficiency and not tariffs which would increase exports. In fact, financial rather than industrial interests were heavily represented among Liberal imperialists. The relative decline of British industry appeared more tolerable than the replacement of London as world financial centre.¹⁴³

Tariff reformers encouraged the creation of a system of mutual tariff preferences in order to develop the economic and industrial supremacy of the Empire as a whole, recognizing the different degrees of industrial development of its component parts, and the necessity to leave under the control of each Dominion some mechanisms for tariffs regulation. It was not envisaged that there would be a customs union—Chamberlain abandoned the idea of a *Zollverein* for a system of mutual tariff preferences—for the reason that it would have undermined the industrial development of the most backward parts of the Empire, where production was mainly agricultural. They did not envisage mere protectionist measures, because their aim was not to build a compartment-tight Empire, but to achieve closer political union through financial measures.¹⁴⁴

Tariff reformers supported a public policy aimed at the economic and social cohesion of the Empire as a whole, subordinating to it the defence of British vital economic interests. This was a public Imperial policy which free traders would oppose ardently. Tariff reformers shared

¹⁴² Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation*, 218 21; Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social Imperial Thought 1895 1914* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), 126 27; Peter J. Cain, “Political Economy in Edwardian England: The Tariff Reform Controversy,” in *The Edwardian Age: Conflict and Stability 1900 1914*, Alan O’Day ed. (London: Macmillan, 1979), 41 44.

¹⁴³ Semmel, *Imperialism*, 61 2, 102 04, 146 50, 168 69; Anne Summers, “The Character of Edwardian Nationalism: Three Popular Leagues,” in *Nationalist and Racialist*, Kennedy and Nicholls, 71; Scally, *The Origins*, 61, 63 64, 71, 73 74, 89; Searle, *The Quest for National*, 146 48.

¹⁴⁴ Tariff Commission Memorandum, “The problems of the Imperial conference and the policy of preference,” 18 May 1911, Tariff Commission Papers, TC1 8/2, 10, London School of Economics; Lecture by Hewins at a meeting of the canvassing Committee of the Primrose League, 17 June 1907, MaP 129, 78.

Milner's view that the action of the State should be directed at the development of British industry through the use of tariffs. Milner presented the agenda of tariff reformers as part of a wider programme of social reforms including old age pensions schemes, social insurance, and technical education. In the face of the challenge of international power politics, Dominion nationalism and internal decline, the traditional British liberal policy of *laissez-faire* appeared to them completely ineffective. It was a "policy of drift" according to H. A. Gwynne, who was calling for a "clear lead from government." The "Doctrine of Development" advocated by Milner and disseminated from the columns of J. L. Garvin's *Observer*, assigned to the government a central role in economic planning and social reforms, thus refuting a tradition of liberal thinking.¹⁴⁵

Constructive imperialists were aware that the cost of an Imperial defence able to retain British naval supremacy could not be supported by existing resources, and that only the use of indirect taxation—tariffs—could meet the needs. On the contrary, free trade imperialists generally advocated the reduction of public expenditure, and suggested a more rational and efficient use of current revenues, eventually raising a public loan for naval rearmament.¹⁴⁶

The combination of restricted government and free trade was an ideological manifestation of British economic, financial, political and military hegemony during the Nineteenth century. The picture of Britain as the 'workshop of the world' persisted into the early Twentieth century when, according to Semmel, "the margin of British naval supremacy was steadily being eroded, international rivalries were intensifying, and British industry was experiencing relative decline." Constructive imperialists presented a policy of protectionism because of the challenge to British economic hegemony by Germany and the United States.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Hewins, *The Apologia of an Imperialist*, 53 4; "Unionists and the Empire," speech delivered in Edinburgh, 15 Nov. 1907, in Alfred Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, 65; "Tariff Reform," speech delivered in Tunbridge Wells, 24 Oct. 1907, in *ibidem*, 10; Hewins, *The Apologia of an Imperialist*, 60; H. A. Gwynne, "The Proper Distribution of the Population of the Empire," in *Compatriots' Club Lectures*, J. L. Garvin ed., First Series (London: 1905), 226 7; Scally, *The Origins of the Lloyd George*, 117. For a discussion, see Michael Freedon, *The New Liberalism: An Ideology of Social Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

¹⁴⁶ See *Minutes of the Navy League Executive Committee*, 29 Oct. 1906, 5 Nov. 1906, 22 April 1907, 9 May and 13 May 1907, SCAP; *The Navy League Journal*, (July 1907); *The Navy League Journal*, (Aug. 1908); "The Policy of the Navy League," *The Navy*, (Nov. 1910): 302.

¹⁴⁷ B. Semmel, *The Rise of Free Trade Imperialism: Classical Political Economy, the Empire of Free Trade and Imperialism, 1750 1850* (Cambridge: 1970), 9, 29,

Constructive imperialists had their highest influence on British public opinion in the aftermath of the Second Anglo-Boer War, Thomson observed, “when Britain appeared isolated in the international community, and its Empire seemed particularly vulnerable to rival foreign powers.” However, the creation of a system of international alliances with Japan in 1902, France in 1904, and Russia in 1907, relaxed the external pressure. The success in the Second Anglo-Boer War, the achievement of South African unification, and the fact that the Empire as a whole received thirty five per cent of Britain’s exports and generated twenty five per cent of Britain’s imports, undermined the case for Imperial preference. Imperial economic self-sufficiency appeared a remote aim.¹⁴⁸

A planned growth of the economies of the Dominions and Dependencies would have offered British industrial production a considerable and constantly expanding market for their products. Matthew White Ridley, chairman of the Tariff Reform League, maintained that Britain was not an “island trying to trade with the world, but a world Empire certain of trade within itself.” However, from the moment in which the tariff reform campaign was launched by Chamberlain in May 1903, it became manifest that its prospects of success depended on Canada’s preparedness to allow British exports to penetrate its defensive tariff policy in exchange for eased access to the British market.¹⁴⁹

Constructive imperialists, Thompson argued, “looked to Germany for ideas and inspiration, and embraced a neo-Hegelian view of the State as a creative and dynamic agency which had a key role of play in the Empire’s consolidation.” However, the British cult of free trade and self-limitation of State intervention in the economic process frustrated their expectations. The Edwardian State was, according to Thompson, still anchored to the tradition of *laissez-faire* and designed on the assumption that the component parts of the Empire were too heterogeneous, experiencing

146 50. On free trader imperialists, see J. Gallagher and R. Robinson, “The Imperialism of Free Trade,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd Series, 6, 1, (1953).

¹⁴⁸ Thompson, “Imperial Ideology,” 13; Hayes, *Modern British Foreign Policy, 1880 1939* (London: 1979), 83; D. Schreuder, “Colonial Nationalism and ‘Tribal Nationalism’: Making the White South African State, 1899 1910,” in *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism*, Eddy and Schreuder, 214; J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688 1914* (Harlow: 1993), 164.

¹⁴⁹ R. A. Rempel, *Unionists Divided: Arthur Balfour, Joseph Chamberlain and the Unionist Free Traders* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles Archon, 1972), 17; Balfour to A. Chamberlain, 10 Sept. 1904, quoted in Max Beloff, *Britain’s Liberal Empire. Imperial Sunset, 1897 1921*, vol. 1 (Oxford: 1969), 96; “An open letter to the electors of Stalybridge and Dunkenfield, 1904,” M. W. Ridley, Ridley Papers, ZRI 25/98, Northumberland Record Office.

different stages of industrial development, to sustain a single and centrally directed economic plan. Any such plan would strengthen the centrifugal forces already active in the Dominions, and bring about the break-up of the Empire.¹⁵⁰

Widespread support for free trade was perhaps well represented in the landslide Liberal victory—the last triumph for the Liberal party—of 1906, gained by Campbell-Bannerman on a free trade *versus* tariff reform campaign. In a speech at Bolton on 15 October 1903 he declared that

we are satisfied that it is right because it gives the freest play to individual energy and initiative and character and the largest liberty both to producer and consumer. We say that trade is injured when it is not allowed to follow its natural course, and when it is either hampered or diverted by artificial obstacles...We believe in free trade because we believe in the capacity of our countrymen. That at least is why I oppose protection root and branch, veiled and unveiled, one sided or reciprocal. I oppose it in any form. Besides we have experience of fifty years, during which our prosperity has become the envy of the world.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Thompson, “Imperial Ideology,” 14; A. J. Marrison, “The Development of a Tariff Reform Policy during Joseph Chamberlain’s First Campaign, May 1903 Feb. 1904,” in *Trade and Transport: Essays in Economic History in Honour of T. S. Willan*, W. H. Chaloner and B. M. Ratcliffe eds. (Manchester: 1977), 232; B. Porter, *The Lion’s Share: a Short History of British Imperialism, 1850 1983* (Harlow: 1984), 190; Peter Marsh, *Joseph Chamberlain: Entrepreneur in Politics* (New Haven, CT: 1994), 408 13; M. Havinden and D. Meredith, *Colonialism and Development: Britain and its Tropical Colonies* (London: 1993), 88; H. Pelling, *Popular Politics and Society in late Victorian Britain* (London: 1968), 1 18; Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 75 79; J. Harris, “Society and the State in Twentieth Century Britain,” in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750 1950*, vol. 3, *Social Agencies and Institutions*, ed. F. M. L. Thompson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 64 68; Brian Howard Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom: Stability and Change in Modern Britain* (Oxford: 1982), 83 44, 108 09.

¹⁵¹ Wilson, *CB: A Life of*, 407 13. “Expenditure calls for taxes,” Campbell Bannerman remarked, “and taxes are the plaything of the tariff reformer. Militarism, extravagance, protection are weeds which grow in the same field, and if you want to clear the field for honest cultivation you must root them all out. For my own part, I do not believe that we should have been confronted by the spectre of protection if it had not been for the South African war. Depend upon it that in fighting for our open ports and for the cheap food and material upon which the welfare of the people and the prosperity of our commerce depend we are fighting against those powers, privileges, injustices, and monopolies which are unalterably opposed to the triumph

According to Thompson, “the most serious opposition to constructive imperialism came less from the radical or progressive wings of the Liberal party than from within the ranks of imperialists themselves,” who remained within the mainstream cult for free trade, “which helps to explain the extraordinary resilience of free trade imperialism up to and indeed beyond the First World War.”¹⁵²

The Round Table’s negative attitude towards Chamberlain’s and Milner’s campaign for tariff reform as a step towards closer union strengthens Thompson’s conclusion. It represented one of the most serious problems that the organization had to face. “The problem of Empire is a political problem,” *The Round Table* stated in June 1913, “to be determined not by the standard of wealth” but by that of its cohesion. Its past history and future destiny could not be tested “in the economic crucible.”¹⁵³

The Round Table identified in tariff reform a protectionist expedient which would have jeopardized Imperial unity by increasing the cost of living and strengthening the centrifugal forces already active within the Dominions. Austen Chamberlain tried in vain to involve the Round Table in his wild campaign, attending a dinner in 1913, “determined to let them know as politely as I could that...they had...done a lot of mischief and to beg them in future not to ‘crab’ any movement which led in the direction of Imperial Union.” Chamberlain thought that “it is time that our children should assist us,” and was “sick of being told that this or that Round Table man or the Round Table as a whole does not want Preference,” blaming for that Curtis, “of whom they have a tremendously high opinion.” On economic and financial matters the prevailing views of the Round Table were, in fact, inspired chiefly by Hitchens and Brand—who in 1921 republished in *War and National Finance* his *Round Table* articles. These were based on a late Nineteenth century doctrine of dependency of politics on economics, and of economics on financial capitalism, and of the international gold standard and balanced budgets as conditions for rising standards of living.

Curtis was “certainly very much in the earnest and wholly unselfish,” but according to Chamberlain, was imbued “with a delightful dogmatism and perhaps sometimes has not seen as far into a problem as he thinks.” Curtis was a newcomer, and because he played a role in South Africa he thought he was able to “settle a policy for us on every conceivable

of democratic principles,” (“Sir H. Campbell Bannerman at the Albert Hall,” *The Times*, 22 Dec. 1905, 7).

¹⁵² Thompson, “Imperial Ideology,” 14.

¹⁵³ “Ethics of Empire,” *The Round Table*, 11, (June 1913): 485.

subject.” “If the cobbler would stick to his last,” Chamberlain bluntly stated, “I should have no complaint,” since he

at once annoys and amuses me when he tells me that what Birmingham needs is a parliament for the Midland counties, and he does not amuse me at all, but simply irritates me nay rather, angers me when, because he thinks he can get organic union without our policy, I have him flung at my head at every turn as saying that Preference is unnecessary, undesirable, bad.¹⁵⁴

In refusing to support Chamberlain’s tariff reform campaign—which had already split the Unionist party—the Round Table lost the support of Chamberlain’s circles. In a letter to Jebb, Kerr explained that the Round Table decided to avoid “taking side in the tariff controversy,” because they believed they would better serve their case “by ventilating the non-tariff case for Imperial Union among Free Traders who regard every argument coming from Tariff Reformer as suspect.” The entrance of the free trader Cecil into the inner group at the end of 1910 helped Kerr and Curtis to prevent the Round Table from joining the Imperial preference propaganda.¹⁵⁵

In spite of Milner and Amery, the inner circle of the Round Table was in fact for free trade. In 1909 Buchan joined the Political Economy Club, founded in 1821 to support the principles of free trade. Other members included Maynard Keynes and the editor of *The Spectator*, John St. Loe Strachey. Brand and Lionel Hitchens joined it towards the end of the First World War, by which time Buchan had resigned. Another club joined by leading members of the Kindergarten, and free trade oriented, was the Chatham Dining Club, created “to bring together for the exchange of ideas men of various professions and political creeds who are anxious to overcome the obstacles in the way of the effective consolidation of the British Empire.” They included Basil Blackwood, Kerr, Brand and Edward Wood, later Lord Halifax.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Austen Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside: An Epistolary Chronicle, 1906 1914* (London: 1936), 553; Austen Chamberlain to Kerr, 24 Apr. 1917, LP, 34, 13; Philip G. Wigley, *Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth: British Canadian Relations, 1917 1926* (Cambridge: 1977), 7.

¹⁵⁵ Kerr to Jebb, 26 Feb. 1912, quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 168; Kerr to Curtis, 7 Oct. 1910, LP, 2, 124 6.

¹⁵⁶ *Proceedings of the Political Economy Club* (London: 1921); *Records of the Chatham Dining Club 1910 1914* (London: 1915). Buchan addressed the club on “Democracy and Representative Government,” reprinted in John Buchan’s *Collected Poems* (Aberdeen: 1996), 118 129. Other speakers included F. S. Oliver and Dougal Malcolm. Curtis, Kerr, Brand, Craik, Hitchens and Grigg figured in

The belief that Imperial union would be achieved through ever closer economic rather than political integration was, however, denied by facts. The failure of trade diversion policies, as implemented after the 1932 Ottawa Conference, showed how imperial economic autarky in fact hastened, instead of halting, the process of imperial disintegration. Economic co-operation by itself, on the basis of a functionalist approach but without political union, proved manifestly unstable and provisional.¹⁵⁷

The majority of the British public remained, in fact, opposed to tariff reform. British interests as a manufacturer, trader and banker went beyond the Empire, and Cecil thought that the Unionists' commitment to tariff reform would "permanently keep them out of power." Amery, on the contrary, thought that the Round Table's refusal to support tariff reform was based on their intention to convert Liberal opinion, "believing that they had the Conservatives already behind them." As a concession to Milner's and Chamberlain's pressure, they suggested an extension of the principle of Imperial Preference and ever closer involvement of the Dominions' 'agent-general'—a sort of colonial representative and plenipotentiary—in the deliberations of the Imperial Cabinet.¹⁵⁸

10. *The Round Table's ideological identity*

The Round Table had its cultural roots in Athens of the Fifth century B.C. rather than in London, partly through the influence that Zimmern had on them, portraying Pericles's funeral epitaph as the most advanced expression of civic spirit inspiring public service. Their classical Oxford education, strongly imbued by neo-Platonic doctrines and the Aristotelian concept of politics as the manifestation of artistic creation at the highest level, brought them to believe that the values of the Athenian civilization had found their full reincarnation in the British Empire. The fault of Greek civilization was, according to Zimmern, that individualism "consciously and intellectually pursued by a whole nation," led "ultimately to

Buchan's eclogue *Ordeal By Marriage*, 1915, a pastiche of a Round Table Moot where the non combatant bachelor 'Knights' of the Round Table meet to discuss a new kind of organic union in an ordeal by marriage. A copy of the original *Ordeal by Marriage* can be found in the Lothian Papers.

¹⁵⁷ [H.V. Hodson], "Empire Trade and World Trade," *The Round Table*, 27, 107, (June 1937): 514-17. Milner and Amery were both closer to Jebb than to Curtis and Kerr on the question of economic integration of the Empire.

¹⁵⁸ Cecil to Kerr, 3 Oct. 1911, RTP, Cecil file; Alan Sykes, *Tariff Reform in British Politics, 1903-13* (Oxford: 1979); Amery to J. Conway, 21 Feb. 1952, RTP, Editorial Committee file.

stagnation.” Classical Greece was not able to produce an ideal which “men would die for.” In writing on “Politics and Economics in Ancient Greece,” Zimmern wanted “to make people think about the nature of the XXth century,” turning to Greek history “as something not less alive than the present.”¹⁵⁹

The British Empire was for Zimmern the most modern of political institutions. Small nations were no longer able to represent the interests of nationalities, which could be defended only by empires, on condition that they were “held together by the constant and willing co-operation of firmly based and self-respecting nationalities.” The principle of self-government as developed and applied within the British Empire provided a model for integrating peoples of different cultures, religions and languages. “An Empire, in the 20th century sense of the term, is a union between self-governing political units of so intimate a character as to make war between them inconceivable,” Zimmern claimed. The British Empire was “by far the greatest instrument the world has ever seen for the preservation of lasting peace upon the planet,” developing in “agglomerations of self-respecting nationalities bound together by a common patriotism.” British imperialism was, according to Zimmern, “the greatest instrument the world has ever seen for good government.” It was “the greatest political instrument for human happiness,” since it satisfied “Nationalistic aspirations.”¹⁶⁰

Zimmern was the main interpreter of Gladstone’s late Nineteenth century ‘broad church’ Liberal Anglicanism, viewing the historical process in teleological terms: the realization of a moral state of society based on the Sermon of the Mount. This vision was Herbert Butterfield’s main target in *The Whig Interpretation of History*.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Zimmern’s notes on “The Greeks and their Civilisation,” 20 June 1905, ZP, 135, 88 89; Zimmern to Wallas, 5 Jan. 1910, ZP, 1/46, 8; Toynbee to Zimmern, 9 Aug. 1930, ZP, 24, 51 2.

¹⁶⁰ Zimmern’s notes on “United Britain: A Study in XXth Century Imperialism,” [1905], ZP, 139, 157 8, 163, 144 5.

¹⁶¹ C. T. McIntyre, “Toynbee’s Philosophy of History in his Christian Period,” in *Toynbee: A Reappraisal*, T. McIntyre and M. Perry eds. (Toronto: 1989); G. Studdert Kennedy, “Christianity, Statecraft and Chatham House,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 5, 1, (1994). Toynbee’s religious views are outlined in his *A Historian’s Approach to Religion* (Oxford: 1956). Zimmern’s father was a German Jew who left Germany after 1848, his mother had a Huguenot background, and he married the daughter of an Anglican pastor. Zimmern’s religious views are expressed in *Spiritual Values and World Affairs* (Oxford: 1939), being the collection of a series of lectures delivered at Oxford in 1939.

The Round Table exemplified, according to Lavin, “the aristocratic racial tone” of British imperialism “in a peculiarly refined form,” not as a “hereditary élite but one of youth, intelligence, and (for some) wealth.” “Aristocratic patronage, allied with intellectual ability...attracted big businessmen by providing them with a patriotic ideal higher than Mammon.” Curtis’s influence derived from the social base of the Round Table: “He divided his time between high-minded austerity in rural Ledbury, high politics in London, and high society at country-house weekends, and became adept at putting each aspect of his life to the service of the other.” Curtis believed that the way to spread a new idea was, according to Frank Underhill, “to capture the élite and convert them.”¹⁶²

The Round Table developed and propagated a political ideology which would promote and accompany the transition from British leadership of the Empire into an equal partnership among its component parts. The alternative to organic union would be disruption, as happened to the Athenian ‘insular’ Empire, finally defeated, on the sea, by the alliance of two ‘continental’ powers, Sparta and Persia. The invention of the principle of representation and of federal government, they thought, were specific contributions which the British political tradition had offered to the development of the principle of self-government invented and experimented with in Athens, making thus possible its application to the national and then to the supranational levels. The deep meaning of their mission sprang from their awareness of living at a time of crisis, which could be overcome only through the extension and application of the democratic principle. That principle needed to apply beyond the limits of the nation-State, since such an entity was apparently unable to offer the instruments for a peaceful settlement of conflicts among social classes and nations. If it were not possible to achieve that goal within the English-speaking peoples, they thought, which were the most advanced in the art of responsible and democratic government, nobody else would succeed.

The British Empire appeared to the Round Table as the most congenial organization of States to start with, in order to create and consolidate a federal nucleus set for enlargement. Through Anglo-American co-operation and alliance it would be possible to restore the international economic and political stability needed to give time for federal ideas to take root. Economic and political co-operation between Great Britain and her thirteen former colonies was then regarded by the Round Table as the only practical solution to the problem of world

¹⁶² Lavin, *From Empire to*, 118 9.

instability, inherent in the political division of the world into sovereign States. Supporting the case for institutional co-operation among the English-speaking nations, the Round Table did not reject or abandon the federal scheme for the Commonwealth or for parts of it, even including the United States; but being realist, they looked at it as the final goal, and spent all their energies trying to achieve a better standard of co-operation among the English-speaking nations, and particularly between Great Britain and the United States.

If Curtis in 1913 thought that it would take “5-15 years of steady unsensational work” before the conditions for federation were ripe, Amery feared that it was not possible “to carry out federalism merely by letting the existing system break down.” Federation could come only when there was “a practical federal spirit in the air, in other words men who have been accustomed to co-operate on quasi-federal lines.” Kerr, on the contrary, thought that since the Dominions would soon be asked to make financial and military sacrifices, all depended on their readiness to join the federation. After four years of work, Curtis recorded with complacency that it was possible to notice a “change...in the attitude of public men and of the press” towards Imperial questions. However Curtis was aware that the Round Table had “as yet no power to control” the “tremendous and swiftly moving events” which may “rush upon us like a thief in the night and precipitate a crisis which public opinion has not yet been prepared to face.”¹⁶³

According to Lloyd George the Round Table was “a very powerful combination—in its own way perhaps the most powerful in the country. Each member of the Group brings to its deliberations certain definite and important qualities, and behind the scenes they have much power and influence.” If Hankey regarded the Round Table “among the most influential” of contemporary “political congeries,” Sir Henry Wilson, intimate of Neville Chamberlain, thought that their influence was “poisonous.” Joseph Caillaux, on the other hand, thought that the Round Table was a group of aristocratic nationalists aiming “to restore

¹⁶³ Curtis to Grigg, 17 Oct. 1913, RTP, Curtis 807, 36; Amery to Jebb, 21 May 1912, quoted in May, *The Round Table*, 47; Amery to Kerr, 26 Jan 1911, RTP, Amery file; Kerr to Amery, 27 Jan. 1911, *ibidem*; Jebb to Curtis, 15 Apr. 1913, quoted in May, *The Round Table*, 96; Jebb, *The Britannic Question*, 77 8; Curtis, “Memorandum on the Conduct of Round Table Work during the War,” 19 Oct. 1914, RTP, c 779, 102 13; [Curtis], *The Round Table Movement. Its Past and its Future: Address Delivered in the Senate House of the University to the ‘Round Table’ Groups at Toronto, 18 November 1913* (Letchworth: 1913), 30 1.

simultaneously the tottering power of their caste and Great Britain's world supremacy."¹⁶⁴

The method employed by the Round Table to influence the policy-making process was constructed in such a way that from different and apparently independent sectors of British society there was convergence towards support for a specific policy which, within a defined temporary arch assumed an hegemonic character. The coordination of public and private interventions by the Round Table in support of a specific political agenda within the 'quality press'—*The Times* and *The Observer*—opinion makers' journals—such as *The Quarterly Review*, *The Nineteenth Century and After*, *The Economist* and *The Spectator*—publishing companies—G. Bell and Sons, Faber and Faber, Macmillan, Oxford University Press—academic institutions—universities, All Souls, New College, Balliol, Nuffield, and the Rhodes Trust—specific political clusters—within existing political parties and the institutions—built consent for the advocated policy. If the single effect of *Round Table's* influence within a specific sector of British public opinion was limited, the cumulative effect of this tactical device became paramount. The anonymity of *Round Table's* articles allowed the journal to multiply its impact on public opinion, bringing the whole weight of the movement, and not just that of a clearly identified author, behind the advocated solution.

¹⁶⁴ William Wallace, *The Foreign Process in Britain* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1976), 88, 100; Lord Riddell, *Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After, 1918-23* (New York: 1934), 8; S. Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets* (London: 1970), vol. 1, 422-3; R. R. James, *Memoirs of a Conservative* (London: 1969), 138; Joseph Caillaux, *Whither France? Whither Europe?* (London: 1923), 5; David Davies, "'Round Table' or World Commonwealth?" *Nineteenth Century*, 117, (1935): 47-55. Riddell, who was in charge of relations with the press, recorded that he received from Kerr, "in default of Lloyd George...inspiration for my communications with the press," (Riddell, *Intimate Diary*, 278).

CHAPTER IV

THE ROUND TABLE, IRELAND, THE WAR, AND IMPERIAL REFORMS

1. The Round Table and the 1911 Imperial Conference

While busy forming new groups in Australia, Curtis on 19 July 1911 was asked by the newly appointed Governor, Lord Islington, to write a memorandum on the coming Imperial Conference, unaware that in the meantime the London group had decided to move in the same direction, producing various memoranda on the subject by Amery, Malcolm, and Kerr. When Curtis presented his memorandum to Islington at the end of August, he was still unaware of the studies prepared by his colleagues, which reached him in early September only, just before he left Australia. The analysis and proposals put forward by Curtis and his colleagues diverged however only in matters of detail.

All agreed that the principle of voluntary co-operation between the Dominions and Britain in the fields of defence and foreign policy would not work in practice, and in the long term it would produce the breaking-down of the Empire. In order to associate the Dominions ever more closely to the direction of foreign policy, the Round Table proposed, as an intermediate measure, a complete separation of the Dominion Department from the rest of the Colonial Office; that the Imperial Conference should be presided over by the Prime Minister and not by the Colonial Secretary, and attended by appropriate British ministers to discuss foreign, defence, Indian and colonial policies. Other proposals were: the creation of a minister and a central office for Imperial affairs, to work in close association with Dominion high commissioners, who were to have enhanced responsibilities; the appointment of Dominion ministers for Imperial affairs collaborating with London, and the creation of an institutional forum—a reformed CID, composed of British ministers and

representatives of the Dominions—for the discussion and formation of British foreign policy.¹

This was the Kindergarten's first attempt to influence the development of Imperial relations. In sending Curtis the studies, Kerr observed that the coincidence of the 1911 Imperial Conference with George V's coronation would have great "psychological effect on the population of Empire," and if "things" were "properly managed" they would be able to "put the finishing strokes to the process of educating the democracies of the Empire up to the point when they will be ready to digest the real doctrine of organic unity which it is our main purpose to promote." Kerr thought that the Conference and coronation, following on from the deadlock between the Liberal and Conservative parties over House of Lords reform, would provide the movement with a chance to press also for home rule all round in Great Britain within the framework of a federal constitutional reform of the Empire. In politics as in battle, Kerr remarked, "one must either go forward or backwards. One cannot stand still. And until one is ready to deliver the great assault one must be content to win positions here and there, and thereby raise the confidence of the army as a whole."²

In forwarding to Islington the memoranda received from London, Curtis was pleased to present the Round Table's case as a strong and coherent plan for concrete action, which in fact materialized in the forwarding in late November to the Colonial Office in London two draft resolutions by the New Zealand Government, calling for "Imperial representation of overseas Dominions with a view to furthering Imperial sentiment, solidarity and interest," and the "reconstitution" of the Colonial Office. Curtis however acted without informing the London group of the special task he was granted by Islington, and of his decision to use Islington as a vehicle to deliver his and other Round Table memoranda to New Zealand's Prime Minister Ward. This independent action by Curtis—

¹ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 89–91; Lionel Curtis, "Memorandum looking at matters that may be discussed with advantage at the 1911 Imperial Conference," LP, 13; John Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887–1911: A Study in Imperial Organization* (London: Longmans, 1967), 135–6, 141–5; Leo Amery, "Notes on the Reorganization of Official Relations between the United Kingdom and the Dominions, and the possible development of the Conference system," LP, 13. By 1911 defence and foreign policy "have already ceased to be," Kerr pointed out, the "sole and exclusive concern of the United Kingdom," Philip Kerr, "The New Problem of Imperial Defence," *The Round Table*, (May 1911): 231–62.

² Kerr to Curtis, 29 July 1910, LP, 11. On the Round Table and home rule, see John Kendle, "The Round Table Movement and 'Home Rule All Round,'" *Historical Journal*, 11, 2, (1968): 332–53.

the first of a series which created a good deal of friction between Curtis and his friends, but which had often been the catalyst for major events—deeply irritated the London group, which thought that in sending to Islington “a new sort of Selborne Memorandum,” Curtis would be bringing “back the discussion to the real matters at issue,” at a time when other Dominion Prime Ministers were not yet ready to accept radical reforms.

Writing to Curtis in a vain attempt to stop him at the eleventh hour, Kerr warned him that unless Ward and Andrew Fisher, Australian Prime Minister, could “put up a decent fight, and force the hands of Laurier, Asquith and Botha and Company and expose in all their nakedness...the facts of the present Imperial situation,” the battle would be lost. The Round Table had still to work very hard before the public became “familiar with the idea of Federation, so that they will be all the more ready to swallow our gospel when it is published.” Kerr recommended therefore to Curtis “caution about the possibility of using the Conference as a lever to focus public attention on the attraction of Federation as the solution of the Imperial Problem.”³

Feeling that “time and the men are against us in 1911,” Kerr resisted Curtis’s pressure to take the occasion of the 1911 Imperial Conference to foster the Round Table’s agenda. The Liberal Government seemed in fact unable to “break fresh ground about the Empire.” Liberals were “quite friendly to the Empire, but definitely opposed to the pushing of ideas for Imperial Federation.” They appeared “somewhat careless about Imperial problems.” It would be appropriate, Kerr warned Curtis, to think “twice before you take any irrevocable step towards forcing a discussion on the Imperial issue in the 1911 Conference.”⁴

The 1911 Imperial Conference seemed to Kerr not the right platform to openly discuss plans for Imperial Federation. It would be “a pity to force a discussion of the real issues, only to get a resolution endorsed by Asquith, Botha and Laurier to the effect that present arrangements work very well, and that no urgent step is necessary, which is precisely what would happen if a weak man or men were to start the discussion in the Conference.” In Kerr’s view thoughtlessness could lead backwards rather than to the progress needed. For that reason he thought that the

value of the opportunity is educational, and I think the opportunity can be seized better outside than inside the Conference...If we wanted to get something done it would be another matter. We don’t; we want to make

³ Kerr to Curtis, 31 Aug., and 14 Oct. 1910, LP, 2.

⁴ Kerr to Curtis, 31 Aug., and 30 Sept., 1910, LP, 2.

people familiar with the ideas of Federation, so that they will be all the more ready to swallow our gospel when it is published.

Kerr's warnings arrived too late. Ward had already received a copy of the *Green Memorandum* and other Round Table documents through Islington and, as will be discussed later, forced the whole question of federation onto the agenda of the 1911 Imperial Conference.⁵

The 1911 Imperial Conference advocated the formation of a single foreign policy for Britain and the Dominions within the CID as the proper institutional seat. It also decided that, in the event of war, the Dominions should put their fleets under the control of the British Admiralty. Many people attributed this diplomatic success to the pressure exerted by *The Round Table* and its editor. In a letter to Kerr's mother on 20 January 1912, Curtis reported that Milner had announced publicly during a dinner for subscribers of the journal that "Philip had altered the whole course of the last Imperial Conference," and that "the immense advance in the attitude of the Imperial Governments in the Dominions in the matter of Foreign Policy was due to his efforts."⁶

The Conference however broke down on institutional questions, raised inexpertly by Ward, who had put forward to the Conference a plan for Imperial federation. Fierce opposition to the federal solution from Asquith, Botha, Laurier and the Colonial Office, as envisaged by Kerr, put an end to the option. Imbued with Curtis's and Amery's ideas on the "ultimate solution," Ward decided, without prior consultation with other Dominion Prime Ministers, or even the Colonial Office, to take a lead in presenting the case for a federal reform of Imperial relations in front of the delegates at the Conference, "making a shocking mess of his Imperial Council proposals." Ward's proposals appeared to Atlee Arthur Hunt, Head of the Australian External Affairs Department, "faulty in design and badly constructed." Ward had presented the case for an Imperial Parliament "in a style that would have discredited a member of a fifth class debating society," dragging the question down "into the depths and kept it sunk by the weight of his disconnected platitudes."⁷

⁵ Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences*, 141 5.

⁶ Philip Kerr, "The New Problem of Imperial Defence," *The Round Table*, 3, (May 1911): 231 62; Kerr to Curtis, 22 Dec. 1910, CP, 210; LP, 9.

⁷ Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences*, Ch. VIII and IX; Hunt to Deakin, 1 June 1911, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 114). Canadian Prime Minister from 1896 to 1911, Sir Wilfrid Laurier regarded the Empire as "a hothouse for the blossoming of autonomous nations, rather than a monolithic, supranational State run from London," (Christopher R. J. Rickerd, "Canada, The Round Table and the Idea of Imperial Federation," in *The Round Table*, Bosco and

Writing on the outcome of the Conference in *The Round Table*, Kerr acknowledged that the hopes for Imperial federation, and therefore for the creation of institutionalized links between the component parts of the Empire, had been completely destroyed by the recognition at the Conference of the separate and sovereign existence of the Dominions. However, according to Kettle the Round Table gave at the Conference a major contribution “to a critical examination of Anglo-Dominion relations,” advocating “the creation of a secretariat free from Colonial Office dictation, the separation of Dominion from crown colony affairs, and the appointment of a Secretary of State for Imperial affairs.” The Conference agreed that the High Commissioners and the Agents General would have increased political responsibilities. It recommended the creation of a Dominions Department and the appointment by the Dominions of cabinet ministers responsible for Imperial affairs. By the 1930s most of the changes that the Round Table suggested at the Conference had in fact been implemented.⁸

If the 1911 Conference appeared to Lord Rosebery as “the germ of a mightier Imperial Council, representing a united Empire in a definite and permanent form,” Asquith thought that the Conference had rejected “centralization” as “increasingly absurd,” and made “disintegration... increasingly impossible.” According to Elliot Crayshaw-Williams, the “recognition of the need for ordered co-operation,” would have produced Imperial federation as inevitable, “if we are to have an Empire in anything more than name.”⁹

Following the diplomatic success of the Conference, the Round Table launched a reform of the CID—as the central institutional body for consultation and coordination for defence, evolving into an embryonic

May, 192). On Deakin, see J. A. La Nauze, *Alfred Deakin, A Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1965); Walter Murdoch, *Alfred Deakin: A Sketch* (Taipei: Bookman, 1999); Judith Brett, *Australian Liberals and the Moral Middle Class: From Alfred Deakin to John Howard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁸ Kettle, *The Round Table*, xv xvi.

⁹ *Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser., Commons, 24, 19 April 1911, col. 959; *The Times*, 20 April 1911; *Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser., Commons, 24, 19 April 1911, col. 973, col. 982; col. 994; *The Annual Register* (London: 1912): 88, 121, 142. Crayshaw Williams had been appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary to Lloyd George in 1910 and had served as Assistant Private Secretary to Churchill at the Colonial Office.

“Cabinet of the Empire”—organizing an effective press campaign through the journal and *The Times*.¹⁰

2. Canada’s naval rearmament and the Committee of Imperial Defence

The Round Table went very close to an astonishing success in late 1911, inspiring Canadian Prime Minister Borden’s naval rearmament programme—with the construction of three dreadnoughts—in contemplation of an “emergency contribution” to the Royal Navy in case of war. In spite of opposition within his own party by the Quebec leader Frederick D. Monk and external attacks by Bourassa, Borden was determined to raise Canada’s international profile as well as his own weight within the Empire. Borden’s scheme was in fact based on his awareness of the strategic weakness of the Empire in the Pacific.

The dimension of the success has to be put in relation to the signing in 1911 of the North American Reciprocity Treaty by Canadian Prime Minister Laurier. Attraction to the United States was, according to Milner, not “consonant with the dignity or self-respect of Canadians.” If Laurier “were a real Independence Man,” Milner told Glazebrook, “he could not be in favour of making over Canada to Taft. And so more power to your elbow and Borden’s elbows, and all the decent Canadians that I know elbows in resisting him.” Milner thought that Laurier’s “policy of flinging Canada...to be all churned up together [with the United States] into one trust-ridden cosmopolitan mash,” would produce catastrophic consequences for the Empire. “As far as Laurier is anything he is against us,” Milner told Glazebrook in 1911. “I always knew it...the greatest danger at present threatening real imperialism is the possible defection of Canada.”¹¹

Imperial federation was in fact for Laurier “out of the question for a French Canadian or for any politician interested in racial harmony in Canada.” The principle of individual liberty, in Imperial relations, meant local self-government. Imperial federation appeared to Laurier as the negation of the principles upon which the Empire was built. While Milner was touring Canada in 1909, Laurier declared in Montreal, at the presence

¹⁰ Edward Grigg, “Canada and the Navy: The Problem as it Appears from London,” *The Round Table*, (Sept. 1912): 627–56; Kendle, *The Round Table*, 111–5.

¹¹ Milner to A. Glazebrook, 28 June 1911, MF, MG 30A43; Milner, *The Nation*, 308.

of the future King George V, that the Canadians were “reaching the day when our parliament will claim equal rights with the British parliament and when the only ties binding us together will be a common flag and a common crown.” Milner was nevertheless aware that “the New Reign” of George V would have seen “the consolidation of this vast Empire, or its disruption.”¹²

Laurier’s opposition to let Canadian troops—after the negative experience of the Second Anglo-Boer War, which saw the participation of Canadian volunteers—to be involved in the European “vortex of militarism,” alarmed Milner who, in writing to Sir Edmund Walker, President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, and prominent figure of the Canadian Round Table, thought that Laurier’s attitude to Imperial affairs was “short-sighted in the extreme and quite fatal to anything like a strengthening of the ties between Canada and the Mother Country.” Walker felt, replying to Milner,

as restive as most Canadians under what remains of our dependent relations with Great Britain; as conscious of our humiliation in most matters settled for us by British diplomacy; as uncertain as to how far we would actually be protected in case of war; as ready for independence if no other honourable and bearable course is possible, but I am not sure that in time a closer relation and one in which we may share in some form in the government of the whole Empire may not be possible.¹³

“I should say that seriously he is devoid of the British feeling for a United Empire,” Lord Minto, Canada’s Governor-General from 1898 to 1904, had warned Joseph Chamberlain in 1900 about Laurier’s aims. Minto suspected that Laurier dreamt “of Canadian independence in some future age.” In Imperial affairs Laurier seemed “unwilling to move either backward or forward,” James Mavor told Curtis. “Any movement that had the appearance of the slightest attempt to diminish the sovereignty of the

¹² Neatby, “Laurier and Imperialism,” 28. Reflecting on his controversial character, Laurier confessed: “I am branded in Quebec as a traitor to the French and in Ontario as a traitor to the English. In Quebec I am branded as a jingo and in Ontario as a separatist. In Quebec I am attacked as an imperialist and in Ontario as an anti imperialist. I am neither. I am a Canadian,” quoted in Michael Bliss, *Right Honourable Men: The Descent of Canadian Politics from Macdonald to Mulroney* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 46. John Dafoe, *Laurier: A Study in Canadian Politics* (Toronto: 1922), 70; Milner to Sir John Willison, 8 May 1910, MF, MG 30D29.

¹³ Walker to Sir R. H. Inglis Pelgrave, 29 Oct. 1910, quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 105; Richard Clippingdale, *Laurier: His Life and World* (Toronto: 1979), 206; Milner to Sir Edmund Walker, 15 June 1911, WP, 9.

Canadian Parliament,” would be “strenuously” opposed by Laurier, and he would “undoubtedly be supported in the country.”¹⁴

The replacement in late 1911 of Laurier—strongly opposed to any form of Imperial reorganization and keen to promote the independence of Canadian naval and foreign policy—with the Conservative Borden gave the Round Table the opportunity to reinforce the direct contacts which Curtis and other members of the Round Table had already established with the new Premier. Though sympathetic to Round Table aims, Borden thought that many Round Tablers “might on occasion fall into a ditch or stumble over a low-lying wall through gazing too intently at the stars.” Borden—who according to Kendle was a “theoretical imperialist”—thought in any way that the Round Table agenda was “impracticable and any advantage too remote and indirect.”¹⁵

The Round Table saw however in Laurier’s 1911 electoral defeat and Borden’s rise to power a sign of a reversal of the policy of closing-up to the United States. “With Canada’s youthful vitality,” Borden had declared during the electoral campaign, “her rapidly increasing population, her marvellous material resources, her spirit of hopefulness and energy, she can place herself within a comparatively brief period in the highest position within this mighty Empire.” It was music for Milner’s ears, who commented: “‘Nothing succeeds like success’, and all the time-servers who have been gibing at Imperialism ever since I can remember, are looking down their noses and beginning to sing quite a different tune.” Milner was however warned by Borden—who owed much to Bourassa for his victory, being the outcome of an “unholy alliance” between French Canadian Nationalists and Conservatives—about “the determination of the Canadian people to maintain unimpaired the control of their own destiny as an autonomous nation within the British Empire.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Minto to Chamberlain, 14 April 1900, (quoted in Guy R. MacLean, “The Imperial Federation Movement in Canada, 1884-1902,” PhD diss., Duke University, 1958, 210; Blair Neatby, “Laurier and Imperialism,” *Canadian Historical Association Report*, (1955): 32, 28; Mavor to Curtis, 24 Aug. 1909, James Mavor Papers, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, 60.

¹⁵ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 128-9; Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences*, 212-4; Borden to Christie, 20 Jan. 1925, quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 281, 119.

¹⁶ John English, *Borden: His Life and World* (Toronto: 1977), 67; Milner to A. Glazebrook, 6 Jan. 1912, MF, MG 30A43; Heath MacQuarrie, “Robert Borden and the Election of 1911,” *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 25, 3, (1959): 284-85; Bennett, *Canada: A North American*, 472; Borden to Milner, 24 Oct. 1911, MP 38. In July 1909, Borden and Milner had met in England, (Quigley, “Round Table Groups,” 209). Stacey, *Age of Conflict*, 168. “It can hardly be

In sending to Borden an annotated copy of the *Green Memorandum* in December 1911, Curtis urged him to take the leadership: "In all human probability the destiny of Canada will be in your hands for some time to come, and that is why I dare to ask you...to find time to digest these results." If Borden accepted the offer made by Churchill, newly appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, to all Dominions to be represented within the CID, Curtis had "no doubt" that Australia, New Zealand and "ultimately South Africa would one by one follow suit."¹⁷

Borden's project to establish a "Canadian Navy as an integral part of the British Navy," was disclosed in April 1912 by Curtis to Wrong, urging his Canadian disciple who had a direct influence on Borden to work in the meantime to strengthen the role of the movement in Canada, by educating the public on "the common responsibility for maintaining the peace of the world." Wrong took up Curtis's invitation and in May left with Kylie to establish on the plains and on the West coast a network of new groups, confident that if Borden took "a strong line...the support of this in both parties" would be "overwhelming." For his part, Wrong urged Curtis to suggest to Churchill that he ask Borden and his Minister of Defence John Douglas Hazen, who were about to leave for a visit in London, "what is best, and not merely what they think Canada will do."¹⁸

Following the successful mission of Kylie and Wrong in the Canadian West to establish branches in Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Victoria, Curtis enthusiastically commented that Wrong had "lit a candle in Canada, which by God's help shall never be put out." Curtis felt "inclined to go into a corner and offer a quiet thanksgiving," since the time had arrived "when it is all important that your great Dominion, which...will outnumber all the

expected," Borden wrote on 4 January 1916 to the Canadian High Commissioner in London, Sir George Perley, "that we shall put 400,000 or 500,000 men in the field and willingly accept the position of having no more voice and receiving no more consideration than if we were toy automata," quoted in Nicholas Mansergh, *The Commonwealth Experience*, vol. 1 (Toronto: 1982), 197.

¹⁷ Curtis to Borden, 19 Dec. 1911, 17 March 1912, (quoted in Gilbert, "Political Influence," 221-22).

¹⁸ Curtis to Wrong, 12 April 1912; Wrong to Curtis, 22 May 1912, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 118-9). "An Empire that will mean anything" to Western Canadians should have been "known not by its roots, but by its fruits," an anonymous commentator of the *Green Memorandum* annotated. There was "little enthusiasm for historical tradition in the Canadian West," since Canada's position was "unique in having a second ally with whom, at almost any time, she may make an alliance." Moreover, "large sections" of the Canadian population looked "upon the Imperial connection with great indifference." To the French Canadian it was "a 'marriage of convenience'," ("Round Table Studies," CP 156/5, 462, 235, 417).

other Dominions put together, should take the lead in saving the Empire.”¹⁹

Kylie was particularly active in following the example of Curtis, “giving lectures in a lot of small places in Ontario.” Kylie had learned from Curtis that Imperial union went far beyond economic or military issues, and that it was a question of “responsibility which rests on us as trustees of civilization in its highest form for establishing and maintaining ordinary relations between different levels of human society.”²⁰

Massey set up groups in St. John, New Brunswick, Halifax, and Nova Scotia. “Groups are coming on well,” Massey reported to Curtis, “two new groups in Toronto, one in Cobalt, in North Bay, and in Almonte. Foundations being laid in Ottawa, Lindsay, Peterborough, even Montreal being re-awakened.” In Quebec “the failure to secure the adhesion of more than one or two French-speaking members,” according to James Eayrs, “was particularly striking. Nor was this for lack of trying.” By the outbreak of war, the Canadian Round Table was organized in thirty-five groups, totalling some three hundred members.²¹

The London group took up Wrong’s suggestion and exploited the occasion of a London visit by Borden, inviting him and his finance Minister Sir George Foster to join them to discuss the question of the Canadian contribution to the Royal Navy on the weekends of 20-21 July at Newmarket and 10-11 August at Cliveden, country residence of Nancy and Waldorf Astor, which would play from then on a prominent role in the Round Table’s activities and in British Imperial and foreign policy.

Borden’s visit produced, according to Amery, an “amazing development of the idea of Imperial partnership,” bringing Canadian ministers to spend “a considerable part of each year in constant attendance at the Foreign Office and the Committee of Imperial Defence.” Intervening in the Commons on July 1912, Amery pressed the Government to give the Dominions “a full and equal voice in our councils” and to place within the

¹⁹ Curtis to Wrong, 6 June 1912, WrP, 1; A. Glazebrook to G. A. Warburton, 30 June 1916, RTP, c.818; Curtis to Wrong, 12 April 1912, WrP, 1.

²⁰ Curtis to Kylie, 10 Jan. 1913, RTP, 796.

²¹ A. Glazebrook to Milner, 20 Nov. 1914, MP, 349; Kylie to Edward Grigg, 4 May 1914, RTP, c.820; Kylie to Curtis, 16 Oct. 1914, RTP, c.821. Kylie added in December: “The groups flourish no limit to the enthusiasm in Ontario, except our strength,” (Kylie to Edward Grigg, 10 Dec. 1914, *ibidem*). DeWitt Clinton Ellinwood, Jr., “Lord Milner’s ‘Kindergarten’, the British Round Table Groups and the Movement for Imperial Reform, 1910-1918,” PhD diss., Washington University, 1962, 256; Eayrs, “Round Table Movement,” 12.

CID the responsibility for creating “a true Imperial constitution for a united Empire.”²²

Curtis then approached Churchill, sending him copies of the *Green Memorandum* and other Round Table publications, and inviting him to meet the inner circle of the Round Table at Cliveden on 17-18 August. During a further meeting in early September on the HMS *Enchantress*, the Admiralty Yacht, Curtis persuaded Churchill both to offer the Dominions their direct participation in the CID, and to launch a campaign for home rule for England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland.²³

While the London group was active in securing Churchill’s support for reform of the Imperial decision-making process, Wrong and Kylie acted on the other side of the Atlantic, organizing—with the remote assistance of Kerr, who was on his way back to London from India—two major dinners at Winnipeg and Toronto, which won bipartisan support for the Government’s rearmament plan by opinion leaders of both parties like Vere Brown, John A. Cooper, Sir Edmund Walker, John Wesley Daffoe and G. Frank Beer. It was agreed to send Borden and Laurier, leader of the opposition, a memorandum stating “the desire of the majority of the people of Canada” that “the Dominion should forthwith take her part in the naval defence of the Empire,” through “the establishment of a navy...worthy of our national aspirations.” The recognition of Canada’s “responsibilities as part of the Empire” should produce an immediate and adequate action in the light of “the existence of an urgent” question, “worthy of Canada’s material wealth and prosperity.” The “question of Imperial Defence” should be removed “from the domain of contentious

²² Kendle, *The Round Table*, 119 21. Present at Newmarket were Milner, Jameson, Sir James Meston, Brand, Curtis, Hichens, Perry and Sir Valentine Chirol. Amery to Deakin, 29 July 1912, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 121); *Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser., Commons, 41, 25 July 1912, col. 1447. Sir James Scorgie Meston (1865–1943), official of the Indian Civil Service since 1885, financial secretary of the Government of the United Provinces, 1899–1903, adviser to the governments of Cape and Transvaal, 1904–6, secretary of the Finance Department of the Government of India, 1906–12, Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces, 1912–18, representative of India at the Imperial War Cabinet and the Imperial Conference of 1917, finance member in the Governor General’s Council 1919. Sir Valentine Chirol (1852–1929), director of the Foreign Department of *The Times*, 1899–1912. At the CID Borden had discussions with Sir Maurice Hankey, secretary of the CID and with Major Grant Duff, Hankey’s secretary. On the CID, see John H. Morrow Jr, *The Great War: An Imperial History* (London: Routledge, 2003); Greg Kennedy ed., *Imperial Defence: The Old World Order, 1856–1956* (London: Routledge, 2008).

²³ Lavin, *From Empire to*, 121.

politics,” it should not “promote the military spirit as such,” but it should “show in a practical way” the belief by the Canadians “that the effective maintenance of the British navy makes for the preservation of the world’s peace.”²⁴

The subsequent Borden Government Naval Bill, strongly supported by the Round Table, raised a wide debate in the country. It passed in the lower house by the introduction of a closure motion, but was rejected by the Senate, controlled by Liberals. Writing to Milner, Borden attributed the failure of the Bill to Laurier’s “wounded vanity...his intense antipathy to any true co-operation in the common defence of the Empire.”²⁵

At the same time the Dominions rejected, for the time being, the Colonial Office’s offer to join the CID and to contribute towards the costs of Imperial defence. For the Round Table it was a double defeat, which forced the movement to revise its programme, to question the feasibility of reaching federation through co-operation, and to settle for minor institutional reforms in security matters.

3. *The Irish question*

The 1910 General Election results forced the Liberals to negotiate with the Irish Nationalists a parliamentary alliance. This gave the Irish MPs a vital role in the Asquith Administration, as it was reliant on them for

²⁴ John Alexander Cooper (1868 1956), editor of the *Canadian Magazine*, 1895 1906, of the *Canadian Courier*, 1906 20; John Wesley Dafoe (1866 1944), parliamentary correspondent of *The Star*, 1883 5, editor of the *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 1885 6, editor of the *Manitoba Free Press*, 1901 44, member of the Canadian Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference 1919. Kerr to Curtis, 31 July 1912, quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 123 4. Curtis sent a copy of the memorandum to Churchill on 12 Aug. 1912. Jebb, in *The Britannic Question* (London: 1913), and in a number of letters published in *The Times*, strongly opposed the policy advocated by the *Round Table* of “emergency contribution,” suggesting the development of an autonomous Canadian naval force allied with the Royal Navy. For a comprehensive study of the debate see Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences*, 207 10.

²⁵ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 122 24, 128 29. See also George Wrong to Borden, 8 July 1912, BrP, 2; Borden to Milner, 31 May 1913, MP, 39. Following Canada’s proposed grant of \$35 million for three dreadnoughts for the Royal Navy, *The Annual Register* suggested that “in the Dominions and the United States, as well as on the Continent and in Great Britain, the announcement was naturally regarded as a further step towards Imperial Federation,” *The Annual Register* (London: 1913): 255. *Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser., Commons, 58, 12 Feb. 1914, col. 378; *The Annual Register* (London: 1915): 73.

parliamentary majority. The question of Irish home rule—which had been blocked twice, in 1886 and 1893—returned to the forefront of British politics, together with the question of constitutional reform for the House of Lords and for the Empire as a whole. Parliamentary congestion was paralysing the country, delaying social reforms and producing, according to Curtis, the “mental deterioration of the British race.” The Kindergarten decided to tackle the situation, becoming deeply involved with the Irish question, advocating a federation of the four nationalities of the British Isles as the only possible answer to Irish demands for independence.²⁶

The Round Table, and among them particularly Curtis, was strongly influenced on the federal solution for Ireland by the Governor General of Canada Earl Grey, who thought that Ireland “may still redeem her past by providing the excuse for Imperial Federation,” and that “federation of the United Kingdom must precede the federation of the Empire.” “Before the road is cleared for the Federation of the Empire we have to put the United Kingdom straight,” Grey wrote to Curtis in December 1909. The time was approaching, “if it is not already here, for getting this work done.” It was necessary to set up

Provincial Legislature of the Canadian rather than the South African type for 1. Ireland 2. Scotland 3. Wales 4. England (North? 5. South?) with a Federal Parliament armed with powers or disallowance sitting in London.

When the Irish were “thus reduced in the Federal Parliament of the United Kingdom to their proper proportion we can begin to talk Imperial federation,” Grey declared. This view was shared by Selborne, who thought in 1909 that “Imperial matters must, if possible, be transferred from the control of the House of Commons to some Imperial authority...a body less fit to interfere with them than the House of Commons, as it is now, I cannot imagine.” A greater colonial autonomy seemed to be a precondition for closer Imperial unity.²⁷

Kerr opposed Grey’s idea, that “Imperial Union and Federation of the United Kingdom are directly connected with one another,” thinking that

²⁶ Curtis, *Memoranda on Canada and the British Commonwealth* (Letchworth: 1910), 85–98.

²⁷ Grey to Laurier, 12 Feb. 1907; Grey to Wrong, 22 Feb. 1910; Grey to Curtis, 14 Dec. 1909, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 131–2). In giving a dinner for Sir Edward Grey, Maud Selborne was “most amused” to find that Grey considered “the proposal for an Imperial Parliament to be a new and original speculation of his own,” (Lady Selborne to Curtis, 14 Jan. 1913, CP, 2, 129–30). Selborne’s ideas on Imperial federation are outlined in D. G. Boyce and J. O. Stubbs, “F. S. Oliver, Lord Selborne and Federalism,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 5, 1, (1976): 60–61.

any home rule scheme should retain “absolute sovereignty in the hands of the British Parliament.” Milner supported this view that a federal Britain was not a precondition of Imperial federation. In 1910 the London group shared Kerr’s view that in Ireland there was no “half-way house” between Dominion status and federalism, a solution described by *The New Statesman* as “Unionism’s second line of defence.” When the federal solution was removed from the agenda by the outbreak of the war, in fact the Kindergarten stood for Dominion status.²⁸

Home rule was advocated because it would relieve Parliamentary congestion, and because it was “a proper concession to the national sentiments of the Irish people.” The “real incapacity” of an Imperial Parliament would, according to Kerr, “still remain, for it would still be elected by the people of the British Isles voting on party issues which have little or no relation to Imperial affairs.” So far as the elections were concerned, it was just “a matter of chance” whether a Cabinet contained “men of sufficient knowledge and ability to manage the Imperial side of the national business.” So far as the purely internal affairs of the British Isles were concerned, Kerr thought that there was “no guarantee” that British party politics would always be able “to produce a government which can take a statesmanlike and farsighted view of Imperial affairs.”²⁹

It was Curtis, as usual, who took the lead in proposing within the Round Table in early March 1910, during his stay in South Africa, a federal solution for the British Isles. He faced strong opposition from his

²⁸ Kerr to Curtis, 30 Sept. 1910, reproduced in “The Lionel Curtis Philip Kerr Correspondence, 1909-1940,” *Annals of the Lothian Foundation*, 1, (1991): 273-86; Philip Kerr, “Imperial Union and Federation of the United Kingdom,” LP, 15, 382-90; Kerr to Curtis, 23 Dec. 1910, LP, 12; Milner to Balfour, 5 Nov. 1910, quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 143; *The New Statesman*, 18 May 1918, (quoted in D. Savage, “‘The Parnell of Wales has become the Chamberlain of England’: Lloyd George and the Irish Question,” *Journal of British Studies*, 12, (1972): 105; [L. Curtis and J. Dove], “Ireland,” *The Round Table*, 11, 43, (June 1921): 465-534; John Kendle, “The Round Table Movement and Home Rule All Round,” *Historical Journal*, 11, (1968): 332-53; Boyce and Stubbs, “F. S. Oliver”, 53-81. Dicey regarded home rule as a “half way house to separation,” Albert V. Dicey, *England’s Case Against Home Rule* (Richmond: 1873), 287. John Turner ed., *The Larger Idea: Lord Lothian and the Problem of National Sovereignty* (London: 1988), 60-61; Boyce, *The Crisis of British*, 330-31; R. H. Brand, *The Union of South Africa* (Oxford: 1909), 12; Lavin, *From Empire to*, 100-01. “Memorandum of conversations which took place between a few English and South African friends at intervals during the summer of 1909,” LP, 11, 16-23; Curtis to his mother, 1 Jan. 1910, CP 2, 1.

²⁹ Philip Kerr, “British Politics,” *The Round Table*, (Feb. 1911): 165.

old friends of the Kindergarten—Duncan, Feetham and Perry—and from associates like Lady Selborne, her brother Robert Cecil, and Amery. Curtis's initial proposal to the inner group to consider a federal solution to the Irish question was made at the time of the launching of the journal. Irish matters were not dealt in *The Round Table* by themselves, but under the general "United Kingdom Politics" section, and frequently by Oliver. Separate articles on Ireland occasionally appeared, but were mainly written by a member of the inner circle. Although Selborne owned a house in Kerry, the Kindergarten rarely visited the country before 1921.³⁰

The lack of direct contact with Ireland brought the Round Table to rely on personal contacts which "were usually Southern Irish, Protestant, Anglicised Establishment figures. They knew few Irish Nationalists...and few Ulster Unionists." Sir Horace Plunkett, leader of the Irish co-operative movement, was one of them, remembered by Oliver "as one of the chief factors" in the "amelioration" of Ireland, "long after many names more conspicuous in contemporary politics have passed out of memory." Curtis regarded Plunkett as the "founder" of the "school" that had arisen in Ireland pleading "for a patriotism founded in love rather than in hate." Plunkett's home became for the Kindergarten a base for their Irish journeys.³¹

It was the calling on 16 June 1910 of a Constitutional Conference, following the death of King Edward VII in early May, which resolved the

³⁰ Hichens to Milner, 21 March 1910, LP, 11, 79 83; Kendle, *The Round Table*, 157, 162 64. Most *Round Table* articles are attributed in May, *The Round Table*, Appendix F. Early contributions on Ireland included "The Revival of Hume Rule," 1, 1, (Nov. 1910): 63 70; "United Kingdom," 3, 9, (Dec. 1912): 98 133; "Home Rule," 2, 7, (June 1912): 422 46. [Grigg], "Ireland," *The Round Table*, 4, 13, (Dec. 1913): 1 67; Kerr to his mother, June 1916 and 21 July 1916, LP, 465, 31 32 and 35; Kerr to Nancy Astor, 11 and 15 June 1916, Astor Papers 49; "United Kingdom," *The Round Table*, 7, 26, (March 1917): 372 77; "United Kingdom," 7, 27, (June 1917): 567 72; "United Kingdom," 9, 35, (June 1919): 580 87. Curtis's father was born in Ireland, (Lavin, *From Empire to*, 5 7). [J. Dove], "A Holiday in Ireland," *The Round Table*, 14, 54, (March 1924): 310.

³¹ Oliver to Northcliffe, 31 Oct. 1910, Northcliffe Papers, British Library, MS62165A, 13 14; S. Gwynn, *Experiences of a Literary Man* (London: 1926), 220 25. Gwynn eventually edited a collection of Oliver's wartime letters to his brother, *The Anvil of War* (London: 1936). Lady Selborne to Curtis, n.d., CP, 2, 105 06; "Pacificus" [Oliver], "Constitutional Conference," *The Times*, (2 Nov. 1910): 10; Curtis's speech, 27 Nov. 1906, CP 1, 222 24; Lionel Curtis, *The Commonwealth of Nations: An Inquiry into the Nature of Citizenship in the British Empire, and into the Mutual Relations of the Several Dependencies Thereof* (London: Macmillan, 1916), 519 20.

Round Table to act. The Conference was designed to overcome the conflict of competences between the Commons and the Lords. Kerr however did not share Curtis's enthusiasm for the federal solution, and in a letter of 10 August 1910 confessed that he had not yet made up his mind as to what "constitutional reconstruction" was necessary. Debate on home rule was useful "in helping the idea of Federalism along," since it had been "a success everywhere," and it would plough "the hard soil so as to prepare it to receive our seeds later on." Federation was "a misnomer," Kerr pointed out, since "under no scheme would there be a Supreme Court to interpret the constitution," but it was "a good fighting word to begin with," and people would not "fight shy of the word." If devolution had "noisome associations," Kerr thought that home rule all around was "worse." The Irish crisis was however providing a chance to spread the federal idea, and move in the direction of the strategic object of the movement, "under the shadow of home rule."³²

Kerr thought that Ireland had no interest, from the economic point of view, in leaving the United Kingdom, since in 1909 it received from London a net contribution of £2,357,500 to cover her budget deficit, being 21% of Ireland's expenditure. The fundamental choices raised by the Irish question were threefold: first, if Ireland should be separated from the United Kingdom and be accorded Dominion status, and therefore participate in the Imperial assembly with the other Dominions when they were "ready for the move," for the purposes of defence and foreign policy only; second, if Ireland should be included as an autonomous unit with Wales, Scotland and England in a federation of the British Isles; or, if she should stay as an integral part of the United Kingdom, and be granted the same measure of administrative devolution as Scotland and Wales.³³

Kerr thought that "federation would be a good thing for the UK," but was against direct involvement of the Round Table in the campaign for home rule, in order not to alienate the support of "many people who would agree with me about Imperial Union," but "would disagree vehemently with any plan for federalizing the UK." Eventual support should come from individual members without involving the movement. Kerr felt that the movement should exploit the extraordinary publicity which the federal idea was enjoying at the time to advance the education of the public mind to accept Imperial "constitutional change," considering how slowly it moved "in this country of traditions." "The Federal movement," as Kerr called it, was "all to the good," and the Round Table "should help it

³² Kerr to Selborne, 18 June 1910, LP, 2; Kerr to Curtis, 10 and 31 Aug. 1910, *ibidem*.

³³ *Ibidem*.

along.” It required “a lot of educative work to be done unobtrusively in party politics,” switching “people’s minds on to a line which leads in our direction and will actually make the final change far easier than it would otherwise be.”³⁴

The Round Table considered however party politics secondary to the real political process. According to Kerr politicians were just “interpreters,” they would “never make a move” until they were “pretty certain that public opinion in the country, or at least in their party, is ripe for it.” Kerr believed that little help could come from the Unionist party, still commanded by “the old guard who fought for Ulster in 1886 and 1893,” which was too concerned to push tariff reform before considering any form of federalism. The Liberal party seemed more interested in social rather than constitutional changes, but since they were “dependent on the Irish vote, which demands constitutional change as the price of its support,” they could “adopt a policy of federalism as the best way out of the difficulty,” of being driven by the Irish “on behind.”³⁵

Kerr thought however that “Federalism for the Empire and Federalism for the United Kingdom” were “two entirely distinct ideas,” and that the second was “clearly...no necessary stage which must be passed before Imperial Unity can be achieved.” “The surrender of the Imperial functions”—Kerr observed in a long letter to Curtis of 30 September, copies of which were sent also to Milner, Oliver and Brand—could “be made to an Imperial assembly just as easily by a unitary Parliament of the United Kingdom as by a federal Parliament.” The movement could exploit a situation in which the federal idea was the issue of the moment, but “our energies,” he reminded Curtis, should be “concentrated on the Imperial side of the business direct.” The problem was that the creation of an Imperial parliament, distinct from a British parliament, could be created only when the Dominions were ready to take their full Imperial responsibilities. The question of “the development of a true Imperial patriotism...rousing the Dominions to such a sense of their Imperial responsibility that they will be prepared to share the burden, as well as the privileges of Empire with Great Britain,” was, according to Kerr, separate from that of the “reconstruction of the constitutional arrangements of the Empire,” with the “creation of an Imperial Assembly representative of all self-governing peoples within the Empire”. Kerr admitted that Imperial patriotism would find “its expression” in “the creation of the machinery.”³⁶

³⁴ Kerr to Curtis, 30 Sep. 1910, LP, 2.

³⁵ *Ibidem*; Kerr to Curtis, 10 Aug. 1910, LP, 2, 84 91.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

The application of some form of federalism to the internal problems of the United Kingdom and to Imperial relations raised a completely different set of questions which were, according to Kerr, dangerous to keep together. "The final and complete separation of Imperial and national affairs within the UK," Kerr argued, "must await the day when the dominions are ready to take their part in creating a true Imperial assembly." The Round Table had tackled, since its existence, the crucial question of separation between Imperial and national affairs "as an essential step which can be taken before and apart from the final step," but it was a mistake, Kerr warned, to reverse the "general strategy." Kerr remarked: "It is not an outwork which must be captured before we take the citadel. It is part of the citadel which will only fall with the city itself."³⁷

The question of Irish home rule was not a question which concerned just the United Kingdom, but it involved also the Dominions, since the creation of armies and navies was related to the exercise of sovereignty by the Dominions. "Twenty years ago," Kerr observed, "the inclusion of Imperial representatives in an Imperial assembly would have simply meant the assumption by them of new rights and duties. Today the creation of an Imperial Parliament involves the transfer of certain powers to a newly constituted body, from the Dominions as well as from the UK Parliaments." Even if the Imperial assembly "would wield very important powers, those relating to peace and war," they were, however, "a small portion of the sovereign powers" of the constituent self-governing units, while "the more important of the attributes of a sovereign peoples" would "rest with the national assemblies."³⁸

Milner was completely opposed to Irish home rule, and thought that the Unionists would be "soused in reference to Colonial Experience," by Liberals in favour of home rule. If the Liberals went "in for a disruptive form of home rule," they would undermine the British tradition of colonial self-government. Milner and Amery would accept federation only as an alternative to Irish partition. As Unionists they opposed the 1911 Parliament Act, passed by the Liberal Government as ordinary legislation, which reduced the veto powers of the House of Lords to a two years' delay. This was related to home rule, since in 1893 the House of Lords rejected Gladstone's second Home Rule Bill. Milner thought therefore that the best way of opposing Liberal home rule was "to shout 'Ulster, Ulster'

³⁷ *Ibidem.*

³⁸ *Ibidem.*

all the way,” which for Unionists meant embracing the cause of Protestant Ulster against Irish home rule.³⁹

In spite of the vast deployment of forces, including Northcliffe’s *The Times*—which under the pseudonym of ‘Pacificus’ published seven letters by Oliver, advocating a party truce on the Irish question—and the Astors’ *Observer*—which on 31 July 1910 launched a massive campaign supporting ‘home rule all round’—the Kindergarten did not succeed in influencing the work of the Constitutional Conference. This ended in November, without settling the conflict between the two chambers and without the suggested creation of a Royal Commission to consider the appropriate measures of home rule. As soon as these transitional measures turned out to be in themselves “inadequate and unsatisfactory,” the Kindergarten thought that it would be easier for them to persuade the public that “organic union was the only permanent solution of the Imperial problem” and to push the process forward.⁴⁰

In vain Oliver and Garvin, editor of *The Observer*, tried to persuade Austen Chamberlain and Balfour to intervene and help lift the Unionist opposition to Irish home rule, which would bring “the hope of Imperial Union a stage nearer.” In his reply to Garvin, Balfour left little ground for hope about the suggested conversion of his party, and lucidly observed that so far federalism had been applied to unite separate units, not to separate component parts of a unitarian State. Irish Nationalists, Balfour thought, would accept nothing short of independence, and also would not accept the division of Ireland into two provinces. For the Unionist party, so strongly committed to Ulster, that would be unacceptable. He also dismissed Lloyd George’s offer to join in a coalition government able to

³⁹ Milner to Oliver, 12 Oct. 1911, OP 48, 62 67; Leo Amery, “Home Rule and the Colonial Analogy,” in *Against Home Rule: The Case for the Union*, S. Rosenbaum ed. (London: 1912); *The Times*, 13 Sept. 1912, 5; “Pacificus” [Oliver], “The Constitutional Conference II,” *The Times*, 22 Oct. 1910, 10; *The Manchester Guardian*, 16 Dec. 1912, and 29 Jan. 1913; *The Daily News*, 10 April 1912; May emphasises the importance of divisions within the Round Table movement as to ultimate objectives (May, *The Round Table*, Ch. 3). Oliver to Milner, 7 Nov. 1910, MP, 13, 3 5; minutes of Blackmoor Moot, 12 13 Nov. 1910, RTP, c776, 79 81; Kerr to Curtis, 30 Sept. 1910, and Curtis to Kerr, 22 Nov. 1910, *Annals of the Lothian Foundation*, 1, (1991): 273 86, 290 94. George Boyce, “British Conservative Opinion, the Ulster Question, and the Partition of Ireland, 1912 21,” *Irish Historical Studies*, 17, (1970): 89 112.

⁴⁰ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 168.

replace Irish Nationalists, neutralize obstructionism in Westminster, and then offer Ireland a moderate devolution.⁴¹

After this initial failure, the Kindergarten dropped the question for a while only to start again with renewed strength in April 1912, when the Asquith Government lodged a Third Home Rule Bill, envisaging an Irish bicameral system—composed of 164 elected representatives and 40 senators responsible for administrative competences excluding matters such as defence, religion, foreign trade, coinage, foreign policy, public and private finance, taxation, social welfare, police, and the Irish Royal Constabulary—and a representation of 43 members at Westminster. The 1912 Bill, retaining Irish representatives at Westminster for all legislation but reducing them in number, would have increased the instability of the House of Commons, giving Irish MPs a considerable power of interference in English and Scottish matters, playing a vital role in the Parliamentary decision-making process. The Kindergarten became unshakeable opponents of the Bill, considered by Asquith as “the first step, and only the first step, in a larger and more comprehensive policy,” leading towards the introduction of a federal system. Kerr, Curtis, Grigg, Brand, and Oliver exercised all their influence through *The Round Table*; Amery, Astor, Cecil and Steel Maitland—Chairman of the Unionist Party—fought in the House of Commons; and Milner and Selborne in the Lords.⁴²

Carson was determined “to oppose this Bill with all the energy we can and at every stage and at every moment that it is before this House.” Andrew Bonar Law—leader of the Unionists—went so far as to declare that if the Government “attempted to drive the people of Ulster by force out of the protection of this House and of British law,” he “could imagine no means too strong for them to take to prevent it.”⁴³

⁴¹ Curtis to Kerr, 19 Sept. 1910, LP, 12; Kerr to Curtis, 29 July 1910, *ibidem*, 11; *The Times*, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 31 Oct. and 2 Nov. 1910. Oliver collected his letters to *The Times* in the volume *Federalism and Home Rule* (London: 1910). Garvin, editor of *The Observer* started the campaign on 31 July 1910, A. M. Gollin, *J. L. Garvin and The Observer, 1908 1914* (London: 1960), 168–234. Oliver to Balfour, 11 Oct. 1910; Garvin to Balfour, 17 Oct. 1910; Balfour to Garvin, 22 Oct. 1910, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 139–41).

⁴² 5 Hansard (House of Commons), 36, 11 April 1912, 1399–1426; Kendle, *The Round Table*, 145–6; Kendle, *Ireland and the Federal Solution*, 46–51, 75–6, 137–50; Richard Murphy, “Faction in the Conservative Party and the Home Rule Crisis, 1912–14,” *History*, 71, 232, (1986): 222–34. Grigg was co editor of the *Round Table* from 1913 onwards.

⁴³ Par. Debs. (Commons), 5th series, 36, 11 Apr. 1912, col. 1441; 61, 31 July, col. 2133. On Law attitude, see Robert Blake, *The Unknown Prime Minister: The Life*

The Kindergarten's attacks on the Bill were intended to show that it was far removed from federal principles, while in private they tried to find allies such as Winston Churchill, who was spokesman for the Bill in the House of Commons. With the spirit of the convert, Churchill made a famous speech in his Dundee constituency on 12 September 1912 supporting a federation of the British Isles, which would, in turn, encourage the attainment of an Imperial federation. In his speech Churchill however omitted to deal with the Ulster issue, which was the major obstacle to the solution of the Irish question.⁴⁴

Much of the credit for Churchill's conversion must go to Curtis and Grigg, improving Churchill's "mind laboriously all day long," during a meeting they had with the First Lord on board the *Enchantress*, returning the courtesy of an August week-end spent at Cliveden. Lady Selborne, no less committed than her husband, her brother (Lord Cecil), her son (Lord Wolmer), and son-in-law (Lord Howick) to the Round Table's cause, warned Curtis to be careful with Churchill:

I have always an idea that he means to steel the moot's clothes while they are bathing, and come out as the one true original Imperialist. I shouldn't tell him too much, but he is a friend to the cause worth cultivating because he is so clever.⁴⁵

Curtis replied—offering us a very lucid and pungent judgement—that he would be happy if Churchill would wear their clothes only once he had bagged them, but he did not have "any hopes of Winston," since he was not Chatham, and "it is not in him to be a pioneer of any policy." Churchill was a man who would "lead only when he sees forces numerous and organized enough to be worth his leading." He was "as great as a politician can be without principles." Curtis felt "a toad for thinking this and accepting his hospitality," but in "our job if one was only friendly with people whom one entirely respected we should not get much further."⁴⁶

Because of Churchill's public statement, however, federalism became a major political issue both in party politics and in the press for about a year, until the outbreak of war. With this aim in view, Astor invited Garvin to give ample coverage to the federalist question in his paper. Amery published a series of articles in the *Quarterly Review*, while personal contacts were extended in order to prod the Unionists into action.

and Times of Andrew Bonar Law, 1858 1923 (London: Faber and Faber, 1955), 119 37, 149 218.

⁴⁴ *The Times*, 13 Sept. 1912, 4; Kendle, *The Round Table*, 147 50.

⁴⁵ Lady Selborne to Curtis, Sept. 1912, (quoted in *ibidem*, 149).

⁴⁶ Curtis to Lady Selborne, 12 Sept. 1912, (quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 121).

The essence of their arguments was summarized by the conservative Viscount Hythe, who remarked: “we Englishmen” should “manage our own affairs without the interference of Irishmen or Scotchmen.”⁴⁷

The immediate reaction to Churchill’s advocacy of federalism was a massive campaign started on 20 September 1912 by Ulster Protestants, who collected 250,000 signatures on a “Solemn League and Covenant” against the inclusion of Ulster in Irish home rule. On the passage of the Home Rule Bill in January 1913—in spite of a twofold exercise of the veto by the Lords—two paramilitary organizations set for civil war were created in Ireland: the Ulster Volunteers in the North and the Irish Volunteers in the rest of the island, forcing the British Government in December to impose on Ireland an embargo on the importation of arms.⁴⁸

The home rule crisis also brought about a radicalization of the political struggle in Great Britain. Lord Willoughby—who had organized the Lords’ opposition to the 1911 Parliamentary Act, which in fact neutralized the Upper House’s veto power—created a “British League for the Support of Ulster and the Union,” with the involvement of 100 peers, 120 MPs, and several thousands of civilians ready to act. “To ask...whether Ulster is justified in preparing for armed resistance,” Amery wrote in the *Quarterly Review* in January 1914, was “ridiculous.” “Men of spirit, threatened with the loss of their citizenship and with forcible transfer to the control of a government which they detest,” Amery argued, “to suit the convenience of a party dependent on the Nationalist vote, could not act otherwise.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 145 6; Curtis to Churchill, 17 April and 12 Aug. 1912, CP; *The Times*, 13 Sept. 1912. In the memorandum “Devolution,” prepared for the Government on 1 March 1911, Churchill already gave proof of a knowledge of the federal system, proposing the division of the United Kingdom into ten regions, each with administrative and legislative bodies, independently elected from an Imperial Parliament. Viscount Hythe, (later Earl Brassey), *The Case for Devolution and a Settlement of the Home Rule Question by Consent* (London: 1913), 9 11.

⁴⁸ *The Times*, 20 30 Sept. 1912, 6 Dec. 1913. On the creation of Ulster Volunteers, see A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis* (London: 1967), 69 78; Brendan Mac Giolla Choille ed., *Chief Secretary’s Office, Dublin Castle: Intelligence Notes 1913 16 Preserved in the State Paper Office* (Dublin: 1966), 16 37, 94 102. On the Irish Volunteers, see *ibidem*, 104 14.

⁴⁹ Leo Amery, “The Home Rule Crisis and a National Settlement,” *The Quarterly Review*, 220, 438, (Jan. 1914): 268 9; Gregory D. Phillips, “Lord Willoughby de Broke: Radicalism and Conservatism,” in *Edwardian Conservatism: Five Studies in Adaptation*, J. A. Thompson and Arthur Mejia eds. (London: 1988), 77 104.

“What are we British Unionists ultimately to do,” Milner rhetorically asked Oliver in October 1913, “if things come to the worst, *beside talking?*” If the Government decided to go through with the home rule scheme unmodified, and civil war broke out, Milner “for one” would not be “satisfied with waving” his arms “impotently in the air,” and was confident that there were “a great many people on this side of the water in like case.” If the worst came, Oliver confessed to George Craik—original member of the Kindergarten, Chief Constable of the London Metropolitan Police, and of the Criminal Investigation Department, better known as Scotland Yard—that he would be ready to offer his “active personal assistance with rifles and so forth in the north of Ireland”:

It may be that it is by finding money and arranging for the supply of arms, ammunitions, and sustenance; it may be that it is by some special kind of political campaign taking place simultaneously in the United Kingdom; it may even be that it is by a rising, or a rebellion, or whatever you like to call it on this side of St. George’s Channel...My friends in Warwickshire and Worcestershire tell me that Willoughby is circularizing them all...to get their horses ready and practice with fire arms; but I confess these evidences of activities do not give a complete feeling of security...When you come to revolutions...gallantry won’t carry you very far, unless a certain number of quiet blokes have previously sat down and worked out things.⁵⁰

The only peaceful solution to the Irish crisis was, according to Oliver, a federation of the British Isles, outlined in his pamphlets *The Alternatives to Civil War*, and *What Federalism is Not*. The Kindergarten opposed partition on the ground that it would leave substantial parts of the population athwart the borders. “How then can you ask the nationalists,” Oliver argued, “to agree to the separation of Ulster,” since they were fighting for “a United Ireland, a United Kingdom, and a United Empire.” The London group’s support for Ulster’s cause against home rule was based on the conviction that Ulster was, as *The Times* stated in March 1914, “fighting an Imperial battle as well as her own.” According to the Kindergarten Ireland was an integral part of the United Kingdom, and as such responsible for governing and defending the Empire. They accepted in 1914 a temporary exclusion of Ulster from Irish home rule as a compromise, and just as an “alternative to civil war.” Partition was in any case regarded as a “makeshift.” They recognized that Ireland was at that moment “two nations,” “hopelessly divided,” and argued that “the aim of sound statesmanship” was to pull north and south together, for their

⁵⁰ Milner to Oliver, 23 Oct. 1913, MP, 13/42 5; Oliver to Craik, 24 Oct. 1913, quoted in Billington, *Lothian*, 33.

hostility was “a source of danger not only to themselves, but to the Empire.”⁵¹

None of the Kindergarten was prepared to accept Irish home rule at the price of the permanent exclusion of Ulster. “Ulster would still resist,” Milner told Oliver, and he would do everything in his power “to make her resistance successful.” With the support of Lord Willoughby and the Union Defence League—formed in 1907 against Irish home rule—Milner and Amery then produced in March 1914 a document, the so called ‘British Covenant’, which echoed the Ulster Covenant of 1912, stating that “to use the provisions of the Parliament Act to carry the Home Rule Bill into law, without reference to the people,” was “an intolerable denial of political justice to those who are directly affected by its provisions.”⁵²

The aim of the campaign was to call a referendum in the United Kingdom, on the basis of a declaration according to which the signers declared their earnest conviction

that the claim of the Government to carry the HOME RULE BILL into law, without submitting it to the judgement of the nation, is contrary to the spirit of our Constitution, WE DO HEREBY SOLEMNLY DECLARE that, if the Bill is so passed, we shall hold ourselves justified in taking or supporting any action that may be effective to prevent the armed forces of the Crown being used to deprive the people of Ulster of their rights as Citizens of the United Kingdom.⁵³

Most of the Kindergarten did not sign the Covenant because Imperial unification was “of greater importance than the solution of any local

⁵¹ Amery, *The Case Against Home Rule* (London: 1912), 121; Frederick Oliver, *The Alternatives to Civil War* (London: 1913); id., *What Federalism is Not* (London: 1914), 114–15; id., *Ireland and the Imperial Conference: Is there a Way to Settlement?* (London: 1917), 16; *The Times*, 12 March 1914, 7; *The Times*, 3 July 1914, 9, and 20 May 1914, 9; “Pacificus” [Oliver], “Federalism and the Home Rule Bill,” *The Times*, 9 May 1912, 14; Curtis to Lady Selborne, 2 May [1914], Maud Selborne Papers, d430, 98–101. The Kindergarten, and Robinson in particular, had been influenced by the Assistant editor of *The Times*, W. F. Monypenny, *The Two Irish Nations: An Essay on Home Rule* (London: 1913); Dawson Diary, 6 Jan. 1914, DP 20.

⁵² J. Marlowe, *Milner, Apostle of Empire*, 197–98, 218–36; Amery, “The Home Rule Crisis and a National Settlement,” *Quarterly Review*, 220, (Jan. 1914): 283–90; Amery, *My Political Life*, vol. 1 (London: 1950), 357, 466, 357–59; Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, 171–220; Milner to Oliver, 23 Oct. 1913, MP, 13, 42–45; Amery to Cecil, 16 and 23 Jan. 1914, CeP, MS51071, 219–25; *The Times*, 3 March 1914, 7.

⁵³ On the Union Defence League, see Walter Long, *Memoires* (New York: 1923), 193–200. For the British Covenant pledge, see MP, 689/170.

problem.” Both Grigg and Curtis were critical of the Unionist party leadership. Grigg, in particular, did not “care a rap for the Ulster case *qua* Ulster.”⁵⁴

In vain Amery tried to gain support for the Covenant from Cecil and from Austen and Neville Chamberlain, on the ground that it would have given “the Government pause.” The signatories would constitute “a list of men who really feel strongly, out of whom again as the crisis develops it may be possible to select still more determined spirits prepared for any action that may prove necessary beyond mere demonstrations.” Amery succeeded, however, in getting the involvement of Bonar Law—leader of the Unionists—and Walter Long—Unionist Whip—who contributed to raising £134,000 for the planned insurrection.⁵⁵

The so-called League of British Covenanters was launched on 3 March 1914 in *The Times*, and included lawyers, clergymen, peers and MPs among its signatories. Rudyard Kipling and Field Marshal Frederick S. Roberts were among them. The man who settled the 1857 Indian Mutiny figured as Honorary President of a menaced mutiny for Ulster.⁵⁶

On 4 April the Covenanters assembled 150,000 people at Hyde Park, being the most active members of a movement which included 1,750,000 signatories, committed “to prevent the armed forces of the Crown being used to deprive the people of Ulster of their rights as citizens of the United Kingdom.” The organisation provided the Ulster Volunteers on 24 April at Larne, in Northern Ireland, with 19,000 rifles and two million rounds of ammunition acquired by Milner himself in Germany. The sworn anti-German crusader and manipulator, determined to identify in Germany the main threat to Great Britain—and himself being a quarter German by

⁵⁴ Coupland to Curtis, 21 March 1914, RTP, c823, 128 33. For Coupland, see T. Simmons, “Sir Reginald Coupland, 1884 1952,” *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 45, (1959): 287; Curtis to Grigg, 16 March 1914, and Grigg to Curtis, 17 March 1914, RTP, c823, 101 03 and 106; Grigg to Curtis, 24 March 1914, RTP, c823, 143. For other letters on the Round Table and the Covenant, see RTP, 101 51; ZP, 14, 48 49; G. L. Craik to Oliver, OP, 51, 103 06. For a discussion see David G. Boyce, *Englishmen and Irish Troubles: British Public Opinion and the Making of the Irish Policy, 1918 1922* (London: 1972); id., *The Irish Question and British Politics, 1868 1986* (London: 1988).

⁵⁵ Amery to Cecil, 16 Jan. 1914, CeP, 51072/219 21; Cecil to Amery, 18 Jan. 1914, MP, 689/10 3; Austen Chamberlain to Amery, 17 Jan. 1914, Neville Chamberlain to Amery, 18 Jan. 1914, MP, 689/5 6, 8 9; Long to Milner, 24 Feb. 1914, MP, 689/38 40.

⁵⁶ *The Times*, 3 March 1914, 7; Long, *Memories*, 204; *The Covenanter*, 1, (20 May 1914); MP, 158.

blood—resorted precisely to Germany in order to initiate in Ireland a civil war, which would have been likely to expand through all the country.⁵⁷

An effect of the circulation of the Covenant among the armed forces was the Curragh Mutiny of 20 March 1914. The Curragh Camp was the main base for the British Army in Ireland. The Irish Home Rule Bill, due to become law in 1914, provided for some kind of military action against the threatened rebellion by the Ulster Volunteers against it. Many officers, especially those with Irish Protestant connections, of whom the most prominent was Hubert Gough, threatened to resign rather than obey, privately encouraged by senior officers. Colonel Henry Wilson—who, in spite of his prominent institutional position within the Liberal controlled War Office, openly supported Unionist policy in Ulster and opposed the ratification of the Irish Home Rule Bill—was one of them.

Although the Cabinet issued a document claiming that the incident had been generated by a misunderstanding, the Secretary of State for War John E. B. Seely and Sir John French, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, were forced to resign after declaring that the British Army would not be used against the Ulster loyalists. Asquith did not however ask Wilson to resign, because of the support he had from Milner and the Liberal Imperialists, and since it could have been interpreted by the French as a reversal of the British Continental commitment, of which Wilson was the major architect.⁵⁸

The event contributed both to lift Unionist confidence and to the growth of the Irish separatist movement, convincing Irish nationalists that they could not expect support from the British army in Ireland in the event of a civil war. In turn, the incident increased nationalist support for paramilitary forces. “It is one of the most significant warnings of Irish history,” Curtis wrote to Grigg in 1913,

⁵⁷ *The Times*, 6 Apr. 1914, 9; Long, *Memoirs*, 203. On the purchase and delivering of guns to the Ulster Volunteers, see Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis*, 176–212. On the role of Milner, see Paul Kennedy and Anthony Nicholls eds., *Nationalist and Radicalist Movements in Britain and Germany before 1914* (London: 1981), 1–39.

⁵⁸ Milner was in contact with senior army officers and encouraged them to resist (Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, 188–91, 195–204). On the Government’s reaction, see Blake, *The Unknown Prime Minister*, 183–209. On the Curragh Mutiny, see: Tim Pat Coogan, *The Irish Civil War* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson 2003); Peter Hart, *The IRA at War 1916–1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Richard Holmes, *The Little Field Marshal: A Life of Sir John French* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004); Keith Jeffery, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A Political Soldier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Travis B. Crosby, *The Unknown Lloyd George: A Statesman in Conflict* (London: Tauris, 2014).

that the Irish, wherever they go, are still conspicuous for their aptitude in perverting the institutions of self government to their own material interests...That, I believe, is the direct result of the generations during which Irishmen were not treated as an end in themselves but were governed under the form of a commonwealth as a means to English ends.⁵⁹

The Round Table distanced itself from Milner and the Covenanters, by observing that in the Irish crisis the United Kingdom had been “led by a process as relentless as the march of a Greek tragedy,” advocating the calling of an early election instead of a referendum, and strongly attacking the Unionists:

The party which prides itself on its devotion to the constitution...is found to be condoning open and violent resistance to constituted authority. If it is true and right to say that Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right, will this lesson be lost upon other discontented elements of society, not only in the United Kingdom, but in our dependencies beyond the seas?⁶⁰

Milner’s intransigence saved Protestant Ulster from falling under the dominance of Irish Nationalists, even at the cost of a civil war, and condemned to failure a compromise solution proposed on 2nd April 1914 by Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief during the Boer War, on the basis of a Round Table federal scheme. This contemplated the calling of a National Convention to draft a satisfactory Irish compromise.⁶¹

Grigg, Hichens, Brand and Curtis approached Andrew Bonar Law, leader of the Unionist party, Austen Chamberlain—leading advocate among the Unionist party of a federal solution for Ireland—and Carson, proposing a federal scheme which would place Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England as self-governing member-States within a British federation. The Ulster question would be dealt with in an Irish National Convention, and Ulster would not join any other constituent member-State before a satisfactory solution could be found. Encouraged by Unionist leaders, the three exponents of the Round Table on 8 April put forward the plan to the

⁵⁹ Curtis to Grigg, 1 Oct. 1913, RTP, c807/20 27.

⁶⁰ Edward Grigg, “The Irish Crisis,” *The Round Table*, 4, 14, (March 1914): 206, 213.

⁶¹ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 152 4; Austen Chamberlain, *Politics From the Inside: An Epistolary Chronicle, 1906 1914* (London: 1936), 637 9, 646 7; Kendle, *Ireland and the Federal Solution*, 25 6; Ian Colvin, *The Life of Lord Carson*, vol. 2 (London: 1964), 382 4; Geoffrey Lewis, *Carson: The Man Who Divided Ireland* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006); Edward Grigg, “The Irish Crisis,” *The Round Table*, (March 1914): 201 30; Roberts to Milner, 2 April 1914, MP, 100. Lord Roberts (1832 1914) had been Commander of forces in Ireland 1895 9, Commander in chief in South Africa 1899 1900, and Commander in chief at the General Staff, 1901 4.

Prime Minister Asquith, and looked for support from Lloyd George, Lord Lansdowne and Churchill, who on 28 April disclosed the plan to the Commons.⁶²

Carson accepted the Round Table proposal in principle, on condition that the six Northeast Ulster counties were excluded from the future member-State. On 5 May the Round Table succeeded in bringing together the Prime Minister Asquith, the leader of the opposition Bonar Law, and the leader of Ulster Unionists Carson at a meeting at the London residence of Edwin Montagu, to discuss the details and the implementation of the scheme. The intransigence, on one side, of Irish Nationalists—on whom Asquith’s majority depended in the Commons and who were against any form of compromise on Ulster—and, on the other, of Milner—ready to come into action with his troops against the implementation of the Bill—and the refusal of both sides to accept a compromise solution prevented the success of the Kindergarten’s desperate attempt to stop the drift to a civil war.⁶³

To the offer of Asquith to exclude Ulster for six years from the implementation of the Bill, Carson replied that it was a “stay of execution.” Even when confronted by Churchill’s warning that insurrection would be settled with force, and by the deployment of the Third Squadron of the Royal Navy into Irish waters, the Covenanters did not abandon plans for action.⁶⁴

In fact, it was for Milner himself, on 11 May, to inform the Kindergarten, when a solution seemed still at hand’s reach—Asquith was ready to amend his Irish Bill and to summon in July a Conference at Buckingham Palace—that their scheme was dead. The Round Table knew

⁶² Kendle, *Ireland and the Federal*, 151–76. On Asquith, see Cameron Hazlehurst, “Asquith as Prime Minister, 1908–1916,” *The English Historical Review*, 85, 336, (Jul. 1970): 502–531.

⁶³ *Milner Diary*, 8 April, 5 and 11 May 1914, 277, MP, 100; Austen Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside*, 637, 639, 646–7; Ian Colvin, *The Life of Lord Carson* (Toronto: 1935), 382–3; Montgomery H. Hyde, *Carson* (London: 1953), 366–7; 5 Hansard (House of Commons), 61, 28 April 1914, 1591; 29 April 1914, 1747–53. Edwin Samuel Montagu (1879–1924), Parliamentary Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1906–8, to the Prime Minister, 1908–10, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for India, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1915, financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1914–16, Minister of Munitions and member of the War Committee, 1916, Secretary of State for India, 1917–22. Sir Edward Carson (1854–1935), Solicitor general for Ireland, 1892, Solicitor general, 1900–6, First Lord of the Admiralty, 1917, member of the War Cabinet, 1917–8.

⁶⁴ *Parl. Debs. (Commons)*, 5th Series, 59, 9 March 1914, col. 934; *The Times*, 15 March 1914, 9.

that without a voluntary agreement, on the basis of a compromise, each side would try to enforce its will on the other, employing all instruments including resort to violence. The outbreak of a civil war in Northern Ireland would possibly have extended to England. In fact, it was the outbreak of war in Europe which prevented such an extreme action from coming into operation. That was only because the Asquith Government postponed the application of the Bill—which on 25 May had passed its third reading in the Commons—to six months after war coming to an end.⁶⁵

Amery thought that Ulster was “only a symptom” of the whole home rule question, an aspect “which everyone outside [Parliament] can understand & which most affects moderate liberals,” and therefore a reasonable cause to fight for. When negotiations broke down in July 1914 Amery thought that it was a “splendid opportunity of ridding ourselves entirely from the entanglement of the Ulster exclusion idea.” What was needed, according to Amery, “was an organization which would be effective in paralyzing the Government’s action before it reached Ulster.” According to Dawson no “true Irishman or any Englishman who understands Irish conditions wants to see a permanently divided Ireland.”⁶⁶

The Irish crisis in many respects mirrored the South African experience, when the determination of a single man, Milner, rejecting any form of compromise on issues which seemed to involve British vital interests in the context of a tense international situation, brought the parties to war. If South Africa had been the strategic terrain on which European power politics manifested itself with the German theoretical challenge to vital British interests—the Rand gold and diamond mines, of vital importance for the British Treasury, and the strategic function of the Cape Colony—Ireland demonstrated the naval vulnerability of Great Britain. If neutral, or allied with rival Continental powers, Ireland would have seriously challenged British security, as happened during the Second World War. A neutral Ireland then left open to German submarines access into British waters. An independent Ireland would have represented, to an

⁶⁵ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 153 5; Jeremy Smith, “Bluff, Bluster and Brinkmanship: Andrew Bonar Law and the Third Home Rule Bill,” *The Historical Journal*, 36, 1, (1993).

⁶⁶ Milner to Oliver, 12 Oct. 1911, OP 48, 62 67; Milner to Oliver, 12 Nov. 1913, MP, 13, 47 52; Amery, “The Home Rule Crisis and a National Settlement,” 279; Amery to Cecil, 16 June 1912, CeP, MS51071, 214 15; Amery to N. Chamberlain, 25 July 1914, quoted in J. Barnes and D. Nicholson eds., *The Leo Amery Diaries, 1896 1929*, vol. 1 (London: 1980), 101; Amery, *My Political Life*, vol. 1, 440; *The Times*, 30 April 1914, 9.

ardent imperialist like Milner, the beginning of a political landslide all-round the Empire, with the inevitable end of British economic, financial, political and military world supremacy.

The Irish claim to independence and the refusal of the Dominions to relinquish to an Imperial federal authority some of their hard-won powers—claiming, quite the reverse, independent control over their own business—brought the Empire to a point of no return. External pressure, naval and military rearmament, and the urgency of organizing an international alliance against the hegemonic ambitions of Kaiser Wilhelm II put the constitutional crisis of Great Britain on stand-by. This combination of forces also put an end to debate on federalism, which in 1914 had known an unprecedented boost.

There was “much talk of federalism these days,” Ernest Barker acknowledged in 1915 in *Political Thought in England*. Behind it lay the feeling that “the single unitary State, with its single sovereignty,” was “a dubious conception,” which was “hardly true to the facts of life,” since every State was “something of a federal society.” Socialism and radical Liberal doctrines were both in favour of the “disintegration of the great State into smaller national groups,” which would have reduced their powers.⁶⁷

In the Introduction to the eighth edition of his *Law of the Constitution*, Dicey concurred with Barker’s observation that federalism was much discussed. “Thirty years ago,” Dicey remarked, “the nature of federalism had received in England very inadequate investigation.” 1914 strangely contrasted with 1884. “The notion is now current,” Dicey argued, “that federalism contains the solution of every constitutional problem that perplexes British statesmanship.” The “belief in a new-fangled federalism,” was “a delusion perilous not only to England but to the whole British Empire,” and he asked what would be the real position, under a federal government, of “that small country limited in size, but still of immense power, which is specifically known by the august name of England.” Feeling “that Imperial Federation is in the air,” Jebb gave the Round Table the merit of having achieved “brilliantly...that inter-party equilibrium which is a stronger position for getting things done than independence of political parties.”⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Ernest Barker, *Political Thought in England* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1915), 181. Barker was a miner’s son who, after studying at Balliol College, Oxford, in the 1890s, taught at Oxford, London and Cambridge, where he became Professor of Political Science in 1928.

⁶⁸ Albert V. Dicey, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution* (London: 1885), citations from eighth edn., (1915), xxiv, xxxiii, xxxiv; Richard

4. *The Round Table and the war*

The war brought little change in the professions of the inner circle of the Kindergarten. Curtis and Kerr were persuaded by their friends not to enlist and to continue to work for the movement, at a critical time for Imperial relations. Milner became chairman, in the spring of 1915, of the Food Production Committee on the suggestion of Lord Selborne, who took the presidency, under the Asquith Administration, of the Board of Agriculture. Amery took an active part in the Recruitment Programme at the War Office under Kitchener. Brand was sent to Washington to represent the Imperial Munitions Board based in Ottawa. Joseph Flavelle, a leading Canadian Round Table member, was appointed Chairman of the Board, and Perry became responsible for the financial operations of the Board.⁶⁹

By 1914 Round Table groups had been created in New Zealand at Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington, Dunedin and Wanganui thanks mainly to the efforts of J. A. Atkinson. In Australia the most active members were Frederic Eggleston, Ernest Scott and William Harrison Moore from Melbourne, and groups were created also in Sydney and Brisbane. In South Africa only the Johannesburg group remained active during the war years, under the joint efforts of Duncan, Feetham and Wyndham, but remained, according to Kendle, “the weakest of the dominion organisations.” The function of the groups was to keep alive local debate on the crisis and the development of Imperial relations, and to contribute with studies to the final draft of the *Green Memorandum*.⁷⁰

Jebb, “Imperial Organization,” in *The Empire and the Century*, C. S. Goldman ed. (London: 1905), 332-50.

⁶⁹ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 183-4. Milner fully supported Lord Kitchener’s appointment as Secretary of War, J. Lee Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot: A Life of Alfred, Viscount Milner of St James’s and Cape Town, 1854-1925* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 309.

⁷⁰ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 156-7; Lionel Curtis, *The Commonwealth of Nations* (London: 1916). A shortened popular version of the volume was published in the same year under the title *The Problem of the Commonwealth*. Kendle, *The Round Table*, 182. Reading the *Green Memorandum*, Fabian Ware, from 1905 to 1911 editor of the *Morning Post* stated: “Their history is wicked how dare they do this sort of thing. It is really poisoning the wells. I am pulled up short at every page always doubting their conclusions & where I have any little knowledge knowing them to be awry...Damn it if England is guided by the R.T. she becomes permanently second rate intellectually among great nations,” (Fabian Ware to Richard Jebb, 24 Dec. 1912, quoted in Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 160). Returning from Canada, Curtis accepted the appointment of Beit Lecturer in

The development of the movement in Canada was a major preoccupation of the London group, and over the years they followed it closely, with visits by Hitchens, Kerr, Brand, Curtis and Milner himself, inviting their Canadian followers to attend crucial meetings in London, or hosting them in their London or country residences when visiting England for business. The most frequent Canadian visitors were Walker, Glazebrook, Kylie, A. L. Burt, and the young modern history lecturer Vincent Massey, who had a significant role to play in the life of the movement and of his own country. The Toronto group was—under the leadership of Willison and John A. Stevenson—the most prominent in the country, requiring its splitting into three junior ones, and groups were also created in Winnipeg, Edmonton, Victoria, Montreal and Adelaide.⁷¹

In Great Britain groups were established at Cambridge, Glasgow, and Oxford, where in 1913 had been established, on the initiative of Coupland, Curtis, Milner, J. G. Lockhart and James Allen, the Raleigh Club, which became a central venue for debates over the future of the Empire. On Sunday evenings, distinguished speakers brought there by Curtis and Coupland, attracted a crowd of “the liveliest and most influential” undergraduates who would play a role in British public life. Recollecting one of these meetings, Lockhart recorded that “from time to time visits were paid by really big people, such as Cabinet Ministers and Proconsuls.” As they had “not learnt the new language,” and were “sometime... a little ‘jingo’,” Curtis converts would shudder “with horror” at them. “Converts are so zealous!,” Lockhart noted, and when the speakers “talked of the Empire, the undergraduates, who knew better and called it the ‘Commonwealth of Nations’, would draw in their breath sharply, as though an infinitive had been split.”⁷²

Colonial History at Oxford, and started to revise the *Green Memorandum* according to the criticism which it raised, for publication.

⁷¹ John Alexander Stevenson (1883 1970), collaborator to the *Winnipeg Free Press* and *Toronto's Star*, chief Canadian correspondent of *The Times*, 1926 40, editorial writer of the *Toronto's Globe and Mail*, 1940 6, Ottawa editor of *Saturday Night* and correspondent of the *Guardian*, 1947 58, contributor to the *Round Table*, the *Spectator* and the *Quarterly Review*. Alfred Leroy Burt (1888 1970), Rhodes Scholar from Ontario 1910, history lecturer at the University of Alberta, 1916 30, professor of history at the university of Minnesota, 1930 56. Vincent Massey (1887 1967), lecturer of modern history at the University of Toronto, 1913 5, Associate Secretary to the War Committee of the Cabinet in 1918, Secretary and then Director of the Government Reparation Committee, 1918 9, Canadian representative in Washington 1926 30, High Commissioner for Canada in London 1935 46, Governor General of Canada 1952 59.

⁷² Lockhart, *At the Feet*, 13, 108.

The private publication and circulation among the groups in mid-1915 of Curtis's *The Project of a Commonwealth*, being the final revision of the *Green Memorandum*, and its shortened and 'popular' version, *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, with a print-run of more than 5,000 copies, provoked animated discussions, and almost a split in the movement. From its strong advocacy of the creation of an Imperial federation on the classical American model, responsible for foreign and defence policies, and with the power to raise revenues directly, it became apparent that the 'study period' of the movement had come to an end, and it had to enter into the battlefield of political arena. Not all the members of the London group would however agree with the 'radical' plan put forward by Curtis, and with the need for a federalist campaign which would alienate supporters of simple co-operation. Amery, who had never been a federalist in the strict sense, led the opposition to Curtis's hard line, and even Milner—who initially thought that Curtis's book was "admirably suited for the purpose for which it was intended," raising "no unnecessary issues"—had to withdraw to a mediating position, unusual for him, putting a stop for the time being to publication of the plan for the public at large.

Curtis did not seem discouraged from taking such a strong line, and, writing to Milner, recognized that the value of the Round Table arose "from its mixed character." If Imperial union was advocated by an organization which consisted "exclusively of Olivers," the cause would be lost in the Dominions and "among the working classes from the outset." On the other hand, "a movement which consisted of Zimmerns and Couplands," Curtis observed, would probably lose touch "with hard realities." Surprisingly, Curtis gained the full support of another loyal Milnerite, Steel-Maitland, who sharply criticized Kerr and Brand, who appeared "to be of the ascetic kind and to want us all to put on hair shirts and feel the prickles just for the sake of feeling them, even though other clothing would suit the purpose of the weather just as well."⁷³

The reaction in Canada was mixed. Copies of the book reached not only members of the groups, but also leading public figures like Borden, Mackenzie King, and Zebulon Aiton Lash (vice-President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce in close touch with Borden and Walker), who were generally sceptical over the federal scheme in general, and in particular on the question of representation within the Imperial parliament, the administration of Dependencies and direct taxation. It seemed, however,

⁷³ Milner to Curtis, 6 Oct. and 27 Nov. 1915; Curtis to Milner, 29 Nov. 1915; Steel Maitland to Glazebrook, 24 Feb. 1916, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 186-7, 189). Curtis thought that Zimmern's mind was "not shaped in the iron Milnerian mould," (Lavin, *From Empire to*, 158-159).

improbable that such a massive ‘private’ circulation of the volume remained unnoticed by the press, which in fact got hold of it, and through John Lewis, editor of *The Toronto Star*, gave it a hostile welcome. Following the publication also of an unfavourable review article in a University Magazine, the Kindergarten decided, on Brand’s suggestion, to allow the immediate publication of the revised *Green Memorandum* with the title of *The Problem of Commonwealth*.⁷⁴

This decision—forced through by Milner in May 1916, in spite of resistance of many members of the London inner group—infuriated the Canadian leaders of the movement which, in the words of its secretary Massey, thought that it was “rather an esoteric production—what in Canada we call ‘highbrow’.” Canadian Round Table members, Massey explained, “would feel embarrassed in being, in a sense, committed to a certain form of centralization which they could not conscientiously follow.” Even if publication would not officially associate the movement with Curtis’s radical proposals, the name of Curtis was by then so strongly identified with the Canadian Round Table—Curtis being its founding father—as to compromise the whole venture in the Dominion which the London group considered strategic for the success of the cause.⁷⁵

Curtis invited Massey not to “presuppose that the study will lead you to any particular conclusion.” “The only gospel” which the organization had to spread at that moment was “that study should precede propagation of any kind.” “My deepest conviction,” Curtis concluded, was “that in politics as in other matters there is a truth which can be discovered by earnest and dispassionate enquiry.”⁷⁶

It would prove impossible, Willison remarked, to urge leaders of government and opposition into a Convention to revise Canada’s relationship with London, if London had already produced a detailed scheme of Imperial enhanced co-operation. Only Part I of the volume

⁷⁴ Lionel Curtis, *The Problem of Commonwealth* (London: 1916); C. W. Colby, “Topics of the Day,” *University Magazine*, 23 Feb. 1916. Members of the Executive were Glazebrook, Willison, Falconer, Walker, Wrong, Massey, Frank Beer, Hugh Scully, H. V. F. Jones and Colonel Reuben Wells Leonard. Review articles of *The Problem* in Britain were not encouraging. Only *The Times* gave it a full measure of support. The Conservative press dismissed it as visionary, while the Liberal papers attacked it as the expression of an expansionist and hegemonic culture, (*The Times Literary Supplement*, 25 May 1916; *The Athenaeum*, 16 July 1916; *The Manchester Guardian*, 11 Sept. 1916).

⁷⁵ Massey to Curtis, 21 Feb., 1 March, 2 March 1916, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 190 1). Lewis was particularly critical to the proposed direct taxation.

⁷⁶ Curtis to Massey, 28 June 1911, RTP, c.793.

should have been published, Massey remarked, since it was a detailed and scholarly study of Imperial relationships, and could help the debate about their evolution towards new forms and models. It

would commit no member of the Round Table to anything new; it would stand as a tangible result of a movement which has often been criticized as leading nowhere; and it would give a reason for the summoning of such a national conference on closer Imperial unity as we are now deliberating upon the Moot.⁷⁷

In a detailed letter to Kerr in mid-March 1916, Glazebrook reinforced the firm stand by the secretary of the Executive, explaining that the Canadian Round Table members were grouped into three categories. There were those “thoroughly enthusiastic and willing to go the whole distance”; then, more cautious supporters—“quite well represented by the Canadian moot”—who would “privately subscribe to the whole scheme” except direct taxation, in which “none of them believe in”; and finally the public at large, with anglophile sentiments but strongly determined to retain Canadian national sovereignty in crucial matters as defence, foreign policy, and taxation. Curtis’s volume would—and Glazebrook’s views seemed to be shared also by the American George Luis Beer—have had “an insignificant sale,” and become the object of “very bitter and sustained attack from all the autonomist organs and the plan as a whole would be seriously injured by details that were not essential or not absolutely essential.”⁷⁸

Massey urged Curtis to

prevent the Round Table name whether on paper or in the minds of people from being associated with any movement other than one devoted exclusively to search for political truth, and as far as possible removed from anything in the nature of the propaganda of any definite scheme of government.

The Round Table idea, according to Massey had always been “to encourage the study of present conditions, to expose the unsatisfactory status of the Dominions and to call for some solution.” It had never proclaimed “any particular scheme,” and had concerned itself “only with the statement of the ‘Problem’ proper.” “We are speaking for Canada,” Massey pointed out, and as Canada was “the strategic point in this whole movement, our political peculiarities must of course be given consideration.” The reply by Curtis was that the London inner circle was just “a group of personal friends who all believed that organic union was

⁷⁷ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 187–91.

⁷⁸ Glazebrook to Kerr 14 March 1916, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 192).

the only alternative to disruption.” They “had only engaged on these studies as a prelude to action.”⁷⁹

What became known as Curtis’s “pistol policy”—i.e. the idea that the component parts of the Empire should choose between federation and disintegration—was the fundamental nucleus of his reasoning:

I want as soon as this show is over to try and bring home to South Africa and Australia that the independence that they enjoy at present simply depends on the naval supremacy of Great Britain. At the same time one wants to bring home to Great Britain that any financial support which is worth having towards Imperial defence from the colonies must be accompanied by a corresponding measure of control over defence and foreign policy. Many people of course say that this is impossible but I do not think that we should admit the word ‘impossible’ to our political vocabulary. If however some years examination of the facts should persuade one that it is impossible then surely the position should be faced and England should say to the colonies that she cannot indefinitely continue to bear the whole burden of Empire and it is much better that they should part as a deliberate and peaceful act.⁸⁰

Curtis’s ‘pistol policy’ was questioned by twenty-five members of a Toronto Round Table study-group, according to whom “there certainly seems to be no surer way of bringing about separation than to present it as an easy and possible future for the Empire, and to suggest that events are rapidly moving in that direction.” Canadians seemed to reject the extremes of secession and Imperial federation, favouring a less compelling middle course. Writing to Glazebrook, Milner intervened to settle the dispute, agreeing with “the unwisdom of over-emphasizing Curtis’s point that there must be an immediate choice between complete Imperial unity and a rupture of relations.” Milner “never thought it a good plan to say to Canada...‘Federate at once or be off with you’.”⁸¹

Curtis was however the only member of the ‘Moot’ to believe that co-operation would collapse. Most believed that co-operation was a necessary

⁷⁹ Massey to Curtis, 2 March 1916, *ibidem*; Curtis to Massey, 28 March 1916, RTP, c.796.

⁸⁰ Curtis to Selborne, 18 Oct. 1907, SP, 71, 127; Curtis to Milner, 31 Oct. 1908, MP, 195, 155–58.

⁸¹ J. R. M. Butler, *Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr), 1882–1940* (London: 1960), 37; Milner to Glazebrook, 8 March 1916, MP, 44; 21 April 1917, MP, 354. Kerr emphasised the dangers of disintegration to Canadians: “You will realise perhaps better what I mean if I ask you to think what the position would be in this country, if the province of Quebec was [*sic*] an independent country flying a different flag,” (Philip Kerr, “Address to the Toronto Club,” 30 July 1912, RTP, c.795). “Round Table Studies,” 400.

phase which would develop into federation. Curtis was moreover almost isolated within the inner group in believing that the main opposition to Imperial federation would come from the Dominions. Amery observed, on this point, that “the real difficulty when it comes to the pinch is not going to be the Dominions but this country, which has got to be familiarised with the idea that it must surrender its monopoly of power.”⁸²

5. *The changing nature of the movement*

“You will understand my surprise,” Curtis replied to Massey in mid-March, arguing that Massey’s veto on a publication which carried Curtis’s own name only, without committing the movement, was a manifest breach of an agreement reached with the Canadians, according to which the existing Round Table organization should continue to carry on as a medium of study and discussion of the Imperial problem, and a new organization, supporting a specific solution to it, would eventually be created. Curtis’s publications would serve exactly the purpose of helping the formation of the vanguard which would lead the way. *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, fruit of a decade of studies, discussions, drafts and re-drafts, by a group of young men inspired by a long-standing tradition of British political thought, and by the moral example of Milner’s uncompromising leadership and patriotic spirit, was the manifesto of those within the movement who thought that the time for a definite action had come. They did not want to “convert the Round Table into a militant organization,” but to make the movement aware that events pressed it to move from “the stage of inquiry to the stage of action.”⁸³

That vanguard already existed, and this political leadership, well aware of its revolutionary role, was formed by a fraction of the London inner group. The horizontal fracture described by Glazebrook was in the nature of a revolutionary movement specifically created to overthrow an outdated political and legal order which did not bear any longer a relation with a socio-historical reality: it expressed the emergence of new socio-historical forces. The time had arrived, Curtis thought—and the emergency of the war did not allow any further delay—to enter in the crucial phase of the battle for the realization of “the project of a Commonwealth,” or to accept defeat. The revolutionary meaning of the Round Table’s final goal and its worldwide consequences were clearly impressed in the minds and souls of most members of the South African

⁸² Amery to Kerr, 26 Jan. 1911, RTP, Amery file.

⁸³ Curtis to Massey, 16 March 1916, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 192 3).

Kindergarten, and offered them the deep motivation for bringing the battle from the periphery to the heart of the Empire. It would be the major political revolution of modern history, Curtis believed, since it would replace an autocratic Empire with a democratic federation, open for membership to all Dependencies once they had been trained to self-government, offering a major contribution to world economic and political stability.

At this stage Curtis had just started to be aware of the historic significance of the revolutionary process of which the Round Table was the subjective and leading factor. Moving from a Hegelian conception of the course of history, as the realization of freedom through what he called “the principle of responsibility,” which in political terms meant self-government, Curtis thought that the survival of “free nations” depended on the realization of “something more than a National State,” which at this stage of evolution of his political doctrine he called “human State,” a Commonwealth including all nations of the world. Curtis had in fact a mystical idea of Empire, dying and resurrecting as the nucleus of a world federation, a Commonwealth of Nations. In trying to reconcile opposites—Empire and federation—the Round Table in fact witnessed and to some extent produced its crucifixion. “Whether this group succeeded in transforming the British Empire into a Commonwealth of Nations,” Carroll Quigley argued, “or merely succeeded in destroying the British Empire is not clear, but one seems as likely as the other.”⁸⁴

Curtis was aware that “no recognized party in Canada would dare to raise the cry of independence. But neither would any of them venture to declare that organic union is the only alternative, or to commit...to a definite movement towards that goal.” The time had come, in Curtis’s judgment, to transform the Round Table organization from a study and debating society into a “propagandist organization.” Canada was, according to Curtis, “the determining factor...of the future and the whole British Commonwealth rests in their [*sic*] hands to make or mar.”⁸⁵

Milner thought that “the statement of the problem...could hardly...have been better done than Curtis has done,” and was well aware that Curtis’s “suggestions for a new Imperial constitution, especially with regard to the raising of the future Imperial revenue” would “give a considerable shock to many people in Canada,” but was convinced of the

⁸⁴ Carroll Quigley, *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time* (Toronto: Angriff Press, 1974), 144, 146.

⁸⁵ Curtis, *Green Memorandum*, 141; Stacey, *Age of Conflict*, 168; John Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of Empire* (London: 1976), 213; Curtis to Maj. Mason, 16 Sept. 1916, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 204).

advantage of putting “a rather extreme statement of the imperialist solution...before the world.” Curtis would “open the ball in his own way,” a way which resembled so closely Milner’s style. Curtis’s exposition “of fundamental principles,” was based on the assumption that “nothing less than a full partnership” was “the only legitimate possibility.” The volume would “crystallise a controversy” which could not “forever be left in its present vague and indefinite state.”⁸⁶

Milner could not “see that anything would be gained by holding back the statement of the case for what I may call a radical solution.” The fact that “a big proposal” had “been boldly made, and supported by such very strong arguments, will prevent,” according to Milner, “our relapsing into absolute acquiescence in the present wholly illogical and indefensible position of affairs.” “Of course there will be an outcry,” Milner told Glazebrook, “and very likely the first effect will be to rally the very formidable forces which are opposed to any general Imperial Union. But, sooner or later, that outcry has got to be faced.”⁸⁷

Milner openly supported the federal scheme outlined by Curtis in *The Problem* in front of the Empire Parliamentary Association on 28 July 1916, expressing “complete agreement with the general argument of Mr. Curtis,” making lengthy quotations from his book and accepting “the main lines of his plan for Imperial Federation.” The resulting discussion, however, “showed that not a single Dominion Member present agreed either with Mr. Curtis or Lord Milner.”⁸⁸

When the London inner circle decided to publish *The Problem*, Massey wrote to Kerr accusing Curtis of having “brushed our well-meant objections to one side like an Imperial Mr. Podsnap, and [having] proceeded to give detailed instructions as to the publication of *The Problem*,” resulting in a “premature promulgation of a detailed and controversial scheme of organic union.”

There is great virtue Massey stated in ‘laying all the cards on the table’, in making a bold, frank statement of a case and in a wholesome refusal to ‘sugar coat a constitutional pill’. These are generalizations with which I heartily agree, but to apply them relentlessly to this particular case and to shut our eyes to the damage which this cause in Canada is sure to suffer

⁸⁶ Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of*, 213; Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, 185.

⁸⁷ Milner to A. Glazebrook, 8 March 1916, MP, 44; Milner to Walker, 22 April 1916, *ibidem*; Milner to A. Glazebrook, 8 March 1916, *ibidem*.

⁸⁸ Milner to Glazebrook, 8 March 1916, MP, 144; Milner to Walker, 22 April 1916, MP, 170; D. H. Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations* (London: 1920), 166.

when presented in all its bald logic is to run all the risks attendant in doctrinaire political methods.⁸⁹

Sir Edmund Walker reminded Milner that “the enemy” had “already begun to warn the timid Canadian that a parliament *in England* shall have power to tax him *in Canada*, at once recalling the most sensitive spot in the colonial history of North America.” The question of direct taxation raised in Canada a fierce opposition, and Walker could not “see that the reliance for an income by this new Parliament is any less strong by taxation levied on the Dominions as a whole.” Canadians were also opposed to being involved in the administration of the Dependencies, thinking that they might “risk everything by insisting on it at the start.”

As an Imperialist Walker reassured Milner I go the whole length...I believe we must, in the end, assume our share of the whole of Great Britain’s burdens, but we are dealing with what is at the moment possible, and with the knowledge that only by the spirit of compromise can we hope to succeed.⁹⁰

Curtis thought that unless “the power to tax” was given to the Imperial federal government, “we shall not be establishing a government at all, but only a conference of separate States.” “Government and taxation” were, according to Curtis “correlative to one another.” A Toronto follower pointed out to Curtis that such central authority would not be able to “collect one dollar in Canada...without the concurrence of the Canadian Parliament of the day.” “To suggest that an Imperial taxing body can seize the revenues of Canada,” he stressed, was “equivalent to anticipating the cataclysm of the British Empire so far as Canada is concerned.”⁹¹

Glazebrook sent a circular letter to the Canadian groups distancing himself from the conclusions of *The Problem*, and claiming that “effective organization of the Empire must not involve any...surrender of control

⁸⁹ Massey to Kerr, 3 April 1916; Massey to Kerr, 4 Nov. 1916, RTP, c.822.

⁹⁰ Walker to Milner, 1 April 1916, WP, 23. In his diary Massey recorded with bitterness on 29 April 1916 that the Toronto Round Table Committee “gave in to L. C. in matter of publication of ‘Problem of the Commonwealth’.” Curtis interpreted Walker’s doubts “as faint heartedness and our personal relations, for the moment, were affected,” Massey Diary, Massey Papers, University of Toronto, 302; Vincent Massey, *What’s Past is Prologue: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, C. H.* (London: 1963), 37 38.

⁹¹ Curtis, *Green Memorandum*, 109, 102; “Report of the Victoria Group on the Green Memorandum,” 4 March 1913, RTP, c.795; William Norwood Higham, “The Laurier Borden Naval Controversy, 1909 1913,” MA diss, University of Toronto, 1951, 88; “Round Table Studies,” 405; 10 Feb. 1917, RTP, c.819.

over fiscal policy by any portion of the Empire.” Writing to Coupland in April 1918, Glazebrook thought that the publication of *The Problem*

was unfortunate, not only in the fact that it said the wrong things but also that it...lost us an opportunity which cannot very well be repeated. Ever since that time the drift of things here has been noticeably in the direction of a more definite Canadian national feeling.

According to Massey, the publication of *The Problem* deserved the Round Table “dying a death that was entirely natural.”⁹²

Curtis’s taxation proposals were disclosed and criticized by the Liberal oriented *Toronto Daily Star*—with a circulation of 95,000 copies—observing:

If our Parliament of Canada gives up its power of taxation for purposes of defence, it impairs its power of taxation all along the line and that means that we give up self government to a large extent. That ought to be understood.

Curtis did not publicly reply, but in private he expressed his irritation that the paper had “taken from the context of *The Problem* the most alarming sentence on the question of taxation that it can find and has given it full publicity.”⁹³

According to Kylie, the Canadian Round Table failed to secure “enough Liberals here, either young or old, to prevent the party from making the question a political one.” The Round Table’s “greatest difficulty” in Canada was, according to Curtis, to persuade “Liberals that behind our enterprise is not some political dodge or trap.”⁹⁴

Loring Christie, leading figure of the Round Table in Canada, and Borden’s chief adviser for foreign affairs, argued in 1913 that “the Canadian people must sooner or later assume a control over foreign policy...no less effective than that now exercised by the people of Britain or by the USA.” Canadians could either separate “their own foreign policy from that of the Empire,” bringing it under their own control or insist “that the foreign policy of the Empire be separated from the domestic affairs of Britain and entrusted to a Government responsible no less to Canadian than to British voters.”⁹⁵

⁹² Glazebrook to Coupland, 9 April 1918, RTP, c.819; Massey, *What’s Past*, 40.

⁹³ *Toronto Daily Star*, 17 Feb. 1916; Curtis to Vincent Massey, 28 March 1916, RTP, c.796.

⁹⁴ Edward Grigg to Willison, 8 Aug. 1913, RTP, c.822; Kylie to Edward Grigg, 27 Oct. 1913, RTP, c.796; Curtis, *The Round Table Movement*, 12.

⁹⁵ C. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies, 1867 1921*, vol. 1 (Toronto: 1977), 167; Robert Craig Brown, *Robert*

Canadian imperialism was, according to Douglas Cole, a form of “*Britannic* nationalism” or, according to Michael Bliss, an “ethnocultural loyalty to things British.” Carl Berger argued that it “rested upon an intense awareness of Canadian nationality combined with an equally decided desire to unify and transform the British Empire so that this nationality could attain a position of equality within it.” A Canadian Round Tabler was, according to C. P. Stacey, “a nationalist when the chips were down.”⁹⁶

In the prospective Imperial federation “the hegemony would inevitably pass,” according to Curtis, “from Great Britain to Canada.” “It may well be,” Curtis ventured, “that the children are born already who will see Canada as populous and wealthy as England itself.” Bourassa would reply to Curtis that English Canada included

a considerable proportion of people still in the first period of national incubation. Under the sway of imperialism, a fair number have not yet decided whether their allegiance is to Canada or the Empire, whether the United Kingdom or the Canadian Confederacy is their country.

Henri Bourassa thought however that the Round Table was “the most active and interesting imperialist group”, and Curtis’s work “even marked with a logical trend of reasoning...rarely to be found in Anglo-Saxon productions.”⁹⁷

Laird Borden: A Biography, 1914 1937, vol. 2 (Vancouver: Canada Pub. Cor., 1975), 80.

⁹⁶ Douglas L. Cole, “Canada’s ‘Nationalistic’ Imperialists,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 5, 3, (1970): 44; id., “The Problem of ‘Nationalism’ and ‘Imperialism’ in British Settlement Colonies,” *Journal of British Studies*, 10, 2, (1971): 171; Bliss, *Right Honourable Men*, 44; Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867 1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 49; Ramsay Cook, “Nationalism in Canada,” in *The Maple Leaf Forever: Essays on Nationalism and Politics in Canada* (Toronto: 1977), 199; Stacey, *Age of Conflict*, 201.

⁹⁷ Curtis, *Green Memorandum*, 124, 42. Stephen Leacock made a prediction in 1906 that, by the end of the Twentieth century, Canada’s population would reach 100 million, (Berger, *Sense of Power*, 126). Henri Bourassa, *Independence or Imperial Partnership?* (Montreal: 1916), 5 6. Kerr thought that Bourassa “would be opposed to the Imperialism of people like Curtis and myself,” (Kerr to E. J. Kylie, 16 Dec. 1910, RTP, Kylie file). Bourassa left the Laurier Government in 1899 because of the Prime Minister’s decision to send Canadian volunteers to serve in the Boer War. He was immediately re elected as an independent Member of Parliament, serving until 1907. In 1908 he was elected to Quebec’s provincial assembly and he founded the newspaper *Le Devoir* in 1910.

One of the main arguments employed by Curtis in trying to involve the Canadians in the management of Imperial affairs was that their share in the burden of administering the Dependencies would correct “the inevitable materialism of North American politics, where men have inherited a disproportionate share of Nature’s bounty.” The growth of “some sense of responsibility towards that portion of the human race who are most pitiable because they cannot manage their own affairs,” would relieve Great Britain from the task of controlling “the destinies of some 350,000,000 of alien people, unable as yet to govern themselves, and the easy victims of rapine and injustice unless a strong arm guards them.”⁹⁸

Curtis’s appeal was answered by George Wrong, who supported the idea that “highly trained young Canadians” would be “employed in the great task of governing India.” “The altruism of our rule in India,” an anonymous commentator of the *Green Memorandum* annotated, seemed however “very questionable.” India, for another commentator, was to most Canadians “simply an awkward accident of the Empire”, which they all hoped was “a *separable* accident.” They had to be convinced “that we hold it not from greed but from duty.”⁹⁹

“Such a consummation,” Curtis remarked in a letter to the French Canadian nationalist leader Henri Bourassa in early September 1916, could “only be attained by a series of steps,” the “first and greatest” being “that which lies before us now: to pass from the stage of the merely National Commonwealth to one which includes a quarter of mankind.” This first stage of the revolution could be attained “by converting the British Empire into a true international Commonwealth,” and it required the extension of self-government, by training, to the populations like India which were still subjected to the “European races.” The “free nations of this Commonwealth,” should “all unite in trusteeship for the future of India.” The British had to promote “a slow and gradual process, to renovate the soul of Indian people, to enable them to rise to a true nationality of their own.” The new task which Curtis gave the Round Table was “to make India free.” The Round Table, and particularly Curtis and Kerr, had in fact to leave a deep and lasting mark of their actions in India more than anywhere else. Self-government meant for Curtis more a moral value than a liberal constitutional formula, based on the principle “of the infinite duty of each to all,” an elaboration of Green’s proposition

⁹⁸ Curtis, *Green Memorandum*, 57, 113.

⁹⁹ *University Monthly*, Feb. 1910; “Round Table Studies,” CP 156/5, 462, 235.

that “among ourselves there is at least a potential duty of every man to every man.”¹⁰⁰

The “moral basis of Empire” was, according to Curtis, the universal extension of citizenship. Anticipating the Montagu Declaration, Curtis stated in 1916: “I should like to see the Imperial Constitution open...with a preamble announcing that the Commonwealth exists for the purpose of extending self-government, as rapidly as may be, to all communities within its circle.”¹⁰¹

6. The Round Table and the Workers’ Educational Association

Membership of the ‘moot’, as they called themselves—defining the character of a group which was debating in an undefined fashion—after returning home from South Africa, was flexible. There was no rigid organizational structure or definite membership. It gravitated around an expanded Kindergarten, an ‘inner moot’ composed of Milner, Selborne, the South African Kindergarten, Amery, Grigg, Oliver, Craik, Coupland, Zimmern, Astor and Cecil. Ordinary attendance at the moot was between six and ten. Amery attended most of the Round Table meetings until 1914, but gradually moved away because of the refusal by the inner circle to support Imperial Preference and to play any active and direct role in British party politics. Zimmern was admitted within the inner circle because of his connection with the Workers’ Educational Association (WEA) and Milner’s wish that “the two movements should keep as closely in touch as possible,” but resigned from the Round Table with Cecil as soon as the movement inaugurated a revisionist policy towards the League of Nations.¹⁰²

Joining the inner circle, Zimmern developed relationships with the WEA, where he was playing with Arnold Joseph Toynbee—nephew of Milner’s mentor, and introduced into the Kindergarten by Zimmern himself—a prominent role, trying to run the organization according to the Fabian model: a select group of the initiated “would educate those below them, while providing expert advice to those above them.” The Round

¹⁰⁰ A. L. Rowse, “Lionel Curtis: The Prophet,” in *Glimpses of the Great* (Lanham, MD: 1985), 342; Deborah Lavin, “Morals and the Politics of the Empire: Lionel Curtis and the Round Table,” in *Essays Presented to Michael Roberts*, John Bossy and Peter Juppe eds. (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1976).

¹⁰¹ Kendle, *The Round Table*, xv.

¹⁰² Grigg to Zimmern, 14 Feb. 1914, RTP, c817, 14 5.

Table was “extremely anxious,” according to Grigg, to co-opt “some stronger representation of Liberal opinion,” since it was “very difficult to get Liberals in this country to do any active work for Imperial organization, although they bestow on it a good deal of academic interest.”¹⁰³

The Highway, journal of the WEA started by Zimmern and John Dover-Wilson, announced in September 1914 the formation of “Study Circles,” on the model of the Round Table’s study-groups, on foreign policy. The war, according to *Highway*, was “a proof of a profound dissatisfaction among civilized nations with the existing political structure of the Continent.” Since “the frame-work of society” did “not coincide with the facts of nationality,” it had “gone to pieces.” Zimmern’s attempt to educate the WEA according to Round Table views began with the assumption that it ought “both to know more about foreign policy and to control it.” He arranged lectures for Toynbee on nationality, which resulted in “enormous fun” and “the finest setting for real teaching” that he had “come across yet.” The establishment within the WEA of a Council for the Study of International Relations owed much to Zimmern’s initiative, supported by Arthur Greenwood, Ramsay Muir, and James Headlam-Morley, who became a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Studies, and through the War Propaganda Bureau—better known as Wellington House, of which he was a leading member—sponsored the publications of the Council. Headlam-Morley became directly involved also in October 1916 in launching *The New Europe*, a journal devoted to Continental post-war settlement, arranging for its distribution.¹⁰⁴

Well before the British Government began to define any articulate war aims, or define a propaganda campaign through Wellington House, those involved in the Round Table and the WEA played a pioneering role in outlining the ideals for which the Empire was fighting. Wellington House

¹⁰³ See Zimmern to Wallas, 8 Oct. [1908], ZP, 12, 23 4; Zimmern notes on “Ancient Greece and Modern Problems,” May 1911, ZP, 137, 78; Grigg to Zimmern, 14 Feb. 1914, ZP, 14, 46. Zimmern used to show to Grigg drafts of his work and of others involved with the WEA, while Grigg encouraged them to contribute directly to the Round Table, (see Grigg to Dover Wilson, 5 Oct. 1914, DWP, 14320, 102 6.7).

¹⁰⁴ DWP 14320, 129; Zimmern to mother, [Sept. 1914], ZP, 9, 15 16; Headlam Morley to Greenwood, 22 March 1916, Headlam Morley to Greenwood, 25 July 1916; CSIR, Minutes, 30 Aug. 1916, Headlam Morley Papers. On the WEA, see Mary Stocks, *The Workers Educational Association: The First Fifty Years* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953).

provided the institutional setting for Toynbee to work with Headlam-Morley, Lewis Namier, and the Leeper brothers—Alan and Rex—on war propaganda, until they joined the Intelligence Bureau of the Department of Information under the direction of the Round Tabler John Buchan. All of them, with the exception of Robert William Seton-Watson, moved in March 1918 to the Foreign Office's newly established Political Intelligence Department (PID), where they were joined by Zimmern—employed since the outbreak of the war at the Ministry of Reconstruction—and entrusted with the planning for the post-war settlement.¹⁰⁵

First envisaged as Peace Terms Intelligence Section, the PID was created at the suggestion of Zimmern himself, who found a strong ally in Amery, Assistant Secretary to the War Cabinet. It was Curtis however who had persuaded Amery on the lack of adequate preparation for post-war peace negotiations. Created in March 1918, the PID was joined by many members of the editorial boards of both the *New Europe* and *The Round Table*. Headlam-Morley, Namier, Rex Leeper, and Zimmern were contributors to both *The Round Table* and the *New Europe*. According to Gordon Martel the needs of a liberal Empire and a more stable European order had begun, by the outbreak of the war, to “fuse,” as represented by the convergence of the *New Europe* and *The Round Table* groups. The Foreign Office encouraged “this prolific production of educational matter,” and Kerr played a vital role, both during the war and in the peace negotiations, in feeding the Prime Minister with ideas and schemes put forward by the PID. Kerr, according to Goldstein, “exerted great influence on Lloyd George’s public speeches, particularly on war aims,” giving him “the opportunity for informal lobbying.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ On the PID, see Erik Goldstein, *Winning the Peace: British Diplomatic Strategy, Peace Planning, and the Paris Peace Conference, 1916 1920* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). On the formation of British war aims, see V. H. Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy 1914 1918* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); Brock Millman, “A Counsel of Despair: British Strategy and War Aims, 1917 18,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 36, 2, (2001): 241 270. James Headlam Morley, who was Zimmern’s supervisor at the Department of Political Intelligence, was influential in his transfer from the Ministry of Blockade to the PID in 1918.

¹⁰⁶ On Zimmern, see D. J. Markwell, “Sir Alfred Zimmern Revisited: Fifty Years On,” *Review of International Studies*, 12, (1986): 279 92; CABP, CAB 21/62/f15/E/1. A second Memorandum was submitted by Toynbee and Zimmern on 13 February. Minute by Amery to Hankey, 10 Feb. 1917, CABP, CAB 21/62/f18/Q/15; *Amery Diary*, 3 Feb. 1917, quoted in John Barnes and David Nicholson eds., *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, 1896 1929 (London: 1980), 141. “On Permission given to members of PID to write for the press,” 26 July 1918,

As a link between the Round Table, the WEA and Wellington House, Zimmern was aware of his special role:

I want to keep my cosmopolitan standard and a certain sense of detachment Zimmern wrote in August 1915 to Albert Mansbridge, co founder of WEA because I feel that is a gift which has been given me, a certain position as a go between or interpreter, and that I must use it. It is for the same reason that I have undertaken to help the Round Table people, not as entirely one of them, but as a link between them and others whom they might otherwise fail to understand.

The WEA had “to think out a national policy in the way the Round Table has done and tied our members with it,” Zimmern thought, recognizing that they were “incapable, in this generation, of thinking one out for themselves.” In trying to find a good reason for not enlisting, Zimmern came to the conclusion that his “Round Table stuff” was “more useful than private soldiering.” “The chance of helping to make the European settlement a little bit better” was for Zimmern, “more important than anything else just now.” Writing to Gilbert Murray, Zimmern—a leading figure also in the *New Europe*—felt that the war was “such a tremendous stimulus to thought and action that I feel it much easier than I expected to keep from brooding. We have got to keep our heads clear at all costs.”¹⁰⁷

The war was not, according to Zimmern writing to the editor of the *Nation*, “between nations but between ideas,” between democracy and autocracy, and “just because” it was a war of ideas, it had to be “fought out sternly, to the point of utter and crushing refutation.” Conscription would contribute to solving the social problem and seemed “part of an universal national education.” Applying to the Great War the lesson of the Peloponnesian War, Zimmern argued that good might come from wrong. If the war were not fought for a universal idea, it would then produce, for Great Britain, the loss of “its own soul.” Zimmern shared Ramsay Muir’s view according to which “all the great movements in modern history—nationalism, internationalism, the growth of popular self-government, and the expansion of European influence over the non-European world—seemed to have a culminating point in the war.”¹⁰⁸

FOP, FO 371/4366/PID263; Erik Goldstein, “The Round Table and the New Europe,” in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 441; id., “The Foreign Office and Political Intelligence,” *Review of International Studies*, 14, 4, (1988): 275 88.

¹⁰⁷ Zimmern to Mansbridge, 29 August 1915, MaP, 65257. Zimmern to Mansbridge, 25 August 1915, MaP, 65257; Zimmern to Murray, MuP, 26, f.57.

¹⁰⁸ 1 Sep. 1914, Draft in ZP, 14, 115 7; Zimmern notes on “Ancient Greece and Modern Problems,” May 1911, ZP, 137, 11; Toynbee to Zimmern, 17 Jan. 1910, ZP, 12, 107 8; Zimmern’s notes on “Thucydides the Imperialist,” ZP, 139, 109.

If Toynbee thought that “we can’t live in a Europe where Prussia is top dog,” and that “of course we go on to the very end of our strength,” Zimmern felt confident that the war was “going to make us the policeman of the world, and the longer it lasts, the greater will our final influence be.” Kerr, very similarly thought that the war would decide whether Europe would develop “along the lines of a free Commonwealth or under the lowering domination of an overweening militarist State.” In opposition to radical Liberals and Labour figures like James Ramsay MacDonald, Norman Angell, Charles Philips Trevelyan and Edmund Dane Morel, who opposed the war, Zimmern thought that “recent events had convinced even them that Grey’s attitude towards Germany was thoroughly justified throughout.”¹⁰⁹

Toynbee shared the Union for Democratic Control’s opinion that “the veiled war of diplomacy” was “the root of all evil, and democracy all over Europe” had “got to conquer the domain of foreign policy as well as home affairs.” In order to transform the exercise of diplomacy into a democratic process, it was necessary to educate and inform the public. The democratization of foreign policy would be possible, however, only through a structural reform of the process of its formation. Zimmern thought that “knowledge on which policies are built,” unites, while “policies divide.” The use of knowledge should however be performed “in the broad spiritual sense,” as put forward by the Harvard scholar Graham Wallas, in the “educational thinking” which the Round Table had always attached to it. As a leading figure of the *New Republic*, Wallas in fact influenced Zimmern particularly with his *Human Nature in Politics*,

Zimmern felt that the production of *War and Democracy* was more useful than enlisting, Zimmern to Dover Wilson, [Sep. 1914], DWP, 14320, 10. Stuart Hodgson ed., *Ramsay Muir: An Autobiography and Some Essays* (London: 1943), 108. On the Liberals and the conscription issue, see Matthew Johnson, “The Liberal War Committee and the Liberal Advocacy of Conscription in Britain, 1914–1916,” *Historical Journal*, 51, 2, (June 2008): 399–420. Even if they were unfit for military service, Zimmern and Toynbee supported British entry into the war.

¹⁰⁹ 24 Aug. 1914, TP, 69; Zimmern to Seton Watson, [August 1914], S WP; Zimmern to father, 31 Aug. 1914, ZP, 9, 6–7; Philip Kerr, “The Principle of Peace,” *The Round Table*, 6, 23, (June 1916): 391; Zimmern to Seton Watson, undated [Aug. 1914], S WP. On Zimmern’s appointment to the Montagu Burton Professorship at Oxford, Toynbee—who had followed in Zimmern’s footsteps from Winchester to New College congratulated him, recognizing that his “lectures on Greek history were one of the two things which really educated me at Oxford.” Zimmern’s treatment of Greek history was “something not less alive than the present,” (Toynbee to Zimmern, 9 Aug. 1930, ZP, 24, 51).

supporting the case for the application of political science to imperial and social reforms.¹¹⁰

The war appeared to Toynbee as “the bankruptcy of the European State system,” and this failure was “the cause of all the misery the people of Europe are suffering.” Toynbee confessed to his mother to finding himself “inclining steadily towards social revolution.” “The middle class have had their fling for a century and produced this,” Toynbee remarked, “now let the working class have their try.” He stood “for nationality at one end and internationalism at the other...and if existing States and their traditions can’t square with them, let them go to the devil, the U.K. and the Dual Monarchy and all of them.” A “new order was coming,” and the nation-State was, according to Zimmern, destined to become part of a larger whole. Nationality was their “blind alley, as the ‘city State’ was to the Greeks.”¹¹¹

7. The Round Table, the New Europe and the New Republic

If it was for Milner to persuade the inner circle of the Round Table to develop relations with the WEA, it was Murray who convinced them that the “liberal feeling” in Great Britain should keep “fully in touch with the war.” It would be a mistake to “let patriotism get identified with Toryism or Militarism, for the sake of the settlement afterwards.” “A generous treatment of Germany and a large and permanent settlement of all the centres of unrest in Europe” should be added, according to Murray, to the strengthening of “the Concert and reducing armaments by treaty.” It appeared “enormously important not to have a mere grabbing or Jingo settlement.” Murray—who would play a vital role in the establishment of Chatham House—served as a link between the War Propaganda Bureau at Wellington House and a cluster of liberally oriented British organizations

¹¹⁰ Toynbee to mother, 12 Nov. 1914, TP, 69; Zimmern to Wallas, 14 Apr. 1916, ZP, 1/46, 37. Wallas shared Zimmern’s view that “B. C. 500 is a date in the modern and not the ancient history of mankind,” (Wallas to Zimmern, 29 Dec. 1909, ZP, 12, 100). The Institute was intended to be the counter to the UDC, just as the UDC and later the Labour Committee on Foreign Policy would consider themselves as an alternative to the Institute.

¹¹¹ Zimmern’s notes on “United Britain: A Study in XXth Century Imperialism,” [1905], ZP 139, 157 8, 163, 144 5.

of which the Round Table and the New Europe were the most prominent.¹¹²

Coupland, then editor of *The Round Table*, in sending the proofs of the journal to Murray for approval, felt “personally...much happier” if he could count on Murray’s “support in trying to interpret the history of the Empire in the light of liberal ideas & to make those ideas the watchwords of Imperial policy in the future.”¹¹³

At the beginning of the war Curtis and Kerr joined an informal discussion group to discuss British war aims. This included G. M. Trevelyan, H. W. V. Temperley, J. H. Rose, W. Alison Phillips, Basil Williams, Zimmern, Robert W. Seton-Watson, and the MPs Aubrey Herbert and A. F. Whyte. Seton-Watson had been Kerr’s contemporary at New College, and was introduced to the Round Table ‘outer ring’ by Zimmern, co-author with Seton-Watson of *War and Democracy*, launching the idea of an “Imperial Democratic Party,” and proposing the replacement of Asquith with a leader drawn from the Commonwealth. They identified in the Australian Prime Minister William Hughes the ideal candidate, and gave Wickham Steed the task of visiting and involving him in the project. This was an idea which did not materialize, since Milner had in mind a different strategy for the replacement of Asquith.¹¹⁴

What was known within the Round Table as “Zimmern vision” was the creation of a single foreign policy among the component parts of the Empire, in order to establish a post-war world order based on the principle of co-operation among sovereign States, having a League of Nations at its centre. In order to spread this ‘vision’ Zimmern with a number of other contributors to *The Round Table*, such as Seton-Watson, Toynbee and

¹¹² Murray to Fisher, 10 Aug. 1914, MuP, 133, 40. Murray, Arnold Toynbee’s father in law, recommended to Oxford University Press to publish Zimmern’s *Greek Commonwealth*, (Zimmern to Seton Watson, 1 Sept. 1914, S WP).

¹¹³ Coupland to Murray, 2 Jan. 1915, MuP, 26, 54.

¹¹⁴ Robert W. Seton Watson and Alfred Zimmern, *The War and Democracy* (London: 1915). It was Murray who encouraged Zimmern to publish the essays that were collected in *War and Democracy*, being papers of lectures given by Zimmern, Seton Watson and Dover Wilson to the WEA 1914 summer school, (Zimmern to Seton Watson, 1 Sept. 1914, S WP). Hugh Seton Watson and Christopher Seton Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: R. W. Seton Watson and the Last Years of Austria Hungary* (London: 1981), 105, 172. Seton Watson was often frustrated by discussions with Kerr, who as the Prime Minister’s private secretary seemed incompetent in European politics. Seton Watson wrote to Thomas Masaryk in July 1919 about a meeting which he had with Kerr, reporting that “it showed him to be even more doctrinaire and nebulous in his ideas than he used to be,” (Seton Watson to Masaryk, 5 July 1919, quoted in *ibidem*, 375.)

Lewis Namier, launched in 1916 the journal *New Europe*, addressed to “the 10,000 who come next to the 200 who count.” The number of individuals belonging to the ‘foreign policy community’ in the years before the outbreak of the war was in fact very limited, and members of each organization entered Government service, influencing each other’s views, and the shape of the post-war order.¹¹⁵

Even if the New Europe was primarily an organization of academics, and the Round Table attracted mainly policy-makers, the intersection between the members of both groups continued to develop during the war. It was the war, in fact, which brought about a convergence, as suggested by Goldstein, of the Empire-centric Round Table with the Euro-centric New Europe. Even if the two groups were created to promote different agenda, each was to some degree influenced by the ideas developed by the other, reaching the peak of their influence during the war and the peace negotiations in Paris. The two organizations could count on some of the most influential newspapermen of their time: Dawson, editor of *The Times*, Wickham Steed, who replaced Dawson at *The Times* from 1919 to 1922, and J. L. Garvin, editor of *The Observer*.¹¹⁶

The leading figure of the *New Europe* was Seton-Watson, primarily devoted to the study of minority populations of the Habsburg Empire within the broader European system of States. He contributed to draw the attention of British public opinion to Central and Eastern European affairs, as pointed out by Goldstein, supporting separatist and nationalist movements in Central and Eastern Europe. The sympathies of Victorian and Edwardian Englishmen for the causes of Italian unification, for the Central European and Balkan States, or for the Arabs were then considered, according to Wright, “eccentric, slightly suspect, and mainly confined to scholars.” Seton-Watson was aware that “the days of the predominance of a single Power” were past, “probably for ever,” and that this was “one of the most hopeful signs for the future.” The “old dream” of Cardinal Wolsey, according to which England held the balance of power

¹¹⁵ J. D. B. Miller, “The Commonwealth and World Order: The Zimmern Vision and After,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 8, (Oct. 1979): 159-74; Seton Watson to Zimmern, 15 Sept. 1914, ZP, 75. Seton Watson was the first Masaryk Professor of Central European History in the University of London. Zimmern was the first Woodrow Wilson Professor of International Relations in the University of Wales. Toynbee was the first Professor of International Relations at the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

¹¹⁶ Seton Watson and Seton Watson, *The Making of*, 185. When the Serbian Society was founded by Seton Watson in 1917, among the members of the Council figured Amery, Kerr and Milner.

in Europe, was according to Seton-Watson “less fanciful today than it was four centuries ago; for England is the natural mediator between France and Germany.” “The hardest exercise that the average Englishman can set himself,” the *New Europe* stated in 1917, “is to realise that his country and himself are not isolated, but really and essentially a part of Europe.”¹¹⁷

Eustace Percy—member of the Department of Political Intelligence and founding member of Chatham House—was one of the many promising young men to fall under the influence of *The Round Table* and *New Europe*. As an early advocate of closer Anglo-American co-operation, particularly in commercial policies, he thought that the British “central political aim” should be to bring Wilson “to take sufficient account of actual facts of international relations and prevent him from confining himself to academic principles.” As a member of the British Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, he worked closely with Curtis and Ray Stannard Baker, Wilson’s biographer, on the creation of the League of Nations.¹¹⁸

The *New Europe*, known as the “Orange Bible” from its cover, was, according to Goldstein, “in great demand at the Paris Peace Conference.” Even if not an official member of the Peace Conference, Seton-Watson was an influential figure among the British Delegation, and succeeded in having copies of the *New Europe* sent to Paris via the War Cabinet bag. Harold Nicolson, member of the PID, recalled that when he left for Paris as a member of the British Delegation, he was “overwhelmingly imbued” with the doctrines of the *New Europe*: “It was the thought of the new Serbia, the new Greece, the new Bohemia, the new Poland which made our hearts sing hymns at heaven’s gate”. He and his colleague Allen Leeper would not have ever “moved a yard without previous consultation with experts of the authority of Dr. Seton-Watson.”¹¹⁹

The *New Europe* could be regarded as the heir of Gladstonian international liberalism, and was alive between 1917 and 1920. Among its contributors it included Oscar Browning, Ronald Burrows, Erskine

¹¹⁷ “Self determination and the British Commonwealth: Ireland,” *The New Europe*, 6, (17 Jan. 1917): 5; Martin Wight, *Systems of States* (London: 1977), 56; Seton Watson and Seton Watson, *The Making of*, 19.

¹¹⁸ Eustace Percy, “The U.S.: Party Politics and the November Elections,” 23 May 1918, FOP, FO371/4360; id., “War Trade Organisation in the U.S.,” 6 Aug. 1918, FO371/4360; Percy to Zimmern, 16 Jan. 1919, ZP, 16, 1 2. On Wilson ideological views, see Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Wilsonian Statecraft: Theory and Practice of Liberal Internationalism During World War I* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991).

¹¹⁹ Seton Watson and Seton Watson, *The Making of*, 339; Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919* (London: 1933), 126, 33.

Childers, Viscount Davignon, Anatole France, Pieter Geyl, Samuel Hoare, Thomas Masaryk, Samuel Eliot Morrison, Bernard Pares, J. Holland Rose, Leonard Woolf, A. F. Whyte, and Wickham Steed. The *New Europe* ceased publication in 1920 for financial reasons, but much of its most important work was, according to Goldstein, accomplished: it had helped to inform the peace-making process, and the acceptance of a new Eastern Europe, including the federal solutions achieved in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

The Round Table and the *New Europe* converged on the principle of national self-determination. If Kerr suggested that the map of Europe should be redrawn to meet the legitimate demands of self-government, A. F. Whyte, Liberal MP, supported the idea of “a new internationalism founded on a satisfied nationalism.” The *New Europe* supported *The Round Table*’s principle of self-determination within the British Empire, and the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms in India.¹²⁰

Even if Seton-Watson, editor of the *New Europe*, was instrumental in disseminating Round Table ideas, there were however between the two organizations differences of judgement. The Round Table opposed the doctrine of the balance of power as guarantee of European stability. “A diplomacy whose principal motive lays in upsetting or maintaining a balance between two opposite groups,” according to Curtis necessarily “tended towards intrigue.” The “principal security for liberty and peace” would be, according to Kerr, the endeavour by the League “to substitute the co-operation of all nations in the adjustment of international disputes for alliances and the balance of power.”¹²¹

Headlam-Morley, deputy-director of the PID, and a contributor to both the *New Europe* and *The Round Table*, was otherwise of the opinion that the doctrine of the balance of power was “and will remain, a fundamental point just as much after the establishment of a League of Nations as it has been before.” This view was supported also by W. Alison Phillips, contributor to the *New Europe*, who argued against the notion that the League, if it was to be successful in preserving peace, could “be based on any other principle than that of the balance of power, or maintained by

¹²⁰ [L. Namier], *The Round Table*, 8, 30, (March 1918); [H. Williams], *The Round Table*, 8, 32, (Sept. 1918); [A. Leeper], *The Round Table*, 9, 34, (March 1919). Seton Watson contributed two articles early in the war, and from March 1920 to Dec. 1921 Headlam Morley contributed regular articles on “The Problems of Europe.” Philip Kerr, “Foundations of Peace,” *The Round Table*, 5, 19, (June 1915): 589-625; A. F. Whyte, “The Next Step,” *The New Europe*, 6, (Jan. 1918): 3.

¹²¹ Lionel Curtis, “Windows of Freedom,” *The Round Table*, 8, 33, (Dec. 1918): 5; Philip Kerr, “The Harvest of Victory,” *The Round Table*, 10, 35, (Sept. 1919): 648.

any other processes than those growing out of this principle, in whatever new form it may be applied." In the years antecedent to the outbreak of the war, Britain "still held in her hands the political balance of Europe; but she was not careful to keep it in equilibrium."¹²²

Kerr thought that it was "perfectly obvious that there was something wrong with all nations before the war," and that the restoration of a balance of power would lead "back inexorable to Armageddon." "What we want is not a League of Peace, or a League to enforce peace, but a League to enforce Right, as defined by general consent." "Assuming that the world will never tolerate unity imposed upon it by a single despot power," Kerr thought that international relations could only be based "upon two broad principles": the balance of power, which was bound to lead "to fatal results," and the "establishment of a true reign of law," aiming at the creation "of an international system based upon the principle...to limit the sovereign independence of all States." Peace could be maintained by an "ever closer association between the great nations, and the ever increasing application of justice to human affairs."¹²³

The Round Table and the *New Europe*, according to Goldstein, were more than just pressure groups for particular sets of ideas. Both attracted the support of prominent figures of British political and intellectual life, raising "the level of debate" on the questions of the federal reform of the Empire and the self-determination of nationalities artificially incorporated in Continental Empires. "Each of these groups," Goldstein observed "found as they addressed their initial problems that the implications of the solutions widened the geographical remit of the issues needing consideration." If this led the *New Europe* "to consider the implication of the concept of self-determination in non-European countries," *The Round Table* considered "how the ideas they had been evolving over inter-dominion relations could be used as a basis for new approaches to international organisation." The ambition "to widen the ambit of debate from a small circle of like-minded colleagues to the wider public" brought the two organizations to "the creation of journals which aimed to reach the widest possible audience."¹²⁴

¹²² FOP, FO 371/4353/f23/PC55; W. Alison Phillips, "The Balance of Power," *The New Europe*, 5, 1, (Nov. 1917).

¹²³ Philip Kerr, "Inter state Relations after the War," in *For the Right* (London: 1916), 140, 149; id., "The Principle of Peace," *The Round Table*, 23, (June 1916): 420.

¹²⁴ Eric Goldstein, "The Round Table and the New Europe," in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 447.

The Round Table and the *New Europe* succeeded, according to Goldstein, “in placing firmly on the political agenda the issues of self-determination and federalism.” If self-determination was widely accepted “as the basis for Europe at the end of the First World War,” spreading out “to encompass the whole international system,” federalism “originally intended as a solution to Britain’s non-European position,” had made “the reverse journey, having drifted from a conception of overseas union to become a solution for the effective relationship of European countries in a system based on nation-States.” In the creation of a federal Europe there is, according to Goldstein, “the union of the ideas which the *New Europe* and *The Round Table* were tentatively propounding at the beginning of the century.”¹²⁵

Zimmern was not just the link between the two organizations, but he also acted, on behalf of *The Round Table* and the *New Europe*, to establish strong links with Walter Lippmann’s *New Republic*. In the autumn of 1917 the Round Table launched a subscription campaign in the United States through the *New Republic*, and sent complimentary copies to hundreds of American editors, libraries and academics. George Louis Beer, historian of New York’s Columbia College, was the main representative of *The Round Table* in the United States, recruiting American journalists and academics to write for the journal, and assisting Brand to organize the advertising campaign in the United States. However he failed to persuade the London group to drop the policy of anonymity, which in the United States was a source of major suspicions. They presented the aims of the journal as being for the “maintenance of the British Commonwealth of Nations,” and the “furtherance of close and friendly relations between the Commonwealth and the United States.” The campaign increased the number of American subscribers from one to two hundred, particularly in academic North-eastern circles and among influential members of the American Eastern establishment.¹²⁶

Kerr had recruited Beer in 1915 to make regular contributions to *The Round Table*. In his war-articles Beer supported the case for an interventionist American foreign policy in the exercise of world power in co-operation with the British Empire. The United States, according to Beer, could not “in the future remain aloof from those questions that are determining the course of world history.” “The existence of common political traditions and ideals” would “inevitably...draw the United States

¹²⁵ Goldstein, “The Round Table and,” 448. On the contribution of the Round Table and *New Europe* to the Peace Conference negotiations, see Erik Goldstein, *The First World War Peace Settlements, 1919 1925* (London: Routledge, 2002).

¹²⁶ Billington, *Lothian*, 47.

more intimately to England than to any one of the other Powers.” Beer predicted that German aggression would serve as a catalyst for closer Anglo-American relations, making “the English-speaking cultural unity a real and effective force in directing the future evolution of the world.” There were a “virtual identity of the fundamental political ideals and principles that constitute the inalienable heritage of all English-speaking peoples.” When war came, Beer saw in British and American war aims a “perfect...identity of purpose.” In order to prepare American public opinion to support the Allied war effort, Beer worked in cooperation with the National Board for Historical Service, an organization created by James T. Shotwell, with the historians Frederick Jackson Turner and Franklin J. Jameson. *The Round Table* took on, according to Priscilla Roberts, the important role in helping “to gel and solidify a significant section of elite opinion within the USA” in support of the Allied cause.¹²⁷

The *New Republic* was founded in 1914 by the pro-Allied Willard and Dorothy Straight—an American couple active in progressive circles—who played a significant role in supporting the entry of the United States into the European conflict. Straight shared Kerr’s strong support for Mahan’s strategic doctrine on sea power, considering the survival of the Royal Navy of fundamental importance for American security, and persuaded an initially reluctant Lippmann, editor of the journal, to openly support the case for American belligerency. From early 1915 Lippmann advocated American policies supporting the Allies, a reasonable peace settlement, and complete abandonment of isolationism. The editorial board was initially approached by Curtis in April 1916, on Kerr suggestion, to establish “some specific agreement with our friends in the U.S.A. as to principles of policy to be adopted,” but they apparently showed a “repulsive attitude.”¹²⁸

¹²⁷ George L. Beer, “American Public Opinion and the War,” *The Round Table*, 5, 20, (Sept. 1915): 797-839; id., “America’s Reaction to the War,” *The Round Table*, 6, 22, (March 1916): 285-314; id., “The United States and the Future Peace,” *The Round Table*, 7, 26, (March 1917): 285-317; id., “America Entrance into the War,” *The Round Table*, 8, 27, (June 1917): 491-514; id., *The English Speaking Peoples, their Future and Joint International Obligations* (New York: Macmillan, 1917); id., “America’s War Aims,” *The Round Table*, 8, 30, (March 1918): 255-256. On Shotwell’s Board, see George T. Blakey, *Historians on the Home Front: American Propagandists for the Great War* (Lexington, KY: 1970). For a discussion, see: Priscilla Roberts, “Philip Kerr and *The Round Table*”, 127; Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 195.

¹²⁸ Curtis to Kerr, 24 April 1916, LP, 3, 250-8; Bothwell, *Loring Cristie*, 92-3; Priscilla Roberts, “Willard D. Straight and the Diplomacy of International Finance During the First World War,” *Business History*, 40, 3, (July 1998): 16-47.

According to Lippmann, the editorial board of the *New Republic* had decided as early as Spring 1915 “to devote the paper to the creation of an Anglo-American understanding.” Without “a vision of the Anglo-American future,” Lippmann argued in January 1916, American foreign policy would face a “crowning disaster.” In Spring 1916 the journal supported Wilson’s appeal for the creation of a “League to Enforce Peace,” on the basis of a maritime alliance between the United States, Great Britain and France. The United States were, according to Lippmann, part of the “Atlantic community,” and American war aims should have been for “a union of liberal peoples pledged to cooperate in the settlement of all outstanding question, sworn to turn against aggressor, determined to erect a larger and more modern system of international law upon a federation of the world.”¹²⁹

Kerr thought that “all the hopes of human unity will hang” on an American decision to abandon isolation. Only by “assuming common responsibilities for maintaining right and justice throughout the world,” could the United States “probably save the world from another Armageddon.” By “clinging to the policy of isolation,” the United States would condemn “mankind to another era of estrangement and war.” “If militarism is to be for ever overthrown,” Kerr argued that the United States should abandon “the dream of selfish isolation,” and undertake “their share of the burdens and obligations of creating an effective security behind public right.” That was “the goal towards which the nations of the empire” were “striving with unfaltering steps.”¹³⁰

Zimmern played the crucial role as *The Round Table*’s ambassador to the *New Republic*. He had first met Lippmann through Graham Wallas and

¹²⁹ Roberts, “William D. Straight and the Diplomacy,” 16 47; id., “Willard Straight, World War I, and ‘Internationalism of All Sorts’: The Inconsistencies of an American Liberal Interventionists,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 44, 4, (Dec. 1998): 493 511. Lippmann to Graham Wallas, 21 April 1916, quoted in John Mortin Blum ed., *Public Philosopher: Selected Letters of Walter Lippmann* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1984), 46; Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1980), 67 73; Ross A. Kennedy, *The Will to Believe: Woodrow Wilson, World War I, and America Strategy for Peace and Security* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2009), 5 6, 12 4, 27 35, 44 54, 60 4, 104 9, 122 4. On the contribution of the *New Republic* to American intervention, see: David Seideman, *The New Republic: A Voice of Modern Liberalism* (New York: Praeger, 1986), 1 59; Forcey, *The Crossroads of Liberalism*, Chs. 7 8; John A. Thomson, *Reformers and War: American Progressive Publicists and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Chs. 4 5.

¹³⁰ Kerr, “The Harvest of the War,” 15 19, 29; id., “The Making of Peace,” 8.

a number of other founders of the *New Republic*—including Croly and Walter Weyl—when he visited the United States in 1915. These American intellectuals—who would form the nucleus of the Wilsonian ‘Inquiry’ and subsequently of the Council on Foreign Relations—were fascinated by “the possibility of making foreign relations a little more representative, a little more the concern of the whole nation.” Members of the Inquiry represented the intellectual vanguard of Wilsonian internationalism, and shared with Toynbee the idea that the war had been caused by the undemocratic nature of foreign policy decision-making.¹³¹

Lippmann, who had been Wallas’ “favourite student” at Harvard, had already been impressed by *The Round Table*’s ideas, and found *War and Democracy* by Seton-Watson and Zimmern,

the very best book on the war published so far. A sweet tempered and generous book, such as one almost despairs of securing from a nation in the midst of war. I wish I could believe without any further doubt that your crowd represented enlightened England. It would dispense the last doubt I have about the fairness of the essential issues in this war.¹³²

¹³¹ Toynbee to mother, 12 Nov. 1914, TP, 69; Weyl to Zimmern, 5 May 1915, ZP, 137/175. Among members of the group were Archibald Cary Coolidge, James Shotwell, David Hunter Miller, James Truslow Adams, Louis Brandeis, Abbott Lawrence Lowell, Paul Monroe, Frank A. Golder, and Walter Weyl. Thirty five members of the Inquiry later became integrated into the American Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. For a discussion on the Inquiry and the ‘Eastern Establishment’, see Rogers Lindsay, “The Inquiry: American Preparations for Peace, 1917 1919,” *Geographical Review*, 65, 3, (July 1964): 260 462; David W. Levy, *Herbert Croly of the New Republic: The Life and Thought of an American Progressive* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978); Priscilla Roberts, “The American ‘Eastern Establishment’ and World War I: The Emergence of a Foreign Policy Tradition,” PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1981; id., “The American ‘Eastern Establishment’ and Foreign Affairs: A Challenge for Historians,” *The Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Newsletter*, 14, 4, (1983): 9 28; David M. Ment, “Education, Nation Building and Modernization after World War I: American Ideas for the Peace Conference,” *Paedagogica Historica*, 41, 1/2, (Feb. 2005): 159 177; Peter Grose, *Continuing the Inquiry: The Council on Foreign Relations from 1921 to 1996* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 2006).

¹³² Lippmann to Zimmern, 7 June 1915, ZP, 14, 180 1. In the summer of 1915, Croly offered Zimmern a permanent position with *The New Republic* if he moved to the United States, (Croly to Zimmern, 8 July 1915, ZP, 14, 198 9). Weyl to Zimmern, 5 May 1915, ZP, 14, 175; Lippmann to Zimmern, 7 June 1915, ZP, 14, 180 1; Zimmern to Seton Watson, 10 Feb. 1910, S WP; Arnold Toynbee’s notes for “What the Historian Does,” a talk given to an undergraduate history club at Oxford, 1910 11, TP, 34; Gilbert Murray to Zimmern, 6 July 1910, ZP, 12, 158;

Zimmern was however aware that Lloyd George was not able—because of the split among Liberals, and the determinant role of the Unionists within the coalition government—to defend alone liberal values, and tried to persuade Lippmann to work on Wilson in order to strengthen Lloyd George's position:

He needs to have his arms held up. He needs someone to keep his ideals real ideals up to the mark. No one can do that better than the President. He dare not fall behind in the idealists' race. Let the President go on making the running. Let him take all our statesmen's professions at their face value. George will follow partly out of shame, partly out of ambition, partly out of genuine idealism.

Zimmern was particularly impressed by Wilson's stand in defence of a new course in international relations, thinking that "no ruler has spoken thus since Marcus Aurelius." Wilson's stand seemed a "complete breach with individualism as with Prussianism." Zimmern despaired "of our pacifists ever learning that the duty of a citizen in a free State is not to weaken the sense of individual obligation to the Commonwealth but to make his State a real moral personality." On ideological grounds, however, it was difficult to justify the fight against Prussian militarism and to be associated with autocratic Russia.¹³³

Zimmern strongly criticized, in *The Round Table*, "the odious character" of Lloyd George's anti-German 'khaki' election campaign, underlying the fact that "he erred, not, like the English people, out of ignorance but deliberately, out of cowardice and lack of faith." The breach of the Pre-Armistice Agreement of 5 November 1918, pledging the Allies to a peace settlement on the basis of Wilson's Fourteen Points, raised a strong resentment in Zimmern, who deplored that "when we elected a Parliament pledged to violate a solemn agreement made but five weeks earlier, we stand shamed, dishonoured, and, above all, distrusted before mankind." The "breach" of the Armistice compact was "as great a crime

Zimmern's notes for "Ancient Greece and Modern Problems," ZP, 137, 10 101. The young Toynbee owed much to Seton Watson: "My own interest in international affairs," Toynbee wrote to Seton Watson just after the appointment of Director of the Institute of International Affairs, "is due very largely to your first three books, which Zimmern lent me when I was an undergraduate," (Toynbee to Seton Watson, 16 Feb. 1925, S W). The Round Table had institutional links also with the American journal *International Conciliation*, (Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 259 61).

¹³³ Zimmern to Lippmann, 24 April 1917, ZP, 15, 60b 60c.

against the law of nations as the breach of the Belgian Treaty, and far less excusable.”¹³⁴

Being a Liberal internationalist, Zimmern became increasingly critical of the Round Table, resigning from the movement in 1922 on the ground that his friends “theorized about a whole without knowing the parts,” and were “subservient to Lloyd George,” then regarded with Wilson as a ‘traitor’ of liberal values: “How can such men make a League of Nations? They will cause our name to stink among all decent men from the Rhine to Vladivostock.” Zimmern felt “disgusted and depressed” because of the results of the Peace Conference: “The Majestic and the Crillon were full of uneasy and heartbroken men.” Zimmern’s anger against Lloyd George brought him to stand in opposition to the former Prime Minister at Caernarvon in the 1924 General Elections.¹³⁵

Oliver abandoned the inner circle of the movement and resigned as trustee in 1923, disagreeing “on several fundamental matters,” and Milner himself was getting distant from the Round Table, unhappy because of the influence of Lloyd George’s ideas within the group. Selborne charged the Round Table with betraying British interests in India and Ireland. Amery parted ways with it as soon as he realized he had lost the battle on tariff reforms, and Cecil left when it became apparent that the Round Table would not support the League of Nations. At the death in 1925 of Milner

¹³⁴ Quoted in Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 237. “When we elected a Parliament pledged to violate a solemn agreement made but five weeks earlier,” the *Round Table* remarked in June 1919, “we stand shamed, dishonoured, and, above all, distrusted before mankind.” The *Round Table* advocated the case of a treaty “valid for a period of ten years only,” since it would prove very difficult to revise the conditions of a long term treaty, laid down in an unbalanced political situation strongly influenced by the feelings of hatred caused by the war. Rehearsing the wartime slogan that “our war was with the German government, not with the German people,” the *Round Table* argued that at Paris “Germany was treated unjustly,” that the reparations were “too severe” and that France “should have been forced to disarm also, as promised in Wilson’s Fourth Point,” (quoted in *ibidem*).

¹³⁵ Zimmern to Dafoe, 27 Feb. 1923, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 276). Zimmern to Mrs. Carruthers, 9 April 1919, Macadam Papers, London School of Economics and Political Science, 25/92, 18 19; Zimmern to Toynee, 10 Aug. 1919, TP. Zimmern was involved in the drafting of the League, and in *The Third British Empire* he tried to harmonise the idea of the League with the needs of the British Empire. Headlam Morley noted that “The League of Nations scheme, which is now public, derives all the merit which is in it from our people, starting with Zimmern and Percy,” Sir James Headlam Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (London: 1972), 214.

his widow took up the editorship of the *National Review*, and became a strong opponent of the Round Table.¹³⁶

8. *The Round Table and the Atlanticist movement*

If Wilson was the exponent of American support for a hypothetical Liberal world order based on the enforcement of international law and morality, Theodore Roosevelt was the leading exponent of an ‘Atlantic system’, “heightened,” according to Priscilla Roberts, “for many patrician Americans,” and based on an Anglo-American alliance aimed at maintaining “social and political dominance over the tide of non-Protestant immigrants from southern and eastern Europe who poured into the United States from the 1880s onward, and to force the newcomers to accept old-stock values and norms.” Before 1914 supporters of a more active and direct involvement of the United States in European affairs were however restricted to Theodore Roosevelt’s entourage, represented by John Hay, Elihu Root, Henry and Brooks Adams, and Alfred T. Mahan.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Zimmern to Dafoe, 27 Feb. 1923, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 276). Brand to Dove, 11 Dec. 1922, BrP, 70; Dove to Kerr, 10 Oct. 1926, LP, 224, 340 1; Oliver to Dove, 20 Feb. 1923, BrP, 70.

¹³⁷ Roberts, *Lord Lothian and*, 33 4. On the United States East Coast’s attitude towards immigrants, see Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R.* (New York: Vintage, 1956), 176 86; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860 1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1977), 136 44, 175 82; David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 63 9; Stuart Anderson, *Race and Rapprochement: Anglo Saxonism and Anglo American Relations, 1895 1904* (East Brunswick, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1981), 54 7, 82; Desmond King, *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of the Diverse Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), Chs. 3 7. On Roosevelt’s entourage, see Howard K. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins Press, 1954); David H. Burton, *Theodore Roosevelt, Confident Imperialist* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968); Richard H. Collin, *Theodore Roosevelt, Culture, Diplomacy and Expansion: A New View of American Imperialism* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1985); Frederick W. Marks III, *Velvet on Iron: The Diplomacy of Theodore Roosevelt* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1979); Kenton J. Clymer, *John Hay: The Gentleman as Diplomat* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1975); William C. Widenor, *Henry Cabot Lodge and the Search for an American Foreign Policy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980); Richard W. Leopold, *Elihu Root and the Conservative Tradition* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1954).

Roosevelt's speeches of Summer 1910, collected in the volume *The New Nationalism*, bring evidence of the influence of Hamilton Holt—owner and editor of the *Independent*—and Mahan's ideas; but Herbert Croly was the author who most influenced Roosevelt, who confessed to Croly himself that he did not know when he read a book which profited him “as much as your book on American life.”¹³⁸

In *The Promise of American Life*, Croly in 1909 supported the case for the strengthening of the federal government against the tendency of American States to defend their own particular interests, thus preventing the United States from playing fully their international role. This view was presented also in *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* by Frederick Jackson Turner, a book arguing that American federalism was a political mechanism created to meet the needs and lives of a dynamic people, unceasingly expanding and moving forward the frontier. Croly demonstrated, according to Leuchtenburg, “the close link between progressivism and imperialism with the concept of the Hamiltonian state and the democratic mission.”¹³⁹

The “general obligation of a democratic nation” in foreign policy was, according to Croly, to “serve the cause of international peace,” and if the United States wanted peace, they had to be “spiritually and physically prepared to fight for it.” If in the past the defence of American interests “constituted the chief justification for its isolation,” the time was coming when to serve “the same purpose, just in so far as it is sincere and rational,” it “may demand intervention.” In international relations peace “will prevail...just as order prevail within a nation, because of the righteous of superior force—because the power which make for pacific organization is stronger than the power which make for a warlike organization.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Quoted in Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Movement, 1900 1915* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: 1963), 97; Theodore Roosevelt, *The New Nationalism* (New York: 1910).

¹³⁹ Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (New York: 1963), 312 3; Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, in *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Chicago, IL: 1893). For a discussion, see Ray Allen Billington, *How the Frontier Shaped the American Character*, “American Heritage,” 9, (April 1958): 89; William Leuchtenburg, “Progressivism and Imperialism: The Progressive Movement and American Foreign Policy, 1898 1916,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 30, (Dec. 1952): 483 504.

¹⁴⁰ Croly, *The Promise of American*, 313.

The idea of “some essential incompatibility between Europeanism and Americanism,” which vitiated the Monroe Doctrine “in its popular form” gave, according to Croly, “a sort of religious sanctity to the national tradition of isolation.” It “would survive its own utility because it flatters American democratic vanity,” but if it prevented “the American nation from contributing its influence to the establishment of a peaceful system in Europe, America, and Asia, such a refusal would be a decisive step towards American democratic degeneracy.” If the Americans preferred their “apparently safe and easy isolation to the dangers and complications which would inevitably attend the final establishment of a just system of public law,” it meant that “the American people believed more in Americanism than they did in democracy.”¹⁴¹

International stability was regarded by Croly as “precisely...the political condition which would enable the European nations to release the springs of democracy.” An “Americanism which was indifferent or suspicious of the spread of democracy in Europe would deserve the enmity of European people,” and “would constitute a species of continental provincialism.” To make “Pan-Americanism merely a matter of geography,” was “to deprive it of all serious meaning.” The “only possible foundation of Pan-Americanism” was “an ideal democratic purpose,” which, “translated into terms of international relations,” demanded “in the first place, the establishment of a pacific system of public laws in the two Americas, and in the second place, an alliance with the pacific European Powers, just in so far as a similar system has become in that continent one of the possibilities of practical politics.”¹⁴²

“The notion of American intervention in a European conflict,” Croly argued, “carrying with it either the chance or the necessity of war,” was still received in the United States “with pious horror by the great majority of Americans,” since “non-interference with European affairs is conceived, not as a policy dependant upon certain conditions, but as an absolute law—derived from sacred writings.” However, it looked, Croly foresaw, “as if at some future time the power of the United States might well be sufficient, when thrown into the balance, to tip the scales in favour of a comparatively pacific settlement of international complications.”¹⁴³

Croly had been “the leading spirit” in founding the *New Republic*, and propagating with Lippmann the idea of an “Atlantic Community.” “The safety of the Atlantic highway,” Lippmann observed two months before the entrance of the United States into the European War, “is something for

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 314.

¹⁴² *Ibidem*, 366 8.

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*, 314.

which America should fight...because on the two shores of the Atlantic Ocean there has grown up a profound web of interest which joins together the western world." "If that community were destroyed," Lippmann warned, "we should know what we have lost." The Atlantic Powers had to recognize, according to Lippmann, that each belonged to "one great community and act as a member of it," and had to show the determination to fight in the "common interest of the western world," to lay down "the cornerstone of federation."¹⁴⁴

American Atlanticists "fundamentally emphasized the saliency of military force over liberal principles," Roberts argued, advocating intervention in the war,

an Anglo American alliance as the basis of international security, the maintenance of a favourable international balance of power, Germany's economic reintegration into the European system, and American participation in Europe's economic revival through loans and the cancellation or reduction of war debts and reparations.¹⁴⁵

"The coming of the First World War," Roberts maintained, "was the decisive event in the creation of a cohesive and self-conscious group of American Atlanticists, committed to a distinctive set of policies with respect to Europe, and determined to put these into practice." This body of men was "concentrated in the great law firms and banks of the East Coast," and "dedicated to the beliefs that the United States and Europe were closely interconnected and strategically mutually dependent."¹⁴⁶

Republican Atlanticists included Henry L. Stimson, Frederic R. Coudert, and George W. Wickerham. Among the Democrats, since 1914,

¹⁴⁴ Lewis S. Feuer, *Imperialism and the Anti Imperialist Mind* (Buffalo, NY: 1986); Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (New York: 1981), 96 7, 111; Walter Lippmann, "The Defense of the Atlantic World," *The New Republic*, (Feb. 1917); Davis, *The Atlantic System*, 240 2; Robert Strausz Hupé, James E. Dougherty and William R. Kintner, *Building the Atlantic World* (New York: 1963), 16.

¹⁴⁵ Roberts, *Lord Lothian and*, 33 4. On the Atlanticist movement, see Warren Zimmermann, *First Great Triumph: How Five American Made Their Country into a World Power* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 455 65.

¹⁴⁶ Priscilla Roberts, "The First World War and the Emergence of American Atlanticism, 1914 20," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 5, 3, (Nov. 1994): 570. See also id., "'All the Right People': The Historiography of the American Foreign Policy Establishment," *Journal of American Studies*, 26, 2, (1992): 309 34; Charles S. Maier, "The Two Postwar Eras and the Conditions for Stability in Twentieth Century Western Europe," *American Historical Review*, 86, 2, (1981): 327 52; Jeffrey Frieden, *Banking on the World: The Politics of American International Finance* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 48 50.

the most prominent were Colonel Edward M. House, Robert A. Lansing—Wilson’s Secretary of State—Walter Page, Franklin D. Roosevelt—Assistant Secretary to the Navy—Norman Davis—Assistant Secretary to the Treasury—Frank L. Polk—Assistant Secretary of State—and John W. Davis, the Solicitor General. Within Wall Street, J. P. Morgan and Company played a leading role in raising substantial financial assistance to the Allies before American intervention. J. P. Morgan Jr., Henry P. Davison, Thomas W. Lamont, Dwight W. Morrow, Willard Straight, Russell C. Leffingwell, and Benjamin Strong—the first Governor of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York—had in Cliveden, the Astors’ Buckinghamshire country house, a location for social recreation and conferences during their recurrent business trips to England. Also Davis, Polk, and Paul D. Cravath of the Treasury and State Departments could benefit from the Astors’ hospitality.¹⁴⁷

A pioneering contribution to the idea of an Atlantic federation was offered by Sinclair Kennedy, with the publication in 1914 of *The Pan-Angles. A Consideration of the Federation of the Seven English Speaking Nations*, showing the continuity between Benjamin Franklin’s Albany Plan—envisaging a single government for the English-speaking self-governing communities—and the Round Table movement. Identifying in Thomas Pownall—member of the Albany Colonial Conference, and later MP—the original initiator of the idea, Kennedy regarded the North Atlantic—thus applying Mahan’s intuition—as the fundamental strategic theatre for the security of the British Empire and the United States.¹⁴⁸

Perhaps the most illuminating document by the pioneers of the American Atlanticist movement is the memorandum by Thomas Lamont, “Ways to Bring About a Closer Union and to improve the Relations Between America and Great Britain,” sent to the Lords Reading and

¹⁴⁷ For a debate, see Godfrey Hodgson, *The Colonel: The Life and Wars of Henry Stimson, 1867 1950* (New York: Knopf, 1990); Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the quest for a New World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Nicholas J. Cull, “Selling Peace: The Origins, Promotion and Fate of the Anglo American New Order During World War II,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 7, 1, (March 1996): 1 15; Priscilla Roberts, “The Anglo American Theme: American Visions of an Atlantic Alliance, 1914 1933,” *Diplomatic History*, 21, 3, (1997): 333 64; Ross A. Kennedy, *The Will to Believe: Woodrow Wilson, World War I, and America Strategy for Peace and Security* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2009).

¹⁴⁸ Sinclair Kennedy, *The Pan Angles. A Consideration of the Federation of the Seven English Speaking Nations* (New York: 1914), ix; Alfred Leroy Burt, *Imperial Architects* (Oxford: 1913); C. A. W. Pownhall, *Thomas Pownhall* (London: 1908), 50 1.

Northcliffe, and discussed with them during his visit to England in late November 1917. “For the long future,” Lamont argued, “the safety and happiness of both America and Great Britain are dependent upon these two great nations working in accord.” The peace of the world depended “upon the same thing,” since both countries were “in the last analysis, animated by the same ideals, working for the same ends”:

Neither desires conquest; each wishes the weaker nations should be able to work out their destinies unmolested; each stands for individual liberty; for a State governed by the people and for the people; each has the same basis of common law, similar language, institutions, similar ideas in education and the civilizing process of liberal education. If it were geographically possible, the two nations ought almost to become one. That being out of the question, still if they work closely together, neither they nor the whole world has anything to fear for the future.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Thomas W. Lamont, “Memorandum for the Lord Reading: Ways to Bring About a closer union and to Improve the Relations Between America and Great Britain,” Nov. 1917, quoted in Roberts, *Lord Lothian and*, 35. On Lamont, see: Edward W. Lamont, *The Ambassador from Wall Street: The Story of Thomas W. Lamont, J. Morgan’s Chief Executive*, (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1994).

CHAPTER V

THE CANADIAN PUZZLE AND INDIAN SELF-GOVERNMENT

1. *Curtis's third 'imperial mission'*

Curtis did not wait for the printing of *The Problem* before initiating another wide-ranging missionary journey—the longest, lasting two years—envisaging a new stage of the battle, which should, he thought, involve also the United States. By the spring of 1916 it became apparent that without a direct or indirect American involvement, the European war would drag on in a wearing ‘war for positions’. In spite of his ardent faith in the British Empire, Curtis was however a realist, and was well aware that Canada would hardly accept becoming an equal partner of Britain and the other Dominions unless the United States abandoned their traditional policy of isolationism.

It is not clear if Curtis reached this conclusion by himself or if he was persuaded by other members of the London group—in particular Kerr, Brand and Astor—keen to find a way out from the deadlock in which the movement seemed inexorably to have fallen. New York, where he landed on 20 April, was the first stage of a journey which had India as final destination. In New York he discussed with Beer—long standing contributor to the journal—and with Whitney Shepardson—Curtis’s student at Balliol, who would play a crucial role in the establishment of the Council on Foreign Relations—the creation of Round Table groups in the United States. Beer thought that “any such connection” would be “fatal.” The Round Table groups would be “regarded from the outset as intended to bring the U.S. under the British thumb.” This was a project which was never realized as such, but which was soon to become in another form the major strategic objective of the Kindergarten.¹

¹ Kerr to Beer, 3 May 1916; Beer to Kerr, 20 March 1916, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 195; Curtis to Kerr, 24 April 1916, LP, 3, 250 8; Billington, *Lothian*, 47; Robert Bothwell, *Loring Christie: The Failure of Bureaucratic Imperialism* (New York: Garland, 1988), 92 3. Beer was chief expert on colonial questions

From New York Curtis moved to Toronto in April 1916, guest of Massey, trying to recover the strained relationship with the Canadian leaders of the movement, and in late April took part in a crucial meeting of the Executive Committee—chaired by Sir Edmund Walker, following Kylie's death on the Flanders battlefield—which had to decide on the calling of an Imperial Convention, for which the Canadians appeared ready. After a two-month journey westward—visiting branches in Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver—Curtis became persuaded of the need for a reorganization of the movement in Canada, “in order to give unanimity and cohesion” to a growing movement, which “badly needed” at this new stage of development a national convention to discuss the creation of a central office, and coordination of the activities of local branches on an agreed platform. This would facilitate the collection of the necessary information for Canadian contributions to the journal, which in the meantime had benefitted from the generous offer by Colonel Reuben Leonard of £1,000 a year, another proof of Curtis's irresistible magnetism in attracting financial resources into the battle. Soon Leonard had to make the movement another and major gift, which turned to be of fundamental importance to the advance of the strategic object of the Kindergarten.²

Arriving in Canada, Curtis organized a Canadian edition of *The Problem*, and also a New Zealand edition followed. The publication marked a turning point in the history of the movement. Of all the publications devoted to the study of Anglo-Dominions relations—such as, for example, *Empire on the Anvil* by Basil Worsfold, and *The New Empire Partnership* by Percy Hurd—*The Problem* was the only one to offer a coherent and non-contradictory solution to the question of the political stability of the Empire within a specific conception of the course of history. If Worsfold proposed imperial protection as opposed to free trade, Keith thought that closer imperial union would limit Dominion autonomy. *The Problem* was also unique in being the expression of an organization

within Colonel House's Inquiry, and a leading supporter in the United States in favour of American intervention. Whitney Shepardson was the first Secretary of the Council on Foreign Relations and then of the Rockefeller Foundation. Both Beer and Shepardson were members of the American Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference.

² Curtis to Kerr, 27 April 1916, LP, 3; Walker to Glazebrook, 2 Aug. 1916; Curtis to Glazebrook, 5 July 1916; Kerr to Leonard, 24 Aug. 1916; Leonard to Kerr, n.d., (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 195 8). Colonel Leonard in 1923 decided to offer as a gift his London house at 5 St. James Square to the newly created Royal Institute of International Affairs, since then the headquarters of the organization.

which in the space of six years had developed into a world-wide movement, organized in Canada in thirty five groups, composed of some three hundred members. Glazebrook understood that Curtis's volume concluded the period of study and opened "a period in which private work must more or less give place to an educational movement to be extended to the public in general," with the inevitable consequence of taking on board a number of "a progressively less educated set of people."³

A central office was created at Victoria College, University of Toronto, run by Walter Bowles—a divinity scholar in charge of a church in Toronto—with the increase of yearly expenses to \$3,500. However, strong suspicions of being manipulated by the London group, and in particular by Curtis, remained. "I have never regarded the members of the movement in London," John Dafoe, editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, stated in a letter to Wrong, "as other than protagonists of a somewhat clearly defined idea." Their "assumption of the open mind" in carrying out genuine research was "lacking in candour," since they had "from the outset the intention that the inquiry should result in the apparent endorsement in their own scheme for Empire consolidation, which they have held from the beginning." The Canadian Round Table members appeared therefore

as persons who were being shepherded along a definite path to a predetermined end, and...many of them were thus being shepherded so skilfully that they realized neither the road that were travelling, nor the goal to which they were tending.⁴

In April 1917, a year after the publication of Curtis's *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, an editorial in the *Toronto Globe* attacked the Round Table's London group, for "appealing at this time to the perfervid loyalty of ultra-imperialists, and in opposing Imperialism to Nationality," with the consequence of "awakening forces in this and every Dominion which prudent statesmanship would refrain from antagonizing at this critical juncture in the affairs of the Empire." The publicity given to the Round Table accounted "in some measure for the breach between the Round Table in Canada and its promoters in England."⁵

Criticism was raised also by Walker, who took the chance offered by his colleague at the Bank of Commerce, Zebulon Lash—who published *A*

³ Grazebrook to Warburton, 3 July 1916, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 207).

⁴ Kerr to Glazebrook, 24 and 25 Aug. 1916, (quoted in *ibidem*, 207 8; Defoe to Wrong, 16 October 1916, (quoted in *ibidem*, 209).

⁵ Dafoe to Wrong, 16 Oct. 1916, RTP, c.796; *Toronto Globe*, 30 April 1917, RTP, c822, 89.

Canadian Criticism of 'The Problem of the Commonwealth'—to observe in the preface that Curtis's solutions involved "some controversial details with which not many of us in Canada are likely to agree." The choice between federation and separation would raise questions "which it would be very difficult, if not impossible...to answer and would have to consider the taking of steps, the ultimate consequences of which" could not be foreseen. Recognising Curtis as "the leading spirit of the Round Table," Bourassa in *Independence or Imperial Partnership? A Study of 'The Problem of the Commonwealth' by Mr. Lionel Curtis*, accepted Curtis's view that "the vote of one single cab-driver in London" counted "more, in...vital matters affecting the whole British Empire, than the skill, the will and the combined votes of all the inhabitants of Canada." Since "of all Europeans, the Anglo-Saxon" was "the least capable of *understanding* people of different race and blood," independence was the only way out.⁶

"You no doubt agree with Curtis," Massey wrote to Coupland,

in regarding Canadians politically as a timid people...but the Canadian public has to be approached in a manner which no doubt would be unsuitable in Australia or elsewhere and I think our Moot here is sufficiently catholic in its composition to make our collective judgment on Canadian matters fairly sound.

Massey was determined "to conduct...our particular part of the Round Table campaign in a manner which is forced on us by local conditions." Massey's leadership of the movement in Canada reflected, according to Glazebrook, "a more robust and conscious Canadianism." In Canada they were "emphasizing the national character of the new Round Table Movement...no enterprise can enjoy any vitality in Canada which is not sincerely Canadian in its personnel and objects." *The Problem*

led to a misunderstanding of our aims all through the country, and a repudiation of the book as a statement of Round Table doctrine has been everywhere necessary...No subject in Canada is more delicate, and no method of treating it is more calculated to fail in this country than that employed in Lionel's book.⁷

The London group strongly reacted to the "charge of bad faith" by the Canadians, and suggested holding in London, after the return of Curtis from India, a Convention with representatives from all Round Table

⁶ [Z. Lash], *A Canadian Criticism of 'The Problem of the Commonwealth' and the Author's Reply Thereto* (London: 1916), 4; 11 Dec. 1916, WP, 23; Henri Bourassa, *Independence or Imperial Partnership? A Study of 'The Problem of the Commonwealth' by Mr. Lionel Curtis* (Montreal: 1916), 23, 34, 49.

⁷ Massey to Coupland, 5 May 1917, RTP, c.822; Glazebrook to Kerr, 9 Nov. 1916, RTP, c.818.

groups. The aim would be to discuss the nature of the movement and its possible development towards an organization of pure study or propaganda, and the eventual creation, out of it, of a new organization. The “Commonwealth Society” was the name chosen by Kerr, and it should be devoted exclusively to promoting a federalist agenda. Since the journal and the leadership of the movement was firmly in the hands of federalists of the first hour, with a very defined idea of the strategy to be employed, the suggestion of such a split sounded quite unrealistic, or just a device to gain time—Curtis was expected back in London within eighteen months—and keep the movement going on at a time of emergency. In fact, the majority of the London group fully endorsed Curtis’s ‘radical’ line for a united Commonwealth—as the Empire was by now officially called—on the basis of a federal Constitution. The London inner circle made it clear to the more cautious followers that “they wanted to stand for their principles, until the goal was either lost or won.” It was impossible for the Round Table movement “to remain, merely a student movement,” Kerr declared to Glazebrook, and the time had come for a declaration of “faith...without any unnecessary delay.”⁸

The publication of *The Commonwealth of Nations* and *The Problem* contributed to opening a wide debate on the future of the Empire and the strategy of the movement during the war. Curtis’s books awakened controversy because he faced up to the contradictions in imperial relations, based on co-operation between sovereign States. The attempt by the more pragmatic members of the movement to dissociate the Round Table from these publications failed. “Whether we like it or not,” Kerr acknowledged, the situation of the movement “changed as a result of the publication” of Curtis’s books. Foreseeing that the Dominions would participate in a peace conference “in the spirit which will more and more resist the assertion of any superior authority or influence on the part of the British Government,” as they tended “more and more to conceive of the Empire as five nations deliberating on equal terms round a table at which India will be also represented,” Kerr believed that a redefinition of the movement’s strategy would be inevitable. According to Hodson, Curtis’s “federal aspirations” were however “an agenda to be discussed, not a plan to be promoted.”⁹

⁸ Kerr to Curtis, 22 Nov. 1916; Kerr to Glazebrook, 22 Nov. 1916, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 210). Henry Hodson, Foreword to Curtis, *World War*, ii.

⁹ Glazebrook to Milner, 8 March 1917, MP, 144; Kerr to Glazebrook, 24 Aug. and 22 Nov. 1916, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 207–11); Coupland to Curtis, 9 July 1917, and Kerr to Curtis, 21 July 1917, LP, 33; Basil Worsfold, *The Empire on the Anvil* (London: 1916); Percy Hurd, *A New Empire Partnership* (London:

From the Canadian west coast, Curtis reached New Zealand at the end of July, to find that the reading of *The Problem* was strongly recommended by the London group to all members of the organization. The volume was widely and favourably reviewed by the press which, in the “well-set up youthful looking Englishman” recognized the “ability and earnestness of the missionary,” and “the characteristic marks of English culture.” During the four weeks of his stay, Curtis was engaged in a very intense programme of lectures, to small audiences of Round Table group members—on the history of the movement and its role in the development of imperial relations—and to large public meetings with audiences of between 200 and 600. The only critical view was raised by T. W. Leys, editor of *The Auckland Star*, who thought that Curtis had “seriously underestimated the strength of the public or national prejudice against centralized Imperial control, especially in fiscal matters.” Curtis wrongly drew his conclusions on the recognition of “certain tendencies in the growth of nations and Empires in the past,” thinking that “our own Empire and its constituent parts must and shall follow these tendencies to their necessary logical conclusion.” Curtis’s dogmatism, Leys remarked, would produce more harm than good to the Empire, since there were more than just two solutions to its problems.¹⁰

Curtis’s eleven weeks sojourn in Australia, before he reached India, proved an even more remarkable success. With satisfaction Curtis could see that the seeds which he planted seven years before during his second ‘imperial journey’ had generated a well rooted and growing movement, active in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. The publication of *The Problem* received such an enthusiastic welcome by members as to require an Australasian edition—with a foreword by the New Zealander Mr. Justice Hosking and the Australian former Prime Minister Sir Edmund

1915). Curtis’s volume *The Commonwealth of Nations* was privately published in 1915 with the title *The Project of a Commonwealth*. If the term Commonwealth was introduced into the political debate by Curtis with the article “The Spirit of the Coronation” *The Round Table*, (Aug. 1911): 426–36 Smuts was the first statesman to use it publicly, in May 1917, during a dinner given in his honour at the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords in the presence of Lord Haldane, Lord Milner, Lord Bryce, Lord Harcourt, Lord Selborne, Lord Crewe, Winston Churchill, Bonar Law and Asquith. This started the process which led to the replacement of the concept of Empire with that of Commonwealth, (Halperin, *Lord Milner*, 161–2).

¹⁰ *New Zealand Times*, 1 Aug. 1916; *The Dominion*, 12 Aug. 1916; *The Lyttelton Times*, 2 and 5 Aug. 1916; *New Zealand Times*, 9 Aug. 1916; *The Wanganui Herald*, 15 Aug. 1916; *The Auckland Star*, 17 and 19 Aug. 1916; Kendle, *The Round Table*, 199–200.

Barton—in order to supply immediately an increasing number of orders. Review articles and reports of various conferences which Curtis gave throughout the country were favourable. Also in Australia it was necessary to establish a central office in Melbourne, in order to promote the creation of new groups, “with the ultimate object of advocating a form of organic union for the Empire,” and to coordinate various activities under the responsibility of T. H. Laby.¹¹

2. The Round Table and Resolution IX

An important contribution to the association of the Dominions to the process of formation of imperial foreign policy was given by the spring session of the 1917 Imperial War Conference—which met on alternate days with the Imperial War Cabinet between 20 March and 2 May 1917. On 16 April this Conference passed Resolution IX, advocating a “readjustment” of imperial relations at the end of the war, “based on the full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth and of India as an important portion of the same,” and the preservation of “all existing powers of self-government and complete control of domestic affairs.” The Dominions and India should have “an adequate voice in foreign policy and in foreign relations,” and “effective arrangements for continuous consultation in all important matters of common Imperial concern,” should be made along with “necessary concerted action founded on consultation, as the several governments may determine.”¹²

Resolution IX, according to Dafoe, “looked Mr. Curtis’s renowned dilemma in the eye and banished it out of the path,” excluding both the idea of formal federation, and “the idea of separation.” It repudiated, “at the same time, the idea of the continued subordination of the Dominions in

¹¹ For reports of Curtis’ conferences and review articles of *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, see the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9, 13 and 16 Sept. 1916; *The Daily Telegraph of Sydney*, 9 and 15 Sept. 1916; *The Brisbane Courier*, 20 Sept. 1916; *The Telegraph of Brisbane*, 21 Sept. 1916; *The Argus of Melbourne*, 26 Sept. 1916; *The Advertiser of Adelaide*, 3 Oct. 1916; *The Register of Adelaide*, 3 Oct. 1916. Curtis to Kerr, 4 Sept. 1916; Curtis to Barton, 11 Sept. 1916, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 201 2). The foreword was signed also by other distinguished Australians such as J. T. Wilson, W. M. MacCallum, J. C. Watson, W. Harrison Moore and H. Y. Braddon.

¹² Halperin, *Lord Milner*, 157 62; Geoffrey Dawson, *The Development of Dominion Status, 1900 1936* (London: 1937), 175; Amery, *My Political Life*, vol. 2, 107.

external affairs, thus attempting, from the viewpoint of Mr. Curtis and the Round Tablers, the unattainable.”¹³

The Resolution represented a mortal blow to the Kindergarten’s hopes, ruling out forever the federal solution for the Empire. It was not just a coincidence that ten days before the United States had entered into the European conflict, moving the world centre of gravity from the Channel into the Atlantic. This decision would have major strategic consequences for the British Empire, particularly for the Atlantic Dominions, Canada and South Africa. As the war had shown, Great Britain had lost her capacity to lead alone successfully a Continental coalition of forces able to defeat the hegemonic ambitions of the strongest Continental power; and she also lost forever her insularity, before the coming into operation of the combination of naval and air power.

The work for imperial unification, Smuts argued at a Parliamentary banquet given in his honour, had been “very largely...already done.” “The idea of a future Imperial Parliament and a future Imperial Executive,” Smuts declared, was “negatived by implication by the terms of this resolution.” This statement was taken by the former Colonial Secretary Harcourt as the proclamation of “the funeral of the Round Table.” The death of the Round Table’s revolutionary goal came in fact from fire from behind.¹⁴

Harcourt knew that the ruling out of the federal solution was made just a year after the publication of Curtis’s *The Problem*, and promoted by two among the closest of the Round Table’s allies in the Dominions, Smuts and Borden. *The Round Table*, in the 1917 June issue, recognized that “the decision today is against any federated reconstruction after the war,” but pointed out that through the institution of the Imperial War Cabinet—which in 1917 met fourteen times—the imperial system had developed towards an irreversible equal partnership. Curtis candidly motivated the establishment of an equal partnership between Britain and the Dominions with the fear “that South Africa might abstain from a future war with Germany, on the grounds that they had not participated in the decision to make war,” and therefore they thought “it would be wise to ask people in

¹³ M. S. Donnelly, “J. W. Daffoe and Lionel Curtis Two Concepts of the Commonwealth,” *Political Studies*, 8, (1960): 170-82.

¹⁴ W. K. Hancock, *Smuts. The Sanguine Years* (Cambridge: 1962), vol. 1, 429-32; N. Mansergh, *The Commonwealth Experience* (London: 1982), vol. 1, 207-14, 25; Norman Rose, *The Cliveden Set: Portrait of an Exclusive Fraternity* (London: Random House, 2000), 67.

the oldest and most experienced of all Dominions what they thought of the matter.”¹⁵

The creation of the Imperial War Cabinet “accorded with the principle of responsible government because all its members were responsible to their several parliaments and electorates for its decision.” In welcoming the new Imperial War Cabinet, Kerr pointed out its elasticity, enabling “all the Governments of the Empire to keep in constant, if not continuous consultation on every aspect of Imperial policy,” and “all its peoples to understand far better their common problems.” This development was certainly a progress, but it would not solve, by itself, “the fundamental Imperial problem,” since the improved system gave the Dominions merely “a consultative voice in Imperial and foreign policy,” leaving the final decision in the “British Parliament.” The system “might be made to work for many years,” but Kerr was aware that it would have been bound, at last, to fail. The war had increased “the sense of national self-reliance,” and “greatly diminished the prestige of the British Government” to a point that the Dominions were “tending more and more to conceive of the Empire as five nations deliberating on equal terms round a table.” In these conditions, any initiative for federation would have been defeated.¹⁶

Intervening on 2 April at the Empire Parliamentary Association in London, Borden shared the Round Table’s view that the Imperial War Cabinet as it was reformed with the inclusion of Dominions and India’s representatives could become the permanent executive of the Commonwealth. Aware of the crucial role which Borden was playing, and thinking that his speech had been “the most important...which has been made by a responsible statesman about Imperial relations since Joe Chamberlain’s death,” Kerr turned to him after the speech, inviting him to take a lead in transforming the War Imperial Conference into an Assembly composed of “Parliamentary delegates chosen by some system of proportional representation so as to include representatives for the opposition, at which general Imperial questions and proposals for joint action for legislation prepared by the Imperial Cabinet should be discussed in public.” Kerr’s appeal would be dramatically negated by Borden’s leading role in Resolution IX.¹⁷

¹⁵ Philip Kerr, “The New Developments in the Constitution of the Empire,” *The Round Table*, 27, (June 1917): 441 59; Kerr to Curtis, 24 April 1917, and Sir Edmund Walker to H. Bell Irving, 26 April 1917, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 220); Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 41.

¹⁶ Kerr, “The New Developments,” 441 59; Minutes of discussion, 2 March 1917, LP, 474, 3; Kerr to Curtis, 21 July 1917, LP, 33, 19 21.

¹⁷ Kerr to Curtis, 24 April 1917, quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 217.

The Kindergarten organized private dinners also for other Dominion leaders present at the spring session of the Imperial War Conference. On 13 April they gave a dinner for the New Zealand Prime Minister William Massey and his coalition partner Sir Joseph Ward. On 20 April they hosted Meston and the other two Indian representatives at the Imperial War Conference, Sir S. P. Sinha and the Maharajah of Bikanir, who were to become strong allies of the Round Table in the process of Indian self-government. On 4 May it was the turn of Smuts, whose speech, however, did not impress all the Round Tablers present—Milner, Selborne, Oliver, Brand, Kerr, Dove, Herbert Backer, Malcolm, Coupland and Eggleston—who expected to hear something about the need for an organic union. Brand, who appeared to Eggleston “more a man of the world than any of them...not so much of the apostle type,” and Kerr, who looked “very tired as if he were working hard,” seemed in any way satisfied with the results achieved, determined to continue working, as the Chairman of the Canadian Round Table Executive Sir Edmund Walker saw it, “whether we like or not...along the lines of least resistance if we want to succeed.”¹⁸

The irony is that Resolution IX was based on a bipartisan petition advocating a change in Imperial relationships, produced and launched by the Canadian Round Table, which collected more than a thousand signatures. Writing to Willison, Borden recollected that “shortly after reaching Great Britain,” he decided to implement the Round Table petition by calling “into formal conference Mr Massey, General Smuts, and Sir Joseph Ward.” “After several meetings,” Borden recollected, “the form of resolution as finally proposed by me was adopted.”¹⁹

In Resolution IX Borden successfully included—with the endorsement of Smuts, and because of the pressure of Willison, leading Canadian Round Table figure—the contents of the Canadian Round Table’s bipartisan petition, except for reference to Article four, about the

¹⁸ For the role played by Borden and Smuts in drafting the Resolution, see Robert Borden, *Memoirs* (London: Macmillan, 1938), 667–77. Present at the 13 April dinner were: Milner, Hitchens, Kerr, Malcolm, Robinson and Oliver. At the 20 April dinner: Milner, Oliver, Brand, Kerr, Coupland and Malcolm, (Kendle, *The Round Table*, 216). For a report on the 4 May dinner see Eggleston to Laby, May 1917, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 219). Walker to H. Bell Irving, 26 April 1917, (quoted in *ibidem*, 220).

¹⁹ Borden to Willison, n.d., (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 219); Kerr to Curtis, 24 April 1917, (quoted in *ibidem*, 217). The petition was signed by about 1,200 distinguished Canadians, but the French press of Quebec considered it as “a dangerous Imperial manifesto,” (Walker to H. Bell Irving, 26 April 1917, quoted in Eays, “Round Table Movement,” 17).

opportunity to call for a Conference in order to define post-war Imperial relationships. Thus Borden reassured Willison: “Resolution passed in Conference. Everything in petition save fourth paragraph.”²⁰

The initiative from Canada to call an Imperial—or, rather, a Commonwealth—Convention, came on 10 February 1917, with the publication in the press of a document asking “political leaders throughout the Empire, irrespective of party,” to meet and consider the development of imperial relations towards the assumption by each Dominion of a “proportionate share in the defence of the Empire”, and of responsibility “in determining its relations with other States.” This “inevitable development of responsible government in the Dominions” should however “not involve any sacrifice of responsible government in domestic affairs or the surrender of control over fiscal policy by any portion of the Empire.” This “harmless”—in Walker’s definition—document received by late March more than a thousand bipartisan signatures, but was identified by the Quebec French press as a “dangerous Imperial manifesto,” and by Wilfrid Laurier as proof that “Canada is now governed by a junta sitting in London, known as the ‘Round Table’, with ramifications in Toronto, in Winnipeg, in Victoria, with Tories and Grits receiving their ideas from London and insidiously forcing them on their respective parties.”²¹

Walter Long, Colonial Secretary, writing “unofficially and as a friend” to Borden on 15 April on the eve of the vote on Resolution IX, showed a good deal of sympathy to the Canadian Round Table “scheme” that the Canadian Prime Minister outlined to him, but felt strongly irritated by the attitude which the Kindergarten seemed to display in such a vital issue: “The misfortune is that nearly all our ‘would be Alexander Hamiltons’ know nothing of our People, nothing of the House of Commons, [and] I really believe do not care much for either.” Who, Long rhetorically asked Borden, would preside over the Imperial Assembly, who would select its members, what should follow from their deliberations, which kind of powers should be entrusted to them? Long thought that it would have made more sense “to make the Imperial War

²⁰ Quoted in A. Gordon Dewey, *The Dominions and Diplomacy: The Canadian Contribution*, vol. 1 (London: 1929), 316; Borden to Willison, n.d., copy in Willison to Walker, 18 May 1917, WP, 13.

²¹ The document was circulated among the Canadian armed forces in Europe, see “Overseas Edition of the Memorandum Issued by the Round Table in Canada, March 1917,” MP, 170; Kendle, *The Round Table*, 212. Laurier’s comments are quoted in Richard Jebb, *Empire in Eclipse* (London: 1926), 8. Walker to H. Bell Irving, 27 April 1917, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 213); Glazebrook to Milner, 8 March 1917, MP, 144.

Cabinet permanent so far as this is possible,” by announcing that any Prime Minister or minister sent over by the Prime Minister to represent himself should become a member of the Cabinet, and “to get each Dom to think out and propose some scheme for representation...and to meet to discuss the proposals at the end of War.”²²

Borden had however warned the Round Table on “the inadvisability of trying to force any system of Imperial Federation in the period immediately following the war,” and advised them to work for the development of “the new constitutional machinery which has now been put into existence,” as “the nucleus which might eventually give us the Imperial Institutions we require.”²³

At a debate in the Canadian House of Commons on the results of the Imperial Conference, Borden declared that “proposals put forward for an Imperial Parliament which should have taxing powers” were, as agreed by “other members of the Conference...neither feasible nor wise.” Nevertheless he paid official tribute to the Round Table’s efforts to unite the populations of the Empire during the most critical period of its existence:

I do think all the parliaments and peoples of the Empire are greatly indebted to the groups of young men in the mother country and throughout the Empire who have taken up this subject and studied it and issued many able publications with regard to it. Their work has been most earnest, unselfish and devoted...it has concentrated the opinion of the great mass of the people upon these problems of great common concern. So while I am unable to accept some of the conclusions which they have reached, I nevertheless feel that the Empire lies under a debt of gratitude for the work which they have done.²⁴

²² Long to Borden, 15 April 1917, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 218). On Long, see John Kendle, *Walter Long, Ireland and the Union, 1905 1920* (Montreal: McGill Queen’s Press, 1992).

²³ Kerr to Curtis, 24 April 1917, quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 217; C. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 239.

²⁴ *Dominion of Canada, House of Commons, Debates*, 1917, vol. 2, 1531; Bliss, *Right Honourable Men*, 87. “If only constitution mongers will let us alone,” W. L. Grant, the first holder of the Beit lecturership observed, “and let ties of common sympathy develop suitable machinery for co operation, our descendants will one day look on rejoicing while the last disciple of M. Bourassa is hanged in the entrails of the last disciple of Mr. Lionel Curtis,” W. L. Grant, *Canadian Historical Review*, 4, 1, (1923): 80, quoted in Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English Canadian Historical Writing, 1900 1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 39.

Borden thought that Canada could “give better service to G.B. and U.S. and to the world” by assuming “full sovereignty.” The 1917 Imperial Conference had been, according to Borden, “a Cabinet of Governments rather than of Ministers,” working “as equals,” in which each component part of the Empire preserved “unimpaired its perfect autonomy, its self-government, and the responsibility of its Ministers to their own electorate.” It was the beginning of “a new era,” and “a new page of history” had been written.²⁵

The war represented in fact a turning point in the development of imperial relations. “The valour, the endurance and the achievement of the Canadian Army in France and Belgium,” according to Borden, “inspired our people with a sense of nationhood never before experienced.” Over 600,000 Canadians served in the war, being 13.48% of the Canadian male population. More than 59,500 died and over 154,000 were wounded in the European battlefields.²⁶

The extraordinary impulse given by the war to Dominion nationalism had completely destroyed any hope for a federal union of the Empire. The Dominion groups started to warn the London leadership that members were “shying off Imperial Federation”, and that it would have proved “disastrous” to try to push from Britain a campaign in that direction. “A new catechism” was required, and Curtis was left in the sole company of Malcolm in supporting the case that “the more unacceptable the doctrine, the greater... is the need for the preacher.” To insist on something which had obviously become anachronistic would mean “marking time.” Having accepted the fact that in the post-war world “the British Empire has ceased to exist,” the Round Table then progressively shifted their interests from imperial to international questions.²⁷

Eddy and Schreuder, in *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism*, have described the Round Table’s efforts as a “grand ballet of incomprehension

²⁵ Robert Borden, *The War and the Future* (London: 1917), 144 45; Eayrs, “Round Table Movement,” 18; Dawson, *Dominion Status*, 25; *Manitoba Free Press*, 6 June 1925, (quoted in Dawson, *Dominion Status*, 25).

²⁶ Desmond Morton and J. L. Granatstein, *Marching to Armageddon: Canadians and the Great War, 1914 1919* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1989), 250. On Canada foreign policy, see Gwynne Dyer, *Canada in the Great Powers Game 1914 2014* (London: Random House, 2014); Mansergh, *The Commonwealth*, 192.

²⁷ Sir J. W. Barrett to Curtis, 23 Feb. 1920, LP, 495; H. F. von Haast to Curtis, 8 March 1920, BrP, 42; Malcolm to Coupland, 22 Feb. 1919, RTP, c 814, 155 6; Coupland to Dove, 28 Feb. 1923, RTP, c 804, 197; Circular to the Dominion groups, 22 Dec. 1920, LP, 17, 16 29. The coverage given by the Round Table to international over Imperial questions raised from 17.8% to 31.5% from 1918 to 1939, (May, *The Round Table*, 218).

with their chosen collaborators in the Dominions,” doomed to failure, and “as hopeless as the earlier British mercantile Imperial attempts to forge a north-west passage through winter ice.” Dominion nationalism appeared, however, to the Round Table as transitional and deeply ambivalent. According to Hessel Duncan Hall, Fabian and former member of the Round Table, in his *British Commonwealth of Nations*, Dominion nationalism should not be over-emphasised. The Round Table identified Dominion nationalism in the aspiration to self-government and a share in responsibilities for defence and foreign policy, “things that any people claiming to be a nation must do for themselves.” Dominion nationalism would have led to independence if Great Britain had slowed down the process towards self-government, “however studiously it may be veiled under courtesies and forms.”²⁸

The Round Table attempted to neutralize the apparent contradiction between Dominion nationalism and Empire federalism by recruiting their Dominion collaborators not from “amongst the still considerable ranks of old-fashioned imperialists in each of the emergent nations,” but “the opposite.” “Whilst travelling around the Dominions on their initial fact-finding tours,” May pointed out, Curtis and Kerr “made notes assessing the usefulness of potential recruits,” who were going to play a prominent role in the Dominions’ internal and foreign policies. Loring Christie and Frederic Eggleston, for example, “put the interests of Canada and Australia before those of the Empire, but they nevertheless spent most of their lives in the belief that the two loyalties were not incompatible.” If Christie’s loyalty to the Kindergarten was not in doubt, Eggleston described himself as “a federationist to the core.”²⁹

²⁸ Eddy and Schreuder, “The Edwardian Empire,” in *The Rise of Colonial*, 51, 45; H. D. Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations* (London: 1920). “Though I have differed,” Hall stated in the preface about the Round Table, “I have learnt much from their investigations, and wish to pay a tribute to the stimulating quality of their work and to the fine spirit in which it is done,” (*ibidem*, ii). [Marris.] “Memorandum of Conversations which took place between a few English and South African friends at intervals during the summer of 1909,” CP, 156, 1; Curtis, *Round Table Studies*, xiii; [Grigg], “Downing Street,” *The Round Table*, 3, 12, (Sept. 1913): 585-613. For the involvement of Dominions Round Tablers, see Foster, *High Hopes: The Men and Motives*, 39, 105, 164; Quigley, “The Round Table in Canada,” 204-24.

²⁹ Robert Bothwell, *Loring Christie: The Failure of Bureaucratic Imperialism* (New York: 1988); Warren Osmond, *Frederic Eggleston: An Intellectual in Australian Politics* (Sydney: 1985); Eggleston to Grigg, 3 April 1913, RTP, c778, 91-92.

“Most of the Imperial federationists,” Cook observed, “were also Canadian Nationalists: they were dissatisfied with Canada’s subordinate status in the British Empire and advocated, through federation, the achievement of an equal status.” “It was no coincidence,” May observed, “that so many of the Dominion Round Tablers found work in the diplomatic services and departments of external affairs which emerged in the Dominions during and after the war.” It was not a coincidence either, that the Round Table “was prominent in urging the creation of these symbols of Dominion nationhood.” “Colonial Nationalism” was for Kerr “a new and immensely important force. Its vigour, self-confidence, even its somewhat aggressive independence, is immeasurably more valuable to the Empire than the apathetic irresponsibility of the ‘colonial days’.”³⁰

3. The Round Table and the Indian self-government process

The Round Table started to tackle the Indian question, once again, on the initiative of Curtis, who on 24 October 1916 landed at Bombay. He arrived with the reputation of being responsible in the Transvaal for imposing on Indians the payment to the authorities of a large residence fee, and the compulsory registration, for men and women, of prints of all their ten fingers. Copley argued that the discriminating provisions imposed by Curtis on Indians in South Africa proved “to be the beginning of Gandhian passive resistance.”³¹

According to Sir James Meston—Governor of the United Provinces, and later to become Indian representative at the War Imperial Cabinet and Conference, who had been associated with the Kindergarten in South Africa—Hardinge’s decision to bring Indian troops into the fighting line in Europe had “precipitated a claim to something akin to colonial self-government which we have long anticipated, but which we had hoped to keep quiet for another generation.” The war effort had led the self-governing Dominions to share with Britain the war debts, bringing “the need for a constitutional reconstruction beyond the region of argument.” Indian demands for self-government, raising the question of Indian representation within an Imperial Parliament, would initiate, according to Meston, “one of the most critical periods in our Indian administration.” If

³⁰ Ramsay Cook, *The Maple Leaf Forever: Essays on Nationalism and Politics in Canada* (Toronto: 1971), 50; Alex May, *The London ‘Moot’, Dominion Nationalism and Imperial Federation*, in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 230; May, *The Round Table*, 229; Philip Kerr, “The Conference and the Empire,” *Round Table*, 1, 4, (Aug. 1911): 412.

³¹ Antony Copley, *Gandhi: Against the Tide* (Oxford: 1987), 23.

the Dominions were “to control foreign affairs without declaring their independence,” “no other system” was possible, but the “difficulty” seemed to Curtis not “as insuperable.” The question of Indian representation at an *ad hoc* Imperial Conference, summoned after the war to draft a Constitution for the Empire, would be inescapable.³²

William Marris—a senior and authoritative member of the Indian Civil Service who had been involved with the Kindergarten in South Africa—had been the first of the Kindergarten to suggest that “self-government...however far distant, was the only intelligible goal of British policy in India,” against the predominant attitude of considering Indians desperately backward peoples, incapable of managing any form of responsible government. India however lacked, according to Marris, the civic sense, “integrity, public spirit, honesty, humanity, unselfishness, tolerance, compassion, temperance,” qualities which enabled democracy to work successfully. “In deciding to impose Western forms of government on India in 1917-1919,” in a country in which religion was still the dominant force, Marris later admitted that the Round Table “did not sufficiently take into account the obstacles in the path.”³³

It was however only during Kerr’s first visit to India in 1912 that the Round Table started to think in terms of a gradual process to “create in India a self-governing, responsible Dominion” which, if it decided to remain within the British Empire, would offer a solution to the “greatest difficulty which presents itself to the world today.” The historical meaning of the British Empire would then have been, according to Kerr, to “associate Indians with the government which control Indian affairs,” and to overcome “the world-old feud between east and west, black and white,” and create “a system based on mutual give-and-take.” If Curtis at this stage thought that the “premature extension of representative institutions throughout the Empire would be the shortest road to anarchy,” Kerr thought that the British were “indispensable” to India, since the country was “still divided within itself,” and Indians were not yet capable of “administering the vast governmental machine.” India should “for all time remain within the Empire,” and progress towards self-government appeared just as an “ideal goal.”³⁴

³² Meston to Curtis, 16 May 1915; Curtis to Meston, 16 July 1915, MeP, Eur. F 136/11.

³³ Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 42; May, *The Round Table*, 199.

³⁴ Philip Kerr, “The Meaning of the British Empire,” 30 July 1912, a speech given at the Canadian Round Table groups, printed in *The Round Table in Canada* (Toronto: 1917); Curtis, *The Commonwealth*, 24; Philip Kerr, “Memorandum on the Representation of India,” n.d., LP, 3/222 32. For a discussion of the role played

Kerr was convinced that the “watchword” of the British Empire was “not dominion but liberty.” “In place of the dominance of one race, as the cement of an Empire’s unity,” the Empire put “the spontaneous loyalty of the inhabitants to its self-governing institutions and the free spirit which forms them.” If Kerr thought that for “the first time in history conquered people, incapable of maintaining order among themselves, were governed not mainly in the victors’ interest, but in their own,” Milner was prepared to grant self-government to the Dependencies “without letting the supreme control out of Imperial hands.” Oliver, alarmed about Kerr’s views, urged Milner to “draw the attention of the Round Table young men to the elementary fact that democracy has proved its utter incapacity.” Believing that the democratic decision-making process gave the “ultimate power on all matters...to an ignorant people,” Milner was easily persuaded by Oliver that democracy was “going to fail, and the British Empire with it.”³⁵

Kerr was in favour of some concessions to Indian claims for self-government, but against allowing Indians a large representation within the Legislative Council, as provided by the Morley-Minto reforms, which “would enable them, like the Irish today, in combination with large minorities, to turn out of office the Cabinet which ultimately controls Indian affairs.” This view was supported by senior British civil servants,

by Kerr and Curtis in Indian and Commonwealth affairs see: Andrea Bosco, *Lord Lothian. Un pioniere del federalismo (1882 1940)* (Milano: Jaca, 1989), 13 61, 175 215; Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 175 89; Gerard Douds, “Lothian and the Indian Federation,” in *The Larger Idea*, Turner, 62 76; Deborah Lavin, “Lionel Curtis and Indian Dyarchy,” in *The Federal Idea*, Bosco, vol. 1, 193 209. On Anglo Indian relations, see: R. V. Vernede, “Memorandum on Indo British Relations 1928 1947,” *Indo British Review*, 19, 2, (1991): 1 13. On Curtis and India, see: Gerald Studdert Kennedy, “Political Science and Political Theology: Lionel Curtis, Federalism and India,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 24, 2, (1996): 197 217; D. C. Ellinwood, Jr., “The Round Table Movement and India, 1909 1920,” *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, 9, 3, (Nov. 1971): 183 209; May, *The Round Table*, 189 200; Lavin, *From Empire to Commonwealth*, Ch. 7; W. C. De Ellinwood, “The Future of India in the British Empire: The Round Table Group Discussions, 1912,” *Nanyang University Journal*, 3, (1969): 196 204.

³⁵ Philip Kerr, “The War in Europe,” *The Round Table*, (Sept. 1914): 613; id, “Anglo German Rivalry,” *The Round Table*, (Nov. 1910): 9; John Marlowe, *Milner. Apostle of Empire* (London: 1976), 133; Kerr to Curtis, 23 Dec. 1910, *Annals of the Lothian Foundation*, vol. 1, (1991): 302; Frederick Oliver to Milner, 16 Dec. 1914, MP, 221; Milner to Lady Edward Cecil, 16 May 1903, quoted in Cecil Headlam, *Milner Papers*, vol. 2 (London: 1933), 446 449; Milner to Curtis, 27 Nov. 1915, CP, 2. See also Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men*, 132, 141.

such as W. H. Buchan, Meston, E. D. Maclagan, E. Molony, and H. T. Cullis, who thought that India was not governed by “an autocratic bureaucracy,” which could “do as it likes, but by a very limited bureaucracy, very sensitive and very deferential to public opinion.” Meston, on the other hand, thought that it was necessary to declare that self-government was “one of the ideals at which our rule in India is to aim.”³⁶

Curtis was initially against granting Indians even a symbolic representation within an Imperial Parliament on the ground that “until we are really prepared to accord the Dependencies governing power we are only laying up...a store of misunderstandings by pretending to do so.” He accepted however that the Round Table’s “guiding principle” should be “the conception that Indians should be regarded as fellow citizens of one super-commonwealth with ourselves, and...to prepare them first for the control of their own sub-commonwealth and finally for an equal share in the control of the super-commonwealth.” According to Lavin—who produced a most comprehensive and unequalled study of Curtis’s contribution to Indian self-government—in propagating “the multinational Commonwealth” Curtis was “the first to explore in any detail the ideal of multiracial Commonwealth.”³⁷

Curtis attributed his change of view on India to Meston and Marris, who exercised the initial pressure for a more sympathetic Round Table consideration of India. “So far,” Curtis confessed, “I had thought of self-government as a western institution, which was and would always remain peculiar to the peoples of Europe.” From the moment Curtis began to think of self-government as a universal principle, “rather of all human life...the goal to which all human societies must tend,” he then found that the “British Commonwealth” was “the greatest instrument ever devised for enabling that principle to be realized, not merely for the children of Europe but for all races and kindreds and peoples and tongues.” This was a view reinforced by Coupland, who thought that “the moment when the Indian problem will become acute” was “rapidly approaching,” and it was “supremely important that both here and in the Dominions people should be informed as to the true outlines of the situation.”³⁸

³⁶ Philip Kerr, “Memorandum on the Representation of India,” RTP, c 826, 4 14; c 826, 45 56, 75 8, 79 85, 208 10, 143 58; Cullis, “General Note,” RTP, c 826, 79; James Meston, “Memorandum on India and the Empire,” Dec. 1912, RTP, c 826, 86 104.

³⁷ Curtis, “Note of Philip Kerr’s Indian Memorandum,” 1912, RTP, 826, 233 40; Lavin, “Lionel Curtis and the Idea”, 97.

³⁸ Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 42; Coupland to Curtis, 20 Feb. 1917, RTP, c 810, 7 8.

The difficulty was that India was not self-governing. The Councils created with the Minto-Morley reforms of 1909 gave the new Indian National Congress the negative role of obstructing the government: “What they want,” Meston observed, “is something that will make India a bigger and more dignified figure in the world. Not knowing exactly how to put it into words they use the formula colonial self-government.” The British would have had “many big problems on its hands without India,” Meston warned the Kindergarten: “it will be the old story of giving the rascals anything they want so long as they remain quiet; and there is a deadly risk of the British work in India receiving a serious set-back.”³⁹

4. Curtis and the dyarchy scheme

The idea of associating the Indians with the British civil servants in the management of Indian local affairs—later defined as dyarchy—was conceived by Curtis when “all the schemes of which I could hear”—he recollected writing to the new Viceroy Chelmsford—“seemed to me to involve progress towards paralysis of government rather than responsible government.” “They all proceeded by leaving the executives responsible to the Indian Parliament,” Curtis observed, “while rendering them dependent first for legislation and presently for supply on Indian electorates.” Curtis, aware of the fact that many areas of Indian Government would be kept out of the control of Indian electorate—an issue faced by Lord Durham in the Canadas—then proposed to the Kindergarten “the possibility of proceeding on another principle, that of calling into existence provincial authorities responsible to Indian electorates, and delegating thereto specific functions and revenues, adding others from time to time as experience warranted.” The Kindergarten’s first reaction was to reject Curtis’s proposal to associate the Indians with the British in the exercise of local self-government.⁴⁰

Curtis however managed to persuade the most sceptical members of the inner circle that the question of Indian self-government would have to be tackled without further delay, recollecting the South African experience, when the Kindergarten agreed that the colour question should be managed by the South African Legislature. “Had we dealt with the native franchise throughout South Africa,” Curtis observed, “the whole operation would have broken down. We succeeded in settling the relations

³⁹ W. Marris, *The Coming Crisis in India*, 5 Oct. 1915, RTP, c827; Meston to Curtis, 16 May 1915, MeP, Eur. F 136/11.

⁴⁰ Curtis to Chelmsford, 8 Sept. 1917, RTP, c810.

between the white communities, leaving the relations of black and white for more gradual settlement.” First the white self-governing Dominions should settle their own relations with the creation of an Imperial Assembly as Lower House, then representation should be offered to the Dependencies in an Upper Chamber modelled on the American Senate. The Dominions, the United Kingdom and India should each have an equal representation of fifteen members, Curtis suggested, while Egypt should have five, and the other Dependencies one or two. Indians would then rise to the status “not as helots but as fellow-citizens.”⁴¹

From his Dominion tours Curtis returned convinced that the administration of the Dependencies was not “one of the problems of history but *the* problem,” which the Dominions had directly to face in order to play a responsible role in imperial foreign and security policies. Curtis saw, in the Dominions’ constraints on Indian immigration, negative attitudes which would cause tensions in the managing of Indian affairs. Curtis became convinced that the Empire would “violate its own essential principles,” unless it applied the principle of citizenship to all the communities which it governed. “Wherever the Imperial problem,” Curtis concluded, was met, “it may invariably be traced to some failure to separate local from Imperial issues.”⁴²

The question of self-government and Indian representation in the Imperial Parliament was discussed at length among the members of the Round Table and, in spite of some resistance from Malcolm, Chirol, Craik and Martin Holland—afraid of Dominion opposition to India’s membership within an Imperial Parliament—the political stance upheld by Kerr and Curtis was, eventually, finally approved. The Indians should be considered British citizens, with full rights.⁴³

That choice represented, according to S. R. Mehrotra, “almost a revolution in imperialist thinking,” since “it rejected the current imperialist dogma that non-white communities were incapable of self-government, and that they should remain satisfied with good British Government.” Lord Hailey argued that the Round Table’s approach to Indian reforms was opposite both to Indian Nationalists and to the Government of India, addressing directly the question of India’s inclusion within Imperial decision-making institutions. Hailey thought that Curtis forced the British establishment to look further than the immediate question of some concessions to Indian Nationalists, and addressed the fundamental

⁴¹ Curtis to Meston, 25 Sept. 1915, MeP, F 136/11.

⁴² Curtis, *The Commonwealth of*, 345.

⁴³ Philip Kerr, “Memorandum on the representation of India,” June 1912, LP, 3; id., “India and the Empire,” *The Round Table*, 8, (Sept. 1912): 587-626.

question of the essential goal of British rule in India. Once the goal of self-government had been set, the Round Table thought that everything would follow accordingly, and the British Government should decide the forms and the time-table for achieving this end, which foresaw the permanent and voluntary association of India to the Empire/Commonwealth.⁴⁴

On the issue of representation the Round Table was however divided. Curtis was against immediate Indian representation within an Imperial Conference, while Kerr suggested just one representative of the Hindu and one of the Mohammedan communities. Meston and Marris opted for two or three. Preoccupied with Anglo-Dominions relations during the war effort, the Round Table produced many documents on the Indian question, which had been left aside until India's relevant and generous financial and military aid to Great Britain comforted all those who feared that once independence was achieved India would be lost. Kerr's idea of the Empire as a bridge between East and West, which by that stage was shared by the more pragmatic members of the movement, implied that self-government and Dominion status should be granted as rapidly as possible. Since Curtis had a greater capacity for synthetic thought and imagination than Kerr, the Round Table asked him to set out the constitutional principle for gradually introducing self-government in a country of three hundred and fifty million inhabitants. This made India the same size as Europe, with profound ethnic and religious differences within itself, culturally a long way off from Western civilization, and only recently unified politically under British rule.⁴⁵

The problem was to grant the Indians self-government gradually, managing the period of transition cautiously, but unequivocally. On the basis of the federalist doctrine of the division, balance and respective autonomy of both local and central powers, Curtis proposed a system of Anglo-Indian dyarchy at the local level, leaving control of central

⁴⁴ S. R. Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth, 1885 1929* (London: 1965), 83, 56 106; Kendle, *The Round Table*, 224 9; Lord Hailey, "Lionel Curtis," RTP, C864, 199 209.

⁴⁵ Philip Kerr, "An Outline of the Indian Chapters," 2 July 1915, LP, 16; id., "Memorandum on the representation of India," June 1912, LP, 3; id., "India and the Empire," *The Round Table*, (Sept. 1912): 587 626. William Marris, "Memo on India and the Empire," June 1912; Sir Valentine Chirol, "Memo on India," July 1912; G. R. Craik, "Note on the Principle of Indian Representation," July 1912; D. O. Malcolm, "Memorandum," July 1912, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 227). On the involvement of Meston and Marris in Indian affairs, see G. Robb, "The Bureaucrat as Reformer: Two Indian Civil Servants and the Constitution of 1919," *Rule, Protest, Identity: Aspects of Modern South Asia*, G. Robb and D. Taylor eds. (London: 1978).

government to the British, with a view to creating an autonomous federation. If the Indians could show that they were capable of running local government efficiently in collaboration with the British, then the British themselves would gradually relinquish first local, then central power, once a federal constitution had come into force. The co-existence and co-ordination of two authorities on the same territory would improve Anglo-Indian relations, since it would force the two communities to work together, would speed up the process of education for democracy, and would also allow the Indians to learn the working of the federal system, even if only in embryo. Provincial legislatures and executives should, according to Curtis's scheme, be made responsible, before an Indian electorate, "for certain functions of government to begin with, leaving all others in the hands of executives responsible as at present to the Government of India and the Secretary of State." "Fresh powers" should be progressively transferred "from the old governments as the new elective authorities developed and proved their capacity for assuming them." Indians would thus be trained in the "exercise of genuine responsibility."⁴⁶

Curtis's idea was met with an initial scepticism by most members of the Round Table, but as soon as other schemes demonstrated unworkable it was eventually taken up and developed into a project by Sir William Duke—former member of the Bengal Executive Council, officer in the India Office, and member of the Advisory Council of India—who had been imbued with Round Table ideas during a week-end at Blackmoor, country residence of Selborne, to discuss the first draft of *The Problem of the Commonwealth*. Curtis's scheme developed into a memorandum, discussed at length in early 1916 by the Round Table at Trinity College Oxford, and sent on his own request to the new Viceroy Lord Chelmsford—who as Governor of New South Wales had helped Curtis considerably in creating Round Table groups in Sydney and Brisbane—as he was looking for ideas on which to base a declaration in favour of Indian self-government, in appreciation of India's generous military war contribution. The Round Table's proposals were incorporated in the *Duke Memorandum*, and were circulated in early 1917 among the Governors of the Indian Provinces. They proposed a complete departure from the Moreley-Minto scheme, which contemplated technical electoral changes in the formation of the Indian Legislative Councils and in the selection of the Indian members of the executives, broadening the gulf between an Indian legislature with limited powers and a British-dominated executive. The

⁴⁶ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 231; Curtis, *Dyarchy*, xxiii; id., *The Commonwealth*, 345.

Memorandum proposed a tentative application of the principle of dyarchy to the Province of Bengal, with an immediate transfer of competences for education, local self-government and sanitation, and direct control of revenues for these purposes. The British Government would decide when the time was suitable to transfer more competencies to the local governments.⁴⁷

The official policy of the British Government was then to extend the Morley-Minto system, based on the representation of Indian interest groups (giving separate electorates to Muslims) rather than territorial electorates, and therefore unable to guarantee any true accountability of legislators: a “sham,” according to Curtis. The artificial nature of the existing Legislative Councils was based on the impracticality of forming within them an alternative policy to that of the Government. The existence of separate electorates for Muslims, said Curtis in criticism, was hampering and delaying responsible government. Only the establishment of really responsible electorates through proportional representation was able to educate Indians in the exercise of responsible government. “Educated India,” Curtis wrote to Kerr in March 1917, “has reached the stage when its political aspirations require sympathy and guidance instead of snubbing. In plain words, I am convinced that what you have got to do is to foster political aspirations in India instead of repressing them.”⁴⁸

The abandonment of the Ripon system of local government for a share in responsibility at province level over a significant number of competences, giving the Indian electorate real control in their administration, as envisaged by the Kindergarten’s “exercise in political research,” was seen favourably by Chelmsford. He appreciated its innovative character, and distributed the *Duke Memorandum* to the heads of all legislative councils and local governments raising however wide doubts about its realization. The Memorandum had, in fact, a negative reception by the official mind. The Indian Civil Service regarded it as “the uninvited contribution of a knot of amateur outsiders.”⁴⁹

Curtis had experience, as Lavin remarked, of British local government. He had worked for Leonard Courtney on municipal questions, and as

⁴⁷ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 232 3. According to Curtis, he discussed with Chelmsford the idea of dyarchy before his appointment, (Curtis, *Dyarchy*, xxvii.)

⁴⁸ Memorandum enclosed to a letter by Curtis to Meston, 19 Sept. 1917, MeP f136/11, 4, 34; Curtis to Kerr, 25 March 1917, LP, 33.

⁴⁹ Curtis to Chelmsford, 8 Sept. 1917, RTP, c810; E. Montagu, “Some preliminary observations on a first reading of Sir William Duke’s report,” Appendices to Indian Diary, 2 Nov. 1917, MoP, D523; W. Marris to W. Seton, 21 Nov. 1916, SeP, E267/5/1.

Private Secretary to Lord Welby, Chairman of the London County Council, Curtis was involved in the substitution of the vestries and district boards by a smaller number of local authorities under the London Government Act of 1899. "Pretty well single-handed," Lavin pointed out, Curtis "had introduced an elective municipal system to Johannesburg after the war, and his extension of that system to replace the rudimentary Health Boards throughout the Transvaal had been the subject of close study by the Local Government Board under John Burns."⁵⁰

India's system of administration was, according to Lavin, centralized and hierarchical, "with authorities exercising powers delegated from above and acting as agents of superior powers rather than autonomously." The horizontal administrative structure of the Government of India, contemplated more than one local authority, "each independent of the others," and "responsible directly to the central government," which laid "down the distribution of functions according to financial capacity." In Great Britain, on the contrary, "different authorities were...concurrently responsible for different functions of local government," with corresponding fiscal powers, and responsible to the electorate. Curtis thought that "it should not be beyond the wit of constitutional experts to frame a scheme of advance along the road of horizontal lines of increasing popular control," replacing "vertical lines separating particular functions and without reaching a chasm that must be crossed in one bound."⁵¹

In a debate at the Lords in November 1927 Chelmsford declared that when Curtis handed over to him the *Duke Memorandum* he made him think that it was an official document from the India Office. It was Austen Chamberlain who persuaded him that it was necessary to educate Indians in the art of self-government. In fact, Chelmsford—who asked Curtis to send him the *Duke Memorandum*, which therefore was kept strictly confidential and not circulated among the Dominion Round Table groups for discussion as was first decided—committed himself to support the Round Table scheme before he was appointed Viceroy in March 1916, an appointment strongly supported by Milner. The acceptance, in the *Duke Memorandum*, of self-government as the goal of British policy in India

⁵⁰ Deborah Lavin, "Lionel Curtis and Indian dyarchy," in *The Federal Idea*, Bosco, vol. 1, 197 8. Lord Welby at the London County Council had, according to Lavin, turned Curtis into a devolutionist, convinced that too much centralisation merely produced an overload of business which inhibited efficiency. India and Ireland had given him practical experience in the division of powers.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, 198; Lionel Curtis, *Memorandum of Evidence to the United Provinces Committee on Local Government*, RTP, c832.

was the first British official recognition of the principle, opening the way to the 20 August 1917 Montagu Declaration.⁵²

Curtis spent the first three weeks after his landing in Bombay on 24 October visiting friends and acquaintances such as Sir Stanley Reed, editor of *The Times of India*, Chelmsford, Claude Hill—a member of the Viceroy's Council—Marris, Chirol and Meston. Then he started to collect material for a survey of Indian affairs, and to form Round Table groups in Calcutta and Nagpur.

Marris was alarmed by Curtis's presence in India:

Curtis is here: hard at work, interviewing not yet preaching but with difficulty will he be restrained. We can't deport him, and we must take the risks...He stands rigidly by unfitness for self government at present, but he may return from Calcutta another C. F. Andrews denying that any official has the least insight into the Indian mind. He may cause the R.T. and all its works to be violently denounced in India as wolves in sheep's clothing. He may stimulate the self government demand enormously by his argument that until self government comes they can't get into the Imperial Parliament. He may be consulted as the big medicine man on the subject of self government and how to attain it. If he is I doubt if he will plead ignorance and hold his peace long.⁵³

Curtis's leadership on the question of Indian self-government offers us the exact measure of his role within the organization, and his historical stature. Writing to Brand in 1912 on Curtis's character, Kerr remarked that liberty meant "the willingness to assume responsibility for the results of one's action." That was the reason why Curtis was, according to Kerr, "the freest human being" he had ever met, and was "always able to escape the charge of recklessness," since he was "always prepared to bear the results of his actions whatever they may be and whatever he has anticipated them, or not."⁵⁴

As soon as Curtis realized that something had to be done in order to push for the immediate implementation of the *Duke Memorandum*, he decided on 13 November 1916 to summarize his views in a letter to Kerr, and through Valentine Chirol, *The Times* foreign editor, printed "several hundred copies" to circulate among Round Table groups in Britain and the

⁵² Lord Chelmsford to the House of Lords, Nov. 1927. In a previous debate in the Lords on 12 Dec. 1919, Lord Crewe supported the version of the commitment of Chelmsford before his appointment, (Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 70). William Duke, *Suggestion for Constitutional Progress in the Indian Polity*, 1 May 1916, MeP, 136/11; the *Duke Memorandum* is reprinted in Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 1 37; Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth*, 101 105.

⁵³ W. Marris to Malcolm Seton, 21 Nov. 1916, SeP, E267/5/1.

⁵⁴ Kerr to Brand, 8 Feb. 1912, BrP, 182.

Dominions. He thus widened as far as possible the debate on the future relationship between India and the rest of the Empire. Curtis's apparent naivety—but the 'prophet', as he was by then called, was by no means unaware of the consequences of such a risky move—brought him suddenly to the centre of political debate in India, since passages of his open letter to Kerr were printed and circulated among members of the Indian National Congress, and the All-India Muslim League, assembled in December at Lucknow. Curtis presented the letter as representing the "joint view" of Meston, Marris and Chirol, senior officials of the Indian Civil Service, and introduced "the question" as "a simple one": British subjects in the self-governing Dominions had to share "on an equal footing with those of the United Kingdom" the supreme responsibility to "assume control of the future and fate" of 370 million people living in India and Central Africa, yet unable to exercise responsible government. If the Central Africans were "scarcely capable of forming any valid opinion as to how they ought to be governed," with the peoples of India it was "otherwise."⁵⁵

The domestic and foreign affairs of India and Central Africa were already controlled by the British "on different principles". The foreign affairs of the two Dependencies were completely under British rule, but Indian domestic affairs were run on a somewhat shared rule. The duty of the Round Table was to educate British opinion on the fundamental differences between India and Central Africa, and on the necessity of solving the problems arising "from the contact of East and West," and pressing the British Government to allow the Indians somehow to control their foreign affairs. At the same time the Round Table had to persuade the Indian Nationalists "of the mischief to their own cause" in carrying on a campaign against British rule. "The cultivation of hate," Curtis stressed, "here as in Ireland is the greatest of all obstacles to freedom, an *ignis fatuus* which only leads men into an ever-deepening morass."⁵⁶

"This vast varied and closely congested community," Curtis stated in his open letter, contained "small but important sections who can and do formulate opinions on political questions." These sections were "relatively too small," and therefore could not be accepted "as the final criterion of Indian policy." Being little representative of Indian society they could not "discharge" the responsibility of taking decisions on an overwhelming

⁵⁵ Curtis to Kerr, 13 Nov. 1916, (quoted in Bosco, *Two Musketeers for the Empire*, 126).

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, 127.

majority which would “overpower them,” and the British were not able to enforce decisions which were not their own.⁵⁷

“Indian opinion,” Curtis pointed out, “cannot rule India, at any rate until the Indians capable of forming such opinion were united, organized and numerous enough to exact regular, willing and continuous obedience from their fellow-countrymen who have not yet acquired the faculty of political judgment.” Indian opinion seemed not “really as sound and disinterested as ours now is.”⁵⁸

It had to be improved “in quality as well as in quantity,” and the fundamental duty of the British was to “improve both...and to allow it to influence policy more and more.” The British should therefore continue to rule India for the time being, reserving for themselves the responsibility for final decisions, but they should look “to a time, however remote, when it will be able to transfer that responsibility to a section of Indians sufficiently large, disinterested and capable of sound political judgment to assume it.”⁵⁹

The publication of abstracts of this letter produced an upsurge of protest by the Nationalists. “BEWARE OF THE ROUND TABLE, BEWARE OF CURTIS,” ran the headlines over an article which depicted Curtis as a man who ranked Indians with negroes, the originator—together with Meston and Marris—of a plan to subject India to the Dominions even at the cost of slaughter. The accident provoked strong annoyance by Austen Chamberlain, Secretary of State for India, who although he considered Curtis “a most unselfish apostle of Empire and a genuine enthusiast devoting himself wholeheartedly to public service,” confessed to Chelmsford that “Curtis’s ways irritate me.” The open letter in fact appeared at the very time when, thanks to the Kindergarten’s own efforts, India was to be represented at the Imperial War Conference and Cabinet, an honour granted only to the Dominions.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, 126.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁰ Chamberlain to Chelmsford, 26 Jan., 27 Feb., and 16 March 1917, CP E264/3. Chamberlain initially ruled out Indian representation from Imperial institutions. The platform advocated by the Indian National Congress envisaged provincial autonomy, direct election of four fifths of the provincial and central Councils, election of at least half of the members of the provincial and central executives by their Councils, the reduction of the role of the Secretary of State for India towards the Government of India as the Colonial Secretary to the Dominions, (Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 90 5). Curtis to Meston, 16 July 1915, 25 Sept. 1915, MeP, F 136/11.

Marris soon realized “that this affair will be the end of me.” “Curtis was like a man walking with a naked light in a powder magazine and lo! he has blown us up.” In fact, Chelmsford’s reaction could not be more severe: he vetoed any member of the Indian Civil Service from associating with the Round Table, thus preventing Indians from discussing Curtis’s scheme with “the only people who really understand the present technique of their government.” Curtis thought that the Viceroy was acting with “extraordinary fatuity,” and that the British establishment in India produced a general “prostitution of popular government.” This statement produced a temporary breach of his relationship with Chelmsford, who instructed Curtis to communicate with him through Sir William Vincent, Home Member of the Government of India. The result was that Vincent became one of the most fervent supporters of the dyarchy scheme.⁶¹

While collecting “opinions, information, and material,” Curtis described himself “as a sort of super-journalist...pumping people with first-hand knowledge.” *Bombay News* “ransacked” the pages of *The Round Table* “for extracts to support the charge of...‘velvet paws hiding sharpening claws’.” The “mere name of the Round Table has become a powerful weapon for raising distrust,” Curtis later recollected.⁶²

Elevated to the centre of public debate, Curtis decided to postpone his return to England and stayed in India till March 1918, producing a number of studies on the question of local responsible government which he thought would strengthen the Round Table’s case. Curtis identified in Bhupendra Nath Basu—president of the Madras Indian National Congress, and member of the Viceroy’s Legislative Council—a reliable interlocutor. In early April 1917 he sent Basu a detailed letter outlining the dyarchy solution, as opposed to the extension of the Morley-Minto reforms, as advocated by the Indian National Congress, which would have brought about an uncontrolled development of self-government. Curtis developed special relations also with Sir Prabhaskar Pattani and other moderate Indians, regarded by the new Secretary of State for India Edwin Montagu as the people “to whom we must look immediately for the acceptance of our scheme and for assistance in working it.” The British needed “to restore” Indian “confidence and fortify their belief” in their intentions.⁶³

⁶¹ W. Marris to W. Seton, 28 Jan. 1917, SeP; Curtis to Coupland, 15 March 1917, quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 143; Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 96 124.

⁶² Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 50, 54, 74; See also his *A Letter to the People of India* (Delhi: 1916).

⁶³ Curtis to Basu, 6 April 1917, (quoted in Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 96 124). Among the Round Table, Curtis’s scheme received criticism only from Lord Selborne, who thought that it would have put in motion a process which would inevitably lead to

In the letter to Basu, Curtis faced the question of self-government, observing that in India the line of demarcation between provincial and central administrations was not clear-cut, as the provincial governments were acting on behalf of a centralized bureaucratic autocracy. In order to transfer governmental competences to Indians, Curtis observed, it was necessary to define which powers would be exercised by the central administration and which powers should be transferred to the provinces. Directly elected Provincial Assemblies would then be sovereign for the powers transferred to them, and act as advisory councils to Governors for the others. "The mechanism of Indian Government," appeared to Curtis,

the most esoteric thing I have ever struck...I doubt whether there are in India 12 men who could explain to a Commission how the revenues of the country are divided between central and provincial governments, and yet everyone is talking glibly of devolution.⁶⁴

Curtis then produced four *Studies* on the structure of Indian Government and revenue system, forcing "the minds of the critics...to work on the hard facts of the problem." Indians and English officials, Curtis recollected, began "to get interested and to drop the fruitless discussion as to whether Indians are or ever will be fit for self-government." His *Indian Studies* in fact produced wide discussion on the principle of delegation of powers, giving "a sufficient knowledge of the intricate and overwhelming detail," and offering "the outline of the course upon which that solution should proceed."⁶⁵

Curtis then decided to publish the full text of his open letter to Kerr. "Through this agitation," Curtis remarked, the Congress "have inadvertently given me the whole of educated India for an audience" in support of the case for associating India with the Commonwealth and opening the road to responsible government eight months before Montagu's self-government statement. "Now that I have made some Indian friends," Curtis later observed, he began "to realise how deeply, in

self government, (Selborne to Coupland, 23 June 1917, enclosed in Curtis to Chelmsford, 24 May 1918, quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 238). The studies "The Structure of Indian Government" and "Land Revenue" first circulated in India, were later published in Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 201-325, 38-95.

⁶⁴ Curtis to Coupland, 5 July 1917, RTP, c810; Curtis to Bhupendra Nath Basu, 6 April 1917, reprinted in Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 96-124.

⁶⁵ Curtis to Chirol, 16 Aug. 1917; Meston to M. O'Dwyer, 5 Oct. 1917, MeP, F 136/17.

their position, I should resent being told that I ‘must gradually be schooled to the management of my national affairs’.”⁶⁶

In the *Letter to the People of India*, Curtis presented “the whole story of the Round Table movement,” dealing “in the most conciliatory fashion” with the episode of his open letter. Curtis exploited “the most glorious opportunity of getting the whole case before the Indian public,” publishing the *Letter* with Macmillan, and arranging for its circulation through two agencies which controlled the bookstalls in India. The situation required “patience and goodwill,” neutralizing the “impression that the Round Table is sulking.” Curtis’s “colossal self-confidence” was, according to Michael O’Dwyer, Lieut-Governor of Punjab, indefensible, since “up to then only the Sovereign had addressed messages to the people of India.” Those who did not know “their Lionel,” Marris remarked, “had laughed at it as naïve, egotistical and sententious...But it had a good effect.”⁶⁷

The aim of the Round Table was manifestly to lead opinion, “instead of sitting on it.” As opposed to treating the Congress “as being rather ‘naughty’,” the British should consider it “as the mouthpiece of educated information in India.” The “discontinuance of free public enquiry” was attributed by Curtis to “the gradual growth of unrest in India, the development of the Indian National Congress, and the demand for a free parliamentary government of their own.” The British failed to recognize in the Congress an active force for self-government, douching the Indians “with cold water from the time of Dufferin onwards.” Moderate liberal opinion should be considered as a driving force to implement reforms, and a special role should be given to the press, through Stanley Reed, editor of *The Times of India*, and Valentine Chirol, both of them being closely associated with the Round Table.⁶⁸

Since the “final authority” on India was the British electorate, which would have “easily” turned “on the question of self-government in India,”

⁶⁶ Lionel Curtis, *A Letter to the People of India*, reprinted in Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 38 95.

⁶⁷ Curtis to Coupland, 15 Mar. 1917, RTP, c 810, 12 16; Michael O’Dwyer, *India as I knew It* (London: 1925), 374 5; Marris to Seton, 6 May 1917, quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 142. The manager of Macmillan complained of being used by Curtis “as a distributing agency for his political propoganda,” (30 Nov. 1917, RTP, c 831, 55 56).

⁶⁸ Curtis to Coupland, 15 March 1917, RTP, c 810, 15; Curtis to Coupland, 19 May 1917, RTP, c 810, 60. Reed became the Vice Chairman of the war time Central Publicity Bureau, which ended up to be a means for propogating the Montagu Chelmsford reforms.

Curtis thought that it was vital to educate the British public on India, and that *The Round Table* could play a pioneering role in that respect:

Really the greatest need of the moment is some first class correspondent in India who can devote his whole time to the subject, travel all about India. He should be a man who can keep in touch with everyone including the Government but who will be sufficiently independent to keep out of everyone's pocket.

The journal was taken by all the major Imperial papers, and the direct inclusion into the movement of *Times* men such as Dawson, Chirol, Grigg, and Lovat Fraser would have amplified its impact.⁶⁹

The Round Table commitment to support a specific political plan was strongly criticized by the Indian Civil Service, which identified in the Indian contributor, Laurence Rushbrook-Williams, "a kind of acting Viceroy in close touch with Montagu and the Round Table behind the backs of the Home Department, and rushing and advertising things like an American boss." It was "very annoying," Coupland commented, "that the name of the Round Table should be involved in this kind of talk." In defending Rushbrook-Williams, Curtis confirmed to Coupland that they never had been "on better or more intimate terms." If they differed, it was "as to how far you should go down the right road at this juncture." They were "in absolute agreement as to the importance of avoiding the wrong road." As a result of their collaboration, they shared "many of each-others views, he absorbing political ideas from me and I historical ideas from him." Williams had an academic training, and Curtis shared Williams' critique of the Government of India's policy. Williams had, according to Marris, "for some time lived very much under Curtis's compelling and magnetic influence."⁷⁰

"What is said about India in the R.T.," Curtis remarked, "may have much more effect for good or evil than what is said about Ireland." India's situation was "at a critical stage, and no one can select facts for an article without reference to that crisis or without the purpose, conscious or unconscious, of moulding opinion." Articles without any educational purpose were, according to Curtis, "worthless, unreadable, and indeed impossible to write." The purpose should "be clear and patent on the surface of the article which must then be judged by the soundness alike of the purpose and of the statements and arguments used to support it." Curtis

⁶⁹ Curtis to F. E. Francis, 23 May 1918, RTP, c 830, 194; Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 82, 54.

⁷⁰ Coupland to Marris, 27 Jan. 1919, RTP, c 827, 156; Curtis to Coupland, 1 Oct. 1917, RTP, c 827, 178; Curtis to Coupland, 29 Sept. 1917, RTP, c 827, 172; Marris to Coupland, 1 Oct. 1917, RTP, c 810, 180; c 827, 148; Curtis to Coupland, 29 Sept. 1917, RTP, c 810, 172.

thought that the Round Table would have failed to “rise to its opportunity,” if they waited “to influence public opinion till a crisis is passed.” If the journal was “not prepared to publish articles which treat the administration and the nationalist movement alike in the same spirit of detachment,” it was better “to be silent on Indian affairs altogether.” It was not possible to “guide public opinion” unless the journal was “prepared to look for errors in past navigation and correct the course thereby.”⁷¹

5. The Round Table and the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms

The Indian deadlock was broken by the replacement—supported by Milner—in July 1917 of Austen Chamberlain with Edwin Montagu—an associate of the Round Table—as Secretary of State. On 20 August he made the famous declaration in the House of Commons according to which

the policy of His Majesty’s Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the Empire.

The use of the wording “responsible government” rather than “self-government” was, according to Lavin, “largely accidental.” The significance of the Montagu Declaration is marked by the fact that a British Government dispatch of 26 November 1916 stated “no wish to develop the [legislative] councils as quasi-parliaments.”⁷²

According to Sir Stanley Reed, editor of *The Times of India*, the Montagu Declaration was drawn up by Milner himself, and issued by Curzon to Montagu. Without the Round Table’s cultural and political influence within the inner circle of British decision makers in London and India, ensuring that they understood the constitutional implications of the announcement, and implemented the reforms in a way that moved clearly towards that goal, it would not have been possible. *The Round Table* welcomed the August 1917 Montagu declaration as the “only policy

⁷¹ Curtis to Coupland, 29 Sept. 1917, RTP, c 810, 169 170, 176.

⁷² For the text of Montagu Declaration, see V. A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 780. For the negotiations which led to it, see Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth*, 99 104; Woods, *Roots of India’s Parliamentary Democracy: The Montagu Chelmsford Reforms* (Delhi: 1996), 58 66. Circular Letter from Chelmsford to local governments and administrations, 20 July 1916, ChP, E264/51; R. Danzig, “The Announcement of August 20th 1917,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 28, 2, (Feb. 1969), 19 37.

compatible with British traditions and with the principles for which the whole British Empire is fighting at the present day." A postponement would have meant that

the tale of Indian unrest and indifference would have become known in the West, whilst the early and premature enthusiasm in the English Press for India's deathless heroes would have waned, and the English people might then have said that India deserved no special treatment, and that there was no necessity to include her in the programme of reconstruction.

It was "important to recognise and admit" the "failure" of the Morley-Minto reforms and to act accordingly. "On any other terms there will be in the East an India as more tragic as it is more vast than Ireland itself."⁷³

The high hopes raised by the August declaration, together with the hostile controversy stirred by the British press, forced Montagu to leave for India in November 1917 in order to establish the time-table for the introduction of self-government. Shortly before his appointment, Montagu had criticised the Government of India at the House of Commons as "too wooden, too iron, too inelastic and too antediluvian." Arriving in India in November 1917, Montagu denounced "the dishonest, hypocritical, fraudulent and cowardly device of the official majority on the Legislative Council," and stated that he did "not care a brass farthing for the European community out here except the I.C.S." Montagu denied that they had "anything to lose, and their history in politics" was "beneath contempt." The "cruel, dull, soulless, lifeless, thwarting, misshapen, dead hand of the Government of India" had to be reformed, since it was "unrepresentative with a series of mock-panoplies and institutions, a series of frauds with which to cover its misdeeds, a series of hypocracies on its lips."⁷⁴

From being strongly attacked by the radical Indian Nationalists, Curtis soon became the spokesman for moderate Indians, who were then able to distance themselves publicly from the radicals, who actually led the majority of the Congress. Instead of treating the Congress "as the mouthpiece of educated information in India and striving to make its leaders realise the responsibility which rests upon them," the Government of India went, in fact, in the opposite direction, insulating itself, and bringing Indian opinion to look at Curtis "rather as a male Mrs Besant." The Indian press saw in Curtis "the true, genuine friend of India." Curtis felt like "a person who has caught the plague and recovered." He was "so

⁷³ "Indian Politics," *The Round Table*, 8, 31, (June 1918), 587 9; Chelmsford to Meston, 13 Sept. 1917, MeP, F 136/1; Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 206 7.

⁷⁴ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 238 9; *Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser., Commons, 195, 12 July 1917, Col. 2205.

immunized” that he had “a perfect immunity from press attacks.” A sign of opening came also from Motilal Nehru—who had previously strongly attacked Curtis in Congress and in the Legislative Council—inviting him to discuss the scheme further.⁷⁵

This caused great embarrassment within the Kindergarten, which delegated Kerr to remind Curtis of the collegiate nature of the movement and not to use the Round Table for personal initiatives. Kerr was particularly critical of the formula used by Curtis to earn the sympathy of moderate Congress leaders—“national self-government as an end”—pointing out that “if India will achieve in a reasonable space of time self-government in the western meaning of the term, it will be in the form of a federation of States, not as a nation.” Kerr eventually persuaded Curtis to reconsider his plan to introduce the representative system at the local level, breaking up the existing provinces into areas of government of limited size and therefore more easily governable, in order to favour a future introduction of a federal structure.⁷⁶

Curtis agreed to the suggestion and drew up a plan for subdividing the existing provinces. This had the assent of the moderates who met during the autumn of 1917 at the home of Lord Sinha, Indian representative at the Imperial Conference, and member of the Imperial War Cabinet. A twelve-point “Joint Address” signed by 64 Europeans and 90 Bengali Indians was submitted to Chelmsford and to Montagu on his arrival in November. P. C. Mitter and S. R. Das were involved by Curtis in the drafting of the *Joint Address from Europeans and Indians to the Viceroy and the Rt Hon the Secretary of State*. If the Indian press attacked it as “a dangerous document” of “consummate ability and a plausible manner,” characterized by “fine passages of political wisdom, breathing liberalism, calculated to throw people off their guard,” Montagu considered it “by far the best thing the man has done, and I think the best scheme I have seen yet.”⁷⁷

Montagu was equally as determined as Curtis to progressively transfer governmental responsibilities to the Indians, finding in Curtis a powerful ally, having to fight both against radical Indian Nationalists and die-hard British senior officials, who realized that their privileges would come to an end. During the six months of his stay, he met Curtis nine times, the first

⁷⁵ *The Beharee*, 10 May 1917, RTP, c851; Curtis to Hichens, n.d., quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 144.

⁷⁶ Kerr to Curtis, 23 April, 9, 21 and 22 July, 2 Oct. and 8 Dec. 1917, LP, 33.

⁷⁷ Curtis to Kerr 28 Aug. 1917, LP, 33; The *Joint Address* is reprinted in Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 326-356; *The Leader*, 25, 26, 29 Nov. 1917; E. Montagu, *An Indian Diary* (London: 1930), 11, entry for 10 Nov. 1917.

on 1st December 1917, after having read all of Curtis's Indian writings. "I...had my first introduction to the great Curtis," Montagu wrote on his diary on that occasion:

At last here was a person unprejudiced, keenly interested, properly equipped. I spoke to him with complete frankness...He convinced me that any official majority is a thing which cannot be tolerated...He did not convince me that you could practically subdivide the provinces now, but of course our two schemes are so similar that it really does not matter.

Montagu was fascinated by the way Curtis took himself so seriously. "I wish he sometimes made a joke," he commented, viewing "things from some other attitude than that of Curtis, the Empire-builder." Montagu saw Curtis a few days later and found him "a strange mixture of impossible inhumanity and soundness," but nevertheless he was "going to be most helpful...a valuable acquisition," since he held "in the hollow of his hands *The Times* and Lord Milner." Montagu forgot to mention that behind Curtis there was also *The Observer*, which among the British 'quality press' perhaps carried major credit for the formation of political consent. Montagu was however certainly aware that within the Cabinet not only was Milner committed to supporting the Round Table's programme for Imperial and colonial reforms, but also that his colleagues Cecil and Curzon were behind it. In Imperial matters, Lloyd George too had been already dragged within Milner's and the Round Table's intellectual and political influence.⁷⁸

The Round Table played a crucial role in organizing the Montagu 1917-18 visit to India. His delegation included three members of the movement: C. H. Kisch, Sir William Duke, and Malcolm Seton. Montagu shared Curtis's view that the reforms scheme could not be successfully implemented "without giving an opportunity" to Indians to express their criticism, since it was "absolutely impossible to ignore" the negative consequences produced on Indian opinion by "a long series of statesmen from Macaulay to Morley." "It may be necessary," Montagu thought, to develop contacts "with somebody with a view to getting at what he really

⁷⁸ On the Viceroy's Indian stay see Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, 76. The Indian writings by Curtis were collected in the volume *Dyarchy*, 39-95, 326-476. Montagu seemed amused to report in his diary Curtis's chameleon like capacity, which apparently reached the point to approach some Hindus expressing them his desire to become an Hindu himself. After they consulted the Pandits at Benares, they reported to Curtis that in order to become an Hindu he had to "feed a thousand Brahmans every day for a year," at the end of which he had to "commit suicide, and then possibly in his next incarnation he may become a sweeper," (Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, 214).

wants or thinks. The stereotyped reading of documents and the acknowledgement of them is not good enough.”⁷⁹

Chelmsford charged Meston in September 1917 with implementing the Montagu Declaration, instructing him that “it may be that we shall have to consider some possible transfer of power and responsibility.” Meston felt annoyed by Chelmsford’s “fatuous demand for a scheme for the future of India (within a month) without a word of guidance,” and decided to act on his own, bringing together his fellow Governors, and asking for assistance from Curtis.⁸⁰

“The goal,” Curtis stated in his *Evidence to the United Provinces Committee on local Government*, was the establishment of “a great Dominion with a Central government responsible to an Indian electorate, and a number of Provincial States, each with a government responsible to its own provincial electorate.” The first step towards that goal was to establish the Provincial States, with governments “responsible to their Provincial electorates,” handing over to them “certain functions, a commensurate share of the revenue, and also powers of imposing additional taxation.” Other powers “should be added from time to time as experience warrants,” once they proved to be “competent to discharge these functions.” The process would end when they had “acquired all functions and powers of taxation which, from the nature of their areas, they can properly administer.” Whenever that process was completed, “those ascertained powers and revenues would be reserved to the Provincial States.” All other powers and revenues would be conferred to the Government of India.⁸¹

The transfer of the administration of the police to the Provinces would imply, according to Curtis, the development of an electorate “fit for complete responsible government.” When this “practical certificate” had been given by the British Government “to a sufficient number of Provincial States, the time would have arrived to render the Government of India responsible to an Indian electorate, instead of the Imperial Parliament.” The arrangement for full self-government would be drafted by a Convention of delegates, “appointed by all the Provincial and Feudatory States...for re-modelling the Government of India.” With the ratification by the Imperial Parliament of such a scheme, “the final goal would then have been reached.”⁸²

⁷⁹ Montagu to Chelmsford, 3 Aug. 1917; Montagu to Chelmsford, 21 Sept. 1917, MoP, 1; Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, 8.

⁸⁰ Chelmsford to Meston, 13 Sept. 1917, MeP F 136/1.

⁸¹ Curtis, *Memorandum of Evidence*, 29, RTP, c832.

⁸² *Ibidem*, 30 1.

Curtis's scheme, designing the Provincial States on the model of English County Councils, aimed to assign real power in the exercise of responsibility, fostering a cooperative attitude by the Indians instead of boycott, to begin with the Provinces and having complete central self-government as a goal. Curtis thought that local government could be "the essential test and training ground for political capacity," but only if Indians saw in it the beginning of a process which would progressively give them the chance of full self-government, and to be part of a wider political community. Great Britain would have transmitted ultimate responsibility for India's self-government when India achieved Dominion status. The scheme was intended to draw in, at the end of the Constitutional process, the Princely States.⁸³

Montagu, who was aware of the fragility of his own political weight in Whitehall, Westminster and Downing Street, needed the support of the Round Table. Montagu started his political career as an Asquith Liberal, but ended at the head of the India Office within a Conservative-dominated Coalition led by Lloyd George, whose support he could not take for granted. Montagu wanted to leave his personal mark on a historic document, which Marris was drafting on his and Chelmsford's behalf. He had therefore to rely upon "the holy man, Curtis" in order to win over the resistance of Curtis's friend and Round Table colleague Marris and bring him into line. Montagu felt strongly irritated by "the melancholy Marris," who was "worshipping his melancholy gods in his melancholy tent, and more or less willing, but never cheerfully, drafting what" he was "told to draft." Marris's attitude was perhaps a tactical device appropriately studied in order to give Curtis a central role in manipulating the conflicting forces, and to get what he wanted.⁸⁴

The *Montagu-Chelmsford Report*, drafted by Marris and Duke, was finalized on 21 April 1918, and published in July with the full support of *The Times*, *The Observer* and *The Round Table*. Montagu was pleased to see that Kerr "who has much influence with the Prime Minister," was "strongly a supporter of our alternatives," and that Curtis in a letter to *The Times* on 22 July pressed for an immediate appointment of the Franchise and Functions Committees proposed by the Report.⁸⁵

On his return to London Montagu set up a Committee to draft the Reform Bill, and another to handle relations with Fleet Street for a favourable response to the reforms. "I believe that I have more knowledge of the London Press than almost any other British Minister, the Prime

⁸³ *Ibidem*, 31.

⁸⁴ Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, 330, 343 4.

⁸⁵ Montagu to Kerr, 12 May 1919, LP, 729; Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, 344.

Minister always excepted,” Montagu wrote to the Viceroy, “and I never lose an opportunity of trying to keep them on our side.” Indian specialists in Fleet Street were comparatively few, and the Round Table’s influence on the editorial policies of *The Times* and *The Observer*, provided Montagu with an invaluable help. With the assistance of the Round Table, Montagu launched an “organised effort to create opinion in favour of the actions or policy of the Government.” The India Office had a “duty” to counterbalance “the persistent repetition...of specious half-truths designed to mislead the ignorant in India and to attract sympathy in other countries.” In “its intercourse with newspaper correspondents,” he emphasised, it was “clearly legitimate for the publicity department to suggest a line of argument which it would be helpful for a newspaper—if so disposed—to adopt.”⁸⁶

Back in London, Montagu discovered that “Cabinet, the India Office, and the political nation had been accustomed,” as Lavin pointed out, “to the idea of dyarchy.” The Round Table had employed all means to impregnate university students, academics, school teachers, World Missionary Conference organisers, and leaders of the Student Christian Movement, with arguments in support of the Indian reforms. “It is very encouraging to think of you,” a schoolmaster wrote to Coupland in January 1919, “instilling Round Table doctrine in the boys at Northampton.” The reprint in London in May 1918 of Curtis’s *Letters to the People of India on Responsible Government*, helped “to mould opinion in the right direction,” when the official *Report* appeared in July. The Round Table set up a Committee which commissioned articles on India and placed them in various journals, bringing “the whole Indian problem before the public.” Montagu reported to Chelmsford that he “got *The Times* quite easily,” in support of the reforms. Chirol had “been bitten by Curtis with the ‘two Governments’ plan for the Provinces.” In gaining the support of *The Observer*, Montagu commented that Garvin was “a person of considerable influence.”⁸⁷

From the India Office, Montagu promoted the implementation of a new attitude in the management of Indian business, and in the Round Table he found an invaluable ally. “The feeding of the newspapers,”

⁸⁶ Montagu to Chelmsford, 15 Apr. 1920, ChP, 4; Chelmsford to Montagu, 10 July 1918, ChP, 9.

⁸⁷ Lavin, *From Empire to*, 154; Eric F. Bowman to Coupland, and Coupland’s reply, 20 Jan. 1919, RTP, c.831, 122 125; Curtis to Chelmsford, 24 May 1918, ChP, 15; Coupland to H. E. Egerton, 19 July 1918, RTP, c. 831, 109; Coupland to Ernest Barker, 15 July 1918, RTP, c. 831 (b), 105 6; Chandrika Kaul, “A New Angle of Vision,” 225 232; Montagu to Chelmsford, 15 June 1918, MoP, 2.

Montagu wrote to Chelmsford in April 1918, “the answering of enquiries, the touch between the Government and those who would support it,” were strategic instruments to mark the substitution of “coercive” methods with “political” ones. Montagu was determined to strengthen unofficial contacts with Fleet Street through the appointment in 1921 of Owen Lloyd-Evans, a former *Times* journalist, to the position of the India Office’s Press Officer.⁸⁸

The building of political consent at the pre-political level, within the British foreign and Imperial community, through the press, was seen as condition for the success of the reforms within Great Britain—neutralizing reactionary opposition to constitutional change—and in India, winning the support of moderate opinion and leaders. “The opinion of the British press,” *The Manchester Guardian* observed in July 1918, “is of great importance at the present juncture. If India is reassured...of the reform scheme being the maximum concessions possible at the moment, the moderates will probably rally round the proposals.”⁸⁹

The *Montagu-Chelmsford Report* received a “generally favourable” opinion from the British press. The major Indian and British newspapers, *The Round Table* reported, “warned the Indian politicians of the folly of an uncompromising rejection.” If the scheme were rejected, India would “certainly not get more.” The “open hostility” to the scheme shown by “a certain section of the British Press...on the ground of undue haste and precipitation,” produced the impression that if Indians “did not rally to their support soberly and promptly”, the reforms would probably be “wrecked by those who disliked them.” *The Round Table* played in fact a prominent role in guaranteeing British acceptance of the plan for reforms contained in the *Report*. Claiming the label of ‘independence’, the journal exercised the most determining influence on British opinion, building an almost unanimous consent behind the reforms, a fundamental factor in persuading India of the good intentions of the British Government.⁹⁰

The *Montagu-Chelmsford Report* was attacked by Indian Nationalists, and by British reactionaries as “about the weakest form of government that human ingenuity ever devised.” The Provincial Governors described it as discriminatory, while the “undraped dyarchists” saw it as a tricky compromise. Curtis replied to criticism by writing to *The Times*, observing that if “to the English mind” the *Report* was “at best one of a multitude of stars,” to “the educated Indian” it was “as the sun obscuring the stars, but bathing the whole world in light.” The reforms had to be immediately

⁸⁸ Montagu to Chelmsford, 27 Apr. 1918, ChP, 4.

⁸⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 31 July 1918.

⁹⁰ *The Round Table*, 9, 34, (Mar. 1919): 330.

implemented, in order to allow the British Delegation to go to the Peace Conference “with a clear conscience and a clean sheet.”⁹¹

Writing to Chelmsford on 4 February 1919 from Paris—where he was attending with Curtis the Peace Conference negotiations, and when his *Report* was not yet translated into the India Bill—Montagu noted with satisfaction how Curtis, in spite of his new responsibilities, was “conducting an uncompromising campaign in favour of undiluted dyarchy,” adding a note of sarcasm: “Oh these men who live above the clouds on the mountain tops, confident in the sordid imperfections of their fellow men and rightly convinced of the integrity of their own soul.”⁹²

Curtis and other members of the Round Table helped to win popular support for the dyarchy scheme and made it more palatable to more traditional imperial figures such as Milner and Selborne. Their support continued during the course of the long parliamentary discussions of details, and contributed to ensuring that there was no serious setback on fundamental matters. The reforms, rightly considered a milestone in the history of Indian independence, provided for a wide extension of the franchise, central and provincial legislative assemblies directly elected by an Indian electorate, and the principle of dyarchy at the provincial executives, transferring the administration of health, education, agriculture and local government to the Indians. Law, public order, finance, tax, famine relief and the control of the press were left in the hands of provincial Governors.

A measure of the role played by the Round Table in the effort to prepare the British public to accept the reforms is offered by the stern attack on Curtis and the movement by anti-reform papers such as *The Morning Post* and *The Spectator*, and reviews like *The National* and *Saturday*. Curtis, portrayed by *The Post* as an “innocent and harmless” constitution monger, was destabilizing imperial cohesion, identifying in Indian self-government the “requisite to the symmetry of his scheme.” Curtis’s arguments had “the persuasive power of advancing the wildest and most combustible projects.” It was an “evil chance” that Montagu was

at his wit’s end for a scheme which might both justify the wild words he had addressed to Parliament and allay the fears of the right wing of the Coalition. Mr. Curtis’s inventive mind supplied him with just what he

⁹¹ Marris to Lord Selborne, 14 Sept. 1919, SP, 83; *The Times*, 22 July 1918.

⁹² Montagu to Chelmsford, 15 June 1918, 4 Feb. 1919, quoted in Sigismund David Waley, *Edwin Montagu: A Memoir and an Account of his Visits to India* (Kolkata: Asia Publishing House, 1964), 167, 195. For the text of Curtis’ letter see Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 477–81; A. Rumbold, *Watershed in India 1914–1922* (London: 1979), 158.

desired...Mr. Montagu embraced the proposal, embodied it in his report, and induced the unhappy Lord Chelmsford to sign it.⁹³

Curtis saw in this attack to his reforms “a determined effort,” he wrote to the Viceroy “by the reactionaries to shelve your Report. Their case could scarcely have been worse conducted than it was by *The Morning Post* and *The Spectator*, and St. Loe Strachey seems completely to have lost his balance.” Chelmsford encouraged Curtis to continue the campaign on “the imperative necessity of a change of spirit towards, and of co-operation with the Indian.” Chirol intervened personally in defence of Curtis writing to Strachey: “He is one of my friends, & I know no one for whose character & ability & absolute single mindedness of purpose I have a greater respect and admiration.”⁹⁴

At the Paris Peace Conference, where he was a member of the League of Nations Section, Curtis continued to advocate dyarchy, arranging for the Information Department to print 3000 copies of his *Letters on Responsible Government* for international circulation. Through his old colleague Feetham and others he made his voice heard on the Southborough Committees, which elaborated the details of the Indian reforms; he produced meticulous briefings for Charles Roberts who drafted the Bill. Curtis exploited also the advantage of his long acquaintance with Selborne, Chairman of the Joint Select Committee scrutinising the Bill, bombarding him with appeals and documents, annoying him to the point of remaining for a while hardly on speaking terms. At last, the Committee accepted many of Curtis’s arguments. Out of the fourteen members of the Joint Select Committee, three were close to the Cecil family—Lord Midleton, Lord Islington, and Sir Henry Craik—and two—Selborne and W. G. A Ormsby-Gore—belonged to the Round Table outer ring.⁹⁵

⁹³ Quoted in Chandrika Kaul, “The Round Table, the British Press and India,” in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 362.

⁹⁴ Curtis to Chelmsford, 2 Sept. 1918, ChP, 15; Chirol to Strachey, 26 July 1918, Strachey Papers, S/4/9/13; Chelmsford to Curtis, 26 July 1918, ChP, 15.

⁹⁵ Reginald Coupland stated that Curtis’s *Letters* taught him what political science was about. They were placed by *The Observer* “in the true line of Milton and Halifax and Burke...at once clarifying and kindling, like few pieces of public argument that have appeared in the last few years,” (Curtis, *Letters to the People of India*, reprinted in Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 357-466); *The Observer*, 16 June, 1918; Kathrin Segal Patterson, “The Decline of Dominance: India and the Careers of Lionel Curtis, Philip Lothian and Reginald Coupland,” PhD diss., Bryn Mawr College, 1989.

After extensive and sometimes animated debate, the *Report* was eventually approved by Parliament in December 1919. Lord Amphill—former private secretary to Joseph Chamberlain, acting Viceroy and Governor of Madras—speaking in the House of Lords on 16 December 1919 portrayed Curtis as “a globe-trotting doctrinaire, with a positive mania for constitution mongering,” and regarded “incredible” the fact that just “for the chance visit to India,” he “would ever have thought of so peculiar a notion as that of ‘dyarchy’.” In the Commons the Bill had the support of the Indian Parliamentary Committee—being the largest parliamentary Imperial pressure group, with the support of over 150 MPs—founded in 1883 to secure “just and sympathetic action” on Indian questions.⁹⁶

During the debate at the Commons, Montagu acknowledged the “great debt of gratitude” that India and the Empire owed to Curtis, for “the patriotic and devoted services...given to the consideration of this problem.” Sir Henry Craik—father of George, member of the original Kindergarten—paid a special tribute to Curtis, expressing himself “proud to know him.” And he portrayed the Round Table as a “very active, and...important body of young men,” who “have been doing good work, and part of that good work has been done in India.” H. A. L. Fisher commended the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, on which the Bill was based, as “one of the greatest State Papers which have been produced in Anglo-Indian history.”⁹⁷

The Kindergarten had good reasons to feel pleased with its first success, even if the main credit was due to the two guiding spirits of the movement, Kerr and Curtis. It was Kerr who had first awakened interest in the Indian question within the movement, encouraging Curtis to go to India, channelling the enthusiasm and missionary zeal of his friend to achieve concrete and far-reaching results. Feetham chaired the Committee which allocated functions between central and provincial governments and within the new provincial governments, and Meston played a key role in safeguarding the interests of the Government of India in London and, ultimately, in deciding the financial arrangements for the new scheme.

Kerr had used his influence with Lloyd George to translate the *Report* into law, arranging for a well-disposed Joint Parliamentary Committee to be presided over by Selborne, who in turn helped considerably in overcoming the stern parliamentary opposition led by Churchill. Curtis had been the guiding force behind the reform process, not just by

⁹⁶ Quoted in Curtis, *Dyarchy*, xxvii.

⁹⁷ Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 208.

formulating the dyarchy scheme and obtaining the support of the moderate Indians, but also by stirring the Indian public out of its torpor and submission and overcoming the resistance of the English, who were unwilling to surrender sovereignty to India. The 1919 Government of India Act, engineered, negotiated and implemented by the Round Table, is considered the most important single Indian constitutional reform from 1861 to 1946. As well as the introduction of dyarchy, it increased the electorate from two to ten percent of adult men, and gave the vote to one half of one percent of adult women.⁹⁸

The first demands for a review of the system came from the Indian Legislature in September 1921, only a few months after the reforms had been introduced. The reforms, Curzon predicted in 1918, were leading India towards a “revolution” which would lead “to the ultimate disruption of the Empire.” The impact of the 1919 Amritsar massacre and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire persuaded Gandhi to resort to a non-cooperation policy, with the result of boycotting the reforms. The Indian moderates who took an active part in the reforms—including parties at the provincial level, Liberals and moderate Nationalists who had distanced themselves from the Indian National Congress—found themselves isolated.⁹⁹

The Round Table’s efforts to introduce the model of the British Parliamentary system to India were thwarted by Gandhi and the Indian National Congress’ boycott of the 1920 elections—they co-operated in those of 1924 only to obstruct the reforms. The 1920 elections were to implement the dyarchy system, which worked only partially with the support of moderate groups. The British kept their pledges of extending the rights they had retained in a progressive sequence: fiscal autonomy was accorded in 1921, and access to senior Civil Service was warranted in 1924. It was however only after the appointment of Lord Irwin—the future Lord Halifax, and an associate of the Round Table since the South African days—as Viceroy in 1924 that considerable progress was made in the dyarchy experiment.

⁹⁸ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 244 5. Beloff argues that Curtis won over Milner and Curzon to the idea of dyarchy: Beloff, *Imperial Sunset*, 201. On Churchill’s attitude towards India, see: R. J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps, and India, 1939 1945* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979); Carl Bridge, “Churchill and Indian Political Freedom: The Diehards and the 1935 Act,” *Indo British Review*, 13, 2, (1987): 26 30; Carl Bridge, “The Impact of India on British High Politics in the 1930’s: The Limits of Cowlingism,” *South Asia*, 5, 2, (1982): 13 23.

⁹⁹ Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth*, 162 3; Curzon to Montagu, 25 July 1918, MoP As3/2/63.

The strong personal antipathy against Milner, and rivalry within the Government between Amery and the new Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead (1924-8), did not help the establishment of a cooperative spirit between the India Office and the Government of India. Under the spell of the Round Table, Irwin tried to implement a collaborative approach with the Indians, while Birkenhead pursued an autocratic control of Indian affairs. Alan Campbell Johnson acknowledged that the appointment of Irwin as Viceroy, with support from *The Times*' editorial policy, played a vital role in the adoption of the Indian Bill, remarking also how "in no uncertain terms," Irwin's policy was appreciated and underwritten by Printing House Square.¹⁰⁰

In order to overcome the deadlock in the implementation of the 1919 Act and in the relations between the two branches of the British Indian executive, the Round Table suggested an early convocation of the Commission which should investigate the functioning of the Act. They used *The Times* both to censure the "arrogant and patronizing" attitude of Birkenhead towards the Indians, and to support the immediate formation of a Statutory Commission, composed of "judicially minded men who were able to agree." The Commission, immediately created and chaired by Sir John Simon as *The Times* required, produced, with the assistance of the Round Table's associates at the India Office, a detailed and useful two-volume report on the Indian situation, but it did not reach unanimity because of Lord Burnham's opposition to making further concessions to the Indians.¹⁰¹

The involvement of the Cecil family and the Round Table in Indian affairs has been a priority in the range of their interests. During the first half of the Twentieth century, of the eight viceroys four were associated with the Cecil family (Lord Curzon, 1898-1905; Lord Minto, 1905-1910; Lord Hardinge, 1910-6, and Lord Linlithgow, 1936-43), two with the Round Table (Lord Irwin, 1926-31, and Lord Willingdon, 1931-6); while Lord Chelmsford (1916-21) was connected with both. Of the thirteen Secretaries of State three were close to the Cecil family (St. John Brodrick, 1903-8; Austen Chamberlain, 1915-7, and Lord Zetland, 1935-40) and three to the Round Table (John Morley, 1908-10; Samuel Hoare, 1931-5, and Leopold Amery, 1940-5). In the twelve Committees and

¹⁰⁰ Alan Campbell Johnson, *Viscount Halifax: A Biography* (London: R. Hale, 1941), 255.

¹⁰¹ *The Times*, 30 March 1927. On the Report of the Commission, see Cdm. 3568 and 3569 of 1930.

Commissions which prepared the legislative enactments, the Round Table had always a member, who in some cases was its chairman.¹⁰²

6. An assessment of the Round Table's Indian policy

Historiographical debate is divided on the role played by the Round Table in India. Rumbold, Gallagher, Seal, Tomlinson, Singh, Bridge and Moore attempted to understate the Round Table's impact on Indian constitutional reforms, identifying in them a defensive response to growing Indian nationalism, and an attempt to *appease* Indians by dividing the Nationalist from the moderate forces, and by making minor concessions. On the other hand, Wint, Coupland, Mehrotra and Woods underlined the liberal and educative aspects of the 1919 reforms, marking a crucial turning point in the process of decolonisation of India, and in the creation of a Westminster-style modern parliamentary democracy.¹⁰³

¹⁰² The Royal Commission of Decentralization in India (1907 9) included W. L. Hitchens; the Royal Commission on Public Services in India (1912 5) included H. A. L. Fisher; the Government of India Constitutional Reform Committee on Franchise (1919) included Malcolm Hailey; the Government of India Constitutional Reform on Functions (1919) included Richard Feetham as Chairman; the Joint Select Committee on the Government of India Bill (1919) included Lord Selborne as Chairman and W. G. A. Ormsby Gore, later Lord Harlech; the Royal Commission on Superior Civil Services in India (1923 4) included Reginald Coupland; the Indian Statutory Commission (1927 30) included Sir John Simon as Chairman; the Indian Franchise Committee (1931 2) included Lothian as Chairman and Lord Dufferin; the three Indian Round Table Conferences (1930 2) included Lothian, Hoare, L. F. Rushbrook Williams, Malcolm Hailey, Simon and Irwin; the Joint Select Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform (1933) included Hoare, Simon, Lothian and Irwin; the Cripp Mission (1942) included Reginald Coupland.

¹⁰³ Peter Robb, *The Government of India and Reform: Policies Towards Politics and the Constitution, 1916 1921* (Oxford: 1976), 79 85; J. Gallagher, "The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire," in *The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire: The Ford Lectures and Other Essays*, A. Seal ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 101; B. R. Tomlinson, *The Indian National Congress and the Raj, 1929 1942: The Penultimate Phase* (London: 1976), 10; A. I. Singh, *The Origins of the Partition of India, 1936 1947* (Delhi: 1987), 244; C. Bridge, *Holding India to the Empire: The British Conservative Party and the 1935 Constitution* (London: 1986), 1 9; R. J. Moore, *Endgames of Empire: Studies of Britain's Indian Problem* (Delhi: 1988), 1, 9 10; G. Schuster and G. Wint, *India and Democracy* (London: 1941); R. Coupland, *The Indian Problem, 1833 1935* (London: 1942); Mehrotra, *India and the*

If Danzig acknowledged that the influence of Curtis and the Round Table group in the reforms “runs...from beginning to end,” Robb and Rumbold, on the other hand, dismissed their role as marginal, attacking the ‘whig’ interpretation of Indian constitutional history offered by Schuster, Wint, Coupland and Mehrotra, historians contemporary to the Round Table, as ideologically misleading.¹⁰⁴

Hailey suggested that the Round Table’s approach to the Indian question was very distinct from either Indian Nationalists or the British Government, trying to involve Indians in the Imperial decision-making process. In identifying the ultimate goal of British rule in India in nothing short of full self-government, the Round Table and Curtis in particular placed the solution of the Indian question in a perspective of a gradual and evolving process through peaceful and constitutional means. This had the result of guaranteeing the support of a large majority of the British foreign policy élite and public, and a remarkable acceleration of the process. The Round Table contributed to popularising the new scheme and making it more acceptable, especially to more conservative imperial figures such as Milner and Selborne.¹⁰⁵

Curtis’s role as facilitator between the Indians and the British concentrated, in fact, in Bengal, which was the area of the country where relations between the races were particularly strained, and which proved to be decisive in the acceptance of the dyarchy scheme. Curtis’s diary reveals, in fact, a wide range of Indian contacts, both with moderate Indians within the Congress, and with radical groups. Curtis managed to persuade Indian moderates to abandon the Congress-League radical positions, on the ground that the Morley-Minto scheme would produce catastrophic consequences for the evolution of complete self-government and the final attainment of dominion status.¹⁰⁶

Commonwealth; P. Woods, “The Montagu Chelmsford Reforms (1919): A Re Assessment,” *South Asia*, 17, 1, (1994): 25 42.

¹⁰⁴ Richard Danzig, “The Many Layered Cake: A Case Study in the Reform of the Indian Empire,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 3, 2, (1969): 69; Robb, *The Government of India*, 79 85; A. Rumbold, *Watershed in India, 1914 1922* (London: 1979).

¹⁰⁵ Hailey, “Lionel Curtis,” 199 209; R. J. Moore, “Curzon and Indian Reform,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 27, 4, (1993): 719 40; Beloff, *Imperial Sunset*, 201.

¹⁰⁶ According to Rajat Ray, “in no other city of India was the relationship between the white rulers and their subjects so tinged with racism” than in Calcutta, Rajat Ray, *Urban Roots of Indian Nationalism: Pressure Groups and Conflict of Interests in Calcutta City Politics, 1875 1939* (Delhi: 1979), 231. *Curtis Diary*, Oct.1916 to Feb. 1918, (Curtis, *Dyarchy*, xxx, xxxiv ix, 326 56). On Curtis’s contribution to Indian democratic development, see P. Woods, *Roots of India’s*

Kerr thought that Britain was not in India by “divine right” but as an “indispensable adviser” and therefore the Simon Commission, appointed to report on the application of the 1919 reforms, could not “decide on the future of the Indian constitution” alone, even if it was true “in the strictly constitutional sense”; but in the “political sense” it was untrue, and it was vital that Indians should be associated with the constitutional process. The fact that “Indian sentiment must not merely be consulted but *appeased*” did not meet the favour of Marris and other members of the Round Table, who had however to accept the leadership of Kerr and Curtis on Indian matters.¹⁰⁷

Perhaps the most illuminating witness on the work done by the Round Table in India during the war is that of E. Lascelles, former New Zealand Round Table member, and by 1919 lecturer to the Indian Army, who urged Kerr to bring the British Government to “make concessions” in India “before they were demanded.” Expressing a very critical judgement towards the attitude of the Indian Civil Service, Lascelles thought that “forward thinking should be done” and that “India wants Curtis again.” “I have often wondered,” Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru wrote to Curtis in 1928, “whether it is possible to arouse again your interest in India. To my mind the personal factor is far the most important thing in a big question like this.”¹⁰⁸

According to Kaul, Curtis was “a visionary and looked to the future as much as responding to the needs of the moment.” For his “style and personality, as much as in his views,” Curtis “was ahead of other members of the Moot.” Curtis was “responsible in large measure for the nature of the Round Table features on the sub-continent,” succeeding “in making the journal respond to the Indian situation in ways which, however flawed, might not have existed at all.”¹⁰⁹

Malcolm Hailey considered Curtis’s approach entirely novel, “since it anticipated,” as Lavin stated, “later nationalist demands for Dominion Status at a time when they were thinking solely in terms of self-government, and was light years ahead of the officials who saw reform in terms of immediate possibilities rather than ultimate objectives.” “With

Parliamentary Democracy: The Montagu Chelmsford Reforms (Delhi: 1996), 58 66.

¹⁰⁷ Kerr to Marris, 23 Oct. 1929, LP, 237, 327 32; Marris to Kerr, 25 Oct. 1929, *ibidem*, 237, 333 4.

¹⁰⁸ Lascelles to Kerr, 24 Nov. 1920, LP, 214, 113 5; Sapru to Curtis 26 Jan. 1928, RTP, c832.

¹⁰⁹ Chandrika Kaul, “The Round Table, the British Press and India,” in *The Round Table*, Bosco and May, 359.

perfect courtesy,” Lockhart commented, Curtis “nearly drove a number of civilians of high rank and long experience to apoplexy, merely by asking them the ultimate purpose of British rule. This was a question which they were entirely unable to answer.”¹¹⁰

Curtis was portrayed by Garvin in *The Observer* as

not only a missionary of Empire, but an apostle of Empire. He pursues its most spiritual purposes of emancipation and elevation no less than its political projects of federation. To that cause he gives the whole of one man’s life. In a way never equalled before, he succeeded in bringing many of the best British and Indian minds together to hammer out a working scheme of reform.¹¹¹

Dyarchy was conceived, according to Lavin, “as an ingenious transitional device in the Imperial tradition by which these moderate Indian critics of the Government could be mobilised in support of the raj while general political education was accelerated.” This period of Indian history could be compared to Canadian history between 1837 and 1845, when Durham’s reforms were experimented with. By 1923 Indian moderates “were routed in the elections, having failed to capitalise on the changes,” since “the effects of the new Indian franchise had moved the political emphasis away from the municipalities towards electoral politics in the rural areas and favoured the men with Province-wide connections, who combined new regional influence with older local contacts.” Non-cooperation, dissatisfaction, and financial difficulties brought to a dead end the dyarchy experiment, with the appointment of the Statutory Commission to review the Constitution two years earlier. According to Quigley, the failure of the Round Table “to persuade the Indian nationalists that they were sincere is one of the great disasters of the century,” although the fault was “not entirely theirs and must be shared by others, including Gandhi.”¹¹²

In the framework of an Empire reformed on the basis of self-government and equal partnership for all its component parts, the Round Table advanced a scheme through which the subject races or ‘backward

¹¹⁰ “Sir M. Hailey on Lionel Curtis, written for J. G. Lockhart”, RTP, c853/231 241; Lockhart, *At the Feet*, 180.

¹¹¹ Quoted in Lavin, “Lionel Curtis and Indian,” in *The Federal Idea*, Bosco, vol. 1, 206.

¹¹² *Ibidem*, 206 7; Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 206. On Curtis’s contribution to Indian reforms see Rumbold, *Watershed in India*; C. A. Bayly, *The Local Roots of Indian Politics* (Oxford: 1975); B. R. Tomlinson, *The Indian National Congress and the Raj* (London: 1976); and D. C. Ellinwood, Jr, “The Round Table Movement and India,” *The Punjab Past and Present*, 8, (Oct. 1974): 477 509.

people' of the Empire should be educated in the art of responsible government and achieve self-government. According to Kendle it was a "revolutionary idea." Milner's young men arrived in South Africa believing that the backward people "were inherently inferior intellectually, incapable of emerging from the most elementary of tribal systems." It was their South African experience—through "intensive discussions with men of Indian experience and the study of federalism"—which changed their minds. "Their continued affirmation of this principle," Kendle concluded, "set them apart from the majority of their contemporaries."¹¹³

The idea of the progressive extension of British political, legal, and economic traditions to the white Dominions and, ultimately, to all the Dependencies, was certainly in the interests of Britain's declining power, but it also had a universal meaning, since it represented a path to be followed beyond the confines of the British Empire. Once the road was open for the Indian self-government process, other Dependencies—Ireland, Palestine and Egypt—would follow suit.

7. The Round Table, Palestine and Egypt

The initiative to press Lloyd George for a national home in Palestine for the Jews came from Kerr. It would provide Great Britain with an ally able to counterbalance the influence in the Middle East of Germany, Russia, France and Turkey. Kerr saw Zionism not just as an instrument of British power politics in the region, but also as a means to promote the market economy and Western cultural standards in the Arabic world. Kerr was surprised to see the opposition to his project coming not from the Arabs, but from the Jew Montagu, who thought that the creation of a Jewish State would undermine the rights of the Jewish settlers in the region as British citizens, and antagonize Muslims in India. Montagu, according to Chaim Weizmann, "although a great Hindu nationalist," was yet not representative of "Jewish Democracy," which would have represented "a very great asset" to the Empire.¹¹⁴

Kerr was a supporter of the Zionist movement because he "was sure" it consisted "of those Jews who are trying to free themselves from the miasma of international finance and to help the Allies get a real victory

¹¹³ Kendle, *The Round Table*, xv.

¹¹⁴ "Islam and the Empire," *The Round Table*, 4, 13, (Dec. 1913): 68 105; "Palestine and Jewish Nationalism," *The Round Table*, 30, (March 1918): 308 36; Waley, *Edwin Montagu*, 139 42; Weizmann to Kerr, 16 Sept. 1917, quoted in Leonard Stein ed., *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann* (Jerusalem: 1975), 511; LP, 42, 96 99; Weizmann to Kerr, 7 Oct. 1917, LP, 42, 102 5.

over Germany.” A British lead in the creation of a national home for the Jews in Palestine was also regarded by Kerr and the British Cabinet as a way to counteract German pro-Zionist propaganda in the United States and Russia. The Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917 had been in fact worded by Milner himself, on Kerr’s input.¹¹⁵

Ormsby-Gore, referring to the Balfour Declaration in the Commons on 21 July 1937, stated: “The draft as originally put up by Lord Balfour was not the final draft approved by the Cabinet. The particular draft assented to by the War Cabinet and afterwards by the Allied Governments and by the United States...and finally embodied in the Mandate, happens to have been drafted by Lord Milner. The actual final draft had to be issued in the name of the Foreign Secretary, but the actual draftsman was Lord Milner.”¹¹⁶

Milner’s pro-Jewish attitude was a form of compensation—evidencing the gulf between his views and those of Kerr—for the prominent role played by Wall Street finance in supporting the case of the Allies and American intervention in the conflict. Needless to mention the professional relations which Milner had with what Kerr called “the miasma” of Anglo-American finance. As treasurer of the Rhodes Trust, Milner had good reason to value the contribution of J. P. Morgan to the fortunes of the Trust itself. In 1899, on the eve of the Second Anglo-Boer War, Milner had rejected the offer by J. P. Morgan to manage Morgan Grenfell, and recommended for the position his close friend Clinton Dawkins. His relations with the world of international finance—which Brand revived after Milner’s retirement—had played a strategic role, providing the material means to achieve his and the Kindergarten’s political aims.¹¹⁷

Supporting the case for Jewish immigration into Palestine in a speech at the Lords on 27 June 1923, Milner argued that there was “plenty of room in that country for a considerable immigrant population without injuring in any way the resident Arab population,” which amounted to 700,000, and there was “room for several millions.” Milner declared that he had always been “a strong supporter of the pro-Arab policy which was first advocated in this country in the course of the war,” and a believer “in the independence of the Arab countries,” which they owed to the British, and could only be maintained “with the help of the British”. Milner also

¹¹⁵ Kerr to Buchan, 31 Oct. 1917, LP, 952, 1; Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration* (New York: 1961), 314 8, 344 9, 463 4, 543 4.

¹¹⁶ Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 170.

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 183; Jonathan Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab Israeli Conflict* (London: Random House, 2012).

asserted that he was looking “forward to an Arab Federation.” The Arabs would make “a great mistake...in claiming Palestine as a part of the Arab Federation in the same sense as are the other countries of the Near East which are mainly inhabited by Arabs.” Palestine should become a National Home for the Jews, accepting as immigrants as many as it could economically support, but “must never become a Jewish state.”¹¹⁸

In granting a national home in Palestine for the Jews, Milner was well aware that the creation of a new State, with an inevitably strong religious identity, and with enormous financial resources available, was inevitable. He was too clever and experienced to believe otherwise. He also knew that it would produce a new form of nationalism, in the long run challenging British hegemony in the Middle East and compromising British authority with the Arab countries. This confirms Milner’s slight interest in remote British Dependencies—as for India, letting his disciples exercise there the art of constitution mongering, and also for Egypt. He concentrated on defending, at any price, what he regarded as the fundamental British vital and strategic interests within the Dominions and Ireland.

In Egypt too, it was for Milner—who had made his own name with a book exalting the merits of British rule in Egypt—to leave his seal on the achievement of self-government. Since the British occupation in 1882 Egypt had been of fundamental strategic importance for the Empire, being a gateway for Anglo-Indian communications. It was regarded by Milner “as one of the brightest spots in the whole field of British Imperial rule.” However, the Round Table could not see the country reaching independence on a fast track, since “the plant of self-government” was “a slow-growing tree.” The rise of a “new and genuine nationalism” was, according to Toynbee, shifting “the struggle for self-government...to the Middle East.” Without an acceptable compromise, the choice was “abdication or tyranny.”¹¹⁹

Egypt was from the end of 1914 a British protectorate, freed from Turkish sovereignty. However, under the leadership of Zaghlul Pasha, the Egyptian Nationalist movement asked for independence. Before leaving for Egypt in November 1919 as Colonial Minister heading a delegation—which included J. A. Spender, Sir Rennell Rodd, General John Maxwell, Sir Cecil Hurst, and Sir Owen Thomas—to report to his colleagues on the situation there, Milner had it in mind to work for the establishment of “a

¹¹⁸ Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 172.

¹¹⁹ Toynbee, “The Outlook in the Middle East,” *The Round Table*, 37, (Dec 1919): 79, 86.

peaceful and progressive Egypt, in friendly alliance with Great Britain, and screened by that alliance from international interference.”¹²⁰

Milner, who knew Egypt well, reported to Lloyd George that he found the country “in a much worse state” than he imagined. It was “evident that, till there is some change in the temper of the people, Egypt will continue to be a thorn in our side and will exercise a disturbing influence in our position in the whole of the near East and to some extent also in India.” Since the “Orientals,” as Milner called the Egyptians, lived “on phrases and camouflage...even more than we do,” it was “the appearance...more than the substance” which had to be saved. “Without our abandoning the degree of control which, in view of native incompetence and corruption” the British were “constrained to keep,” Milner urged the Prime Minister “to find a way of making Egypt’s relation to Great Britain *appear* a more independent and dignified one.”¹²¹

The following day Milner issued to the press a declaration, without prior approval by the Prime Minister, stating that the aim of his Mission, approved by the British Parliament, was “to reconcile the aspirations of the Egyptian people with the special interests which Great Britain had in Egypt,” generating a wave of criticism at home, since the original remit of the Milner Mission was the maintenance of the Protectorate. Milner’s independent initiative opened the way to the negotiations which brought about the so-called Milner-Zaghlul Agreement of August 1920. Since the Egyptian question “collided with Irish,” as Spender observed, the Coalition Government was unable to “couple its Irish settlement with what its Tory supporters would have called a surrender to Egyptian Nationalists.” It was not therefore possible to solve the Egyptian question in 1920, but the granting of independence by Proclamation in February 1922 by Lord Allenby, without the prior settlement of “reserved questions,” had been made possible because of the Milner Mission. The two years delay turned out to be the “tragedy of Egypt’s later history.”¹²²

As soon as the Round Table realized that Imperial federation was out of reach, and the Dominions needed to go all the way through the full

¹²⁰ Milner, “The Situation in Egypt,” *The Round Table*, 39, (June 1920): 520 35; Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, 589.

¹²¹ Milner to Lloyd George, 28 Dec. 1919, quoted in *ibidem*, 590 1.

¹²² Lord Lloyd, *Egypt Since Cromer* (London: 1934), 2, 15 and *passim*; Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, 592 3; Spender, member of the Mission, commented that “if the Egyptians did not want us to govern them and could keep order and maintain solvency without us, we were under no obligation to undertake the...task of governing them against their will,” J. A. Spender, *Life, Journalism and Politics* (London: 1927), 2, 91.

exercise of national sovereignty before being ready to federate, they turned to the United States, and envisaged a period of time during which through Anglo-American co-operation and alliance it would be possible to restore the necessary international economic and political stability to give time for federal ideas to take root. In the meantime they worked *to maintain* a certain degree of *co-operation* between Britain and its Dominions, by then completely independent. In order to preserve this strategic collaboration—aimed at upholding the international role of Great Britain as a superpower—the Round Table promoted ‘progressive’ policies in India, Ireland, Egypt, and Palestine. With the consequent partitions—India and Pakistan, Ulster and the Republic, Israel and Palestine—those policies ushered in civil wars. In order to keep in place some form of post-imperial collaboration, and to be consistent with the ideals of a world to be rebuilt on the “fundamental principles which lie at the heart of Anglo-Saxon civilization”, the Round Table stamped its permanent seal on a process of decolonization that had tragic results. The application of federalist schemes to former colonies not only speeded up the break-up of the Empire, but also detonated all the contradictions of divided societies kept together by colonial administration. Federalism, in order to be successful, in fact requires a set of specific economic, political, and socio-historical conditions, which were completely missing in the Dependencies.

CHAPTER VI

THE ROUND TABLE DURING LLOYD GEORGE'S WAR-TIME PREMIERSHIP

1. Milner and the rise to power of Lloyd George

Milner and the Kindergarten played a crucial role in the replacement of Asquith with David Lloyd George in December 1916 at 10 Downing Street. With the formation of a Coalition Government in May 1915 under Asquith, the Unionists were able to control directly the executive, and with the assistance of *The Times*, Milner became the most prominent advocate of conscription, taking the leadership in July 1915 of the National Service League. In spite of the introduction of conscription, with the Military Service Act of 27 January 1916, Milner was dissatisfied with Asquith as a war-leader.¹

With the creation of a so-called 'Ginger Group'—composed of Milner, Sir Edward Carson, F. S. Oliver, Sir Henry Wilson, Leo Amery, and Waldorf Astor—Milner aimed to introduce compulsory conscription, and “to work for the more effective conduct of the war, and, above all, somehow or other, to secure a change of government.” The group—unsatisfied by the erratic and feeble conduct of war policies by the Asquith Government—had been formed in January 1916, and met every Monday evening. During its meeting of 27 November 1916 the Group officially asked Lloyd George and Bonar Law to quit Asquith's Cabinet.²

Asquith fell on 5 December, as a consequence of Dawson's *Times* editorial of 4 December. This summarised the events which had weakened Asquith's leadership and suggested that Asquith's own closest supporters

¹ On the 1915 Coalition, see John Turner, *British Politics and the Great War: Coalition and Conflict, 1915 1918* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 55 81; Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, 249 51. On *The Times*' campaign, see *The Times*, 27 May 1915, 16 and 20 Aug. 1915.

² Martin Pugh, “Asquith, Bonar Law and the First Coalition,” *The Historical Journal*, 17, 4, (1974). On the 'Ginger Group', see Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, 323 64; Amery, *My Political Life*, 81 2; Brock Millman, *Pessimism and British War Policy, 1916 1918* (London: Routledge, 2001), 133.

had persuaded him that “his own qualities” were “fitted better...to ‘preserve the unity of the nation’ (though we have never doubted its unity) than to force the pace of a War Council.” *The Times* had, in fact, been engaged since early 1916 in a press campaign—supported by other Lord Northcliffe papers, *The Daily Mail* and *The Evening News*—requesting a more effective Cabinet to replace “weak methods and weak men.” The collapse of the British Somme offensive in the summer and autumn of 1916, with the loss of more than 400,000 British soldiers, had in fact strongly weakened Asquith’s war leadership, which saw in *The Times* press campaign a “well-organised, carefully engineered conspiracy” against him. Asquith, as Roy Jenkins put it, “made a complete surrender of power to Lloyd George,” since he realized that his leadership had lost the support of the most influential Unionist circles.³

Lloyd George moved from 11 to 10 Downing Street by splitting and weakening the Liberal party—which since then never recovered its original strength—and making an alliance with the right wing of the

³ Amery, *My Political Life*, vol. 2, 81; Philip Kerr, “Lord Milner,” *Nation and Atheneum*, 23 May 1925; *Dawson Diary*, 17 Jan. 1916, 27 Nov. 1916, DP, 22; A. Lockwood, “Milner’s Entry into the War Cabinet,” *Historical Journal*, 7, (1964): 120–34; Cameron Hazlehurst, “The Conspiracy Myth,” *Lloyd George*, Martin Gilbert ed. (Bergen County, NJ: 1968); John Evelyn Wrench, *Geoffrey Dawson and our Times* (London: 1955); Stephen Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets* (London: 1970), vol. 1, 422–3. For a discussion of the events and their background, see *The History of The Times: The 150th Anniversary and Beyond, 1912–1948*, Part 1, 1912–1920 (London: 1952); K. O. Morgan, *The Age of Lloyd George: The Liberal Party and British Politics, 1890–1929* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971); John D. Fair, “Politicians, Historians, and the War: A Reassessment of the Political Crisis of December 1916,” *The Journal of Modern History*, 49, 3, (1977): 1329–43; John M. McEwen, “The Press and the Fall of Asquith,” *Historical Journal*, 21, 4, (Dec. 1978): 863–883; Roy Jenkins *Asquith* (London: Collins, 1978), 444; id., “The Struggle for Mastery in Britain: Lloyd George versus Asquith, December 1916,” *Journal of British Studies*, 18, 1, (Autumn 1978): 131–156; id., “Northcliffe and Lloyd George at War, 1914–1918,” *Historical Journal*, 24, 3, (1981): 651–672; Id., “The National Press during the First World War: Ownership and Circulation,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17, 3, (Jul. 1982): 459–486; Michael Fry, “Political Change in Britain, August 1914 to December 1916. Lloyd George Replaces Asquith: The Issues Underlying the Drama,” *The Historical Journal*, 31, 3, (1988): 609–627; J. L. Thompson, *Politicians, the Press and Propaganda: Lord Northcliffe and the Great War, 1914–19* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1999); id., *Northcliffe: Press Baron in Politics 1865–1922* (London: John Murray, 2000). On Law’s role, see R. J. Q. Adams, “Andrew Bonar Law and the Fall of the Asquith Coalition: The December 1916 Cabinet Crisis,” *Canadian Journal of History*, 32, 2, (1997): 185–200.

Unionist party, which had authoritative exponents in Milner, Carson, and Selborne. Representing a minority within the Liberals, Lloyd George allowed the Unionists to exercise real power under a 'liberal' coverage. Lloyd George, an 'outsider' among the 'haves' of the Liberal social class, carried with him just a handful of MPs. They formed a new Liberal parliamentary group and party, thus creating a permanent political fracture of the Liberals into two rival camps. With this political operation Milner could exercise a decisive personal influence on crucial matters in the most critical period for the survival of the Empire, and the Unionists created the political conditions to neutralize the destabilizing effect of the need for parliamentary support from the Irish Nationalists for crucial strategic political choices.⁴

With the split of the Liberal party into Asquith Liberals and Lloyd George Liberals, the Conservatives guaranteed their unchallenged return to power for more than a generation. Once split not on a political platform, but on the basis of personal leadership, the Liberal party ceased to be a serious competitor within the uninominal electoral system, which favoured the existence of well-organized and rooted political forces within a single constituency, and the Conservatives could face alone the new challenge coming from the left.⁵

⁴ On Lloyd George's responsibility in splitting and weakening the Liberal party, see M. Cregier, "The Murder of the British Liberal Party," *The History Teacher*, 3, 4, (May 1970): 27-36. On Lloyd George political career before the rise to premiership, see John Grigg, *The Young Lloyd George* (London: Harper Collins, 1973); M. Creiger, *Bounder from Wales: Lloyd George's Career Before the First World War* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1976); Michael Fry, *Lloyd George and Foreign Policy: The Education of a Statesman: 1890-1916*, vol. 1 (Montreal: 1977); Michael Fry and Fortune Fled, *David Lloyd George, the First Democratic Statesman, 1916-1922* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011); Bentley Brinkerhoff Gilbert, "David Lloyd George: Land, The Budget, and Social Reform," *The American Historical Review*, 81, 5, (Dec. 1976): 1058-1066; Bentley B. Gilbert, "David Lloyd George: The Reform of British Landholding and the Budget of 1914," *The Historical Journal*, 21, 1, (Mar. 1978): 117-141; John Grigg, *Lloyd George: The People's Champion, 1902-1911* (London: Harper Collins, 1978); id., *Lloyd George: From Peace to War, 1912-1916* (London: Harper Collins, 1985); Bentley Brinkerhoff Gilbert, *David Lloyd George: A Political Life: The Architect of Change 1863-1912* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1987); id., *David Lloyd George: A Political Life: Organizer of Victory, 1912-1916* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1992); Roy Hattersley, *David Lloyd George: The Great Outsider* (London: Little Brown, 2010).

⁵ G. K. Searle, *The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration, 1886-1929* (London: Macmillan 1992).

This operation succeeded in 1916 since it was an “intramural game,” as Quigley put it, between two teams belonging to the same social class, and willing to “fuse with its temporary antagonist as soon as the future produced an extramural challenger.” In fact the decisive move for the split did not come from Lloyd George, who as an outsider could not bring, by himself, much parliamentary support, but from two leading exponents of the core social class which constituted the Conservative party, Balfour and Bonar Law. Asquith in fact never issued public recriminations against them for their mortal injury, addressing instead all his resentment to Lloyd George. Asquith identified his sworn enemy in Lloyd George, who in fact exercised from 1916 to 1922 the simulacra of power, leaving to the Cecil family and its entourage the shared control with the Unionists over the fundamentals of power.⁶

The representation of the Cecil family and Milner’s followers did not change significantly from the May 1915 Asquith Coalition Government to the December 1916 Lloyd George executive. With Asquith, the Cecil family was represented by seven members (Lansdowne, Curzon, Bonar Law, Austen Chamberlain, Walter Long, Sir Edward Carson, Frederick E. Smith), occupying medium-high range positions, and Milner’s followers were four (Cecil, Balfour, Steel-Maitland and Selborne), occupying medium-low positions. With Lloyd George, the Cecil family increased slightly its representation to twelve (Curzon, Bonar Law, Sir Robert Finlay, the Earl of Crawford, Sir George Cave, the Earl of Derby, Walter Long, Austen Chamberlain, Sir Edward Carson, Rowland E. Prothero, Smith, Lord Hardinge) occupying medium-high positions, and Milner to five (Milner himself, Balfour, Cecil, H. A. L. Fisher and Steel-Maitland), occupying strategic positions which put Milner eventually in control of the executive. In the reshuffle of 1918, becoming War Minister and then Colonial Minister, Milner completed his design, becoming the most powerful and influential force within the executive.⁷

⁶ Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 141. On the crisis of the Liberal party, see Trevor Wilson, *The Downfall of the Liberal Party 1914 1935* (London: Collins, 1966); David Powell, *British Politics, 1910 1935: The Crisis of the Party System* (London: Routledge, 2004). On the Conservative party’s hegemony, see John Charmley, *A History of Conservative Politics, 1900 1996* (London: Macmillan, 1996).

⁷ In the May 1915 Asquith government, Lansdowne was Minister without portfolio; Curzon, Lord Privy Seal; Bonar Law, Colonial Minister; Austen Chamberlain, Minister for India; Balfour, First Lord of the Admiralty; Selborne, President of the Board of Agriculture; Long, President of the Local Government Board; Carson, Attorney General; Smith, Solicitor General; Cecil, Under secretary at the Foreign Office; Steel Maitland, Under secretary at the Colonial Office. In

As 'king-maker', Milner could guarantee places of influence to his Kindergarten and the new entries. Frederick Liddell was made First Parliamentary Counsel, while Kerr and Astor were appointed private secretaries to Lloyd George with W. G. S. Adam, who was also editor of the published reports of the War Cabinet. Brand remained deputy Chairman of the British Mission to Washington, and Zimmern was appointed Chief Assistant to Cecil at the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office. George W. Prothero was made Director of the Historical Section of the Foreign Office; Sir Frederick Duke became Chief Adviser to Montagu—from 1917 to 1922 Secretary of State for India—and Sir Malcolm Seton was made Secretary to the Judicial and Public Department of the India Office, and from 1919 Assistant to the Under-Secretary for India. M. L. Gwyer was appointed Legal Adviser to the Ministry of Shipping, and from 1917 to 1926 to the Ministry of Health, and Arthur Salter became Director of Ship Requisitioning in 1917, and Chairman of the Allied Maritime Transport Executive in 1918, joining forces with Cecil at the Ministry of Blockade. Steel-Maitland, as Head of the War Trade Department from 1917 to 1919, had the assistance of Lord Wolmer (Assistant Director of the Department), Henry Birchenough (member or chairman of various committees), R. S. Rait (member of the Trade Intelligence Department of the War Office), H. W. C. Davis (member of the War Trade Advisory Committee), Harold Butler (secretary to the Foreign Trade Department of the Foreign Office, 1916-17) and H. D. Henderson (secretary of the Cotton Control Board, 1917-9).

At the Board of Agriculture, Selborne and Prothero could rely on Viscount George Goschen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Board), Lord Astor (Chairman of a Committee on milk supplies), Sothorn Holland (Controller of the Cultivation Department of the Food Production Department of the Board), Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton (Deputy Director of the Women's Branch), Lady Alicia Cecil (Assistant Director of Horticulture

the December 1916 Lloyd George government, Milner was Minister without Portfolio; Curzon, Lord President of the Council; Bonar Law, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Sir Robert Finlay, Lord Chancellor; the Earl of Crawford, Lord Privy Seal; Sir George Cave, Home Secretary; Derby, War Minister; Long, Colonial Minister; Austen Chamberlain, Minister for India; Carson, First Lord of the Admiralty; Fisher, President of the Board of Education; Prothero, President of the Board of Agriculture; Smith, Attorney General; Cecil, Minister of Blockade; Lord Hardinge, Under secretary for Foreign Affairs; Steel Maitland, Under secretary for the Colonies. For a discussion of the war time Lloyd George coalition, see David French, *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition, 1916 1918* (London: Oxford University Press, 1995).

in the Food Production Department), and Edward Strutt (technical adviser to Prothero). In the Colonial Office, Milner placed the closest and most loyal of his collaborators, his former private secretary in South Africa from 1897 to 1900, George Fiddes, who was appointed Permanent Under-secretary, 1916-21. John Buchan was appointed head of the Information Department of the War Office, and John Dove went to the Intelligence Department with the future warden of All Souls B. H. Sumner. To H. W. C. Davis, medieval historian and fellow of All Souls and Balliol, Milner gave the editorship of the *Oxford Pamphlets* on the war—a formidable vehicle of war propaganda—and the responsibility for creating the Trade Intelligence Department of the Ministry of Blockade, and the direction of the Department of Overseas Trade. James W. Headlam-Morley, the editor of the controversial *British Documents on the Origins of the War*, and later a prominent figure in Chatham House, worked under Buchan at the Department of Information from 1915 to 1918. Milner was also in the position to guarantee the appointments of Sir James Meston as one of the three Indian representatives who attended Imperial Cabinet and Conference meetings, and of Amery as Assistant to Maurice Hankey, Secretary of the War Cabinet, playing an important role in the preparation of its work schedule.

Not by chance Milner came to occupy within the new War Cabinet the strategic position of Minister without Portfolio, mainly responsible for food policy, war trade regulations, and post-war settlement. Milner shared with Lloyd George an agenda for social reform, conscription, tariff reform and the abandonment of Asquith's Irish home rule scheme. Under Milner's pressure, Lloyd George introduced compulsory education, extended old-age pension and unemployment insurance schemes, and launched a major housing programme.⁸

The immediate consequence of Milner's and his disciples' underground manoeuvres was the creation in February 1917 of an Imperial War Cabinet, composed of the British War Cabinet—consisting of the five ministers most directly involved with the war effort, with its own Secretariat presided over by Sir Maurice Hankey at 2 Whitehall Gardens—the Dominions' Prime Ministers or their representatives, and representatives from India. The Imperial War Cabinet had deliberative and

⁸ Scally, *The Origins*, 172 97, 347 49, 355; J. Cain, and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Crisis and Deconstruction 1914 1990* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), 49 58; Robert W. Cox, *Production, Power and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 178 81; Martin Pugh, *Lloyd George* (London: Longman, 1988), 100 05, 107 10, 119 22, 132 48.

executive powers, and constituted a major constitutional innovation in imperial relations. It played the role, in wartime, of the peacetime CID, with the addition of some features which in fact gave it the character of the imperial executive which the Round Table had advocated from the very beginning. Aware that "full federation was at the present moment impracticable," Kerr thought that the creation of an Imperial War Cabinet and Conference would provide "the nucleus both of a future Imperial executive and of a future Imperial Parliament...better than a shadowy scheme of federation for which opinion was not ripe."⁹

The Round Table had already reached a recognized position of intellectual leadership in Great Britain for imperial and foreign policy. The war inaugurated for the Empire an unprecedented crisis which could not be solved through the application of traditional policies—the policies which in relatively stable periods allow the political and economic institutions of the State to function by their own force of inertia. The need was for 'innovative' policies, according to a new paradigm.

During the war Britain in fact lost its position as the world's greatest creditor, to become one of the largest debtor nations. The loss of overseas markets, primarily to the benefit of the United States, was followed by the winding up of overseas investments. The need to re-balance Government deficit left little margin for public expenditure to transform war work into peace-time economy, sustaining industrial investments and boosting productivity. In order to maintain naval predominance, Britain needed the financial support of the Dominions, or the creation of a system of imperial defence on the basis of equal partnership with the Dominions.

Having reached the centre of power of the still hegemonic world superpower, the Kindergarten began to exercise a political and cultural leadership which, for a quarter of a century, had a fundamental impact on the evolution of British institutions and of the British role in international affairs. The Kindergarten was, during Lloyd George's premiership, in a position to directly influence the development of imperial relations and British foreign policy, by filling with clear-cut policies a vacuum which was created by the emergency of the war.¹⁰

⁹ Minutes of discussion, 4 May 1917, LP, 474, 4 8; Kerr to Curtis, 24 April 1917, LP, 33, 12 4.

¹⁰ From December 1916 to April 1918, when he became Secretary of State of War, Milner was Chairman of a Committee to increase home production of food and of a Committee on post war reconstruction, from which came in 1919 the creation of the Ministry of Health.

2. Milner and British pre-war foreign policy

From 1909 to 1916 Milner and the Round Table did not exercise direct influence on British foreign policy, partly because they spent those years building up their network, and partly because they generally approved the conduct of imperial and foreign policy by the Liberal party under Asquith, Grey and Haldane, as represented by naval rearmament, military alliances with France and Japan, the agreement of 1907 with Russia, and the handling of the Agadir crisis.

The Treaty of Algeciras, which sanctioned a diplomatic defeat of Germany, could be regarded indeed as the first appearance of the allied front which came into operation during the First World War. Grey had a clear vision of the policy of containment of Germany's African policy, writing to Arthur Nicolson in the aftermath of the Algeciras Conference, observing how the "recovery of Russia will change the situation in Europe to the satisfaction of France." An "entente between Russia, France and ourselves would be absolutely secure," Grey remarked. If it was "necessary to check Germany," it could be done.¹¹

Britain had, according to Selborne, "all the difficulties and the responsibilities of a military Power in Asia." The "crux" of British foreign policy was to remain the "greatest Naval Power when Naval Powers are year by year increasing in numbers and in naval strength," while being a "military power strong enough to meet the greatest Military Power in Asia," without compulsory military service. The defence of thousands of miles of Asiatic borders was therefore impossible, without coming to terms with Russia or Germany. Since Russia had recently been defeated by Japan in the Far East, she was looking towards the Balkans in order to establish there a strategic presence, and in particular to access the Mediterranean. Alternatively, she might look towards India, thus threatening vital British interests. This was the fatal strategic choice, supported by Milner and the Liberal League, which opened the way to World War I.¹²

Grey thought in 1895 that a "skillful" Foreign Secretary should detach Russia "from the number of our active enemies without sacrificing any very material British interests," while keeping the Continental balance of power. In 1906 Grey negotiated with Russia the partition of Persia—

¹¹ Quoted in George Monger, *The End of Isolation: British Foreign Policy 1900-1907* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1963), 280.

¹² Quoted in Keith Wilson, *The Context of Britain's Imperial Problems, The International Impact of the Boer War*, Keith Wilson ed. (Chesham: Acumen, 2001), 200 1.

excluding Germany from any influence in the region—and gave Russia a free hand in the Balkans, leading to an inevitable clash with Austria-Hungary. The Anglo-Russian partition of Persia—even though it was a regional agreement—relieved Great Britain from Russian pressure on India, but nevertheless left open the so-called ‘Balkan question’.¹³

The French intervention at Fez, and the partition of Morocco between France and Spain—an open breach of the Treaty of Algeciras—was defended by Grey, and *The Times*, on the ground that the 100,000 French troops would stay in Morocco so long as it was “absolutely necessary.” On the contrary, *The Nation* portrayed the French action as “a pretext as mendacious as the legends by which D. Jameson sought to excuse his rush to Johannesburg.” “Everyone knew,” *The Nation* concluded, that in Morocco France was engaged, with the support of Great Britain, “in a sordid imperialistic venture.” William Tyrrell concurred, writing to Hardinge, that “the French game in Morocco had been stupid and dishonest,” but it was “a vital interest” for Great Britain “to support her.”¹⁴

It was Sir Arthur Nicolson who advised Grey “to range ourselves alongside of France, as we did in 1905 and 1906, and show a united front to German demands.” Otherwise “the whole Triple Entente would be broken up, England would be faced by a triumphant Germany and an unfriendly France and Russia and our policy since 1904 of preserving equilibrium and consequently the peace of Europe would be wrecked.” Since Germany was “playing for the highest stakes,” and had embarked on a “trial of strength,” Eyre Crowe—a Milnerite senior officer of the Western Division of the Foreign Office, who had been strongly influenced by the military views of Henry Wilkinson—commented, it was necessary to prove the solidity of the Anglo-French entente.¹⁵

¹³ Zara Steiner and Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 42; Monger, *The End of Isolation*, 288 9.

¹⁴ Quoted in Anthony A. J. Morris, *The Scaremongers: The Advocacy of War and Rearmament, 1896 1914* (London: Routledge, 1984), 286; Zara Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 75.

¹⁵ Quoted in Geoffrey Barraclough, *From Agadir to Armageddon: Anatomy of a Crisis* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982), 112 3; Williamson, *The Politics of Grand Strategy*, 144. Sir Eyre Crowe (1864 1925), was born and educated in Germany, and entered the British foreign service in 1885. As an official at the Western Department of the Foreign Office, in January 1907 he wrote the “Memorandum on the present state of British relations with France and Germany” directed to Sir Edward Grey on whom it made a strong impression inspired by the strategic views of Henry Wilkinson. Crowe was knighted in 1911, and the following year became assistant Under secretary of State for foreign affairs. In 1920 he was appointed permanent Under secretary of State for foreign affairs, a post that he held

The Agadir crisis offered the occasion to Lloyd George—then Chancellor of the Exchequer—to openly abandon the Liberal isolationists, and join the interventionists' ranks. In a speech at Mansion House on 21 July 1911, he declared that

if a situation were to be forced upon us, in which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position England has won by centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing Great Britain to be treated, where her interests were vitally affected, as if she were of no account in the cabinet of Nations, then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure.¹⁶

The concealment from the Cabinet of the secret Anglo-French military talks of January 1906 was suggested to Haldane by Milner, and according to Robert Reid—later Lord Loreburn, Lord Chancellor, and opponent of the Grey-Asquith-Haldane triumvirate—“protracted” and “deliberate.” Parliament “knew nothing of it till 3rd August 1914, nor anything of the change of policy which the suppressed communication denoted,” Loreburn declared. The fact that the military talks were not technical, as Grey suggested, but merely political—the substitute for an alliance, according to A. J. P. Taylor—was in pursuit of their own aim: co-ordination of Anglo-French war effort in case of a war against Germany.¹⁷

“Without the guidance we derived through the conversations,” Haldane admitted, “We could not have been ready in July 1914.” The failure to inform the Cabinet was, according to Sommer, “a remarkable omission,

until his death. For an analysis of Crowe's contribution to British foreign policy, see; Richard A. Cosgrove, “The Career of Sir Eyre Crowe: A Reassessment,” *Albion*, 4, 4, (1972): 193–205; J. S. Dunn, *The Crowe Memorandum: Sir Eyre Crowe and Foreign Office Perceptions of Germany, 1918–1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012). Henry Spenser Wilkinson (1853–1937) was the first Chichele Professor of Military History at Oxford University, fellow of All Souls from 1909, and had been a key figure in the founding of the Navy League of Great Britain in 1894. Wilkinson's views on military strategy inspired Sir Eyre Crowe's *The National Awakening* (London: 1907). For a discussion, see: Christopher Bassford, *Clausewitz in English: The Reception of Clausewitz in Britain and America, 1815–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Beatrice Heuser, *Reading Clausewitz* (London: Random House, 2002). Amery played a crucial role in establishing both the Chichele Chair in the History of War, and the Beit Chair in the History of the British Empire, (Louis, *In the Name of God Go*, 55).

¹⁶ Quoted in Barraclough, *From Agadir to Armageddon*, 131.

¹⁷ Robert Reid, *How the War Came* (London: Methuen, 1919), 78; Dudley Sommer, *Haldane of Cloan: His Life and Times 1856–1928* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), 160.

not easy to reconcile with the practice of Cabinet responsibility." Grey and Haldane deliberately kept the Cabinet unaware of them—with the complacency of the Prime Minister—because they were, as remarked by Major General John Spencer Ewart—who replaced General James Grierson in October 1906 as Director of Military Operations and Intelligence at the War Office—"well aware" of their "strategic implications," and that the rest of the Cabinet would have never assented. The decision to conceal the talks from the Cabinet had been taken during the weekend of 27-29 January 1906 at Windsor, by Edward VII, Campbell-Bannerman and Grey: they feared that opposition by the radical members of the Cabinet would jeopardize the success of the military preparations.¹⁸

Grey reversed Lansdowne's and Salisbury's traditional British foreign policy of friendly relations with Austria into a hostile attitude. He censured Austria's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina of 6 October 1908 as a breach of the Treaty of Berlin, without issuing any warning, demanding the matter be brought before an international conference. By backing Serbian claims for compensation from Austria-Hungary, Grey placed the diplomatic weight of Great Britain behind Russian aspirations in the Balkans, without making significant concessions to Russia on the question of the Straits, which were of fundamental strategic and vital interest to Britain. The British could tolerate the extension of Russia's sphere of influence on the Balkans, but not on the Mediterranean. They needed Russian friendly relations to safeguard their Asiatic possessions. The diplomatic masterpiece of Grey was to dissolve the Three Emperors League, and to align Russia on the side of Great Britain and France, at the expense of the Balkan States.

Grey's support for the pan-Slav Russian foreign policy—led by Nicholas Hartwig, Russian Ambassador to Serbia from 1909 to 1914—produced the Serb-Bulgarian Treaty of March 1912. This included defensive clauses against Austria-Hungary, and the partitioning of Macedonia after the expulsion of the Turks. The outbreak of the Italo-Turkish War on 5 November 1911 over Tripoli had further weakened the Ottoman Empire, and, under the tutelage of Russia, Serbia signed a mutual alliance with Montenegro, while Bulgaria did the same with Greece, thus forming the Balkan League. The League was victorious in the First Balkan War, which broke out in October 1912, and brought under its control most of the European Ottoman territories. The old rivalries between members of

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 160 1; A. J. A. Morris, *Radicalism Against War: The Advocacy of Peace and Retrenchment* (London: Longman, 1972), 38 9; Williamson, *The Politics of Grand Strategy*, 66, 83.

the League—particularly on the partitioning of Macedonia—brought about, however, the collapse of the League. On 16 June 1913, with Bulgaria's attack on her former allies, the Second Balkan War broke out, with the defeat of Bulgaria by the combined forces of Serbia, Greece, and Romania.¹⁹

If Russia and Austria-Hungary were the two super-powers behind the First Balkan War—which under the remote control of Grey strengthened Russian influence on the Balkans, without however opening the Straits to the Russian Navy—during the Second Balkan War both Russia and Austria-Hungary stood aside. If the control of Macedonia did not involve major strategic issues, the access to the Adriatic Sea by Serbia, through Albania, represented a direct threat to the security of Austria-Hungary, and to British supremacy in the Mediterranean. Count Leopold Berchtold succeeded in October 1913 in forcing Serbian troops out of Albania by diplomatic means, because Nicholas Hartwig, Russian Ambassador, directly intervened on the Serbian Prime Minister Nikola Pašić and Prince Alexander to respect the London Conference settlement and the integrity of Albania. Berchtold managed to prevent Serbia from securing an outlet to the Adriatic, but failed to contain the rising Russian influence in the Balkans, and thwart Serbian ambitions for a united Yugoslav State.

Without Russian support, the Serbian authorities—Pašić had been informed by General Radomir Putnik, Chief of the Serbian General Staff, of the planned plot between the end of May and the beginning of June—would never have authorized the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28 June 1914, since it would have exposed Serbia to Austria-Hungary's military reaction, and to certain defeat. Without direct military intervention by Russia, the Serbian army, ill equipped and exhausted after two wars, would not have been able to face Austria-Hungary alone, even with the support of Croatia and Slovenia.

The direct involvement in the plot by Viktor Artamanov reveals that Serbia was the terrain on which was played out the power politics of the Great Powers and, foremost among them, of Austria-Hungary and

¹⁹ Firuz Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864 1914: A Study in Imperialism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968); Andrew Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans: Inter Balkan Rivalries and Russian Foreign Policy, 1908 1914* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1981); Samuel R. Williamson Jr., *Austria Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 117; William Janner Jr., *The Lions of July: Prelude to War, 1914* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1996); Astrid S. Tuminez, *Russian Nationalism since 1856: Ideology and the Making of Foreign Policy* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 89.

Russia.²⁰

In Belgrade Hartwig—drawing strength from the personal support of the Tsar—acted largely independently of the Russian Foreign Minister Sergej Sazonov, following the same pattern as he did in Persia. In addition to defending the strategic Russian interests in the region, Hartwig also represented the Pan-Slavist and more militantly pro-Serbian court party, giving the Serbian Government the impression that they would get more support from Russia than *realpolitik* allowed. Hartwig had in fact played a prominent role in the formation of the Balkan League, and was a strong opponent of Austria-Hungary's interference in the region. As a Pan-Slavist, he was in favour of territorial gains at the expense of Turkey after the conclusion of the Balkan Wars, and was the main opponent of the territorial *status quo* line based on the London settlements, and officially supported by Sazonov and Count Berchtold. In backing Serbian demands for a revision of the military agreement with Bulgaria, which were to include additional pieces of Macedonian territory, Hartwig aimed to compensate Serbia for the loss of access to the Adriatic because of the creation of Albania by the Treaty of London of 1913, following the First Balkan War. The Second Balkan War produced a remarkable increase in Serbia's territory and population, but the Treaty of Bucharest of 1913 continued to deny Serbia access to the sea. This was the strategic object of the nationalist movement of 'Great Serbia', and of its military arm, the Black Hand.

The British Government supported Russian ambitions to expand their Balkan sphere of influence, yet firmly opposed Serbia's access to the Adriatic, and therefore the eventual creation on the Adriatic coast of a Russian naval base. Serbia was in fact for the Russians of fundamental strategic importance, precisely for the acquisition of an access to the Mediterranean. Germany could count, indirectly, on Trieste, and on the friendship of the Ottomans, who controlled the Dardanelles and therefore the North-eastern gateway to the Mediterranean, which was—and continues to be—the strategic centre of world power politics. From its control, firmly in Anglo-French hands, depended also the territorial status-quo of Continental Europe.

²⁰ David MacKenzie, *Apis: The Congenial Conspirator. The Life of Colonel Dragutin T. Dimitrijevic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); id., *The Exoneration of the "Black Hand," 1817 1953* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Velibor Čolić, *Sarajevo omnibus* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012). Artamanov was the Russian Military Attaché in Serbia, and he provided the necessary financial support, as testified by the organizer of the plot Dragutin Dimitrijević, better known as 'Colonel Apis', founder of the Black Hand and head of Serbian Army Intelligence.

3. Milner and the origins of World War

If British diplomacy during the Nineteenth century succeeded in preventing a local conflict degenerating into a European war with the involvement of all the Great Powers, it failed during the 1914 July crisis. The question is why British diplomacy made little effort to prevent the outbreak of a general war. The Serbian question represented a central and vital issue for the future of the already fragile Austro-Hungarian Empire, which under the pressure of the Italian and Slav nationalist movements could easily fall into pieces. British and French diplomacies were well aware of the strategic role which Serbia played for the survival of the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy, and that Serbian authorities were directly involved in the murder of Franz Ferdinand, the moral and political symbol of the unity of the Empire.

The gains for Serbia in the two Balkan wars and the assassination represented the extension and consolidation of Russian influence in the region, in the perspective of a possible pan-Slav upheaval. It was an intolerable perspective from the point of view of the Central Powers, since it would have dramatically changed the strategic balance in Southern Europe, to the advantage of France and Russia. The German Chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, could not tolerate a mortal blow to the most loyal but fragile German ally, and therefore offered Austria-Hungary unconditional support for effective measures against Serbian provocation.

Haldane and Grey were well aware of the state of opinion in Germany, and that Austria-Hungary was “in a white heat of indignation... contemplating drastic action.” Haldane reported to Grey on 5 July that the German Ambassador to London, Prince Karl Max Lichnowsky, told him that Austria-Hungary “felt strongly that Serbia must be publicly humiliated,” even with war, and that Germany would support Austria-Hungary “in any action which she proposes to take.” The German Ambassador was certainly aware that “Russia would support Serbia,” and expressed to Haldane his “apprehension” about the rumours that Great Britain “had entered into naval treaty with Russia.”²²

²² Quoted in Sommer, *Haldane of Cloan*, 299-300; Karl Max Lichnowsky, *My Mission to London, 1912-1914* (London: Cassell, 1918); id., *Heading for the Abyss: Reminiscences* (New York: Payson and Clarke, 1928); Konrad Jarausch, *Von Bethmann Hollweg and the Hubris of Imperial Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973); Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 233; David Allen Butler, *The Burden of Guilt: How Germany Shattered the*

In meeting Lichnowsky on 6 July—the day in which Austria-Hungary received the official support of the German Chancellor for punitive actions against Serbia—Grey noted on his diary that he had the confirmation that “it was not impossible” that Austria-Hungary “would take military action against Serbia.” In the diaries Grey added that he would use “all the influence” he could “to mitigate difficulties and smooth them away,” and that “if clouds arose” he would act “to prevent the storm from breaking.” In spite of the warnings by the British Ambassador to Vienna, Sir Maurice de Bunsen, that “a Servian war meant a general European war,” that “almost all sections” of the Austro-Hungarian population were “blindly incensed against the Servians,” and prepared “to give evidence” of Austro-Hungarian strength “by settling once and for all her long-standing accounts with Serbia,” Grey did not act. This was as he already had behaved during the Bosnian crisis, waiting for the annexation of Bosnia by Austria-Hungary.

De Bunsen also reported to Grey the “serious apprehension” of the French Ambassador to Vienna, Alfred Dumaine, who was in a position to know about a situation which “may develop rapidly into complications from which war might easily arise,” since Austria-Hungary seemed determined to reduce Serbia “to impotence for the future.” The problem was that according to the Russian Ambassador in Vienna, Nikolai Schebeko, “Russia would be compelled to take up arms in defence of Serbia.”²³

Grey ignored the warnings of de Bunsen, and followed the advice of the Permanent Under-secretary of the Foreign Office, Arthur Nicolson, who in a minute to the Foreign Secretary expressed his doubts as to whether Austria will take an action of a serious character, expecting that the storm would “blow over.” The same view had been put forward by Schebeko, who was, according to Nicolson, “a shrewd man,” bringing “weight to any opinion he expressed.” In instructing on 30 June the British Ambassador to Russia, Sir George Buchanan, Nicolson expressed the view that the crisis would “not lead to any further complications,” in spite of the fact that it was “already fairly evident” that the Austro-Hungarians were “attributing the terrible events to Servian intrigues and machinations.” Moreover, Nicolson had the hubris to suggest that the new Austro-Hungarian heir, “little more than a mere boy,” would have been “more popular than the late Archduke,” since he was “not bound by any hard set

Last Days of Peace, Summer 1914 (Havertown, PA: Casemate Publishers, 2010), 103.

²³ Luigi Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), vol. 2, 203 4.

prejudices or predilections.”²⁴

Grey deliberately kept the British Cabinet unaware of the potential dangers of the situation, and consulted only Asquith, Haldane, and Churchill. Lloyd George recollected having been deeply impressed, during the July crisis, “by the complete calm” with which international diplomacy was handling the situation, and the fact that the Foreign Office “preserved its ordinary tranquillity of demeanour and thought it unnecessary to sound an alarm even in the Cabinet.” On 9 July Grey assured Lichnowsky that Britain had no binding commitments towards France and Russia, and that he saw no reasons for fearing the drift to war. Grey’s inertia was corroborated by the impasse within the Austro-Hungarian Government, where Hungarian Prime Minister Count István Tisza refused to take military sanctions against Serbia, fearing Russian intervention. Only when the Serbian press launched a wild anti-Austrian campaign, with the possible destabilization of ethnic cohesion in Hungary and Transylvania, did Tisza resolve to act, feeling that the risks of peace, leaving unchecked a strong Serbia, were greater than the risks of war. The provocation was intolerable, more than anything else because it was deliberate—orchestrated by the Serbian and Russian authorities—and brought evidence of the direct involvement of the Serbian-Russian authorities in the Archduke’s assassination.²⁵

The “uncompromising mood” of the Austro-Hungarian Government was strongly supported by the German Chancellor. In the showdown between the two Central Powers and Russia, Great Britain was holding the role of the referee, since without direct British support it was very unlikely that France would have offered Russia diplomatic and eventually military aid. Grey had at his disposal three options. He could have summoned the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in London, Count Albert von Mensdorff, or instructed the British Ambassador in Vienna de Bunsen to declare British neutrality, and determination to settle the new Balkan crisis with diplomatic means, as for the two previous crises. This action would have strained British relations with France and Russia, questioning a decade of Anglo-French containment of Germany, re-opening with Russia the settled issues of the Straits and naval access to the Mediterranean.

Alternatively, Grey could send to the Austro-Hungarian Government a

²⁴ Quoted in Cafferky, *Lord Milner’s Second*, 217–20. For a discussion, see Marina Soroka, *Britain, Russia and the Road to the First World War: The Fateful Embassy of Count Aleksandr Benckendorff (1903–1916)* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

²⁵ David Lloyd George, *War Memories of David Lloyd George* (London: Nicholson, 1933), 52–3; Clive Ponting, *Thirteen Days: The Road to the First World War* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2002), 87–94.

firm warning that if they pressed for war, Great Britain would have sided first with France, and then Russia. This action would probably have prevented the military timetable from dictating the course of events, but would have thrown the whole weight of the British Empire into the Continental power politics game. The Dominions would certainly not have followed Great Britain. And the British were too well aware that, being on the eve of a civil war over Ireland at home, without the Dominions' financial and military support Great Britain would not have been able to face a Continental war.

The third option, which was Grey's choice, was to ignore the fact that Continental Europe was experiencing a major political crisis, and let the Continental Powers settle it by themselves by diplomatic means, or through a local conflict. After all, since the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Great Britain had always succeeded in preventing the extension of a local European war into a general conflict. And from the British point of view, the Continent was not under the threat of being conquered by a despot with hegemonic ambitions.

The publication on 17 July in the *Westminster Gazette* of a leading article by J. A. Spender—widely known as Grey's intimate and megaphone—strongly supporting the case of Austria-Hungary misled all European diplomacies, giving the impression that Grey took sides in favour of severe action against Serbia. In the article Spender mentioned the “strong indignation in the Empire” about the crime of Sarajevo, identifying the source of the “anti-Austrian conspiracy” in the Serbian authorities. This was a feeling reinforced by the anti-Austro-Hungarian press campaign which went on in Serbia since the assassination. In face of the “deliberate attempt” by the Serbian authorities “to work on the population of Servian nationality” within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, “in order to prepare their separation from the Monarchy, should an opportunity present itself,” the Austro-Hungarian Government could not “be expected to remain inactive.”²⁶

Instead of clarifying the British position, the article produced the opposite result, alarming the Russian Ambassador in Vienna, Schebeko, and deceiving the German Ambassador in London, Lichnowsky, on British intentions. Grey knew from Buchanan that Russia was prepared in any circumstance to back Serbia, and from Haldane that Berchtold was “apparently ready to plunge Europe into war to settle the Serbian question.” However in meeting Lichnowsky on 20 July he simply

²⁶ F. R. Bridge, *Great Britain and Austria Hungary, 1906 1914: A Diplomatic History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), 213.

suggested that Austria-Hungary kept her demands “within reasonable limits,” since “the idea of a war between any of the Great Powers... would be detestable.” Grey never mentioned the possibility of Great Britain taking sides with France and Russia, and the same is true also of his meeting with Mensdorff on 23 July. Thus he let the Central Powers’ ambassadors in London believe in British neutrality, encouraging them in fact to intransigence and war.

When Grey spoke about a possible European war, he always referred to a war limited to “as many as four Great powers.” The Germans and the Austro-Hungarians started the countdown with Russia on the assumption that Great Britain would intervene in a Continental war only “if the balance of power were to be greatly altered”—as Haldane clearly stated on 23 July at a dinner with Grey, John Morley and Albert Ballin, German shipping magnate and intimate to the Kaiser—“by German annexation of French territory.”²⁷

Poincaré’s support of Russian Balkan policy was an integral part of the Franco-Russian Alliance, according to which if Russia was attacked by Germany, or by Austro-Hungary with German support, France would intervene in the conflict attacking Germany in the Rhineland. The replacement of the French Ambassador to St. Petersburg George Louis—sceptical on the real military strength of the Russian army, and of the effectiveness of the Franco-Russian Alliance—with Théophile Delcassé—a strong supporter of the reasons for the alliance, and of Russia’s expansionist Balkan policy—marked Poincaré’s intention to bring to its logical and extreme conclusion the new dislocation of European power politics. With the election of Poincaré to the Presidency of the French Republic, the appointment of Delcassé as Foreign Minister, and of Maurice Paléologue to the post of French Ambassador to St. Petersburg, the pro-Russian front of the Third Republic gained total control of French foreign policy.

The State visit of Poincaré to St. Petersburg of 20-23 July—opposed by Louis on the ground that it could have serious consequences—strengthened Russian determination to fight for Serbia: Poincaré offered unconditional French support. The outcome of Poincaré’s visit was summarized in a telegram Buchanan sent to Grey on 24 July, following a meeting he had at the French Embassy at St. Petersburg with Paléologue and the Russian Foreign Minister Sazonov, just after Austria-Hungary presented the ultimatum to Serbia. First, France and Russia had established a “perfect community of views on the various problems with

²⁷ Albertini, *The Origins of the War*, vol. 2, 209; Ponting, *Thirteen Days*, 103 4.

which the Powers are confronted as regards the maintenance of...balance of power in Europe, more especially in the East." Second, they agreed to take common action against Austria-Hungary in case they intervened "in the internal affairs of Servia," attacking "her sovereignty and independence." Third, the President and the Tsar made a "solemn affirmation of obligation imposed by the alliance of the two countries."²⁸

During the meeting Sazonov invited Buchanan to ask his Government to declare its "solidarity with France and Russia," and to denounce "Austria's conduct as immoral and provocative," since behind the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum there was Germany. Sazonov declared that mobilization would be inevitable in order to show the Central Powers "a firm and united attitude" as being the "only chance of averting war." Buchanan reported to Grey that France and Russia "were determined to make a strong stand" even if Great Britain "declined to join them." If war broke out, Sazonov observed, Great Britain in any way "would sooner or later be dragged into it," but if Great Britain "did not make common cause with France and Russia from the outset," she "should have rendered war more likely." At the suggestion by Buchanan to "induce Austria to extend term of delay accorded to Servia," Paléologue replied that "time did not permit of this." Either Austria-Hungary "was bluffing or had made up her mind to act at once." There was no ground left for mediation. The choice for the British Government was to take sides willingly with France and Russia immediately, or be forced, at a later stage, to take part unwillingly in a general European war.²⁹

Buchanan's report reached the Foreign Office on the morning of 25 July and Crowe suddenly realized that "the moment has passed when it might have been possible to enlist French support in an effort to hold back Russia." Since France and Russia had "decided to accept the challenge thrown out to them" whatever "the merits of the Austrian charges against Servia," Crowe suggested to Grey that it would have been "impolitic, not to say dangerous...to attempt to controvert" French and Russian opinion that Austro-Hungarian charges were a pretext to sanction Serbia. The question was whether Germany was really "absolutely determined to have this war now," and Crowe suggested following Sazonov's advice, to allow Germany "to apprehend that the war will find England by the side of France and Russia." The only "effective way" of causing Germany "to

²⁸ Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey, July 24, 1914, quoted in G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley eds., *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, Vol. 11, *The Outbreak of War: Foreign Office Documents, June 28th August 4th, 1914* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1926), 80.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 81.

hesitate...without absolutely committing us definitely at this stage” would be “to put our whole fleet on an immediate war footing” once France and Russia began to mobilize. The conflict could be avoided only “by showing our naval strength, ready to be instantly used,” and it would be “wrong not to make the effort.”³⁰

This action should be taken immediately, and it was “the best thing we could do to prevent a very grave situation arising as between England and Russia,” Crowe remarked. It was “difficult not to agree with Sazonov that sooner or later England will be dragged into the war,” if it came. If Great Britain succeeded in standing aside and the Central Powers won, crushing France and humiliating Russia, Germany would come into control of the Channel “with the willing or unwilling co-operation of Holland and Belgium.” If France and Russia won, “what would then be their attitude towards England,” Crowe asked himself, “what about India and the Mediterranean?” British vital interests were, according to Crowe, “tied up with those of France and Russia.” The struggle which was staged in the Balkans was “not for the possession of Servia, but one between Germany aiming at a political dictatorship in Europe and the Powers who desire to retain individual freedom.” This was, by then, a view which gained overwhelming support not only in the Foreign Office, but also in the country at large, particularly because of the uncompromising anti-German press propaganda by *The Times* and *The Observer*, led by Milner’s disciples.³¹

The Times was in fact directly involved, with *The Spectator* and *The National Review*, in a wild anti-German propaganda campaign from 1895 to 1914, building consent in British public opinion and that of the Dominions in favour of the Anglo-French alliance. Germany was then represented as the most serious threat to British vital interests abroad and to British values. *The Times* correspondents from Berlin tended to amplify German actions against British interests overseas, and against British involvement in the Baghdad railway project. Donald Mackenzie Wallace, head of the Foreign Department of *The Times*, was replaced by Valentine Chirol—another of Milner’s followers—and ‘promoted’ as editor of the supplementary volumes of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. According to the Belgian Ambassador in Berlin, Jules Greindl, *The Times* “carried on for many years a campaign of slander and falsehood” by Chirol, stirring up “the hatred of the English against the Germans by attributing to the

³⁰ Minute by Sir E. Crowe, July 25, 1914, quoted in Gooch and Temperley, *British Documents on the Origins*, Vol. 11, *The Outbreak of War*, 81.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 82.

Imperial Government ambitious plans of which the absurdity is evident."³²

Crowe's minute raised fundamental strategic issues which were never faced before by the British Cabinet, carried away by the Irish question. Nicolson noted that in handling the crisis, the British Cabinet should be "most careful" not to alienate Russia. Grey minuted that Churchill assured him that the fleet could be mobilized in twenty-four hours, but that it was "premature to make any statement to France and Russia yet." When the news of the Russian partial mobilization reached Grey on the 25 July—Buchanan in vain tried to restrain Russia, and persuade Sazonov he thought that it was "almost inevitable," in front of "the brusque, sudden and peremptory character of the Austrian *démarche*." Instead of supporting his ambassador's desperate attempt to stop the mobilization escalation, and to force a diplomatic settlement of a crisis which involved British interests only indirectly, Grey accepted Russian mobilization as a legitimate reaction to excessive Austro-Hungarian claims. Grey's last minute attempt to favour a diplomatic settlement of the crisis was based on the calculation that Russian mobilization required double the time of the mobilization of the German and Austro-Hungarian armies. This was a gamble which turned out to be reckless.³³

Crowe, on the contrary, on 27 July had a lucid vision of the mobilization issue. Once Russia opted for the mobilization, Germany and Austria-Hungary would immediately follow. Since German mobilization was "directed almost entirely against France," the latter could not "possibly delay her own mobilization for even the fraction of a day." If the interpretation of the British Ambassador in Vienna de Bunsen was correct, that Austria-Hungary was resorting to war "because that was from the beginning her intention," Crowe observed that "it would be neither possible nor just and wise to make any move to restrain Russia from mobilizing." In a situation of general European mobilization, Great Britain, according to Crowe, could not "stand idly aside." Taking the example of Prussia which remained neutral in the war of 1805, Crowe observed how Prussia in 1806 "fell a victim to the Power that had won in 1805, and no one was ready either to help her or to prevent her political

³² Farrer, *England under Edward*, 53. On the role played by *The Times* in anti German propaganda, see: William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism* (London: Alfred A. Knopf, 1935); Sidney B. Fay, *The Origins of The World War* (London: Macmillan, 1966); Oron J. Hale, *Germany and the Diplomatic Revolution: A Study in Diplomacy and the Press, 1904 1906* (London: Octagon Books, 1971).

³³ Zara S. Steiner and Keith Nelson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* (London: Macmillan, 2003), 230 5.

ruin and partition.”³⁴

In meeting Lichnowsky on 27 July, Grey for the first time mentioned the possibility that Great Britain would side with France and Russia in the event that the war could not be localised. Grey was aware that such a war “would be the biggest ever known,” and the only possible way to avert this tragic eventuality was for Germany not to assist Austria-Hungary against Russia, and to urge Vienna to moderation towards Serbia. The German Ambassador reported to Berlin that Great Britain “would place herself unconditionally by the side of France and Russia in order to show that she is not willing to permit a moral or perhaps, a military defeat of her group.” Austria-Hungary’s declaration of war against Serbia the following day was the opposite of a signal toward moderation. With the support of Germany, Austria-Hungary aimed to take Belgrade as a hostage, forcing Serbia to come to terms. Russia would then mobilize—a full, and not a partial mobilization—as soon as Austro-Hungarian troops crossed the Serbian border. Germany offered not to mobilize if the Russian mobilization was just partial. Great Britain would “stand aside as long as the conflict remained confined to Austria and Russia,” Lichnowsky reported to Berlin on 29 July, following a meeting with Grey, after the announcement that Russia would begin a partial mobilization against Austria-Hungary on 30 July. If Germany and France were involved, “we shall have England against us,” Lichnowsky warned Berlin, since an attack on France by Germany through Belgium would not be tolerated by Great Britain.³⁵

The decision of Grey to follow Crowe’s advice and on 30 July to move the British Fleet on the North Sea was the signal which Sazonov had waited for to persuade the Tsar to approve general mobilization; it was also the signal which Paléologue needed to strengthen the hand of Sazonov, and that Germany feared, realizing that the time for diplomacy had ended. Russian mobilization against Germany was the fatal blow which started the storm.

Addressing Grey directly on 31st July, Crowe supported immediate British commitment:

The theory that England cannot engage in a big war means her abdication as an independent State...The theory further involves not only that there is no need for any British army or navy but also that there has been no such need for many years. It cannot have been right to impose on the country the upkeep at an enormous annual cost of an unnecessary because useless force. If the theory were true, the general principle on which our whole

³⁴ Minute by Sir E. Crowe to Sir Edward Grey, July 27, 1914, quoted in Gooch and Temperley, *British Documents on the Origins*, Vol. 11, *The Outbreak of War*, 120 1.

³⁵ Steiner and Nelson, *Britain and the Origins*, 237 41.

foreign policy has hitherto been declared to rest would stand proclaimed as an empty futility. A balance of power cannot be maintained by a State that is incapable of fighting and consequently carries no weight...The argument that there is no written bond binding us to France is strictly correct...But the Entente has been made, strengthened, put to the test and celebrated in a manner justifying the belief that a moral bond was being forged. The whole policy of the Entente can have no meaning if it does not signify that in a just quarrel England would stand by her friends. This honourable expectation has been raised. We cannot repudiate it without exposing our good name to grave criticism. I venture to think that the contention that England cannot in any circumstances go to war, is not true, and that any endorsement of it would be an act of political suicide. The question at issue is not whether we are capable of taking part in a war, but whether we should go into the present war. That is a question firstly of right or wrong, and secondly of political expediency. If the question were argued on this basis, I feel confident that our duty and our interest will be seen to lie in standing by France in her hour of need.³⁶

The British Cabinet was divided between a minority of unconditional interventionists—Grey, Haldane, Asquith, Churchill—and a majority of conditional interventionists—led by Lloyd George—willing to commit Great Britain just to guarantee Belgium's neutrality. Only Morley was unconditionally neutralist. Grey forced the Cabinet to bring Great Britain into the war on 2nd August, by threatening his resignation and showing his colleagues a note by the Conservative leader Bonar Law, offering the Government the “unhesitant support” of the opposition in siding with France and Russia. Law's offer, together with the prospect of the resignation of the head of the Foreign Office—which could be followed by the resignation of Asquith himself—won over the resistance of the conditional interventionists. Their opposition to bringing the country into the war would have been swept away by their replacement with a Coalition or Unionist Cabinet. The fate of the Empire had been in fact decided outside the Cabinet and Parliament, without even consulting the Dominions' Prime Ministers.³⁷

Zara Steiner saw Milner behind Bonar Law's note. Law initially

³⁶ Memorandum by Sir E. Crowe to Sir Edward Grey, July 31, 1914, quoted in Gooch and Temperley, *British Documents on the Origins*, Vol. 11, *The Outbreak of War*, 228 9. For a discussion, see Steiner and Nelson, *Britain and the Origins*, 243.

³⁷ On Lloyd George and Churchill's interventionist policy, see John Ehrman, “Lloyd George and Churchill as War Ministers,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Ser., 11, (1961): 101 115. On Law's role in Great Britain's entry into the First World War, see Adams, *Bonar Law* (London: John Murray, 1999); Andrew Taylor, *Bonar Law* (London: Haus Publishing, 2006).

refused to make the offer to Asquith unless he was first asked. He acted under the pressure of Austen Chamberlain, Arthur Balfour, Henry Wilson, the Duke of Devonshire, and Lord Talbot, at a dinner on 1st August at Lord Lansdowne's London house. Milner does not appear to be among Lansdowne's guests that evening, but his presence lies behind the major events which brought, step by step, Great Britain into the Great War.³⁸

Beyond the direct involvement of Milner in the turning-points of British imperial policy since his appointment as South African High Commissioner, his specific role in the history of the Empire was to exercise a decisive intellectual leadership within the British foreign policy inner circle. Milner had been the most lucid interpreter of the British imperialist tradition, which in federalism found a device to perpetuate the privileges of the 'few', as first perceived by Bryce, against the rights and interests of the 'many'. Milner was the 'strong man'—only in public life, because he was, in fact, victim of recurrent and devastating nervous breakdowns—of that small but powerful group of men—representing the historical 'families' of the British establishment—who had run Great Britain, behind the throne, since Act of Union of 1707. Milner became their intellectual leader, bringing to them as dowry the impressive financial resources of the Rhodes Trust. He was therefore a sort of 'private' treasurer employed in the advancement of a public cause—the 'moulding' of public opinion through *The Times*, *The Observer* and a number of other journals. Above all, he was influential through the fresh energies of a group of young men loyal to the cause of the Empire and longing for a deep meaning to give to their lives. In federalism they found the political ideology able to give this existential yearning a political dimension. There certainly was a 'spiritual' element at the base of this commitment and long fidelity. Their most unselfish devotion to the cause, and the intrinsic force of the new ideology which they developed, provided the basis on which grew, during the second decade of the Twentieth century, a new 'Imperial Spirit' in the Dominions and India.

A million men enlisted to support Great Britain from the Dominions on a voluntary basis. The war, according to *The Round Table*, brought about "a wider, more discriminating, and more instructed loyalty to the great Commonwealth," together with a "feeling that the war has altered for all time the position of the Dominions." In spite of the Dominions'

³⁸ Zara Steiner, "The View from London", *The Origins of a Tragedy, July 1914*, Samuel Williamson ed. (Arlington: The Forum Press, 1981); Chamberlain, *Down the Years*, 98; Blake, *The Unknown Prime Minister*, 270 5. On the foreign policy of the Conservatives, see Frank McDonough, *The Conservative Party and Anglo German Relations, 1905 1914* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

massive injection in the war effort of human and material resources, reinforcing the view that Imperial co-operation was working successfully, Curtis argued that if the Empire had been federated, Germany would not have resorted to force. Curtis's hope that the pressure of war would have "more closely united" the Empire "as the noblest of all political achievements" was negated by the fact that the war, as Beer clearly saw it, produced an enormous "centrifugal tendency."³⁹

4. Lloyd George's Secretariat and British Imperial policy

When Lloyd George moved into 10 Downing Street in December 1916, he took with him J. T. Davies, Frances Stevenson and William Sutherland as his secretaries for day to day business, and gave to Kerr, Astor, and the Oxford Professor William G. S. Adams, control of the rapidly expanding administration and the duty to maintain contacts between the Prime Minister and his Ministers and the War Cabinet. Lloyd George's Private Secretariat—more commonly known as the 'Garden Suburb' because of its temporarily location in the garden of Downing Street—was to become the Round Table's bridgehead within the inner circle of British political life for five years. When Kerr joined Lloyd George, he brought with him a set of values which heavily reflected his leading role within the Round Table movement.⁴⁰

Milner introduced Kerr to Lloyd George as "a young man of conspicuous ability...specially knowledgeable on all Imperial questions and on foreign affairs." If, according to Lentin, "no man more completely justified" Milner's recommendation, Rowse described Kerr as the "most promising of Milner's Young Men...a regular Prince Charming, gifted, glamorous, and generous." "His humanity, his informality, his winning smile, his good looks" immediately won, according to Rowse, Lloyd George's confidence. Frances Stevenson, Lloyd George's secretary,

³⁹ "New Zealand," *The Round Table*, 20, (Sept. 1915): 887-902; Curtis to Kerr, 4 Sep. 1915, RTP, c 809, 78-81; Beer to Curtis, 1914, RTP, c 779, 82-3.

⁴⁰ For an analysis of the 'Garden Suburb', see John F. Naylor, "The Establishment of the Cabinet Secretariat," *Historical Journal*, (Dec. 1971); Turner, *Lloyd George's Secretariat*; John Grigg, *Lloyd George: War Leader, 1916-1918* (London: Faber, 2013); Travis L. Crosby, *The Unknown Lloyd George: A Statesman in Conflict* (London: Tauris, 2014). For a discussion of Lloyd George's political leadership, see Kenneth O. Morgan, "Lloyd George's Premiership: A Study in 'Prime Ministerial Government'," *The Historical Journal*, 13, (March 1970).

thought that Kerr was “the most Christ-like man” she had “ever known,” and seemed “to shed his personality around and radiate happiness.”⁴¹

In the House of Commons, the radicals sharply criticised the establishment of the Garden Suburb, in which they saw a return of the South African Kindergarten. *The Nation* published on 24 February 1917 a caricature of Kerr portrayed as Narcissus, having to assimilate “the popular ideas or tendencies of the day, and presenting them to his chief, as it were, in concentrated pellets.” In the leading article, “The New Bureaucracy,” the editor H. W. Massingham attacked the “little body of illuminati, whose residence is in the Prime Minister’s garden, and their business to cultivate the Prime Minister’s mind.” The reactionary neo-imperialism of which they were portrayed as leading exponents had

seized the whole body of Liberal and democratic doctrine, and is making off with it under cover of the war. The governing ideas are not those of Mr Lloyd George we do not know what these are but of Lord Milner...Mr George has used Toryism to destroy liberal ideas, but he has created a Monster which, for the moment, dominates both. This is the New Bureaucracy, which threatens to master England, unless England decides in time to master it.⁴²

This attack on Lloyd George’s entourage was the expression of the fear that the Government would realize the Round Table’s agenda. Dockrill and Turner have pointed out that the Round Table political project began to decline just as Kerr and other members of the Kindergarten entered within the administrative and decision-making apparatus of the State. The rise of Milnerism had been helped by the war, which required the political and military cohesion of the Empire, and a strong leadership; but the war marked also the end of imperial closer union because of the entry of the United States into the conflict.⁴³

With the exception of Lloyd George, Milner was the most charismatic and influential personality within the Government. It was Milner who in March 1918 persuaded Lloyd George and the Government that the Allied Command should be unified on the Western Front in order to thwart the German offensive more effectively, and to impose on a reluctant Clemenceau the appointment of Foch rather than Pétain as Commander in

⁴¹ David Lloyd George, *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, vol. 1 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1939), 172 3; Antony Lentin, *Lloyd George, Woodrow Wilson, and the Guilt of Germany* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1984); Alfred J. Rowse, *Appeasement* (New York: Norton, 1961), 31 2; Frances Stevenson, *Lloyd George: A Diary* (New York: Harper&Row, 1971), 214.

⁴² Turner, *Lloyd George’s*, 1 4.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, 27 45.

Chief of the Allied forces. The Douellens Conference of 26 March 1918 contributed significantly to improved organisation of the Allied resistance and to the final victory, and gives us some indication of Milner's far-sightedness and integrity at a time when the fate of both the Empire and Europe hung in the balance.

Milner is also credited with having proposed—as already discussed—in February 1917, with the unanimous support of his colleagues, the creation of the Imperial War Cabinet and Imperial War Conference, directly associating the Dominions and Indian representatives in the definition of war strategy and imperial policy. The Round Table could therefore see the first half of its programme—equality of status between Great Britain and her Dominions—fulfilled. The second half—limitation of national sovereignty and creation of a federal political system—was never realized. The structure of imperial relations which resulted from the war was not that of federalism between centres of equal political and judicial status, but rather of co-operation between a centre in progressive decline and a periphery in continual ascent.⁴⁴

5. The Round Table and the idea of a League of Nations

One of Kerr's main tasks during his first period at Downing Street was to define Allied war aims. Following Wilson's invitation to the belligerents to define and make public their war aims, in December 1916 Kerr suggested to Lloyd George to include in his reply to Wilson some of the themes introduced by *The Round Table* and widely debated by the British press. The meaning of the war was, according to Kerr, for the victory of the rule of law over militaristic autocracy. He suggested a new slogan for the Allies: "the democratization of Europe." "It has been extraordinarily difficult," Kerr wrote to Lloyd George, for the British Government to launch a campaign for democracy "as long as it was in alliance with autocratic Russia." With the overthrowing of the Tsar "that difficulty" no longer existed, Kerr observed, and reminded Lloyd George how "it was not until Abraham Lincoln added the emancipation of the slaves to the preservation of American unity...that the tide began to turn."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs* (London: 1938), 1747; Halperin, *Lord Milner*, 164 6; Catherine Ann Cline, "British Historians and the Treaty of Versailles," *Albion*, 20, 1, (1988): 43 58.

⁴⁵ Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: Campaign for Progressivism and Peace* (Princeton, NJ: 1965), 249 71; Kerr to Prime Minister, n.d., LP, 865. In his Glasgow and London speeches of 29 June 1917, and 5 Jan. 1918, Lloyd George followed Kerr's advice, see *The Times*, 30 June 1917, 7, and 7 Jan. 1918.

British support for European democratic and national movements would, according to Kerr, weaken the Central European Powers, and meet British public opinion's support for a "democratic peace," a British version of Wilson's "peace without annexations." As soon as Kerr realised the intrinsic weakness of the democratic movements in Russia and Germany, he warned Lloyd George against reasoning "with the growing forces of pacifism and unrest in this country and among the Allies."⁴⁶

"Having broken away from autocracy," Kerr wrote to Curtis, the world was "rushing headlong towards the abyss of anarchy under the guidance of such phrases as 'self-determination', 'nationalism', 'Home Rule', and so forth." There were two forces standing across "the path to a true Commonwealth." On one hand there was "the tendency to autocracy," represented by Germany and Russia, and on the other hand, "the tendency to anarchy...latent in the gospel of self-determination."⁴⁷

The call from British peace movements for a negotiated end to the war and plans to create an international forum to promote a peaceful solution of conflicts attracted increasing support in Great Britain, because of Wilson's appeal for a "peace without victory." Wilson's innovative approach to international relations was also supported in Great Britain by the League of Nations Society, bringing together professional élites, religious heads, labour leaders, and liberal opinion makers.⁴⁸

A "bad peace without victory," Kerr warned Lloyd George, would compromise the post-war settlement. According to Kerr, post-war stability should be based on a centre of gravity constituted by the enlargement of the Supreme War Council newly established at Versailles. It would provide the basis for post-war Anglo-American co-operation. What was taking place was "a war against war," which could only attain its ultimate objective if there were a complete victory for the Allies. Since the war was the negative expression of the trend of the forces of production and exchange towards world unification, Kerr thought that the creation of a British-led "League of Allied Nations" would provide a positive solution

⁴⁶ Minute from Kerr to Lloyd George, May 1917, LP, 929/1; Kerr to Lloyd George, 20 Nov. 1918, LGP, F/89/1/13. On Lloyd George Coalition after the war, see Kenneth O. Morgan, *Consensus and Disunity: The Lloyd George Coalition Government, 1818 1922* (Oxford: 1979).

⁴⁷ Kerr, "The Irish Crisis," *The Round Table*, 31, (June 1918): 496 525.

⁴⁸ For the origins of the League of Nations movement in Britain see the George Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation of the League of Nations* (Chapel Hill, NC: 1978); id., "Conservative Internationalism: British Approaches to International Organization and the Creation of the League of Nations," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 5, 1, (March 1994).

to that contradiction, even if temporary and incomplete. A British diplomatic initiative of this kind would be good for the morale of both Allies and neutral countries alike: it would counteract "the idea that the war has degenerated in two groups of powers, each aimed to punish the other...It would tend to bring more neutrals into the war and to exercise an economic pressure on Germany."⁴⁹

The idea of a league of nations entered into the forefront of political debate in May 1916, following President Wilson's campaign to support the creation of a post-war international system to enforce peace, with United States' participation. Wilson's ideological appeal for a new diplomacy, and former Foreign Secretary Lord Lansdowne's overture, on 29 November 1917, for a negotiated peace on the basis of a league system, caused Kerr to suggest to Lloyd George that he "play the part of Joshua and go forward and explore the promised land of peace."⁵⁰

Kerr was against the idea of a negotiated peace with the United States acting as peacemaker, since the peace terms suggested by the United States might "in effect involve the partial triumph of the militarist evil, on the humanitarian pleas of saving human life." Even worse for Kerr was the prospect of the Bolshevik attempt to put forward a compromise, a "peace

⁴⁹ See minute from Kerr to Lloyd George, 30 July 1917, LP, 644; Kerr to Lloyd George, n.d., probably 5 or 7 Dec. 1917, LGP, F/89/1/11; LP, 648/2; Kerr to Lloyd George, 4 Dec. 1917, LGP, F/89/1/10. For a discussion of Lloyd George war leadership, see Grigg, *Lloyd George: War Leader*; Brock Millman, "The Lloyd George War Government, 1917-18," *Totalitarian Movements & Political Religions*, 3, 3, (2002): 99-127; David R. Woodward, *Lloyd George and the Generals* (London: F. Cass, 2004); Andrew Suttie, *Rewriting the First World War: Lloyd George, Politics & Strategy, 1914-1918* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); George Cassar, *Lloyd George at War, 1916-1918* (London: Anthem Press, 2011).

⁵⁰ On Wilson and the League question, see Thomas Knock, "Woodrow Wilson and the Origins of the League of Nations," PhD Diss., Princeton University, 1982; Arno J. Mayer, *Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 1917-1918: Lenin vs. Wilson* (New Haven, CT: 1959). On the Lansdowne letter, see *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 Nov. 1917; Philip Kerr, "Lansdowne Speech," 5 Dec. 1917, LGP, F/89/1/10; Lord Newton, *Lord Lansdowne: A Biography* (London: 1929), 463-9; Kerr to Prime Minister, 5 Dec. 1917, LP, 648/1-2. For a discussion of wartime debate in Great Britain on the league idea, see Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation*, Chs. I-III; id., "Collective Security as Political Myth: Liberal Internationalism and the League of Nations in Politics and History," *The International History Review*, 4, (Nov. 1983): 475-627. Kerr expressed to the American Ambassador, Walter Page, his hope for post-war Anglo-American co-operation, B. J. Hendrik, *The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page* (New York: 1923), 2, 59.

at any price,” which would invariably produce “class hatred and social strife, inevitably ending in Bolshevist ruin.”⁵¹

Lloyd George charged Kerr and Maurice Hankey, Secretary to the War Cabinet, to draft a scheme for a league of nations to be discussed by the Cabinet and proposed to Wilson. Kerr’s suggestion was to convert the Treaty of London into

a permanent international agreement pledging them not only to respect the peace settlement but to maintain the Reparations necessary [to] enforce respect for international law on others, and to meet together from time to time in order to consider by full and frank discussions between responsible ministers international problems as they arise.⁵²

“International machinery or treaties,” according to Kerr, were not able to guarantee, by themselves, international peace, which could be achieved only through the creation of a federation, not a league, of nations. “The beginning of the end of international war,” according to Kerr, could be marked by the re-creation of the Nineteenth century European concert which, originally formulated by Castlereagh and Canning, under the leadership of the British Empire gave Europe and the world a century of relative peace, the so called *Pax Britannica*. This new international organization would be extended to non-European powers, meeting regularly through ministers negotiating “round a common table,” having no veto power, and agreement would be voluntary. Since such an organization would not imply surrender of national sovereignty, and therefore “would have no legislative or executive authority or military power,” it would not be a substitute for traditional diplomacy, but it would be just a step forward to international co-operation. The British Empire represented, for Kerr, “the greatest bulwark of peace in the world,” the nucleus of “a world-wide commonwealth of nations—an achievement which will be not unworthy to rank with the works of Greece and Rome.” This view was shared also by Hankey, who leaving Paris at the end of the Peace Conference declared that the Empire was worthy of “a thousand Leagues of Nations,” being “the real League of Nations.”⁵³

⁵¹ Kerr to Plunkett, 5 Dec. 1916, quoted in Neilson, “Lord Lothian, Russia,” 46; Kerr to Lloyd George, 20 Nov. 1918, quoted in Michael Dockrill and John Turner, “Philip Kerr at 10 Downing Street,” *The Larger Idea*, Turner, 41 2; Kerr to Howard, 22 April 1918, LP, 210. For a discussion of British policy towards Russia, see Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar: British Policy and Russia, 1894 1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 106 8.

⁵² Kerr to Lloyd George, 30 Dec., 1917, LGP F/89/1/12.

⁵³ LP, 871. Kerr’s early imperialistic vision is expressed in his “Political Relations between Advanced and Backward Peoples,” *An Introduction to the Study of Inter*

Kerr absolutely opposed plans to enforce peace through economic or military sanctions against aggression. "No nation will in fact go to war merely to prevent other nations fighting," Kerr argued, "unless they are nations of the smallest and most impotent kind." Progress towards the settlement of minor international disputes would be accomplished "if all the great nations should assume a common responsibility for deliberating together about the most serious of international problems." "The true course," Kerr wrote in December 1916,

is to depart entirely from the militarist creed by resting the permanence of peace, not on a combination of powers whose main purpose is directed against Germany, but by massing an overwhelming preponderance of force behind a new code of public right, which shall embody the essentials of a just peace.⁵⁴

The future of the world depended, according to Kerr, on that "great association of free peoples," which constituted "all enlightened nations," coming together "not to dominate the world or seek aggrandizement for themselves, but to protect the weak among nations, and to ensure that right and not the will of strongest shall be the governing principle in international affairs." This association should abolish conscription, limit armaments, guarantee equal economic opportunities, create a mechanism of arbitration, and generate "the constitution of a regular conference or League of Nations to watch over the larger affairs of mankind, which may prove consistent with the effective maintenance of liberty for all."⁵⁵

Pressure on Lloyd George for "the institution of a regular Conference or League of Nations which shall control the execution" of the provisions of the peace treaty and "devise adequate machinery for the purpose," came also from Smuts. British peace aims should include, according to Smuts, provisions to "bind the Governments concerned to the abolition of military conscription and the limitation of armaments and the means and scale of future warfare, to the compulsory submission of future international disputes to arbitration."⁵⁶

"The essential condition of Peace" was, according to Kerr, "that Germany should be forced to accept such a position that she will no longer

national Relations, A. J. Grant and Philip Kerr eds. (London: 1916). Roskill, *Hankey*, 2, 80.

⁵⁴ Kerr, "The Harvest of the War"; Philip Kerr, "The Making of Peace," *The Round Table*, 25, (Dec. 1916).

⁵⁵ [Kerr], "Statement of War Aims: Draft Statement Based on General Smuts' Draft," G. T. 3182, 3 Jan. 1918, CABP, Cab. 24/37/2.

⁵⁶ "War Aims, Draft Statement by General Smuts," G. T. 3180, 1 Jan. 1918, CABP, Cab. 24/37/2.

be able to dream of dictating successfully to Europe, and so will have no option but to accept the status of equality with her neighbours based upon equal rights for all civilized States." The creation of "a new international order" depended "mainly upon the Allies and America." It was "essential" that the United States took part "in the work of international reconstruction."⁵⁷

"A real League of Nations," Kerr wrote on 2 April to Esme Howard, British Ambassador to Stockholm and future member of the British Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, "ought to advocate that all neutrals should join the Allies and develop the Entente into a league of all nations to enforce respect for public right on all who would infringe it." It was Kerr's elaboration of a suggestion put forward by Howard, that the Government should launch a league-based peace offensive after the failure of the Spring 1918 German offensive.⁵⁸

Writing to Howard two days later, Kerr noted how people tended to think, mistakenly, that such a league would make it possible to settle international conflicts and abolish armaments, and so "to produce eternal peace." A simple league could not produce these effects. For example, general disarmament was the condition for, not the consequence of, the creation of a league of nations, but that would actually be dangerous until German militarism was eradicated. If general disarmament were however not accompanied by a genuine spirit of reconciliation, it would end by lulling the democratic states "into a false sense of security during which the pacifists would persuade them to reduce their armaments, trusting to the efficacy of a league of nations exactly as our pacifists did with the Hague Conventions before the war." The problem of the League, as it was emerging from the negotiations, was that it would "become discredited through its inability to live up to the expectations which have been formed of it."⁵⁹

The essence of the idea of the League of Nations was, according to Kerr, "that all nations must combine in order to enforce respect for international justice, because in the international sphere as in the national, the enforcement of law and order is the condition of lasting peace." This would oblige the victors to guarantee "equal rights and an equal place in a true concert of the world for all nations including Germany." The League of Nations could only succeed if it represented a democratic alternative to German militarism, which was the negative expression of the historical

⁵⁷ Kerr, "The Principle of Peace," 411, 413, 422 3.

⁵⁸ Kerr to Howard, 20 April 1918, LP, 210.

⁵⁹ LP, 210/487 90; Kerr, "The Victory that Will End War," *The Round Table*, 30, (March 1918): 221 37.

trend towards world unity. To a world order "dictated by the sword," the democracies should oppose a political system which enforced "respect for public right...Anything else is really pacifism in disguise."⁶⁰

6. Kerr, Hankey, and the League of Nations

Lloyd George's endorsement of the idea "to establish by some international organization an alternative to war as a means of settling international disputes," was reinforced by Wilson's statement of "a general association of nations...formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small States alike." This idea was developed by Robert Cecil—Minister of Blockade and member of the Round Table since its foundation—in a memorandum of late 1916, which won the support of his cousin and Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour. Balfour instituted in late January 1918, with Lord Phillimore as its Chairman, a Committee to investigate the question, and which produced the first draft of the Covenant of the League of Nations.⁶¹

From the beginning the majority of its members were against the possibility of submitting questions which involved vital national interests to the judgment of a court. The most that such a league could achieve was to delay the outbreak of war for a very limited period, during which a solution could be explored and unanimous agreement eventually reached. The "interposition of a delay in seeking redress by force of arms" was, according to Cecil, "the essential thing."⁶²

Within the Phillimore Committee Hankey and Kerr proposed "to knit" the allied organizations set up within the Supreme War Council "together

⁶⁰ LP, 210/487 90.

⁶¹ For a discussion of Lloyd George's and Wilson's early ideas on the League, see Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation*, 37 42, 57 61, and Ch. IV; Knock, "Woodrow Wilson," 264 279.

⁶² On Cecil's vision, see Margaret MacMillan, *Peacemakers: The Paris Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War* (London: John Murray, 2003); Gaynor Johnson, *Lord Robert Cecil: Politician and Internationalist* (London: Ashgate, 2014); Isabel V. Hull, *A Scrap of Paper: Breaking and Making International Law during the Great War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014). The League of Nations Union was created through amalgamation of the League of Free Nations Association, founded in 1917 by Herbert G. Wells, and the League of Nations Society, and included Zimmern, Gilbert Murray, Wickham Steed, Leonard Woolf, Ernest Barker, Lowes Dickinson, John A. Hobson and Henry N. Brailsford. For a discussion on the question of international governance, see Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea, 1815 to the Present* (London: Penguin Books, 2013).

with a view to the formation of a veritable League of Nations.” As secretary of the War Imperial Cabinet, Hankey knew very well the functioning of the governmental decision-making mechanism, and proposed the extension of war-time institutions, with the inclusion of former enemies, into the post-war period of reconstruction, for the achievement of economic and political stability. The Hankey-Kerr scheme, based on the progressive administration by an international organization of sectorial competences which fell under the domain of national apparatuses, was influenced by a ‘functionalist’ approach to international relations developed by the Fabian Leonard Woolf. The wartime experience had showed, Hankey pointed out, that nations became

accustomed to transacting their business, not only on great, but on minor matters, at some common centre where there is a permanent International Bureau, and where they constantly meet the Ministers and Officials of other nations, a continuous personal contact will be established which will enable business even of the greatest magnitude to be transacted more easily than it otherwise would.⁶³

Being under the influence of Cecil and the pro-league propaganda which was gaining increasing support in the country, the Phillimore Committee initially dismissed the Hankey-Kerr scheme, proposing a system of mandatory sanctions. Kerr strongly reacted against his own Round Table fellow Cecil with an article in *The Round Table*. The defence of the rule of law in international relations could not be provided by any machinery to resort to economic and military sanctions. “It can never do what many of its advocates think it can do,” Kerr observed.

It can never be in itself a guarantee against war or against those international wrongs which lead to war...What the League of Nations will really do will not be to produce a magic millennium, but to bring home to the leading peoples the fact that they can no longer live unto themselves alone, but that they have to shoulder together the burden of maintaining law and order between nations throughout the world.

The League should rather be set up to tackle the question of economic reconstruction, promoting economic stability, and to provide an institutionalized framework to bring responsible statesmen regularly into

⁶³ “The League of Nations: Observations by the Secretary,” 16 Jan. 1918, CABP, Cab, 24/39; Minutes of the Phillimore Committee are in FOP, FO 371/3483; “League of Nations: Sketch Plan of Organisation,” [31 March 1919], FO 608/242; “Diplomacy by Conference,” *The Round Table*, 11 Dec. 1920. As a supporter of “diplomacy by conference,” Hankey became so closely associated to the league idea as to be regarded as a candidate for the post of first Secretary of the League of Nations.

conference "so as to create the indispensable basis of trust and confidence without which no human organization can achieve enduring results." The Imperial War Cabinet and Imperial Conferences provided, according to Kerr, the "most helpful" model to be applied to the search for international stability.⁶⁴

The Round Table always opposed the League as an instrument of collective security through sanctions, and envisaged it as a centre for multilateral diplomacy and international co-operation on the basis of voluntary agreements. Curtis pointed out even more clearly that the Peace Conference did not have the mandate "to produce a written constitution for the globe or a genuine government for mankind," and that "if the burden of a world government" was placed on an association of sovereign nations, it would "fall with a crash." On the base of national sovereignty it was not possible to establish more than "a permanent annual conference between foreign ministers...with a permanent secretariat...in which all questions at issue between States can be discussed and, if possible, settled by agreement." Such a conference, even if it could not "itself govern the world, no less for those portions of mankind who cannot govern themselves," could "act as a symbol and organ of the human conscience, however imperfect, to which real governments of existing states can be made answerable for facts which concern the world at large." According to Zimmern, the League of Nations could have some chances of success only on condition that rather than "invalidating or diminishing national sovereignty," it would "strengthen and increase it."⁶⁵

Wilson's opposition to both the Hankey-Kerr and Phillimore schemes brought Lloyd George to ask Lord Reading, who was to undertake a diplomatic mission to Washington in the early autumn of 1918, to find out American views. Kerr asked Curtis, who would have visited the United States, to approach Beer and other members of the Inquiry in order to find common ground for an agreement on the future League, and an Anglo-American administration of German and Ottoman colonies.⁶⁶

Wilson's determination to build the post-war settlement on the basis of his own conception of the League was made manifest to Lloyd George in late October 1918 by William Wiseman, head of British intelligence in

⁶⁴ Kerr, "The Victory that"; id., "The Unity of Civilisation," *The Round Table*, 32, (Sept. 1918).

⁶⁵ Lionel Curtis, "The Windows of Freedom," *The Round Table*, 33, (Dec. 1918): 1 47; Alfred Zimmern, "Some Principles and Problems of the Settlement," *The Round Table*, 33, (Dec. 1918).

⁶⁶ WCP, WC 481,9, 2 Oct. 1918, Cab 23/8; Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation*, 78 80; Kerr to Curtis, 15 October 1918, CP, Round Table Offices file.

America. Negotiations between the Allies and Colonel House representing Wilson, which brought about the pre-armistice agreement of 5 November, had persuaded the British and Dominions governments that the future of Anglo-American relations would depend on the settlement of the League question. Wilson thought that the British should not describe Americans as their cousins or brothers, as they were “neither.” According to Wilson, the foundations of an Anglo-American alliance could only lie on a “community of ideals and interests.”⁶⁷

Egerton identified three principal strategic approaches in the fundamental decisions of the late December 1918 Imperial War Cabinet. If “traditionalists from the Foreign Office, Admiralty, and War Office,” Egerton observed, “favoured a policy which sought security from continued naval hegemony, and a European balance of power in alliance with France,” imperialists saw “enhanced naval supremacy” of “a consolidated British Empire with much closer Anglo-Dominion partnership and the extension of Imperial territories and bases at the expense of defeated enemies, in Africa and the Middle East.” Internationalists, on the other hand

looked to a transformation of the pre war diplomatic system and the creation of a league of nations which would preserve peace, provide its members a new source of security, and serve as an alternative to the balance of power, naval hegemony, and Imperial expansion.⁶⁸

Atlanticists, alternatively, “looked to an alignment of Anglo-American interests and ideals which would bring in a stable, progressive world order.” The search for a common position among these British/Dominions diverging views, and between them and the French and the Americans’ expectations, characterized the negotiation which led to the Versailles settlement.⁶⁹

“Kerr’s influence on the question of international organization within the Lloyd George Government was,” according to Egerton, “greater that has generally been recognized.” His conception of international organization “exhibited a realism and practicality lacking in the more ambitious constitution and structure erected by Wilson and Cecil.” The Americans, Egerton remarked, would have most likely joined a League based on voluntary co-operation instead of coercion, as suggested by Kerr, and it

⁶⁷ [William Wiseman], “The Attitude of the United States and of President Wilson Towards the Peace Settlement,” 20 Oct. 1918, FOP, FO 800/214; MacMillan, *Peacemakers*, 29.

⁶⁸ Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation*, Ch. VII.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

“would have functioned at the centre of post-war world politics rather than being peripheralised.”⁷⁰

7. The Round Table, Kerr, and Ireland

The Round Table initiative to tackle the Irish question came in August 1916 from Selborne, with two articles published on *The Morning Post*. From 1887 to 1917, Irish affairs had been one of the most important concerns of the Cecil family, which always opposed home rule for Ireland. “Ireland must claim equal nationality amongst the constituent nationalities of the United Kingdom,” *The Observer* pointed out in May 1917, “but cannot for a moment claim to be an altogether superior and privileged nationality.” According to *The Manchester Guardian* there was a fundamental difference “between home rule that is advocated as Gladstone advocated the cause of Ireland, out of sympathy with a nationality that had been denied its just expression, and home rule conceded not on the ground of nationality, but as a measure of improving the efficiency of collective government.”⁷¹

An Irish Convention held at Regent House in Dublin from 25 July 1917 to 5 April 1918 produced a draft Irish Home Rule Bill. This was based on a scheme by Selborne and Oliver and was to be presented into the House of Commons before the Military Service Bill, which was to introduce conscription into Ireland. According to the Home Rule Bill, all the powers not specifically assigned to the English, Scottish and Irish legislatures would be handed out to the Imperial Parliament. It proposed the partial control of taxation by an Irish Parliament, leaving the Parliament of the United Kingdom to levy direct taxes on Irish incomes and property. It also proposed the continuance of Irish representation within Westminster on the basis of population. Each of the three units was to be allowed to adopt that form of Constitution which most suited its

⁷⁰ George Egerton, “Imperialism, Atlanticism and Internationalism: Philip Kerr and the League of Nation Question, 1916-1920,” *Annals of the Lothian Foundation*, vol. 1, (1991): 118-9. On Kerr and the Round Table's contribution to the war time debate on closer Anglo-American relations, see Priscilla Roberts, “World War I and Anglo-American Relations: The Role of Philip Lothian and the Round Table,” *The Round Table*, 95, 383, (Jan. 2006): 113-39.

⁷¹ Boyce, *Englishmen and Irish*, 39; *The Morning Post*, 8 and 18 Aug. 1916; John Kendle, “Federalism and the Irish Problem in 1918,” *History*, 61, (1971): 207-30; id., *Ireland and the Federal*, 179; D. G. Boyce and J. O. Stubbs, “F. S. Oliver, Lord Selborne and Federalism,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 5, (1976): 53-81; Hyam, *Elgin and Churchill*, 544.

traditions and needs. Ireland would have a Senate and two lower Houses, one for Ulster and one for the rest of Ireland. Walter Long and Amery called it a “United Kingdom” rather than an Irish Bill, “pressing for the establishment of a series of National Parliaments.”⁷²

Sir Edward Carson—leader of the Irish Unionists in the House of Commons—tried to remind Lloyd George of his early federalist sympathies, and to persuade him that federalism could provide the only basis “upon which a settlement was possible” to the Irish question. Speaking to the Ulster Unionists in 1918, Lloyd George had in fact declared that the Government had in mind the “reorganization of the affairs of the United Kingdom on federal lines.” He had always supported the federal idea, Lloyd George told a Deputation of impenitent Irish federalists led by Lord Brassey on 26 June 1918, but it needed “something like general assent” in the country. England was “what really matters,” and since the war required “national unity,” controversial measures were inappropriate.⁷³

The decision by the War Cabinet in March 1918 to extend compulsory conscription to Ireland, which had been exempt until then, prevented however the Irish question from being resolved by the envisaged federation of the United Kingdom and jeopardized the whole plan: it brought moderate Irish Nationalists round to the position of the revolutionary Sinn Féin Movement. For the Round Table the opposition of the Irish nationalists to national service was betrayal. Ireland appeared to Curtis as “that part of the British Isles which has hitherto been the most laggard in the performance of its duties.” Ireland had let the Empire down at the most critical moment. In opposing conscription, Irishmen were

⁷² Kendle, *Ireland and the Federal*, 191; Boyce and Stubbs, “F. S. Oliver, Lord Selborne”, 67 9; Richard Murphy, “Walter Long and the Making of the Government of Ireland Act, 1919 20,” *Irish Historical Studies*, 25, 97, (May 1986): 82 96. A resolution moved by the House of Commons in June 1919 stated that “with a view to enabling the Imperial Parliament to devote more attention to the general interests of the United Kingdom, in collaboration with the other governments of the Empire, to matters of common Imperial concern...the time has come for the creation of subordinate legislatures within the United Kingdom, and that to this end the government, without prejudice to any proposals it may have with regard to Ireland, should forthwith appoint a parliamentary body to consider and report...upon a measure of federal devolution applicable to England, Scotland and Ireland,” *Conference on Devolution. Letter from Mr Speaker to the Prime Minister* (London: 1920), Cmd 692, 2.

⁷³ 23 April 1918, War Cabinet Minutes, CABP, Cab, 23/6; Boyce and Stubbs, “F. S. Oliver, Lord Selborne”, 73. For a discussion on Lloyd George’s attitude to the Irish crisis, see Savage, “The Parnell of Wales.”

failing, according to *The Times*, the only test for self-government "worth anything in these days." The lack of their "readiness to share in the burden which the war imposes on the self-governing peoples of the Empire" showed their political immaturity.⁷⁴

The Round Table strongly attacked Sinn Féin's doctrine of self-determination, defined as "the apotheosis of selfishness and the highway to war." The Irish people seemed "morbidly obsessed by the demon of racial intolerance...which lies at the bottom of the present war." Sinn Féin's "ideal government" was, according to Kerr, "to separate mankind into watertight racial compartments instead of to unite humanity under equal laws giving equal rights and opportunities to every individual," a vision opposed to the "larger idea of a union of self-governing communities which the American Federation and the British Empire" stood for. Kerr rejected the doctrine of self-determination, since there was latent in it an "indefinite anarchism." Self-government did not mean independence but the acceptance of responsibilities.⁷⁵

While thinking that Sinn Féin was, like extreme nationalists in India and Egypt, and anti-Imperialists in French Canada, unrepresentative, Kerr thought that their leadership hold on the Irish people was temporary. A mixture of concessions and coercion would eventually strengthen the moderates in their demands for dominion status rather than total independence. The sectarian nature of Irish politics was the consequence, according to Kerr, of the role played by the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the resistance to conscription in Ireland. Kerr, a former Catholic brought up, according to Curtis, under a "religion of terror," developed an intense dislike for all forms of sectarianism:

The root of the trouble in Ireland Kerr wrote to Coupland in 1919 is that the population is under clerical control. Until somebody has the courage to say that we will never settle the problem...at every crisis it is the Bishops and Maynooth which finally determine the political action of the people...Ulsterism and Carsonism, like the violence of atheism and

⁷⁴ Curtis to Lady Selborne, 10 Aug. 1915, CP, 2, 180 83; "Memorandum," 14 June 1915, and Curtis to Kerr, 15 June 1915, RTP, c809, 54 66; Curtis to Milner, 18 Oct. 1916, RTP, c780, 189 95; *The Times*, 11 June 1918; 8, 19 Oct. 1916; *Erskine Childers Diary*, July 1919, Erskine Childers Papers, Trinity College, Dublin, MS.7811.

⁷⁵ Philip Kerr, "Ireland and the Empire," *Round Table*, 6, 24, (Sept. 1916): 633 34; id., "The Irish Crisis," *Ibidem*, 8, 31, (June 1918): 522; Amery, *My Political Life*, 151 53; Kerr to Lloyd George, 31 July 1920, LGP, F/90/1/14.

radicalism in France, Spain and Italy, are really the consequences of the political control exercised by a great religious organization.⁷⁶

The struggle against Sinn Féin was, according to Kerr, “exactly the same as the struggle in South Africa and in the war of the North and South” in the United States, since Sinn Féin was apparently the leading force within three out of the four Irish provinces. It was, in fact, the Sinn Féin landslide victory in the 1918 election which put an end to both the devolutionary home rule for Ireland and the federal solution for Britain. Apparently unaware of the changed Irish political situation, the House of Commons carried on 4 June 1919 a motion introduced by Edward Wood—later to become Lord Halifax—by 187 votes against 34, stating that the time had come “for the creation of subordinate legislatures within the United Kingdom.” Even Churchill evoked the danger of a parliamentary breakdown if the United Kingdom was not federated. Amery thought that Ulster’s exclusion from the rest of Ireland’s home rule was “completely modified if the measure is one which gives real guarantees for the preservation of the United Kingdom as a single sovereign unit.”⁷⁷

8. *Kerr’s revisionist outlook*

During the twenty months spent next to Lloyd George as a war leader, Kerr developed a sense of guilt for having been involved, through *The Round Table*, in the wild anti-German press campaign, which played such a crucial role in building widespread popular consent to British entry into the war. A measure of it is offered by his analysis of the origins of the war outlined in 1935 in *Pacifism is not enough*. In this writing, Kerr—by then Lord Lothian—presented with extreme lucidity and economy of words his federalist conception of international relations, and turned to the causes of the war apparently to bring evidence to his theoretical analysis. In fact, Lothian tried to justify himself for having joined forces with *The Round*

⁷⁶ Kerr, “The Irish Crisis,” 496–525; *The Times*, 24 April 1918, 7; Curtis to Lady Selborne, 8 March 1914, MSP, d430, 197–98; Kerr to Coupland, 23 Aug. 1919, LP, 490; Turner, *The Larger Idea*, 14, 36. For a discussion, see: D. G. Boyce, *Englishmen and Irish Troubles: British Public Opinion and the Making of Irish Policy, 1918–1922* (London: 1972).

⁷⁷ Kerr to E. Lascelles, 24 Dec. 1920, LP, 214, 124–26; Leo Amery to Lloyd George, 17 April May 1918, LGP F2/1/18 23. Imperial federation and Irish home rule appeared interlinked to both Reginald Baliol Brett Esher in *After the War* (Richmond, CA: University of California Libraries, 1918), and Edward Frederick Lindley Wood in *The Great Opportunity* (London: 1918).

Table in *The Times*' and *The Observer*'s anti-German pre-war propaganda. Members of the Kindergarten were not anti-German before 1914 or pro-German after 1919, but were all the time strong supporters of the British Empire's reasons for existence and its cohesion, not merely from a nationalist point of view but also because it represented the foundation for the economic and political stability of the world as a whole. The Empire, they thought, had to be strengthened in order to face the crisis of western civilization.

The conclusion which Lothian presented to the reader was that the entry of Great Britain into the war was inevitable. But he knew that it was not. Great Britain could have prevented it, and Lothian spent all his intellectual and moral energies in the years to come developing the theory and practice of appeasement in order to prevent its repeat on a larger scale. Here is the key to understanding Lothian's complete severance from Milnerism.

Aware that the Great War had been an unnecessary carnage, in which he lost his brother David, Lothian made of his desperate attempt to prevent the Second World War a personal matter. He brought into play all the extraordinary fire-power accumulated meanwhile by the Round Table, especially at the Royal Institute of International Affairs—better known as Chatham House—and with the Round Table's stable connections in the City and with the property of *The Times* and *The Observer*. In the implementation of a policy diametrically opposed to that of Milner, appeasement, Lothian actually contributed to paving the way to Hitler's supremacy in Central and Eastern Europe, exactly what Milner and the Liberal League had denied to the King's cousin. It is interesting to note how the architects of those diametrically opposed policies towards Germany belonged to the same organization, and how those policies were in any case unable to prevent the outbreak of two world wars. Indeed, they accelerated the drift towards catastrophe.

In his reconstruction of contemporary European history, Lothian tried to define the broad process through which Europe fell from the relative stability of the Nineteenth century into the tragedy of the Twentieth. With German national unification, the old concert of Europe that had emerged from the Congress of Vienna had been replaced by a system of two opposing military alliances. The political and military European balance was maintained by the neutrality of Great Britain, which acted as the stabilizer of the European system of states. Each modification of the European territorial *status quo* had immediate repercussions on strategic considerations: the greater or lesser chance of victory in case of war. "Alterations in the political structure of Europe," Lothian observed, "to

meet the changing conditions of the times could thereafter only be made by agreement between these two groups.” The judgement on single claims for change could not be made by “considerations of reason or justice but according to whether a particular proposal increased or diminished the security or the prospect of victory of either of the groups or of the particular states within it, in the event of war.” In such a situation, “every local conflict tended to develop immediately into a general war.” As an inevitable corollary “might became the supreme element in European politics—for the ultimate question in every particular controversy was whether either side was prepared to throw the sword into the scale.” European power politics arose, according to Lothian, “not from the malignity of this nation or that, though some played it more readily than others, but inexorably from the anarchy of Europe.”⁷⁸

The continuing frustration of German demands to be recognized as a great power, and to have a role in colonial policy proportionate to her power, led Germany to embark on an aggressive expansionist policy through the increase of her fleet. German naval rearmament was not intended—Lothian remarked, reversing what he supported in *The Round Table* between 1910 to 1914—“to give Germany supremacy, but...to ensure that no decision should be made without taking Germany’s wishes into account.” Germany wanted “equality,” and “there was nothing wicked about this desire in itself.” What made “it fatal” was that in a “European anarchy”, and in a precarious balance between opposing alliances, only war could alter the *status quo*. The catastrophe had been preceded by a series of international crises, such as the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary from Turkey in 1908, and the Agadir crisis in 1911, when Great Britain “threw the sword into the scale to induce Germany to withdraw when she sent a small warship to Agadir to show her resentment at France’s monopolizing Morocco under the Anglo-French agreement of 1904.” “The dissolution of the old Turkish Empire in Europe,” Lothian observed, “the growing weakness of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as the power of the Slavs increased, and Russia’s recoil to the West after her defeat by Japan in Manchuria” had created a situation in which “the strategic balance between the Dual and the Triple Alliance would be upset.”⁷⁹

The two Balkan wars did not turn, according to Lothian, into a general war “because they did not markedly affect the balance between the two

⁷⁸ Lord Lothian, *Pacifism is not enough, nor Patriotism either. Collected Lectures and Speeches by Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr)*, Andrea Bosco and John Pinder eds. (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1990), 230 1.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, 231 2.

groups and were fought mainly at the expense of the 'sick man of Europe',” whereas the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, symbol of the unity of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, “affected the very existence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire,” and therefore that of Russia, Germany and Italy. The incident gave the German and Austro-Hungarian military hierarchies the opportunity of achieving a prominent position in the Balkans by means of a rapid and decisive campaign. The weakness of South-East Europe could not last for long: power vacuums could not be tolerated in a strained international situation. The space Germany intended to occupy would be taken over by Russia, and so “Europe stumbled into war without anybody deliberately pressing the button.” Once Europe had entered “the atmosphere of war, the military time-table became predominant, and the accident of the assassination thrust the statesmen on one side and swept everybody helplessly and headlong into the abyss.”⁸⁰

The concept of the time-table was used by Lothian in Weberian terms, since it showed “the decisive influence which, under conditions of anarchy, is exercised in a crisis by strategic considerations.” The assassination of Archduke Ferdinand had made the ultimatum to Serbia inevitable, since the corollary of power politics was to show readiness—in certain circumstances—to risk war. The detonator which made the Great War explode had not been Germany's support for the Austro-Hungarian “extremely stiff” ultimatum to Serbia, which was intended to obtain a diplomatic success for Vienna and give it a free hand in the Balkans, but the mobilisation of the Austro-Hungarian army to force Serbia into surrender. This decision was followed by Russia, in defence of Serbia, and so Germany had become like a nut in a nutcracker as can be seen in the telegrams exchanged between Kaiser Wilhelm II and Czar Nicholas II.

“There are many who think,” Lothian pointed out regretfully, “that if Britain had similarly thrown her sword into the scale on the other side, Germany would have withdrawn,” as did Russia in 1908, and Germany itself in 1911. “The essential difference from the 1908 and the 1911 crises,” Lothian pointed out, “was that in 1914 Austria-Hungary mobilized a large part of her army”, and was prepared to occupy Belgrade: “That was the percussion cap which ignited the World War.” “A declaration by the British Government of its intention to fight for Belgium,” Lothian admitted, “might have affected the course of events if it had been made before Franz Ferdinand was assassinated.” Lothian controversially concluded that “it could have made no difference after mobilization had been ordered.” He put forward this conclusion more as a posthumous

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, 232 3.

justification for the historical responsibilities of Britain's major foreign policy makers—Milner, Asquith, Law, Grey and Haldane—than as historical fact. Lothian knew that the Kaiser was willing to suspend mobilization had the British Government provided certain guarantees to Germany, or declared the inviolability of Belgium's borders.⁸¹

The factor which "entered upon the scene which rapidly and fatally swept diplomacy and the statesmen on one side," was that since Austria-Hungary mobilized "the proportion of her army which she thought was necessary to compel the submission of Serbia," Russia "retailed partly to be prepared to save her fellow Slav state...from extinction...partly because her general staff declared that if she did not mobilize a large part of the Russian army, the Austro-Hungarian army could march unopposed to Warsaw directly its mobilization was complete." Germany's "very existence in the event of war—her chance of victory—depended," Lothian observed, "upon her being able to defeat one of her two allied neighbours before the other was ready." Russia possessed a much larger army, but she mobilized far more slowly than her neighbours. The *Schlieffen* plan therefore

provided that in the event of war the German army should put its whole strength into overwhelming France and then turn back against Russia, before the Russian 'steam roller' could reach Berlin in order that Germany might not be caught by the necessity of fighting numerically superior forces simultaneously on two fronts.

On the other hand, "France and Russia realized that Germany and Austria-Hungary had the immense advantage of the interior position and could move their armies from front to front whereas the French and Russian armies could never combine":

Everything, therefore, for both sides depended upon their not being caught unmobilised and unprepared. Hence as soon as the factor of mobilization was introduced strategic considerations swept Sir Edward Grey's diplomacy ruthlessly aside. Each side implored the other to cancel its mobilization if war was to be avoided. Neither was willing, perhaps able, to comply. This was the terrible time table which dragged the whole of Europe into mobilization, with irresistible violence.

When German mobilization was complete, its army "strode through Belgium to endeavour—on the ground that it was the only way both to avoid defeat and to gain a victory—to encircle and roll up the French army before Russia was ready."⁸²

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, 233 5.

⁸² *Ibidem*, 234.

In an anarchic system of sovereign states, the military time-table "inevitably" became "a governing factor when the competition in armaments and alliances" had reached "a certain point of tension and nations began to think in terms whether their national existence may not depend, if not upon getting in the first blow at least in not being caught unprepared." A political crisis which involved vital strategic issues could develop into a war of global dimensions without any statesman deliberately 'pushing the button'. Lothian therefore attributed the ultimate cause of the Great War to European anarchy, in which states were forced to think in terms of security rather than justice. When the decision passes out

of the hands of the statesmen and Parliaments...a knave, a fool, or an accident can precipitate an event in some corner of the world which thrusts the diplomats on one side and puts the military time table in command and slides the whole world into a war which nobody wants.⁸³

If this conclusion is correct from a federalist conception of international relations, Lothian omitted to mention that British foreign policy from late 1905 to 1914 deliberately created the German threat, by negating Germany a place among nations which corresponded to her real economic and military strength, encircling her with a system of alliances, and building in Great Britain and the Dominions, through a manipulated press, a widespread anti-German feeling. Lothian also omitted to mention that the outbreak of the First World War prevented the shift of the Anglo-Irish conflict into a civil war, and that it was not just a coincidence. For Unionist leaders—Milner, Carson, and Bonar Law—and Liberal Imperialists, a European 'regional' war was preferable to a civil war in Ireland. The problem was that Great Britain was no longer able, as she was during the Nineteenth century, to localize it and defeat the Continental hegemonic Power without the assistance of an 'external' Power, the United States.

Lothian only indirectly mentioned that the origins of the World War lay in the British failure to recognize the rise of German power as a stability factor for Central and Eastern Europe, and to appease Germany with colonial expansion before the Anglo-German naval rearmament race compromised a diplomatic and peaceful settlement of the Continental balance of power. The vulnerability of the Asiatic frontiers of the Empire forced Great Britain to choose between Russia and Germany, and the vulnerability of the Channel forced Britain to choose between France and Germany. The choice of France and Russia, the United States being still

⁸³ *Ibidem*, 235.

on the fringe of international power politics, destroyed the British advantage of insularity, which had been the fundamental strategic basis for British world hegemony during the Nineteenth century. Once entangled in Continental alliances, Great Britain was an insular power no longer, and was no longer able to prevent, with the assistance of the Dominions alone, a European war from developing into a world conflict.

It is not possible to define exactly the moment at which Kerr became conscious of the fatal mistakes of pre-war British foreign policy as interpreted by Milner and the Liberal League, and started the formulation of its reversal. Lloyd George certainly exercised a deep influence on Kerr, deeper than that exercised beforehand by Milner himself. It had been however more a moral than an intellectual influence. Kerr felt somehow manipulated by Milner in his anti-German crusade and, being deeply religious, could not share Milner's total devotion to the Empire as a divinity by itself. After Milner's death, Lady Milner claimed that her husband mistrusted Kerr, as he did other "unmanly men." In late years apparently Milner was "deeply concerned about the extent to which the Round Table was drifting away from Imperial interests," because of Lloyd George's influence on Kerr. In fact, Kerr abandoned his early Tory sympathies, and after joining Lloyd George at Downing Street remained a Liberal for the rest of his life. And just because of his close association with Lloyd George, he was later opposed by Asquith's Liberals. Kerr's Liberal 'conversion' was mainly due to his closest friend Robert Brand, and was however limited to economic and social issues. Lothian confuted the Liberal faith in the nation-State and indivisible sovereignty on the basis of his federalist doctrine. Kerr also argued against the Liberal belief in international trade as the principal guarantee for world peace, rendering war obsolete. In Lloyd George, Kerr admired the man and the leader more than his Liberal ideas.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Lady Milner to Grigg, 23 June 1925; Grigg to Hichens, 15 Dec. 1931, Grigg Papers, Microfilm 1002. International trade was, according to John S. Mill, more than the application of the federal idea, "the principal guarantee of the peace of the world," and was "rapidly rendering war obsolete," J. S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (London: 1848), citations from 1909 edn., 582. The failure of Nineteenth century Liberal economists to envisage the establishment of the reign of law as a condition of international trade has been explained by Pinder as due to their faith in national power and indivisible sovereignty, "which could not be reconciled with a federal international order." A second reason was that at the same time they "wanted less government," which was "logically consistent" within a national State where there was too much, but this prevented them from seeing "the need for even a minimum of international government." Liberals supported nationalist causes in Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Poland only through the

Lloyd George certainly helped Kerr to free himself from the “*religio Milneriana*”—as Campbell-Bannermann defined Milner’s version of British imperialism—but it was the experience of the war, having been at “as near the centre of power as it was possible for a man to be,” which offered Kerr the opportunity to look for new paradigms to comprehend the deep meaning of an historical turning point. Freeing himself from Milnerism, Kerr began in Paris that ‘Copernican revolution’ which would cost his divorce from active policy for a period of ten years, during which he developed his federalist conception of international relations.⁸⁵

According to Billington, the pre-war years “left Kerr and his friends with a legacy of alienation from the wisdom of conventional government and officialdom,” particularly in relation to Milner’s cynical handling of the Irish crisis. “During the war and postwar years,” Billington argued, “this alienation would enable Kerr to see some of the long-range needs of both the empire and the larger world order. But it would also encourage him to trust his own intuition and judgement how best to meet these needs.”⁸⁶

In Paris Kerr however had not yet completed his ‘Copernican revolution’. Kerr was in Paris the first Englishman to make concrete proposals regarding the policy of appeasement, but only in so far as he was an interpreter and an exponent of Gladstonian liberalism, to which he had added the Hamiltonian federalist conception of international relations. In Paris Kerr could not grasp all the meanings and consequences of the application of the federal idea to international relations, which brought him later to become a pioneer of Atlantic unification.

nation State. Finally Pinder pointed out that “the security of world commerce and the stability of world money were, in the Nineteenth century, largely the responsibility of the Royal Navy and the Bank of England; and this may have made it easier for the British, including liberals, to overlook the deficiencies of the system,” (Pinder, *The Federal Idea and the British*, 101 2, 106). Lionel Robbins underlined the failure of classical economists to see that a liberal international economy needed international juridical and political institutions, in order to enact, judge and enforce laws of property, contract, and competition. Classical economists had not been aware of the contradiction inherent in conceiving a world economy without a world order, Lionel Robbins, *Economic Planning and International Order* (London: 1937), 240 1, 225 9, 426 9; id., *The Economic Causes of War* (London: 1939).

⁸⁵ Philip Kerr and Lionel Curtis, *The Prevention of War* (New Haven, CT: 1923), 8.

⁸⁶ Billington, *Lothian. Philip Kerr*, 37.

CHAPTER VII

THE ROUND TABLE AT THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

1. Kerr at the Paris Peace Conference

On 15 November 1918, Kerr left for Paris with Lloyd George, Balfour and Hankey, to sign the Armistice with Turkey, Austria-Hungary and Germany. In the meantime, the ‘Garden Suburb’ had been dissolved, but Kerr had remained at the Prime Minister’s side as his principal adviser on foreign policy. By then Kerr enjoyed the total trust of Lloyd George, who left him great freedom in the negotiations. Dockrill has observed that

it is difficult to determine precisely the impact of Kerr’s advice on the course of British policy. But from the testimony of contemporaries, from Lloyd George’s replies to Kerr’s letters, and from the way in which many of Kerr’s recommendations found their way into policy documents and decisions, there can be no doubt that the Prime Minister listened carefully to Kerr’s suggestions...Hankey alone enjoyed a similar intimacy with Lloyd George.¹

According to Neilson, in Paris Kerr “acted in some way akin to a foreign secretary—his primary tasks were to keep Lloyd George informed of events and to ensure that the prime minister’s views were known—it is equally clear that he played an important role as an intermediary and that his own opinions at least coloured British policy.”²

According to Roberts,

Lothian’s public career possessed greater coherence than many have suggested, being dominated by one overall defining theme, a single minded quest for national advantage and the effort to win the friendship and support of the world’s potential great power...His methods and style in pursuing his objectives perhaps go some way toward explaining why,

¹ Dockrill and Turner, “Philip Kerr at 10”, 58.

² Neilson, “Lord Lothian, Russia,” 46.

during his lifetime and well beyond, Lothian's character and activities often attracted seemingly...excessive condemnation and reproach.³

During the Peace Conference, which opened in January 1919, Kerr's influence on British politics was so marked that during a commemorative debate in the House of Commons on 19 December 1940, Lloyd George was to admit that "some of the greatest men of the day—Clemenceau, President Wilson, Venizelos", had been so impressed by "the depth and breadth of his intellectual capacity," that "they treated him, not as a Prime Minister's Secretary, but as if he were an emissary to the Conference, and a very important one." In fact, Kerr did not just act as a second in command, representing Lloyd George on various *ad hoc* committees and maintaining contacts with the American Delegation and the press, but also acted in his own right, outlining the structure of the treaty. His experience in Paris represented a turning point in his public career, giving him the chance to leave his mark on the post-war settlement, and at the same time to test his political vision in the field of international politics.⁴

Round Table members who went to the Paris Peace Conference in an official capacity were Milner (Colonial Minister and Chairman of the Commission appointed to draft the mandates), Kerr, Curtis (adviser to the British Delegation), Robert Cecil (Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council); the Australians John Latham, Eggleston, and Robert Garran; and the American George Beer, member of the Inquiry. Curtis attributed the high number of Round Table members present at the Paris Peace Conference "to the fact that for ten years...the group system had given the R.T. men a special training." By 1918 *The Round Table* had, in fact, "won an established and influential position" throughout the British Empire, with sales of around "ten and a half thousand." It had the "largest and most widely-distributed circulation of any political quarterly magazine in the British Empire."⁵

Shortly before leaving for Paris, Kerr wrote a long letter to Lionel Curtis, affirming his optimism regarding the geo-political settlement of Europe, as he was convinced that the Allied victory would allow a re-drawing of frontiers which would eliminate, as far as that was possible "nationalist jealousies," while fearing that the most serious problems would arise from the treatment of the "politically backward peoples," still

³ Priscilla Roberts, Introduction to *Lord Lothian and Anglo American*, 15 6.

⁴ Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 71.

⁵ Sir Robert Garran, Sir John Latham, Vincent Massey, and Loring Christie played prominent roles in the political life of Canada and Australia. Curtis to Glazebrook, 2 Sept. 1921, RTP, c 796, 134 40; 7 Nov. 1911, RTP, c 844. Advertising circular for the United States, 1918, *ibidem*, fol. 234.

subject to colonial rule. The Americans, he thought, still had “a childlike faith in the virtues of democracy and laissez faire” and, unfortunately, Wilson—who was the “absolute dictator of American public opinion”—appeared to share that view. The Round Table, on the contrary, believed that only direct intervention by European powers would be able to protect politically backward populations from the corrupting influences caused by the impact of Western civilisation, while encouraging their progress towards self-government.⁶

Kerr feared that Wilson would induce Great Britain to enter into “some kind of international system which may be a source of serious friction in the future.” The Americans had “an attitude towards the problem of world government exactly analogous to the one they took during the first three years of the war towards the problem of the world war,” and tended to believe that the assumption of international responsibilities was “iniquitous imperialism.” “You can see,” Kerr continued, “what an immense difference is going to make whether America comes to learn its responsibilities in regard to this matter quickly or slowly.” If the Americans were slow, “we shall be condemned to a period not only of chaos in these backward countries, but of strained relations between the various parts of the English-speaking world.” It was vital to persuade the Americans and the Canadians that “a share in the burden of world government is just as great and glorious a responsibility as participation in the war.” In order to “give to the whole English-speaking world a common task in the execution of which they can co-operate,” it was necessary to “remove the last great barrier to an Anglo-Saxon understanding.”⁷

According to Kerr, these differences were very damaging and dangerous, not only because they would throw non-self-governing populations into chaos, but also because they might adversely affect Anglo-American relations, both during and after the Peace Conference. The share of “the burden of world government” could no longer be borne by Great Britain alone. Wilson was “the prophet of Gladstonian liberalism brought up to date,” negative in its essence, and “bound to produce a settlement which will contain within itself the seeds of Gordon and Majuba disasters on a vastly larger scale.” It was unrealistic, according to Kerr, to keep the peace, in the military sense of the term, by “arbitration and disarmament and other purely negative measures.” It was necessary to convert the Americans to “a larger, more constructive and more generous

⁶ Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 68.

⁷ *Ibidem*, 69–70; Roger Louis, *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914–1919* (Oxford: 1967).

conception of international reconstruction based upon the idea of responsibility.” This was the philosophy followed by Kerr at the Peace Conference in Paris, but it could only partially be transformed into principles of action because of the precarious state of Anglo-American relations. Kerr considered the United States “a complementary, rather than a competitive factor.”⁸

Kerr was of the opinion that Wilson’s Fourteen Points were “mostly verbiage”, and that what mattered most was the diplomatic unity of the British/Dominion delegations at the Peace Conference. Kerr thought that the Dominions would take part in the Peace Conference “in the spirit which will more and more resist the assertion of any superior authority or influence on the part of the British Government.” The war transformed the Empire into “five nations deliberating on equal terms round a table at which India will also be represented.”⁹

Signals which came from Dominion leaders were not encouraging. Hughes, New Zealand’s Prime Minister, had complained, on behalf of other Dominion leaders, about their exclusion from the Anglo-American talks which led to the pre-Armistice Agreement of 5 November. Borden, Canadian Prime Minister, claimed an independent Dominion representation at the coming negotiations. General Smuts, South African Prime Minister, emerged as an advocate of moving the centre of gravity of post-war international relations from the Channel to the North Atlantic.¹⁰

Borden, in particular, advocated with Amery, then Assistant Secretary to the Imperial War Cabinet, the creation of a post-war world order based on the union “by the closest ties of purpose, of interest and of action” of the

two great English speaking commonwealths which are of themselves sufficiently powerful to dictate the peace of the world if they can subordinate to a common aim the jealousies and divergences which naturally arise from time to time; and through such an understanding or

⁸ Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 68 70; Michael G. Fry, *Illusions of Security: North Atlantic Diplomacy, 1918 1922* (Toronto: 1922), 7. On Lloyd George’s attitude towards Wilson idealism, see Sterling J. Kernek, “Distractions of Peace during War: The Lloyd George Government’s Reactions to Woodrow Wilson, December, 1916 November, 1918,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Ser., 55, 2, (1975): 1 117.

⁹ Kerr to Curtis, 21 July, 1917, LP, 33.

¹⁰ Kerr to Hankey, 13 Nov. 1918, LP, 57; CABP, Cab 44, 16 December 1918; Cab. 29/2; reprinted in David Hunter Miller, *The Drafting of the Covenant*, vol. 2 (New York: 1928), 23 60; Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation*, 101 103. On Hughes, see Carl Bridge, *William Hughes: Australia* (London: Haus Publishing, 2011).

alliance between Britain and America to have a less active and intimate relationship to the minor complexities and rivalries of European politics.¹¹

Kerr's ideas and the Dominion leaders' outlooks were taken up by Curtis's *Round Table* article "Windows of Freedom," published in December 1918. This article won Curtis an invitation from Cecil to attend the work of the Peace Conference, and provided the underlying inspiration for the creation in late May 1919, on the initiative of Curtis himself, of the Institute of International Affairs. James Shotwell—intimate of Beer, member of the American Delegation to the Peace Conference, co-founder of the Institute of International Relations, and future President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace—regarded Curtis's article as "one of the most eloquent statements of responsible idealism to be found in any of the literature at the close of the war." Curtis's viewpoint—discussed with Kerr at a weekend at Cliveden before the Germans had requested the Armistice and published after it had been signed—was that unless the United States shared with the British Empire "the burden of world government" through a League of Nations, the world would experience "the greatest danger which can threaten mankind." After the war, the Atlantic appeared in fact to Curtis "narrower than the Straits of Dover before steam."¹²

In "The Windows of Freedom" Curtis made a passionate appeal for Anglo-American cooperation to guarantee the adequate functioning of the League. The war had persuaded the Americans that "the world is one", and that it was "now impossible" to return to their pre-war policy of isolation. "Having put her hand to the plough," could America "look back?" Curtis questioned. "Can she now go back to the plea that American interests are the dominating principle of her policy?"

The League would "not constitute a world government," Curtis remarked. Unless it was composed of democratically elected representatives, and able to directly levy taxes, developing "the structure of a world government," the League would remain little more than a "scaffolding." A League "plastered with phrases and made to look like stone" could, according to Curtis, become "the greatest danger which can threaten mankind." "The hour...not yet" came for a "Government speaking and acting in the name of mankind." The League could however bring "peace,

¹¹ Borden to Amery, 22 Aug. 1918, LP, 1064/2; Bothwell, *Loring Cristie*, 163 4; Fry, *Illusions of Security*, 9 11.

¹² *The Round Table*, 9, 33, (Dec. 1918): 1 47.

order and good government” to those “races who cannot as yet hope to govern themselves”, as in tropical Africa and the Pacific.¹³

Kerr’s and Curtis’s ideas were the expression of the Round Table’s cultural background, as shown by Beer’s scheme for the mandates, outlined in a report submitted to the United States Government on 1 January 1918. On the administration of former German colonies Kerr and Beer had in fact almost identical views. Kerr was against handing back the colonies to “a nation inspired by Prussian ideals,” and advocated “to the best interest both of the inhabitants and of the world,” their attachment to “neighbouring free power...or to a power which has great colonial experience...or be internationalized.” Beer thought that a “state exercising sovereignty in Africa” should proceed “under an international mandate,” and should “act as trustee primarily for the nations and secondarily for the outside world as a whole.” The Mandate system should single out and develop, according to Beer, “the best side of what had been done hitherto by western administration,” being in fact, “an application of the ‘commonwealth’ idea.”¹⁴

Kerr was probably unaware of the fact that Smuts had in mind the annexation of South West Africa to South Africa—having received the approval of Wilson on 10-11 January 1919, in exchange for Smuts’s support for Wilson’s scheme for the League of Nations. Kerr sent a note to Lloyd George on 27 January defending the view that fiduciary powers should not have to be accountable for their actions to the League of Nations, since the mandate system, from his perspective, would mean a “perpetual irresponsible interference or dual control with clearly defined

¹³ Lionel Curtis, “The Windows of Freedom,” *The Round Table*, 33, (Dec. 1918): 5, 33, 25, 18, 32 33. Curtis’s article was reprinted in the *New York Times* on 21 Dec. 1918, and published by the League of Nations Union as its first study, (*Lavin, From Empire to*, 161.)

¹⁴ Harold V. Temperley, *History of the Peace Conference*, vol. 4 (London: Henry Froude Hodder & Stoughton, 1921), 501; George L. Beer, *African Questions at the Peace Conference* (New York: Greenwood Heinemann Publishing, 1923), 424 5; H. D. Hall, *Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship* (Washington, DC: 1948); U. S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States. Paris Peace Conference 1919*, vol. 6 (Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1919), 727 9; Kerr to Smuts, 14 Dec. 1917, quoted in Hancock and Van Der Poel, *Smuts Papers*, vol. 3, 576 7; Lawrence E. Gelfand, *The Inquiry: American Preparations for Peace 1917 19* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963), 232; “The Outlook in the Middle East,” *The Round Table*, 37, (Dec. 1919): 56; W. R. Louis, “The United States and the African Peace Settlement of 1919: The Pilgrimage of George Louis Beer,” *Journal of African History*, 4, 3, (1963): 413 33; Kerr to Charles Howland, 6 June 1929, LP, 235, 154 7.

responsibility for government nowhere.” In the face of strong resistance to the extension of the mandate system to include former German colonies from W. M. Hughes, William F. Massey and Louis Botha, representatives of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa respectively, all of whom believed in the principle of annexation to the relevant parts of the Empire, Kerr proposed a compromise. This materialized in the Declaration of 29 January, drawn up by Kerr himself, which was to become Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.¹⁵

2. Kerr and the German question

During Lloyd George’s absence from Paris, from 10 February to 7 March, Kerr played a prominent role in the negotiations, acting as intermediary between the Prime Minister and the British Delegation, prompting Hankey to describe him as Lloyd George’s “watch dog” left in Paris. Kerr’s interference in the foreign policy decision-making process provoked great irritation in the Foreign Office, and in Sir Maurice Hankey in particular. The activity of the Garden Suburb was sometimes confused with that of the War Cabinet by Parliament, which attacked Hankey several times. Looking back, Hankey was to comment that “it eventually became almost a joke between Philip and myself that I was his ‘whipping boy’, but it was a wry joke for me because the War Cabinet Office was an object of suspicion.” There was also criticism from Lord Curzon, the Foreign Secretary, who accused Kerr of acting like a “second Foreign Office.” If according to MacMillan, Kerr was Lloyd George’s “gatekeeper,” Warman inferred that he was the “intimate companion” of the Prime Minister, holding total control over the current of information to the Prime Minister. Thomas Jones, Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet from 1916 to 1930, observed in 1917, on the contrary, that “Kerr pumps things into [Lloyd George] and he seems to agree and then he goes and does the opposite.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 70 1; Elizabeth Monroe, “The Round Table and the Middle Eastern Peace Settlement 1917 22,” *The Round Table*, (Nov. 1970): 479 90; Louis, “The United States and”, 413 33; id., “Great Britain and the African Peace Settlement,” *Journal of American History*, 52, (1966): 857 92.

¹⁶ Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 64; Leonard Mosley, *Curzon: The End of an Epoch* (London: 1961), 64; minute by Curzon on 30 Nov. 1922, Curzon Papers, Eur 112/319. On Lloyd George control of foreign policy, see G. H. Bennett, “Lloyd George, Curzon and the Control of British Foreign Policy 1919 22,” *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 45, (1999); Margaret MacMillan, *Peacemakers: The Paris Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War* (London: John Murray, 2001), 49; Roberta M. Warman, “The Erosion of Foreign Office Influence in the Making of

The measure of the trust that Lloyd George had in Kerr is given by the decision by the Prime Minister to ask Kerr to turn, during his absence from Paris, directly to Balfour—who in Paris was acting Foreign Minister—to sign the Treaty of Anglo-American guarantee to France, provoking Hardinge's irritation. "I doubt," Hardinge commented, "if any treaty of such vital and far reaching importance has ever been negotiated in such a thoughtless and light-hearted manner." Balfour was certainly aware of the total trust the Prime Minister had in his private secretary, but on one occasion, asking Kerr if the Prime Minister had read a report sent by the Foreign Office, was annoyed at the reply by Kerr: "I don't think so, but I have." Balfour then told Kerr that it was "not quite the same thing, is it Philip—yet?" The fact that Kerr returned to the Foreign Office documents signed off by himself instead of by Lloyd George brought Crowe to argue that he continued "to withhold papers from the Prime Minister."¹⁷

Kerr was the British delegate in the Committee of Three set up to examine the French proposal—which Lloyd George firmly opposed—to bring the South-West frontier of Germany up to the Rhine. Suspecting that the French wanted to take advantage of the temporary absence of Lloyd George and Wilson from the Conference to get their own way in the various *ad hoc* committees, Kerr led the British opposition to the French requests, with the approval of the Prime Minister. Reporting to Lloyd George, Kerr noted with irritation on 11 February:

Since you left there is no doubt that the business of the conference has begun to drag. It has dragged, however, largely owing to the deliberate obstruction of the French who fill the agenda paper with small points and who more or less openly admit that they want to postpone the discussion of all important questions until President Wilson has gone.

Wilson was well aware of this dilatory attitude, and made an angry statement to the press as to the possibility of moving the Conference to a neutral city. Lloyd George shared his worries and, writing to Kerr on 12 February, admitted that it had been "a mistake" to choose Paris as the seat of the Conference.

Foreign Policy, 1916-1918," *Historical Journal*, (March 1972): 138; Priscilla Roberts, "Lord Lothian and the Atlantic World," *The Historian*, (Spring 2004): 98.

¹⁷ Briton C. Busch, *Hardinge of Penshurst* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1980), 291; David Hunter Miller, *My Diary of the Conference of Paris* (New York: 1924), vol. 1, 293-5; Alan Sharp, "The Foreign Office in Eclipse, 1919-1922," *History*, 61, (1976): 206; Michael L. Dockrill and Zara Steiner, "The Foreign Office at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919," *The International History Review*, 2, (1980): 67-8.

We knew beforehand he explained that the French Bureaucracy would resort to these underhand methods of influencing our deliberations, bullying, cajoling, lying, sowing dissension and resorting to all their well known methods for achieving their ends by devious means.¹⁸

Interpreting Lloyd George's intention of putting an end to the Continental militaristic tradition through general disarmament and the abolition of compulsory military conscription, Kerr proposed to Colonel House that Great Britain and the United States should give France a guarantee against recurrence of war. Informing Lloyd George on 18 February of the action taken, Kerr noted that disarmament and suspension of conscription for five or six years was not enough: "the terms of peace," he emphasized, "should not contain any more Alsace Lorraines." Kerr believed they should "give France some real guarantee against the renewal of the struggle eight or ten years hence." The League of Nations plan was "little more than a scrap of paper," and it was therefore vital to create a security mechanism, independent of and complementary to the League, capable of placating the legitimate anxiety of the French, and helping towards an easing of tension in Franco-German relations. If Germany were to exceed the level of armaments stipulated in the treaty, and sanctions by the League of Nations had no effect, then Great Britain and the United States would have to intervene militarily by the side of France, in order to force Germany to respect the agreements. This idea, approved by House, inspired the Anglo-American Treaty of guarantee to France's North-Eastern borders. Kerr proposed this explicitly as a *quid pro quo* to induce the French to accept German sovereignty on the Rhineland; it was a fundamental decision in the structure of the Versailles Treaty, with strategic implications of major importance in post-war Franco-German relations. Kerr later claimed that the Anglo-American Treaty "was an

¹⁸ Maurice Hankey, *The Supreme Control at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (London: 1963), 97; Kerr to Lloyd George, n.d., probably 9 or 10 Feb. 1919, LP, 1215. Answering Kerr on 12 Feb., Lloyd George supported Kerr's view: "things seem to have slowed down. Your explanation is no doubt the correct one. The old tiger wants the grizzly bear back in the Rocky Mountains before he starts tearing up the German hog!" (LP, 1217). Kerr to Lloyd George, 11 Feb. 1919, and Lloyd George to Kerr, 12 Feb. 1919, LP, 1216, 1217. On the Paris Peace Conference see: Clifford R. Lovin, *A School for Diplomats: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997); Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World* (London: John Murray, 2003). On Kerr's role as Lloyd George representative, see Alan Sharp, "The Foreign Office in Eclipse, 1919 22," *History*, 61, (1976): 198 218.

essential element” of the peace settlement, and that the American “failure to uphold it destroyed the whole balance of the Treaty of Versailles.”¹⁹

The essence of this idea later inspired, with the Dunkirk and Brussels Treaties, the foundations of the post-Second World War European security system, with the permanent involvement of the United States as the warrantor of European strategic stability. Here are the origins of the strategic foundation for the Atlantic system.²⁰

On the French side, Foch—who had however no official status at the Conference—was the strenuous supporter of a Rhine frontier, and regarded its abandonment by Clemenceau for the Anglo-American Treaty, “a capitulation, a betrayal,” since American and British assistance would not reach France in time to avert its collapse under the German steam roller, in spite of the envisaged construction of a Channel Tunnel. This was a view shared by President Poincaré and Henri Franklin-Bouillon. In view of France’s demographic, strategic and economic inferiority to Germany, the Rhine frontier appeared as the ‘natural’ and tenable line of resistance. Against this claim Clemenceau could rightly observe that no river would be able to halt a future German attack, being 400 kilometres long. Kerr’s fundamental counter-argument was that it was an unrealistic approach to the settlement of the German question, since without the support of the Allies France alone would not be able to directly administer seven million Rhinelanders and prevent them from re-joining the *Reich*.

¹⁹ LGP, F789/2/38; A. L. Kennedy, Diary entry, 18 May 1937, quoted in A. L. Kennedy, *The Times and Appeasement: The Journals of A. L. Kennedy, 1932-1939*, Gordon Martel ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 247. On Versailles Treaty, see: Ruth Henig, “The Treaty of Versailles 80 Years on: ‘A Complex Interplay of Forces’,” *Modern History Review*, 12, 4, (2001): 2-5. According to Goldstein the Anglo American guarantee of France’s security was the main reason for the United States Senate’s decision to reject American membership of the League of Nations, Goldstein, *Winning the Peace*, 236. On the Senate Knox Resolution of 1919 regarding the guarantee to France and the debate on the Versailles settlement, see Ralph Stone, “‘The Irreconcilables’, Alternatives to the League of Nations,” *Mid America*, 49, 3, (July 1967): 163-73; id., *The Irreconcilables: The Fight Against the League of Nations* (New York: Norton, 1973), 26-7, 41, 44-8, 55, 108; Keith L. Nelson, *Victors Divided: America and the Allies in Germany, 1918-1923* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1975), 79-88; Walter A. MacDougall, *France’s Rhineland Diplomacy, 1914-1924: The Last Bid for a Balance of Power in Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 60-1, 67-8.

²⁰ A view put first forward by Lloyd E. Ambrosius, “Wilson, the Republicans, and French Security after World War I,” *Journal of American History*, 59, 2, (Sept. 1972): 341-52.

The French were at last convinced by Lloyd George's argument that the creation of "an Alsace-Lorraine in reverse" would produce a permanent factor of international instability, poison Anglo-French relations, and prevent a necessary Franco-German détente.²¹

According to Duroselle, Clemenceau sacrificed "the complete realization of his programme to the maintenance of an alliance—guarantees included—which he thought more solid than it really was." The Anglo-American Treaty was, in fact, according to Clemenceau "the keystone of European peace," being "the ultimate sanction of the peace treaty." This view was shared by André Tardieu, who thought that the Treaty was "the crowning achievement of Mr. Clemenceau's policy," and "served as the key factor in making possible the Versailles treaty."²²

An alternative solution to the German question was outlined by Milner, who at Versailles played a minor role, since his relationship with Lloyd George during the last ten months of the War had become less and less cordial, both because of the clash of their personalities, and because of their different views on the future of Germany. Much is revealed from a letter Milner wrote to Kerr on 24 April, showing that, because he had been largely excluded from the Conference, he was trying to exert some influence on the negotiations through his protégé, supporting the theory of the "two Germanies" put forward by August Bebel and Theobald Bethmann-Hollweg. "I have always thought, and still think," Milner wrote, "that one of the possibilities, almost probabilities, of the future is that we may have to recognise and deal with Western Germany as distinct

²¹ Raymond Poincaré, *Au service de la France. Neuf années de souvenirs*, vol. 11 (Paris: 1974), 290, 188; William R. Keylor, "The Rise and Demise of the Franco-American Guarantee Pact, 1919-1921," *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History*, 15, (1988): 374; Gabriel Terrail, *Le Combat des Trois. Notes et documents sur la Conférence de la Paix* (Paris: 1922), 230; Walter A. McDougall, *France's Rhineland Diplomacy. The Last Bid for a Balance of Power in Europe, 1914-1924* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 3-96. The Channel Tunnel project of March-April 1919 was conceived as an instrument that would allow Britain to come to the aid of France within 48 hours, and therefore as a necessary and essential complement of the Anglo-American Guarantee. The project fell victim to the failure to compromise on the proposed 15-year inter-Allied occupation of the left bank of the Rhine. For a discussion, see Keith Wilson, "Missing Link: The Channel Tunnel and the Anglo-American Guarantee to France, March 1919," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 5, 1, (1994): 73-80.

²² Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Clemenceau at the Justice* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1983), 176; George Clemenceau, *Grandeurs et Misères d'une Victoire* (Paris: 1930), 210, 208; André Tardieu, *La Paix* (Paris: 1920), 237.

from the rest, and in the first instance that we may have to recognise something like the old kingdom of Westphalia.”²³

This was not a new idea, particularly in France, where the plan to divide Germany was receiving more and more popular support, but Milner offered a more positive version, emphasising the need to be ready “to deal differently with different portions of it.” Milner passionately disapproved of the press campaign taking place in the Allied countries, which tended to blame all Germans indiscriminately, ignoring the fact that the Rhinelanders and the Western Germans were not like the Prussians in character, tradition or history: “they have been partly Prussianized by force, partly converted by the immense success—up to a point—of the Prussian military regime.” It was “not necessary that a Rhenish-Westphalian Republic or any other similar State that may spring up in Western Germany, should, either of its own deliberate desire or under any obligation imposed by us, cut itself off from Germany for good and all.” Milner envisaged “an orderly and peaceful State, or States, under our protection, and with which we might begin to do business again.” Great Britain should prevent them falling into “the general German chaos, just as Siberia, Estonia and Finland are more or less saved from the general Russia chaos, without the possibility of their ultimate reunion with the rest of Germany in a happier future being precluded.”²⁴

According to Milner, this new German political entity

saved from the general wreck, would be the point from which the re-creation of a de Prussianized Germany might start. We want to reverse the process of the last fifty years and get the more humane and purely Teutonic west—the land of older civilization—to extend eastward, as the harder, more aggressive, less purely German type—the hard core of Prussianism—has in the last century swept west and south till it absorbed the whole.²⁵

By nature opposed to any kind of compromise, and gifted with intellectual sharpness, Milner proposed the only effective and radical, albeit provisional, solution to the German question which was adopted at the end of the Second World War, even if more out of necessity than calculation. Milner’s solution to the German problem must be seen in relation to his view of the British Empire as the centre of gravity of

²³ LP, 1176. In a private discussion with Raymond B. Fosdick, future Rockefeller’s adviser, Wilson dismissed Milner as “a Prussian,” Arthur S. Link ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 53 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 366–367.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

Western civilisation, as opposed to Eastern despotism, to which Bolshevism was giving a definite political form. He thought that German culture and civilisation would only be regained by the democratic West (centred on the British Empire) by the political division of Germany in the short term, and by her expansion eastwards against Russia in the longer term. Although this plan had some support within the Empire, particularly in the Dominions, it did not take into consideration the significance and consequences of the United States' entry into the war, above all on the economic scale. American intervention had been decisive for victory mainly because of the immense reserve of financial, material, and moral resources that the United States were able to throw into the fight. During the years of its neutrality, the United States had, in fact, replaced Great Britain almost everywhere in overseas markets, and had been able to develop its economic potential to a level hitherto unknown.²⁶

The rejection of the Milner solution to the German question, and the final adoption of the Anglo-French compromise based on the Anglo-American Treaty suggested by Kerr, did not just reflect the change of the international balance of power represented by the United States' entrance into the forefront of world power politics—a novelty which Milner failed to comprehend. It was also ideologically inscribed into a new global strategic perspective, of which the Round Table—in spite of Milner—was the main advocate, implementing Rhodes' vision.²⁷

The war had in fact revealed and accelerated the historic decline of the Empire everywhere—a process that could be reversed only by federation—and had seen the sudden emergence of a new and more solid 'insular' power which would inevitably oust the old. The peace of Versailles undoubtedly signalled the transition from a European to a world system of States, representing Milner's East-West divide, with Germany always at the centre. What was not grasped by Milner was recognized by Kerr, who tried to design the framework of the peace taking into account the factors which had most contributed to victory. Recognising that the idea of an Imperial federation could not be realized, and that Anglo-French dyarchy had entered into an irreversible crisis because of a substantial

²⁶ On American involvement in international power politics, see Burton I. Kaufman, *Efficiency and Expansion: Foreign Trade Organization in the Wilson Administration, 1913 1921* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1974); Lawrence Lenz, *Power and Policy: America's First Steps to Superpower 1889 1922* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2008).

²⁷ On Anglo American convergence of global strategic interests at Paris and after, see Michael G. Fry, *Illusions of Security: North Atlantic Diplomacy, 1918 1922* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).

divergence of the strategic interests of the two powers, Kerr was the first of the ‘architects’ in Paris to lay the foundations of the post-war order on co-operation between the two ‘insular’ powers. Whilst not harbouring any doubts over the solidity of those foundations—it was impossible to foresee at that time a sudden reversal of American foreign policy—he tried to regain for the West not just a part, as Milner advocated, but the whole of Germany, by means of a policy of severe moral condemnation but of leniency in punishment. Kerr interpreted and reconciled British strategic interests with the continuance of a British hegemonic international role.

3. Kerr and German disarmament

During Lloyd George’s absence from Paris, Kerr dealt also with the question of German disarmament. In his letter to Kerr from London on 12 February, Lloyd George pressed for the eradication of German militarism:

We must disarm Germany. It is good for her as well as for us...I am sorry that they have given up the idea of smashing manufactory machinery. Once they were destroyed I don’t believe they could easily be replaced but as long as they are in Germany they will always be a temptation to manufacturers and governors. Inspection and control by Allied officers is a mere temporary substitute.²⁸

Kerr did not agree with the conclusions reached by the Foch Commission on 3 March, to allow Germany an army just large enough to maintain order internally. The same day he suggested to Lloyd George that Germany should be forced to accept disarmament to a level which would allow it to defend its own territory from external attacks. Although Kerr judged the Germans to be “fundamentally unrepentant,” and was convinced that a “very firm and uncompromising handling” was needed, he believed that a statement by Lloyd George favouring general disarmament—disarmament of the defeated would be followed by disarmament of the victors—would “make it easy for them to accept disarmament.” In one of his speeches, Lloyd George should state plainly that German disarmament had to be “the first great step in the demilitarisation of the world.”

If the proposals are presented as part of a peace programme of the world Kerr continued they will find an echo among the mass of the population of Germany itself. If they are presented as a new humiliation for Germany

²⁸ LP, 1223. On German disarmament, see Lorna S. Jaffe, *The Decision to Disarm Germany: British Politics towards Post War German Disarmament, 1914 1919* (Boston, MA: 1985).

just to show our superiority and to humble her still more in the dust, it may just give the handle that the politicians of Germany like Brockdorf Rantzau require to revive national feeling.²⁹

Kerr's suggestion was welcomed not just by Lloyd George, but also by Wilson and Clemenceau, and kept alive what would come to be called as the 'hope of Versailles', although it was destined to remain just that, despite a succession of plans for disarmament signed by Tardieu, Herriot, MacDonald, and Hoover, up until the final collapse of the Disarmament Conference in the Spring of 1934. This hope undoubtedly had a galvanising effect on the peace movements which, both in Europe and the United States, achieved some results in the Twenties, finally acknowledging German rearmament.³⁰

On 3 March, Kerr urged Lloyd George to return to Paris sooner than planned:

One of your first tasks, I think, will be to insist on a sane policy towards Germany both in the military and the economic sphere. I am all for us still imposing terms on Germany, but they must be terms which give the German people some hope and some independence. If the French have their way they will give them neither.

Kerr persuaded Lloyd George to stand for an army of volunteers on a modest scale, which would be better suited to defend Germany from outside attacks as well as prevent internal disorder, rather than an army of conscripts twice the size. Foch's proposal of an army of two hundred thousand conscripts was therefore eventually dropped by the Council of Four and replaced by Kerr's idea of an army of one hundred thousand volunteers.³¹

In a meeting on 7 March with Clemenceau and Colonel House, Kerr also dealt with the fate of the German fleet, stressing that any decision should be taken from the point of view of British global strategic interests, and that his country would only accept its destruction on the basis of an Anglo-American agreement to prevent a future naval arms race between the two major Atlantic powers. As House agreed, Kerr was able to propose the sinking of the German fleet in the Atlantic by British and American warships. As for the Foch's plan to occupy the Rhineland indefinitely,

²⁹ Kerr to Lloyd George, n.d., probably 4 March 1919, LGP, F/89/2/14.

³⁰ LP, 1173. On disarmament, see: Carolyn J. Kitching, *Britain and the Geneva Disarmament Conference: A Study in International History* (London: Palgrave, 2003); Catherine Krull and B. J. C. McKercher, "The Press, Public Opinion, Arms Limitation, and Government Policy in Britain, 1932-34: Some Preliminary Observations," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 13, 3, (2002): 103-136.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

from the Swiss to the Dutch borders, Kerr strongly opposed it and made it clear that Great Britain and the Dominions would never contribute to an army of occupation consisting of a hundred thousand units, even if two thirds were French. Kerr was also opposed to Foch's plan to place the Polish border on the Danzig-Thorn axis, with the annexation by Poland of Eastern Prussia—predominantly German—since his Government did not want “any more Alsace-Lorraine in Europe, whether in the East or the West.” Kerr also strongly resisted House's proposal—welcomed by Clemenceau—to annex Danzig to Poland, and for the internationalisation of Eastern Prussia, or the creation of an independent republic.

In an attempt to involve the United States more directly in European affairs, particularly regarding the containment of Russia, Kerr offered House a mandate for the United States in Constantinople, while shrewdly offering Syria to Clemenceau—knowing that France was more interested in Cilicia—which would have inevitably led to Franco-American frictions in the future. In accepting Kerr's offer, House committed the United States to a “general supervision” over the whole of Anatolia, leaving Palestine and Mesopotamia with Mosul to Great Britain, being regions of the greatest strategic importance for the maintenance and defence of communications between Great Britain and India and the Far East. As for the question of food supplies to Germany in order to prevent a possible westward spread of Bolshevism, Kerr noted bitterly that Clemenceau was “anxious to preserve the demeanour of a conqueror towards Germany. There will therefore be some difficulty, I fear, in inducing the French to assent to any reasonable plan for feeding Germany.”³²

It was Kerr who convinced Sidney E. Mezes—Director of the Inquiry, and member of the American Delegation—of the foolishness of the French plan to make the Rhineland an autonomous region under Allied occupation. Although Kerr supported the “necessity of drawing the military frontier of Germany to the East of the Rhine,” he wanted Rhineland to remain under German sovereignty, and was totally opposed to even a temporary British army of occupation, or to Allied control of the bridges over the Rhine. In a memorandum of 11-12 March, he noted that the French proposal “might offend” British public opinion's “sense of justice or fair play,” and prejudice the possibility of France “maintaining a complete understanding with Great Britain and America,” on which depended the “real security of France.”³³

³² LP, 1240.

³³ See the memorandum by Kerr, “Notes of discussion with M. Tardieu and Dr. Mezes,” which refers to a meeting of 11 12 March, LP, 1174.

Kerr did not yield either when Mezes offered a temporary American army of occupation, making it clear that Great Britain would intervene on the Continent only in the event of German transgression of the clauses of disarmament and of the remilitarisation of the Rhineland. Since there was, as Tardieu noted, “a fundamental difference of view between the British and French Governments,” the final decision was left to Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau. Tardieu was “disappointed” at Kerr’s intransigence, as “he had understood at the conversation between M. Clemenceau and the Prime Minister that there had been an acceptance in outline of the French proposition.” Tardieu stressed to Kerr that “it was impossible for France to leave herself still exposed to the menace of another German invasion,” and that “it was extraordinarily difficult for any maritime power to realise what the presence of 80 million Germans on their borders meant to the French, in view of the experience of the last 100 years.”³⁴

According to Tardieu, the Rhine was the frontier of defence for the democracies, and the creation of a small buffer State in the Rhineland would facilitate the containment of Germany. Kerr was not convinced by these arguments, and suggested inserting in the Treaty a temporary clause against the *Anschluss*, waiting for decisions to be taken on the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the creation of the League of Nations. Kerr urged Lloyd George to “resist the Tardieu proposition to the end,” and suggested that Great Britain should “undertake to maintain in the British Empire not less than 100,000 regular troops and keep in existence the machinery for their transportation to the Belgian frontier within three weeks.” Kerr would “call upon America to undertake to do the same,” and the British Empire, the United States and France would then provide “the central bloc of the League of Nations and would be ample when reinforced by economic pressure to compel the observance of reasonable peace terms.”³⁵

In order to get round French intransigence and Mezes’s conciliatory attitude towards France, Kerr suggested to Lloyd George offering the French the theoretical application in the Rhineland of the principle of self-determination, urging however the Prime Minister to do his “utmost to avoid” this possibility materializing, because he was “against doing anything in the terms of peace which is an interference with another nation’s internal affairs.” The Rhineland’s autonomy would imply an Allied occupation of the region, and giving an Allied mandatory power to France, preventing a future re-unification with Germany. Self-determination,

³⁴ *Ibidem.*

³⁵ *Ibidem.*

Kerr advised, would produce positive developments in Central Europe only if it was a step towards federation.³⁶

Kerr believed that French security would be guaranteed by reducing German armaments, and demilitarising the right bank of the Rhine. Kerr also proposed provisional Allied control of the bridges over the Rhine, to prevent Western Europe from being overrun by Bolshevism: "If Germany goes Bolshevik the Rhine is obviously the cordon sanitaire to maintain." If the Rhineland were to remain under German sovereignty, then it would be difficult to refuse the French strategic frontier between Trier and Landau in Lorraine. That would be acceptable, Kerr thought, provided that the inhabitants were exempt from military service, and could have local autonomy with control over education and language, as had been proposed for the Saar. "I would, however, urge them strongly in their own interest," Kerr suggested, "not to insist on incorporating 1,300,000 Germans in France merely for strategic reasons. If they do insist, this might also be a temporary arrangement subject to revision after a number of years by the League of Nations." The Anglo-American Treaty forced Clemenceau to give in and grant Germany sovereignty on the Rhineland. Kerr tried in vain, however, to prevent Allied occupation of the region, which, according to the Treaty, was to last fifteen years with gradual withdrawal of the forces every five years. In fact the occupation lasted until 1931 and was by the French on their own, since the Americans left in 1919 following rejection of the Treaty by the Senate, and the British withdrew in 1922.³⁷

4. Kerr, Reparations and the Fontainebleau Memorandum

Well aware that Germany had become the knot of the European tragedy, and that a policy of discrimination against Germany would reproduce, on a larger scale the same tragic events as the Great War, Kerr completely reversed Milner's strategy, and during his last two years at Downing Street persuaded Lloyd George to launch a policy of appeasement towards Germany. First, Great Britain had to regain its insularity, developing ever closer relations with the United States. Kerr voiced British aspirations to

³⁶ Kerr to Lloyd George, 13 March 1919, *ibidem*, 1174/1; Philip Kerr, "The Harvest of the War," *The Round Table*, 21, (Dec 1915): 1-32.

³⁷ Kerr to Lloyd George, 13 March 1919, LP, 1174/1; Howard Ellock, *Portrait of a Decision: The Council of Four and the Treaty of Versailles* (London: 1972), 149. Beer foresaw that the Senate would have rejected the commitments under the League, George Beer, "The United States and the Future Peace," *The Round Table*, 26, (March 1917): 308.

turn the wartime linkage with the United States into a durable Atlantic entente. Secondly, Great Britain had to deal with Germany, negotiating peaceful modifications of the Continental *status quo* to Germany's advantage. The concrete outcomes of this reversal of strategy, which Kerr suggested to Lloyd George towards the end of the Paris negotiations, were the Anglo-American Treaty and the provisions of the *Fontainebleau Memorandum*.

One of the problems with which Kerr was most directly involved was that of Reparations. It was Kerr who drafted the famous expression "by the aggression of Germany," an integral part of Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles, concerning responsibility for the war. This allowed Reparations to be extended to Great Britain, but was also the source of German resentment, and of British feelings of 'guilt' towards Germany, and to a large extent, of the policy of appeasement in the Thirties.

In order to grasp the significance of Article 231, one has to go back to the inter-Allied negotiations which preceded the Armistice, concerning British reservations regarding Wilson's Fourteen Points. The Seventh and Eighth points called for the reconstruction of Belgium and the liberation and reconstruction of French occupied territory, but made no mention of the damage sustained by Great Britain, such as air and naval bombardments—however modest—and the sinking of merchant ships—with enormous losses—by German submarines. For electoral reasons, Lloyd George was determined to call for Reparations to be extended to Great Britain, which according to official figures had sustained as much damage as Belgium and France, although it had not been invaded. Accordingly, Lloyd George delivered, on 30 October 1918, a Memorandum to Colonel House for President Wilson, which dictated the British conditions for acceptance of the Fourteen Points as a basis for Armistice. The memorandum stated that "compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the forces of Germany by land, by sea and from the air."³⁸

During a meeting of the Supreme War Council at Versailles on 1 November 1918, Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando decided to propose to House to modify the expression "by the forces of Germany" into "by the invasion by Germany of Allied territory." The expression changed into "by the aggression of Germany" during their meeting on 4 November 1918. All three versions were suggested and drafted by Kerr.

³⁸ Kenneth O. Morgan, "Lloyd George and Germany," *Historical Journal*, 39, 3, (1996): 755 766.

Hankey, then Secretary of the Supreme War Council, added the following note to the minutes of the meeting of 4 November: "The object of the alteration was to include compensation for damage inflicted at sea," and not to blame Germany for having triggered off the War, even though, six months later, Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George decided to use the expression "by the aggression of Germany" in Article 231 of the Treaty, thereby attributing to Germany the sole responsibility for the war.³⁹

To understand the background of that crucial decision, which so strongly influenced European relations in the years to come, it is necessary to refer to a letter from Kerr to the historian and South Africa Round Table member Eric A. Walker, of 18 March 1931. The interpretation of the phrase "aggression of Germany" raised, according to Lothian,

two quite different questions which got hopelessly intermingled. The first was as to the liability of Germany, the second was as to the distribution of German Reparations among the Allies. Did the words, for instance, only mean that Germany was responsible for physical destruction by gun fire, etc., or did the word 'damage' include the more indirect losses inflicted on Great Britain as a result of the aggression of Germany financial losses which, as subsequent experience has shown, were greater than those inflicted on any of the other Allies? On the answer depended not merely the question of Germany's liability, but whether France was to be in a position to claim practically the whole payments for herself, for if the phrase only covered the destruction of property by gun fire, Great Britain suffered practically no losses while France had suffered them all. There was, therefore, a double struggle going on in Paris, on the one side as to what these words could be taken to imply so far as Germany was concerned, and in the second place as to the distribution of the proceeds among the Allies.

Lothian also recalled that Lloyd George had been forced to reconsider his initial alignment to the moderate position of the United States because of the approaching elections, and because of great pressure from the vast majority of his followers in Parliament who, with the so called "telegram of the 370," forced him to leave Paris and fight Northcliffe's press campaign asking Germany for more consistent compensation. The subsequent withdrawal by the United States from European affairs gave the Presidency and control of the Commission on Reparations to the French, and frustrated British efforts for moderation in the Allied requests, and for a fair enquiry in May 1921 into Germany's real capacity to pay.

³⁹ House to Wilson, 30 Oct. 1918, (quoted in M. Burnett, *Reparations at the Peace Conference*, vol. 1 (Ithaca, NY: 1940), 393; Report of the War Supreme Council, 1 Nov. 1918, (quoted in *ibidem*, 397); Report of the meeting of 4 Nov., (quoted in *ibidem*, 407).

Walker, referring to an earlier conversation with Lothian, asked him to confirm whether Smuts had or had not included war pensions among the terms of Reparations in return for a more generous territorial treatment of Germany, since revision of the financial clauses seemed simpler than rectification of frontiers. Lothian would not commit himself, but stressed the conciliatory role that Lloyd George played in Paris, expressed in the *Fontainebleau Memorandum* drafted by Kerr himself. Lothian recalled that Lloyd George was against the clause ensuring Allied occupation of the Rhineland for fifteen years, but that he had to give in when Wilson and Clemenceau reached a compromise on the Rhineland, in return for Clemenceau's support for the League of Nations. Lloyd George and the British Delegation strongly supported a modification of the eastern frontiers of Germany on favourable terms. He succeeded in reducing the Danzig Corridor by a half, in making Danzig a free city, and in ensuring a plebiscite for Silesia, which Wilson and Clemenceau wanted to give unconditionally to Poland.⁴⁰

The German Delegation strong resented the attribution of historic and moral responsibility for the war solely to Germany, and rejected it in the Dispatch of 29 May 1919, which also contained German objections to the terms of the Treaty as a whole. Lloyd George, Wilson and Clemenceau assigned to Kerr the task of preparing the Allied reply. Kerr's document was submitted to an inter-Allied Committee for revision between 13 and 16 June, but it remained unchanged in its general outline. Lloyd George considered it "an excellent example of the vigour and lucidity of his style." The memorandum—which, as Lentin pointed out, constituted a kind of commentary on Article 231 and was intended to offer an apologetic version of the already agreed Treaty—signed by Clemenceau, President of the Conference, and delivered to the German Delegation on 16 June, stressed Germany's responsibility for the outbreak of war and for the "savage and inhuman manner in which it was conducted...the greatest

⁴⁰ LP, 254/856 61. Eric Anderson Walker (1886 1976) was King George V Professor of History at the University of Cape Town and Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History at the University of Cambridge. In *The Frontier Tradition in South African History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), Walker outlined his theory that the origins of the apartheid system in South Africa lay in the conflict between blacks and whites on the frontier regions during the Nineteenth century, which was then imported into the interior where it was institutionalized in the constitutions of the Orange Free State and the South African Republic.

crime against humanity and the freedom of peoples that any nation, calling itself civilized, has ever consciously committed.”⁴¹

The idea of Germany’s guilt represented the ideological justification not only for the extension of Reparations, but also for a Treaty characterized by a strongly negative and punitive nature. In spite of the appeasing spirit of the *Fontainebleau Memorandum*, Kerr’s reaction to the speech by Brockdorff-Rantzau, Foreign Minister and leader of the German Delegation, in the very same Hall of Mirrors in Versailles which slightly less than half a century before had witnessed the birth of the German Empire, well represents the inner feelings of members of the British Delegation. “At the start,” Kerr recollected, “everybody felt a little sympathy with the Hun, but by the time Brockdorff-Rantzau had finished, most people were almost anxious to recommence the war.”⁴²

The idea of Germany’s guilt was rooted in moral rather than political considerations, and depended much on the fact that most of the members of the Allied delegations had been involved in the war. In a speech in Hamburg on October 1929 at the Institut für Auswärtige Politik—an organization created in 1923 and associated with Chatham House—Kerr

⁴¹ David Lloyd George, *The Truth About the Peace Treaties* (London: 1938), 263; Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference*, vol. 4, 11 2.

⁴² LP, 428/507 8. On the debate on the origins of World War I, see: H. W. Koch, *The Origins of the First World War: Great Power Rivalry and German War Aims* (London: Macmillan, 1984); M. B. Hayne, *The French Foreign Office and the Origins of the First World War 1898 1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1993); Joachim Remak, *The Origins of World War I, 1871 1914* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace, 1995); Laurence Lafore, *The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I* (Waveland, MS: 1997); Ruth Henig, *The Origins of the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2001); Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig eds., *The Origins of World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Annika Mombauer, *Helmuth von Moltke and the Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Gordon Martel, *Origins of the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2008); John Charmley, *Splendid Isolation?: Britain, the Balance of Power and the Origins of the First World War* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009); William Mulligan, *The Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Günter Bischof, Ferdinand Karhofer, and Samuel R. Williamson Jr., *1914: Austria Hungary, the Origins, and the First Year of World War I* (New Orleans, LA: University of New Orleans Press, 2014); Geoffrey Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe: The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Habsburg Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez eds., *The Outbreak of the First World War: Structure, Politics, and Decision Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus* (London: Routledge, 2015).

recognized that “the war-time thesis that any one nation was solely responsible for the war” was “clearly untrue.” Addressing the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, shortly after the re-militarisation of the Rhineland, Lothian went so far as to affirm that “no serious historian now accepts the legend, so naturally accepted during the war, of Germany’s sole war guilt. Yet the position she was given in 1919 was based, perhaps inevitably at that time, on that assumption.” Again in July 1936, in a speech to the ‘Anglo-German Fellowship’, Lothian asked the British Government

to abandon once and for all what is called in Germany the Versailles attitude of mind...No doubt historians will argue about the origins of the war to the end of time, but there is one point upon which they are already agreed, and that is that no one nation can be held solely responsible for the war...The theory of sole war guilt led to certain permanent and unilateral discriminations against Germany which are the root of all our trouble today.⁴³

This was the spirit of the *Fontainebleau Memorandum*, which was intended to induce the French to revise the draft of the Treaty in Germany’s favour, before the parties approved its final version. The *Fontainebleau Memorandum* of the 25th March 1919, entitled “Some Considerations for the Peace Conference before they Finally Draft their Terms,” has been judged to be the first official act of the British policy of appeasement which developed in the Twenties, badly damaging Anglo-French relations, and culminating in the policies pursued by the Baldwin and Chamberlain Governments in the Thirties. Kerr himself was not just one of the principal supporters of that policy in the years to come, but the principal draftsman of the memorandum, both in the material sense, being the writer, and in the moral sense, having suggested it during a weekend spent in Fontainebleau with Lloyd George, Field Marshal Henry Wilson—British Permanent Military Representative at the Supreme War Council at Versailles—and Hankey.

The fear of continual concessions to the French on the terms to be imposed on Germany, which could favour the spread of Communism, was shared by Henry Wilson and Hankey who, writing to Lloyd George, considered “Kerr’s ideas on economic and political appeasement of Germany, as a condition for the economic reconstruction of the Continent and for a general easing of tensions in international relations” “well expressed” in the *Fontainebleau Memorandum*. Kerr thought that “the maintenance of peace” would depend upon “there being no causes of

⁴³ LP, 445/37, 317/33.

exasperation constantly stirring up the spirit of patriotism, of justice and fair play.” “Our terms may be severe,” Kerr pointed out, “they may be stern, and even ruthless, but at the same time they can be so just that the country on which they are imposed will feel in its heart that it has no right to complain.”

Germany should remain a great power and if the Allies did not encourage its economic recovery and democratisation, there would be a great danger of Bolshevism spreading in Central and Eastern Europe, which would in turn realize Lenin’s plans for a world-wide revolution. Kerr proposed to extend the principle of national self-determination to Germany, giving it “precedence over strategic, economic and commercial considerations.” Access to international markets would “enable the German people to get upon their legs again.” “We cannot both cripple her and expect her to pay,” Kerr concluded. German disarmament had moreover to be “the first step in the limitation of the armaments of all nations.” The Rhineland had to remain under German sovereignty and a realistic compromise concerning Reparations had to be found.⁴⁴

The French reaction to this attempt by Kerr—supported by Keynes and other members of the British Delegation—to modify the terms of the peace was sharply negative. Clemenceau expressed himself firmly against the revisionist spirit of the memorandum, and opposed any concession, authorizing the French Delegation, which was negotiating on minor open questions to take up a hard line. The impact on the British Delegation, on the other hand, was quite favourable, since the memorandum put into writing many of the ideas and convictions which had already been raised. The memorandum had the effect of hardening the positions of the two delegations, compromising Anglo-French relations after the war, and pushing Great Britain towards a semi-isolationist policy towards the Continent.⁴⁵

Mindful of the old and bitter Franco-German rivalry, the French Delegation aimed to ‘neutralise’ Germany, subjecting her to a system of

⁴⁴ Anthony Lentin, “Philip Kerr e ‘l’aggressione della Germania’,” *Lord Lothian. Una vita per la pace*, Giulio Guderzo ed. (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1987), 63 7; Hankey, *The Supreme Control*, 97; Lloyd George, *The Truth About*, 397 9, 403; “Some considerations for the Peace Conference before they finally draft their terms,” LP, 60. On interwar Anglo French relations, see M. H. Bell, *France and Britain, 1900 1940: Entente and Estrangement* (Harlow: Longman, 1996).

⁴⁵ John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (London: 1920). On the inclusion of veterans’ pensions in the Reparations, see Antony Lentin, “Maynard Keynes and the ‘Bamboozlement’ of Woodrow Wilson: What Really Happened at Paris?” *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 14, 4, (Dec. 2004): 725 763.

military and political supremacy, while the British Delegation, on the other hand, followed the traditional policy of helping the defeated enemy to recover its strength, and promoting the democratisation of Germany's decision-making process within a wider European balance of power. The American Delegation, which brought in a fresh outlook and an idealism destabilizing the traditional European diplomacies, hoped to promote a general reconciliation and co-operation through the League of Nations, retreating from Europe as soon as the 'dust had settled'. The Italian Delegation and those of the minor States like Greece and the Dominions did not have a broad strategy because they had not yet gained a position to lose. Thus the Treaty of Versailles, born out of the co-operation of the three major powers, was a compromise, in the literal sense of the word.

Kerr was well aware that the foundations of the European political structure created in Paris rested on the military and economic hegemony of the victorious powers. Disarmament, demilitarisation of the Rhineland, Reparations, prohibition of *Anschluss*, loss of the German colonies and fleet and one seventh of her population and territories to the bordering States were the principal punitive measures adopted by the Allies to prevent the rebirth of German hegemonic ambitions. Among the Allies, however, there were marked differences of opinion regarding the severity of the provisional and of the permanent clauses, and, above all, on the policy of European reconstruction.

Lloyd George raised the issue of the revision of the Treaty in favour of Germany on the 2 June 1919 meeting of the Council of Four. He mentioned that he received pressure in this direction from the only Labour representative in his Cabinet, Georges Barnes, and from General Smuts, Cecil, Chamberlain, the two Archbishops, and H. A. L. Fischer, "whose views carried great weight." Lloyd George pointed out to his colleagues that as for Reparations "more had been asked for than Germany could pay," and argued that the occupation of the Rhineland by the French Army should not exceed a maximum period of two years, and that with a reduction of the German Army to 100,000 units, a French occupation army of 200,000 units was totally unacceptable as a device to force Germany to pay for Reparations.⁴⁶

In his demand for a revision of the peace terms, Lloyd George publicly acknowledged the pressure of representatives of the Labour party and the Anglican Church, but his main concern was to bring home a Treaty for ratification without the political support of the Cecil family,

⁴⁶ US Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations*, vol. 4, 138 60.

South Africa and Milner's entourage. If Smuts had good reasons of political opportunism—in Paris he was seeking, above all, the recognition of South Africa as an independent international player, and the annexation of South West Africa—to reverse the punitive peace conditions, the Cecil family was interpreting the traditional British attitude of generosity—as had been applied earlier to Spain and France—against a defeated power after a struggle to win Continental hegemony, while the Round Table had ideological reasons.

The Round Table also had economic reasons to support the appeasement of Germany. They thought that the condition for political stability, necessary to prevent the spread of the Bolshevik contagion, was economic stability, achievable only through a reduction of the amount of Reparations, and by foreign loans—mainly from the United States—to German banks to speed up recovery. This was a view strongly supported by Brand and by some members of the American Delegation—such as Thomas Lamont, Whitney Shepardson, James T. Shotwell, Archibald Cary Coolidge, and Beer—with whom the Round Table had plans for cooperation through the projected Institute of International Affairs.

Germany was able to pay an “indemnity,” according to Brand, “apart from any immediately available assets...out of any surplus on her foreign balance of trade.” “Why should Germany be able to do the miracle that France and Italy cannot do, and not only balance her trade, but have great surpluses in addition to pay over her enemies,” Brand wondered, concluding that the Allies should have asked Germany to pay just for the “next five years” a “limited” amount of money. If the Allies would took away from Germany “all her liquid assets, and her working capital,” and if furthermore Germany had “to make yearly payments to an amount which will in any reasonable human expectation exceed her capacity,” then, Brand concluded, “no one outside a lunatic asylum will lend her money or credit, and she will not recover sufficiently to pay anything.” The “urgent question” of the moment, Zimmern warned in 1918, was not “of autocratic against popular government” but “a question of government against anarchy,” to get Europe “back to work.”⁴⁷

The “real work” of the “coming age” was, according to Zimmern, to “moralize” states both internally and externally, as a condition for the creation of citizens “more public-spirited” and “fully-conscious of their obligations.” The “machinery of the League” could “develop into the organic union or world-State to which all students of the political affairs of

⁴⁷ Robert Brand, “Finance and Reparations,” *The Round Table*, 35, (June 1919), reprinted in *War and National Finance* (London: 1921), 193; Alfred Zimmern, *Europe in Convalescence* (New York: 1922), 80.

mankind are bound to look forward to,” only when a spirit of “civic dedication” took roots through “the co-operation of States which have common ideals.”⁴⁸

The Round Table with Brand headed a campaign against Reparations, on the ground that “a vast indemnity” would “act as a forcing house to German exports to the detriment of British trade.” Moreover they would form “a constant and powerful incentive to Germany to repudiate her undertakings in all parts of the peace.” The Round Table strongly criticized the clauses of the Versailles Treaty also in relation to the losses by Germany of Upper Silesia, Eupen, Malmédy, and the Saar Valley, proposing in 1921 an all-round cancellation of inter-Allied debts in order to reduce the Reparations to more realistic figures.⁴⁹

“I am in favour of restricting our commitments abroad,” Kerr wrote to Lloyd George in February 1919, “until we set our country thoroughly in order.” Kerr thought that it was “America’s turn to take on some of the burden of developing and financing the backward parts of the earth.” The United States should make “her money available for this,” and for the cancellation of inter-Allied debts, or offer a loan for the recovery of European countries, since French and British finances were insufficient for this purpose. Without American money, the financing of reconstruction would have to rely on German Reparations, with adverse consequences both domestic and international.⁵⁰

Kerr was well aware that Germany was “potentially still the most powerful state in Europe,” which would not willingly “submit to her present position of subordination for-ever.” The Treaty was based “on a balance of forces which cannot possibly endure” and therefore characterized by “latent dangers.” *The Round Table* therefore advocated the case for a treaty “valid for a period of ten years only,” since it would prove very difficult to revise the conditions of a long term treaty laid down in an unbalanced political situation strongly influenced by the feelings of hatred caused by the war. Rehearsing the wartime slogan that “our war

⁴⁸ Alfred Zimmermann, “Some Principles and Problems of the Settlement,” *The Round Table*, 33, (Dec. 1918): 90, 91 92, 98 99.

⁴⁹ Philip Kerr, “Europe, the Covenant and the Protocol,” *The Round Table*, 58, (March 1925): 231; Robert Brand, “The Future of Reparations and Inter Allied Debts,” *The Round Table*, 50, (March 1923): 273 86; James Headlam Morley, “The Aftermath of Victory,” *The Round Table*, 45, (Dec 1921); James Headlam Morley, “Problems of Europe: The Paris Conference and After,” *The Round Table*, 38, (March 1920).

⁵⁰ Lentin, “Philip Kerr e ‘l’aggressione’,” 63 7; id., *Lloyd George and the Lost Peace: From Versailles to Hitler, 1919 1940* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

was with the German Government, not with the German people,” *The Round Table* argued that at Paris “Germany was treated unjustly,” that the Reparations were “too severe,” and that France “should have been forced to disarm also, as promised in Wilson’s Fourth Point.”⁵¹

5. *Kerr, Ireland, and Russia*

Kerr first visited Ireland in June 1916 for the purpose of writing an article in the aftermath of the 1916 Dublin Easter Rising. Great Britain, with the Rising, had to face a major rebellion at home while engaged in the European war. The execution of the leaders of the rebellion had caused “a violent revulsion of feeling” particularly in the United States, strengthening isolationist forces. The occasion gave Irish Americans a case for strongly opposing American intervention in Europe, and as a result the American organisation Friends of Irish Freedom had significantly increased in membership. A settlement of the Anglo-Irish conflict would have allowed Wilson—as stated in a message to Lloyd George in April 1917—to multiply American support for the British war effort.⁵²

Kerr was aware how the Irish question could affect American public opinion. Irish nationalists were trying hard to secure American support to their cause. The increase of emigration from Ireland to the United States during the Nineteenth century was another cause for the increase of American backing—moral and financial—for Irish nationalism.⁵³

⁵¹ Robert Brand, “Finance and Reparations,” *The Round Table*, 35, (June 1919): 455–67; id., “The Peace of Versailles,” *The Round Table*, 35, (June 1919): 429–54; Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 237.

⁵² Philip Kerr, “Ireland and the Empire,” *The Round Table*, 6, 24, (Sept. 1916): 614; Ward, *Ireland and Anglo American Relations*, 127–8, 141. Sinn Fein could be regarded, to a certain extent, as the successor of the Irish Transvaal Committee. The Irish Separatist movement supported the Boers with an Irish Transvaal Brigade, led by Major John MacBride, who would later employ in the Easter Rising of 1916 the Boers’ guerrilla tactics. For a discussion, see Donald McCracken, *Forgotten Protest: Ireland and the Anglo Boer War* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2003), 72–73.

⁵³ On Anglo Irish relations at the beginning of the Twentieth century, see Alan J. Ward, *Ireland and Anglo American Relations, 1899–1921* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969); Francis M. Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question, 1910–23: A Study in Opinion and Policy* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1978); Jack Holland, *The American Connection: US Guns, Money and Influence in Northern Ireland* (Dublin: Poolbeg, 1989).

The American Commission on Irish Independence, formed by three representatives of the Irish-American Nationalist movement—Frank P. Walsh, Michael J. Ryan, and Edward F. Dunne—was an outcome of this support. This Commission acted to secure the access by Irish ‘unofficial’ delegates—Éamon De Valera, Arthur Griffith, and Count George Plunkett—to the Peace Conference. Wilson’s crusade for the case of the small nations in fact boosted the expectations of Irish nationalists—who could rely upon their American supporters—that they could have independence and not just home rule. Kerr was approached by William C. Bullitt—head of the Intelligence Department of the American Delegation in Paris—demanding, on behalf of the Commission, that he issue passports to the peace talks for the Irish delegates. Kerr acted accordingly, and arranged a meeting of the Commission with Lloyd George, but warned Bullitt that, by all means, the Irish ‘delegates’ would not have any recognised role at the Conference.⁵⁴

The impressive press coverage of the Commission’s journey in Ireland—visiting prisons where Nationalists were incarcerated, meeting Sinn Féin leaders, and publicly supporting the case for Irish independence in front of enthusiastic crowds—caused Lloyd George to reverse his willingness to issue passports to the Irish delegates and to meet the Commission. The Commission’s attitude provoked also Wilson’s irritation: he dropped his manifest support for the Irish case, fearing it would jeopardise Anglo-American relations.⁵⁵

In Paris, Kerr was also involved in trying to settle the Russian question. Together with Lloyd George, he strongly believed in the policy of military non-intervention in the Russian civil war, and of diplomatic mediation between the parties in dispute. This policy failed because of the refusal of anti-Bolshevik groups to take part in a Conference which was to be held on the island of Prinkipo, in the sea of Marmara.

At the end of January 1919, with the approval of Lloyd George, Wilson assigned Bullitt and Lincoln Steffens of the American Delegation to go to Russia to explore the possibility of putting an end to the civil war. Bullitt’s mission tested Lenin’s willingness to agree to an armistice on all fronts and to start negotiations. Lenin did agree, but on condition that this

⁵⁴ Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question* 131 2; id., *The American Commission on Irish Independence 1919: The Diary, Correspondence and Report* (Dublin: Irish Manuscript Commission, 1985), 10.

⁵⁵ “Papers Relating to the American Commission on Irish Independence,” LP, 575 80; Carroll, *The American Commission on*, 46; John B. Duff, “The Versailles Treaty and the Irish Americans,” *Journal of American History*, 55, 3, (Dec. 1968): 582 98.

request came officially from the Allies. Bullitt's surprising decision to disclose the outcome of his mission first to Lloyd George and then to Wilson irritated the President to the point of allowing Lenin's offer to be dropped. Bullitt was forced to resign soon afterwards, and the American Senate carried out an inquiry which questioned Wilson's attitude. *The Times'* report of the case produced a Parliamentary interpellation on Lloyd George's approach.

Even after the failure of the 'Prinkipo formula', Kerr did not abandon his conciliatory attitude towards Russia, and entered into open conflict with Churchill and Sir Henry Wilson, who with Milner supported massive Allied military intervention against Bolshevik forces. Lloyd George was opposed to an "effective intervention," and in any case did not want a decision to be made while the American President was absent from Paris, since he ought "to share the responsibility whatever it is." Lloyd George thought that "there is nothing worse than indecision," but wanted to involve Wilson in the decision, sharing its responsibility.⁵⁶

British troops were already in Russia in order to prevent the Germans from seizing Allied supplies directed to Russia. The question was whether to bring these forces into operation on the side of White Russia, or to withdraw them. Kerr thought that if the Prinkipo scheme collapsed, the British should remove their troops from Russia. Writing to Lloyd George on 11 February 1919, Kerr stated his view:

We ought to do all that we can to bring the Conference off. It looks pretty certain that we could anyhow get an agreement in regard to peace on the frontiers of Russia and that would be a tremendous gain. The Bolsheviks are careful to say nothing about suspending internal warfare but I think we have got a fairly strong hand to play there too. If neither side is willing to agree voluntarily we can say to Kolchak and his people that we intend to withdraw Allied troops in the Spring, which means that he and his Party will collapse and the Bolsheviks will overrun Siberia. On the other hand we can say to the Bolsheviks that unless they are prepared to make a reasonable settlement with their opponents, we will not send any clothes or boots and that their chief motive in making peace with us, which is the restoration of trade with the outside world, will not be fulfilled.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill. The Stricken World 1916 1922*, vol. 4 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 219 319.

⁵⁷ Kerr to Lloyd George, 11 Feb. 1919, LGP, F/89/2/17. For a discussion on British policy towards Russia at the Peace Conference, see Keith Neilson, "'That Elusive Entity British Policy in Russia': The Impact of Russia on British Policy at the Paris Peace Conference," *The Paris Peace Conference, 1919: Peace without Victory?*, Michael Dockrill and John Fisher eds. (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2001), 67 102; Richard H. Ullman, *Anglo Soviet Relations, 1917 1921. Britain*

Lloyd George succeeded on the 12 and 13 February in temporarily neutralising within the Cabinet the attempt by his Secretary of State for War, Churchill, to press for intervention. Churchill however tried to exploit the absence of Lloyd George from Paris to force through his plans, trying to win the support of the Foreign Secretary, Balfour, and playing an ambiguous role with House, Wilson's representative in Paris. Lloyd George was well aware that he could not trust his Minister of War, and charged Kerr with the duty "to extract" from Balfour "all the information that he can get and write a daily letter to the Prime Minister." Kerr used this special role also to exercise on Balfour pressure to act as counterweight to Churchill's action, reminding the Foreign Secretary that it would be a "fundamental and colossal mistake to be drawn into a war with Soviet Russia."⁵⁸

In the note of 16 February, Kerr alerted Lloyd George to Churchill's manoeuvres:

I cannot conceal from you that in my opinion Mr. Churchill is bent on forcing a campaign against Bolshevik Russia by using Allied volunteers, Polish and Finnish and other conscripts that can be got hold of, financed and equipped by the Allies. He is perfectly logical in his policy, because he declares that the Bolsheviks are the enemies of the human race and must be put down at any costs. Personally as I think you know, I am against such a policy because, to my mind, it must lead to the Peace Conference taking charge of Russian affairs, and if they do that it will end in revolution in the West...I think you ought to watch the situation very carefully, if you do not wish to be rushed into the policy of a volunteer war against the Bolsheviks in the near future.⁵⁹

Kerr thought that "to start in on a new war against Russia" was "the surest way of producing Bolshevism at home," and that it was not "any business of ours how the Russian people govern themselves." Intervention would "cause grave difficulties at home and would land us with the ultimate responsibility for the government of Russia for a number of years." Lloyd George was of the same view, and when it became manifest that Churchill had started "planning War against BOLSHEVIKS" with the Americans, the prime minister asked Kerr to intervene directly with House. The British had "an obligation to defend our friends," Kerr made

and the Russian Civil War, vol. 2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 99 115.

⁵⁸ Hardinge to Curzon, 11 Feb. 1919, quoted in Neilson, "Lord Lothian, Russia," 49; Kerr to Balfour, 16 February 1919, LP, 764.

⁵⁹ Kerr to Lloyd George, 16 Feb. 1919, LGP, f/89/2/17.

clear to House, but “this did not include the obligation to refuse to speak to the Bolsheviks or to conquer Bolshevik Russia on their behalf.”⁶⁰

Informed by Kerr on the determination by Churchill and Henry Wilson to intervene, Lloyd George on 17 February sent two telegrams from London in which he expressed his firm opposition to the project. Since Churchill tried to bypass the Prime Minister, turning directly to the Council of Ten to gain support for the interventionist line, Kerr asked Lloyd George for permission to show copies of the two telegrams to Colonel House, in order to neutralize Churchill’s harsh action. In writing to the Prime Minister, Churchill felt “very indignant” about Kerr’s action, which “revealed to the Americans the internal disagreement of the British Government, and made it seem as if you [Lloyd George] had no confidence that he [Churchill] would represent your views.” As a result, relations between Churchill and Kerr were strained until May 1940, when Churchill had replaced Chamberlain at the head of the British Government and Lothian was Ambassador in Washington. Only then did mutual esteem and trust develop, even though they remained essentially strangers to each other.⁶¹

Kerr’s opposition to the policy of military intervention certainly did not result from ideological motives, even if the Italian and French Delegations held him to be “the head of Bolshevism” in Western Europe, but from practical considerations. In a letter to Lloyd George on 18 February, he noted with satisfaction that “the idea of an anti-Bolshevik campaign had been definitely abandoned,” and proposed negotiating with the Bolsheviks to reach the signing of an armistice on all fronts. They should resort to military intervention, and the consequent request to Parliament to finance the sending of volunteers, only if the Bolsheviks refused to sign an armistice and accept a compromise “which the whole world would regard as reasonable.” Informing Lloyd George that House was willing to support, on behalf of Wilson, his conciliatory position, Kerr thought that a compromise would also guarantee the autonomy and independence of the territories conquered by Alexander Kolchak and Anton Denikin: Archangel and the small States on the Western border of

⁶⁰ Kerr to Lady Anne Kerr, 18 Feb. 1919, LP, 466; Kerr to Balfour, 16 Feb. 1919, LP, 764; Lloyd George to Kerr, tel. 177, tel. 178, 16 Feb. 1919, LGP, F/89/2/19; FOP, FO608/177; Kerr to Lloyd George, 18 Feb. 1919, LGP, F/89/2/23; House to Kerr, 22 Feb. 1919, LP, 766.

⁶¹ Lothian to Lloyd George, 20 April 1937, LP, 341, and Lloyd George to Kerr, 12 Feb. 1919, *ibidem*, 1217; Kerr to Lloyd George, 17 Feb. 1919, LGP, F/89/2/21. For an analysis, see: R. K. Debo, *Revolution and Survival. The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1917 1918* (Toronto: 1979).

Soviet Russia. He was, moreover, successful in showing the impracticability of Foch's plan to invade Russia with the help of the Czechs, Finns, Poles and Russian prisoners of war and in convincing Clemenceau and House on 7 March finally to abandon plans for military intervention.⁶²

Kerr was against the recognition of a Kolchak Government by the Allies since it controlled only "part of the country," and there were regions which did not "want to have anything to do with him," and favoured the evacuation of British forces from the Baltic and Caucasian regions. The Dominions were generally against their permanence in Russia, and the Empire was "doing as much, if not more," than they "could safely face." Churchill and officials at the Foreign Office were "so pre-occupied with great schemes in Russia," Kerr wrote to Hankey on 7 July 1919, that they were "letting the far more important business of getting our own armies into good shape go by the board." Kerr, on the other hand, was in support—influenced by Seton-Watson—of the various national movements on the borders of the former Russian Empire.⁶³

Kerr was also opposed to sending Allied contingents into Hungary to bring down the regime of Béla Kun. The foundations of the policy of non-intervention in the hotbeds of war still burning in Europe are well expressed in a letter to Lloyd George of July 1919:

The necessities which have overtaken the Western Powers and compelled them to demobilise and concentrate on home reconstruction will very quickly overtake Eastern Europe as well. Militarism, I think, is dead in Europe in the sense that it can no longer achieve anything. The economic factors are becoming so pressing that no government can stand which does not demobilize and organize all national armies for the purpose of economic production.⁶⁴

The re-opening of Russian markets and sources of supply were, according to Kerr, of "enormous importance to Europe." Before the war

⁶² L. Aldovrandi Marescotti, *Guerra diplomatica* (Milano: 1936), 381; Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 76; Kerr to Lloyd George, 18 February 1919, LP, 1222; "Notes of an interview between M. Clemenceau, Colonel House and Myself," *ibidem*, 1173. Kerr also dealt with the Adriatic question, standing up for Wilson's view and contributing to increasing the tension between the Italian Delegation and those of Great Britain and the United States.

⁶³ J. Y. Simpson to Tyrrell, 13 June 1919, FOP, FO/371/4380/PID461; Simpson to Tyrrel, 23 June 1919, FO371/4380/PID 483; Kerr to Hankey, 7 July 1919, LP, 1320; Keith Jeffery, *The British Army and the Crisis of Empire, 1918-22* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

⁶⁴ LGP, F/89/3/11.

was over, the West had in fact imported a considerable amount of foodstuffs from Russia, but these now had to be purchased from the United States “at American prices,” with a resulting scarcity of food and an increase in prices which were a “continuous incentive to Bolshevism in Western Europe.” The re-establishment of commercial activity seemed to him “a most powerful counter to Bolshevism in Russia and the rest of Europe.”⁶⁵

6. Kerr and the League of Nations

Kerr initially welcomed and took an active part—as has been discussed—in the creation of the League of Nations, because he saw in it an instrument to promote economic and political stability in Continental Europe, on condition that the United States would share with Britain the burden of directing it. As soon as it became apparent that the United States would revert to isolationism, Kerr and the Round Table severed their support for the League, seriously undermining their relations with that part of the Cecil family willing to follow Robert Cecil in his long-standing determination to support the League.

Cecil had resigned from the Government in November 1918 in order to exercise a more effective influence on the British foreign policy establishment in favour of the League, drafting what became known as the “Cecil Plan,” an attempt to reconcile Kerr-Hankey views on the League with the Phillimore scheme. If the Cecil scheme did not contemplate Smuts’ idea of Anglo-Dominion-American trusteeship of former German, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman colonies, both Smuts and Cecil however regarded the questions of sanctions as the fulcrum of the League’s structure, “the most important question of all for the preservation of world peace.”⁶⁶

The recommendations put forward by the Imperial War Cabinet of late December 1918—following a remarkable clash of views among its members—were based however on the Kerr-Hankey scheme, according to which the League should be designed on the basis of the “admirable precedents” of the Imperial War Cabinet and the Versailles Supreme War Cabinet, with its functional agencies, such as the Military Council at Versailles, the Naval Council in London, and the Maritime Transport Council. It would work on the basis of a permanent and institutionalised conference of leaders, where decisions would be taken without a limitation

⁶⁵ Kerr to Rex Leeper, n.d., LP, 214/144 6.

⁶⁶ CABP, Cab. 79, 17 Dec. 1918; Cab. 29/2.

of national sovereignty. "It must not be constituted as a body with executive power," Lloyd George stressed, supporting the Kerr-Hankey scheme, "but on the basis of the Imperial War Cabinet and of the Supreme War Council you would get a body whose authority rested with the governments." Lloyd George was well aware that the League issue was "the only thing" which Wilson "really cared about," but that Wilson was definitely opposed to "anything in the nature of giving executive powers to the League of Nations."⁶⁷

"The continuation and strengthening of the existing Inter-Allied organizations for economic cooperation," providing the material basis for "an effective League of Nations," was a view supported also by Paul Cravath, Assistant Secretary of State.

It may well be Cravath argued that the success in continuing the existing Inter Allied machinery for economic cooperation during the period of the world's convalescence from the economic maladies resulting from the war would lead to the establishment of some permanent international economic machinery which would make for peace and provide an economic weapon with which to discipline any nation which threatened to disturb the peace of the world.⁶⁸

In spite of the rejection by Lloyd George of the Cecil plan to furnish the League with coercive means, Cecil was appointed head of the British

⁶⁷ IWCP, IWC 43, 18 Dec.; IWC 46, 24 Dec. 1918, IWC Cab. 23/42; Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation*, 103 109; IWCP, IWC 47, Dec. 30; and IWC 48, 31 Dec. 1918, Cab. 23/42. In drafting the minutes of the Imperial War Cabinet, Hankey commented that Lloyd George went in "the direction that I have always advocated," (Diary of Maurice Hankey, 23 Dec. 1918, quoted in Stephen Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets* (London: 1970 1974), vol. 2, 38. Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation*, 167 8; Hankey to Lady Hankey, 6 May 1919, (quoted in Roskill, *Hankey*, vol. 2, 87 8). "The League of Nations, Observations by the Secretary," CABP, CAB, G. T. 3344, 16 Jan. 1918, Cab. 24/39; Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation*, 69 71.

⁶⁸ Paul D. Cravath to William G. McAdoo, 7 Nov. 1918, quoted in Roberts, *Lord Lothian and*, 36; Dean Acheson, *Fragments of my Fleece* (New York: Norton, 1971), 206. For a discussion on Anglo American economic and financial war and post war relations, see Seth Tillmann, *Anglo American Relations at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 260 72; Carl Parrini, *Heir to Empire: United States Economic Diplomacy, 1916 1923* (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 1969), 40 54; Burton I. Kaufman, *Efficiency and Expansion: Foreign Trade Organization in the Wilson Administration, 1913 1921* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1974), 237 41; Michael J. Hogan, *Informal Entente: The Private Structure of Cooperation in Anglo American Diplomacy, 1918 1928* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1977), 20 7. On Cravath, see Robert T. Swaine, *The Cravath Firm and Its Predecessors, 1819 1938* (New York: 1946 8).

Delegation to deal with the League at the Paris Peace Conference, which on January 25 approved the guiding-principles for the future League. In Paris, Cecil found in Colonel House, American representative on the League of Nations Commission, a strong ally, and when on 29 January he sent to Kerr for commentary the interim report of the Commission, he was well aware that he “went a good deal further than the Prime Minister” allowed him, as William Wiseman—intelligence agent and Wilson’s liaison with the British Delegation—put it. Before carrying the negotiations with the British representatives further, House asked Wiseman to arrange a meeting on 31 January between Wilson, himself, Cecil and Smuts, in order to reach an Anglo-American general agreement prior to negotiating the terms with the French. Wiseman knew that Lloyd George would never have agreed to go along the lines suggested by Cecil and Smuts: he therefore asked Kerr to draft a memorandum for the Prime Minister, briefing him on the state of the negotiations.⁶⁹

Kerr did not however limit himself to reporting on the options at stake, but in his memorandum to the Prime Minister offered a complete outline of how the League should be finally established according to the prevailing views of the leading members of the British and Dominions delegations. It provided Lloyd George a last line of resistance against Wilson and Cecil’s internationalist visions which, according to Kerr, contained the seeds for future international disasters.⁷⁰

The constitution of the League of Nations should be based, according to Kerr, “upon the constitution and procedure which has been worked out for the Peace Conference...a method whereby twenty five nations can deliberate together and not only draw up a legal instrument of peace, but deal with the current problems of the world.” It had not developed into a “Holy Alliance” because the Allies “adopted and put into execution the principle that the representatives of the Little Powers should be present at all discussions which affect them, not as advocates or witnesses, but as parties to the Conference and parties to the decisions.” The execution of the decisions of the League of Nations would not depend, in fact, “upon the power of the League in arms or economics so much as upon the procedure which placed the representative of each nation under the obligation to give effect to any decision which he may have agreed to or resign office in his own country.” The procedure adopted for the Peace

⁶⁹ Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation*, 115 119; LP, 54.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*. Kerr’s memorandum and role in the creation of the League of Nations is fully examined in Egerton, “Imperialism, Atlanticism, and Internationalism,” 95 121.

Conference and the system of representation went “as far as it is possible to secure these results.”⁷¹

The League of Nations would succeed in promoting stable international relations not because its members would

enter into solemn covenants to guarantee one another’s territories or to go to war with rebellious powers on certain stated conditions, but because it constitutes the machinery by which the nations of the world can remain in continual consultation with one another and through which they can arrive promptly at great decisions for dealing with all international problems as they arise.

Plenipotentiary ministers “should be meeting one another continuously,” spending “half their time in their own capitals and half their time in the capital of the League of Nations.” They had “to be men of great authority,” and “at stated intervals and moments of crisis their deliberations would be reinforced by the presence of Prime Ministers and Presidents of the various States.” They would operate “through a joint secretariat constituted on the same lines as the secretariat of the Supreme War Council or of the Peace Conference.”⁷²

“The probable effect of including in the constitution of the League of Nations obligations to go to war in certain stated conditions,” Kerr pointed out, would have been overwhelming opposition in the United States, and would have made

it impossible for any nation to join the League, for no nation will commit itself in such a vital matter except by the free decision of its own Government and of its own Parliament, and no Government and no Parliament can come to such a decision except after an examination of the facts at the time when the decision has to be made.⁷³

The imposition of obligations “of this kind at the start will either end in their being nugatory or in the destruction of the League itself.” International crises would be resolved only through the voluntary agreement of all parties involved, and therefore “the nations of the world

⁷¹ LP, 54. For a general discussion of the British official mind and the League negotiations, see Peter J. Yearwood, “‘Real Securities against New Wars’: Official British Thinking and the Origins of the League of Nations, 1914–19,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 9, 3, (Nov. 1998): 83–109.

⁷² LP, 54; Egerton, “Imperialism, Atlanticism, and Internationalism,” 95–121.

⁷³ LP, 54. On Anglo American relations during the peace negotiations see George Egerton “Ideology, Diplomacy, and International Organisation: Wilsonism and the League of Nations in Anglo American Relations, 1918–1920,” *Anglo American Relations in the 1920’s: The Struggle for Supremacy*, Brian McKercher ed. (Edmonton, AB: The University of Alberta Press, 1990).

should remain in continuous consultation under a system which enables them to come to prompt and great decisions on world problems as they arise." The League should commit its members not to "initiate military or economic action against its neighbours without first having submitted the matter in dispute to the consideration of the Council of the League and given it reasonable time to negotiate or impose a settlement." Any nation which did not respect this rule would "become ipso facto an outlaw of the League and an immediate Meeting of the Council of the League" should determine "what action should be taken by the League to deal with the matter."⁷⁴

Kerr suggested that statesmen "take the deliberations of the twenty-five nations that constitute the Peace Conference as a kind of preliminary meeting of the League of Nations," which should

expand into a Conference of the Nations, including the neutrals which, after the question of the representation and status of the new comers has been settled, should proceed at once to deal with the post war problems which will be numerous and pressing exactly as the Peace Conference is dealing with current problems.

The "paper obligations" of the future League, Kerr advised Lloyd George, "should be reduced to the absolute minimum." If the Peace Conference was able to negotiate "a settlement which is just and satisfactory it will have the authority necessary to float its own continuance as the League of Nations." If it failed, Kerr foresaw, "no other League of Nations is likely to do better."⁷⁵

⁷⁴ LP, 54; Egerton, "Imperialism, Atlanticism, and Internationalism," 95 121.

⁷⁵ LP, 54. Kerr enclosed with the memorandum to the Prime Minister a draft Constitution of the League: "1. There shall be constituted a League of Nations for the purpose of securing agreement among all nations in the conduct of international affairs, and for the prevention of war. 2. The League shall consist of all powers who undertake to abide by its rules. 3. The League shall conduct its business by means of an executive Council, consisting of plenipotentiaries of the Great Powers who shall have general charge of the affairs of the League, and of a plenipotentiary of each of the other powers who may attend the Council as a member whenever matters specially affecting their nation are under consideration. 4. The function of the Executive Council shall be to secure agreement among all nations in the conduct of international affairs by means of constant consultation and deliberation together. It shall also have charge of all international services, administrative, inspectional or research, which may be initiated by the League. 5. Each power shall appoint a representative who shall be its permanent plenipotentiary on the Council and other plenipotentiaries to the number laid down on the basis of representation annexed hereto. 6. The permanent members of the Council shall sit in continuous session, but there shall be full meetings of the Council at intervals of not less than six months, or

On the basis of Kerr's suggestions, Lloyd George instructed Cecil to follow, in the negotiations with the Americans, the guiding-lines which emerged from the December Imperial War Cabinet, a permanent diplomatic conference based on voluntary agreement among the leading world powers at its centre. Cecil had therefore to drop from his scheme the proposed League Council and Assembly as legislative organs, the Secretariat as its executive, and the International Court as its juridical body, being the fundamental features of a federal government. Lloyd George was not just worried about the reaction in the Empire of such a dramatic departure from the British political tradition, but also by the attitude of American isolationist forces, which were still predominant on the other side of the Atlantic.⁷⁶

Before the League's final architecture was finalized, Lloyd George tried then to meet South Africa's claim to annex the former German colonies in Africa, and similar Australian and New Zealand claims on Southern Pacific colonies, on the basis of Smuts' mandate system. Lloyd George gave to Kerr the responsibility for drafting the text which ultimately became Article XXII of the Covenant.⁷⁷

The refusal by Wilson at the 30 January Council of Ten meeting to grant to South Africa the mandates for the former German colonies in Africa, unless Lloyd George lifted his veto on the creation of the League according to his own vision, caused Cecil to disregard his Prime

whenever necessity requires, at which the other plenipotentiaries may attend. 7. There shall be an annual plenary [sic] Conference of the whole League. 8. The administrative organisation of the League shall be in the hands of a joint secretariat of the Great Powers and the control of the permanent members of the Council of the League. 9. Every member of the League undertakes to take no action, military or economic, against any other member, without first submitting the matter in dispute to the consideration of the Council of the League for a period of not less than three months. In the event of any power breaking this rule it immediately becomes an outlaw, forfeiting its privileges and immunities under the rules of the League, and there shall be immediately summoned a full Council of the League to consider the action to be taken against it. 10. The first meeting of the League shall consist of the members of the Peace Conference and of all neutrals, and the first business it shall consider shall be draft constitution. 11. Every nation joining the League shall be required to stop line armies, liquor and slave trade, etc.," (*ibidem*).

⁷⁶ Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation*, 110-114.

⁷⁷ Kerr to Lloyd George, 27 Jan. 1919, LGP F/89/2/2; Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 74-75. For a discussion, see Wm. Roger Louis, "The United States and the African Peace Settlement of 1919: The Pilgrimage of George Louis Beer," *Journal of African History*, 4, 3, (1963); id., "Great Britain and the African Peace Settlement of 1919," *The American Historical Review*, (April 1966).

Minister's instructions in the drafting, as Chairman of the League of Nations Commission, of the Covenant. Having Wilson as an ally, Cecil also dismissed reservations from Canada and Australia.⁷⁸

The reaction of the British, Canadian and Australian delegations to the Covenant of the League, presented by Wilson on February 14, was one of great irritation. The only Dominion which stood behind it was South Africa, because of the direct involvement of Smuts in the drafting of the Covenant, and the territorial gains which the Southern Dominion would have obtained once the League issue had been settled. Vain was the attempt by Kerr to persuade Colonel House to revise the Covenant during Wilson's absence from Paris.⁷⁹

When negotiations to shape the character of the new League were already advanced, *The Round Table* proposed in March 1919 a functional model of international co-operation, based on "a permanent international commission," formed by delegates from "every great department of government in each country whose activities touch those of similar departments in other countries," and "charged with the study of the sphere of international relations in question and with the duty of making recommendations to the various Governments." The coordinating institution of these sectorial departments should be an "international secretariat," composed "not by national ambassadors," but by civil servants "under the sole direction of a non-national chancellor," and the aim of the whole organization should be "to evolve a practical international sense of common service." In many respects, here we find the description of some fundamental features of the early European Commission, when its powers were not extended yet to include some vital sovereign functions such as currency and foreign policy. *The Round Table's* proposal stopped short of the crucial question of surrender or merging of national sovereignty into a semi-sovrational organization. If realized in 1919, it would have created the basis for further integration.⁸⁰

Between late March and early April, the Peace Conference had entered its most critical period, with the French pressing on the Rhineland, the Italians on the Adriatic, the Japanese on China, and Wilson being confronted by an increasing wave of anti-League American opinion. Kerr, according to Egerton, "played a central role in guiding Lloyd George's tactics and policy through the turbulence of these weeks," suggesting to

⁷⁸ Hankey to Lady Hankey, 5 Feb. 1919, (Roskill, *Hankey*, vol. 2, 57). On Cecil and other Anglo American supporters of the League scheme, see William Mulligan, *The Great War for Peace* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014).

⁷⁹ Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation*, 143 144, 149 152.

⁸⁰ Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 252 3.

Lloyd George and House the idea of an Anglo-American guarantee to France's North Eastern frontiers against an eventual German threat. The proposal, as has been discussed, offered the solution to the question of post-war French security, and secured a continuing Anglo-American collaboration after the war.⁸¹

The "disgusting thing of the situation to-day," Kerr thought, "was the way in which the Americans with a population of a hundred millions, and 'stinking with wealth', were withdrawing themselves from their share in the burden of civilization in Europe and Asia." Unless the British Government adopted however a "positive policy" towards the United States, there were the risk that the two countries "shall drift into rivalry as being the two great powers of the world." Kerr thought, however, that "America and ourselves have fundamentally the same outlook on the world and there is a job which we can do together which neither of us can do alone."⁸²

The mission of the English-speaking nations was, according to Kerr

(a) keeping peace between nations by insisting on reference of all important disputes to the League of Nations, which we will mainly control, and acceptance of its decisions, and, (b) getting a movement on for the education and betterment of the backward races of the world.⁸³

Convinced that without the United States the League would be "unworkable," and that the Republican reservations to the United States' ratification of the Covenant, if accepted, would discharge all the burden of the League onto British shoulders alone, Kerr took a firm position with Cecil Hurst—Foreign Office legal adviser—Balfour, Hankey, the neo-appointed Foreign Secretary Curzon, and Eric Drummond—the future Secretary General of the League—to oppose "any American reservations whatever." In the event that the United States failed to ratify the Covenant, Kerr suggested proceeding to British withdrawal from the League in the space of two years. The American Senate in fact refused twice to ratify the League Bill—on 19 November 1919, and 20 March 1920—a fatal setback for the Atlanticists, who spoke of "the Great Betrayal."⁸⁴

⁸¹ Kerr to Lloyd George, 13 Feb. 1919, LGP F/89/2/10; Harold Nelson, *Land and Power: British and Allied Policy on Germany's Frontiers, 1916-19* (London: 1963), Chs. 8-9.

⁸² Kerr to Lloyd George, 18 July 1919, LGP, F/89/3/6; Kerr to Hankey, 21 July 1919, LP, 1323.

⁸³ Kerr to Hankey, 21 July 1919, LP, 1323.

⁸⁴ The British perception of the American ratification debate is analyzed by George Egerton in "Britain and the 'Great Betrayal': Anglo American Relations and the Struggle for United States Ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, 1919-1920," *The*

The aim of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge's reservations to the ratification of the Covenant was not to prejudice America's freedom of action at home or abroad. In the 1890s Lodge often met in the Metropolitan Club in Washington former President Theodore Roosevelt, and a number of his followers, including Alfred T. Mahan and Peter C. Brookes Adams, to discuss the evolution of American foreign policy towards a direct involvement in international power politics. Roosevelt was one of the most vigorous critics of Wilson and the League, favouring a "League of Allies."⁸⁵

In coincidence—but perhaps it was not a simple coincidence—with the final vote at the Senate, Kerr supported, writing in *The Round Table*, the Lodge-Roosevelt approach, arguing that Wilson "aimed too high and too far." Since it was "very unlikely" that "one of its most important members" would finally ratify the Covenant, it had to be revised in order to favour the vital membership of the United States. The revision should take into consideration that "the emphasis of public sentiment in all nations" reverted at the time "on the rights of national sovereignty, rather than on international right." The American Senate represented "the real sentiment of all nations with hard-headed truthfulness," and the fact that the leading world Power was unwilling to subordinate their "national sovereignty to an international code and an international ideal." Recognition that the "principle of national sovereignty" was "over-riding the ideal of world government enforcing world interests," that Wilson's project signified "the complete abandonment of the doctrines of the Fathers of the American Republic," and that the "influence of the League of Nations upon British Imperial relations" had been "misleading and dangerous," caused Kerr to suggest a reform of the League based on the rejection of "general obligations," including the exercise of "military or economic pressure on recalcitrant States."⁸⁶

Historical Journal, 21, 4, (1978): 885 911. [P. Kerr], "Memorandum on American Reservations and British Ratification of the Treaty of Peace," 10 Nov. 1919, LP, 2; Philip Kerr, "America and the League of Nations," 14 Nov. 1919, LP, 54; Egerton, "Britain and the 'Great Betrayal,'" 894 897, 885 911; Herbert F. Margulies, *The Mild Reservations and the League of Nations Controversy in the Senate* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1989).

⁸⁵ Tilchin, *Theodore Roosevelt and the British Empire*, 18 19, 24; Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise*, 78; Mahan, "Possibilities of an Anglo American," 558, 559, 555, 560.

⁸⁶ Philip Kerr, "The British Empire, The League of Nations, and the United States," *The Round Table*, 38, (March 1920): 225, 226, 166, 232 235, 246 247.

The Senate's reversal to isolationism was taken however largely as a consequence of opposition to Wilson's internal policy. Support for the League idea was in fact widespread in the United States. The League to Enforce Peace was counting in 1919 on 300,000 members, and 50,000 militants. Created in 1914, on the initiative of Hamilton Holt of the New York Peace Society, Lawrence A. Lowell—rector of Harvard University, and leading figure in the World Peace Foundation—and Theodore Marburg of the Century Club, the organization had the support of three presidents, Theodore Roosevelt, William H. Taft, and Woodrow Wilson. With a yearly contribution of 10,000 dollars, the World Peace Foundation became in fact the major sponsor and guiding force behind the League. The activities of the League to Enforce Peace culminated in May-June 1919 with the daily publication—on the example of the *Federalist Papers*—of *The Covenanter*, a series of 37 articles aimed at winning the support of public opinion to back the Covenant of the League of Nations.⁸⁷

The World Peace Foundation was created in 1910 by Edwin Ginn, with a yearly contribution of 50,000 dollars, and an endowment of a million dollars at his death. The same year, Andrew Carnegie granted the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace ten million dollars. The World Federation Committee was also founded in 1910 by the New York Peace Society, which in 1912 became the World Federation League. Holt had been a central figure of both the World Federation League and the New York Peace Society, and the inspiration for Theodore Roosevelt's 5 May 1910 Christiania speech, with which the former President advocated, on the occasion of the ceremony for acceptance of the Nobel Prize for peace, the creation of a world federation.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Theodore Marburg, *Development of the League of Nations Idea: Documents and Correspondence of Theodore Marburg*, John H. Latané ed. (New York: 1932); Henry A. Atkinson, *Theodore Marburg, the Man and his Work* (New York: 1951); William Howard Taft, *The Proposal for a League to Enforce Peace* (New York: 1916); id., *World Peace: A Written Debate between William Howard Taft and William Jenning Bryan* (New York: 1917); Henry F. Pringle, *The Life and Times of William Howard Taft* (New York: 1939); Lawrence Abbott Lowell, *A League to Enforce Peace* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1915). The articles of the "The Covenanter," were collected in the volume *The Covenanter: An American Exposition of the Covenant of the League of Nations*, William H. Taft, George W. Wickersham, Lawrence A. Lowell and Henry W. Taft eds. (Garden City, NY: 1919). For a discussion, see Charles Chatfield, *The American Peace Movement: Ideals and Activism* (New York: 1992), 30 1; Ruhl J. Bartlett, *The League to Enforce Peace* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, 24; Chatfield, *The American Peace Movement*, 20 1; Jean Francis Billion, *I movimenti mondialisti e l'integrazione europea*, in *I movimenti per*

Aware of the growing support by American opinion for the idea of some form of international government, and as soon as it became evident that the United States would not join the League, *The Round Table* immediately advocated revision of the Covenant “both in honesty and in self-regard” of the “great obligations” undertaken by the British Government. “A settlement based on ideal principles,” *The Round Table* warned, could “be permanently applied and maintained only by a world government to which all nations will subordinate their...national sovereignty to an international code and an international ideal.” The reservations of the American Senate stated “the sovereign right of the American people to make their own policy without interference from an International League” on vital issues of economic, foreign and military policies. In demonstrating the “illusory character of this arrangement,” the American Senate rendered the League “the great service of pointing clearly to the flaws which at present neutralize its work.”⁸⁹

The fact that the British Dominions accepted without reservations membership of the League—in order to have recognized their “full national independent status”—showed their willingness to undertake “obligations to foreign Powers...more binding than any obligations that they would undertake to their kindred nations within the British Empire.” Being “bound by stronger written obligations to Poland and Czechoslovakia, than the British Isles,” according to *The Round Table* the Dominions had “mortgaged their freedom of action to a League of foreign States in order to avoid the possibility of mortgaging it to the British Government.” If the Peace Conference marked the end of the diplomatic unity of the British Empire, the signing of the Covenant, according to *The Round Table*, meant the end of any realistic hope for closer Imperial union. Nonetheless, *The Round Table* was confident that “if England were threatened by invasion, the other British democracies would mobilize at

l'unità europea, 1945-54, Sergio Pisone ed. (Milano: Jaca, 1992), 273; Warren F. Kuehl, *Hamilton Holt: Journalist, Internationalist, Educator* (Grinesville, FL: 1960). On Holt's influence on Roosevelt, see Theodore Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt, An Autobiography* (New York: 1985), 558. In a declaration of faith, the *Independent* of 2 Oct. 1913 stated the belief in “a strong central government both in state and in nation in order that the people may have as efficient an instrument as possible with which to rule themselves.” The “spirit” of the *Independent* could not better be “expressed that in the motto which the French revolutionists made glorious as the ideal—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,” where the latter meant “the brotherhood of man and the federation of the world,” *The Independent*, 76, (2 Oct. 1913): 5-6.

⁸⁹ Philip Kerr, “The British Empire, the League of Nations, and the United States,” *The Round Table*, 38, (March 1920): 239.

once for her support,” while “they would not in practice mobilise a single man to defend the integrity of the Corridor to Danzig or any other Polish territorial interest”, in spite of the fact that “they had a written obligation to Poland, which they have never dreamed of giving to England.” The influence of the League upon Imperial relations had therefore been “misleading and dangerous,” and it would be just a question of time before this situation led to an incident of some kind provoking “the bitterest recrimination and controversy.”⁹⁰

Kerr thought that Dominion representation within the League was “a matter of form without political substance,” and that their delegates had a fundamentally different outlook “from the other peoples” represented in the League, because they had “similar processes of comprehending a problem,” and were “irresistibly impelled into sympathetic co-operative action in working it out.” If to a large extent this view was supported by the convergence of strategic interests of the component parts of the Commonwealth, and by their joint actions within the League—which proved to be an important “co-ordinating factor” in Anglo-Dominion relations—nevertheless it could last only on the condition that Britain stood as far as possible aside from Continental European affairs, when they demanded a direct commitment. It seemed therefore an “imperative necessity” that British foreign policy had to be shaped “in line with the opinion of the Dominions.”⁹¹

The way out from such a “dangerous and equivocal situation” was, according *The Round Table*, to review and correct the obligations of “our democracies” under the League, “with the clearness of vision and candour of statement displayed by the much-abused Senate of the United States.” The territorial arrangements of the Treaty of Versailles could be “challenged at any time by forces too powerful for diplomatic control,” and it was evident that in no part of the Empire would public opinion “sanction our active interference in the local disputes which might ensue.” The democracies of the Empire should therefore not commit themselves to responsibilities which they could not “discharge to the full” with their own resources. A new League with “less ambitious objects” would “sooner or later secure the whole-hearted support of American opinion,” thus reopening the fundamental question of the Anglo-American Treaty of guarantee to the North-Eastern frontiers of France, which for the political and military stability of the European Continent had major strategic relevance. The Treaty had been in fact ratified by British and French

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, 244 5.

⁹¹ Kerr interview to the *Toronto Daily Star*, 7 Nov. 1922, LP, 19, 223 31; Henry Hodson, “British Commonwealth Relations,” *The Round Table*, 93, (1933): 53.

parliaments, but it would not come into operation without ratification by the United States.⁹²

When by the middle of November 1919 it was certain that the United States would not join the League of Nations, even refusing to take mandatory responsibility in Asia Minor, Kerr made clear, in a memorandum to Lloyd George, the consequences that this would have for Great Britain and for peace. Kerr believed that the Versailles Treaty was based on the fact that

the four Great Powers with Japan as an associate were going to remain united as the centre of gravity of the world. They have succeeded in defeating the German menace, they had imposed a settlement on Europe which carried with it far reaching obligations, and in the Covenant of the League of Nations, they had not only provided the instrument which was designed to settle international disputes peaceably, but also clearly implied that they themselves intended to stand together in giving some kind of unity of direction to the world's affairs.

If the United States did not put “the whole weight of its authority and its resources behind the League of Nations,” it would be “doomed to failure,” since Great Britain alone would not be able to carry a load which would “eventually destroy it.” Kerr accordingly proposed to Lloyd George that he announce that Great Britain would leave the League within two years if, in the meantime, Article I were not modified to guarantee the entry of the United States.⁹³

“Like the Peace Conference,” *The Round Table* stated in March 1920, “the Covenant of the League of Nations aimed too high and too far.” As soon as the European powers tried to “furnish the means” to the League “for peaceful revision of the terms of the peace, where revision might be required,” they had to “realize that national sentiment” set “closer limits to international action” than the allies “were willing to recognize” in Paris. The Covenant of the League of Nations which guaranteed the Versailles

⁹² Kerr, “The British Empire, the League of Nations,” 248. For a discussion on the negotiations and ratification of the Treaty, see William R. Keylor, “The Rise and Demise of the Franco American Guarantee Pact, 1919 1921,” *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History*, 15, (1988): 367 77; Antony Lentin, “The Treaty That Never Was: Lloyd George and the Abortive Anglo French Alliance of 1919,” *The Life and Times of David Lloyd George*, Judith Loades ed. (Bangor: 1991), 115 28; id., “Several Types of Ambiguity: Lloyd George at the Paris Peace Conference,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 6, 1, (March 1995): 241 4.

⁹³ Philip Kerr, “America and the League of Nations,” 14 Nov. 1919, LP, 54/1 9.

peace conditions implied “a capacity for united action between the Allies” which the facts did “not warrant.”⁹⁴

Having failed to revise the Covenant due to the firm opposition of France, the Round Table tried to control as much as possible its proceedings, exercising through the Cecil family a dominant role among the thirty British delegates who took part in the hundred sessions of the Council of the League from 1920 to 1938. The Round Table secured about half of the total number of British delegates to the Annual Plenary Assembly of the League during the same period, except when a Labour Government was in office. The Round Table was also able to control the leadership of the League, through the appointment of Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary-General from 1919 to 1933, of Harold Butler, deputy Director, and then Director of the International Labour Office between 1920 to 1938, and of Arthur Salter, Director of the Economic and Financial Section from 1919 to 1920, and from 1922 to 1931, all of them members of the outer ring of the movement.⁹⁵

The Round Table also provided external support to the Cecil family in the formation of bipartisan consent in Great Britain to the League through the League of Nations Union, a transversal organization which played a central role in the formation of British attitudes towards European affairs in the inter-war period. Cecil was President of the organization from 1923 to 1945, and Murray was Chairman of its Council from 1923 to 1938, and co-President from 1938 to 1945. The Round Table eventually exercised influence on the editorial policy of the newsletter of the organization,

⁹⁴ Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 238 9.

⁹⁵ Anthony Eden was delegate at 39 sessions of the Council; Sir John Simon at 22; Sir Austen Chamberlain at 20; Arthur Balfour at 16; Robert Cecil at 15; Sir Alexander Cadogan at 12; E. H. Carr at 8; H. A. L. Fisher at 7; Sir William Malkin to 7; Viscount Cranborne to 5; Lord Curzon to 3; Lord Londonderry to 3; Leopold Amery to 2; Lord Halifax to 2; Cecil Hurst to 2; Sir Edward H. Young to 2; Lord Cushendun to 2; Lord Onslow to 2; Gilbert Murray to 1; Sir Rennel Rodd to 1. At the Assembly of the League, H. A. L. Fisher was delegate in 1920, 1921 and 1922; Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton in 1923, 1926, 1927, 1928 and 1931; Lord Astor in 1931, 1936 and 1938; Cecil Hurst in 1924, 1926, 1927 and 1928; Gilbert Murray in 1924; Lord Halifax in 1923 and 1936; Ormsby Gore in 1933; Robert Cecil in 1923, 1926, 1929, 1930, 1931 and 1932; E. H. Carr in 1933 and 1934. The Round Table was represented by its associates (such as Cecil, Murray, Sir John Latham, Vincent Massey and L. F. Rushbrook Williams) also within Dominions delegations. Associated to the Round Table were also the warden of All Souls B. H. Sumner, on the staff of the International Labour Office from 1920 to 1922, and R. M. Makins, assistant adviser on League affairs at the Foreign Office from 1937 to 1939.

Headways, through its editor Wilson Harris, member of the outer ring of the organization since 1922.

The Covenant of the League of Nations, which eventually created a nucleus around which tension could be eased and Europe rebuilt, represented by far the most positive aspect of a substantially negative Treaty. The political process which had brought about the Balkanisation of Europe on the basis of self-determination, granting independent governments to national claims, clashed with the universalisation of production, exchange and consumption resulting from industrial methods of production. Industrialization transformed European States into arsenals of weapons of destruction ready to be used in time of war. The Great War itself could rightly be considered as the negative expression of the tendency of the forces of production and exchange to bring about the unification of Europe. The creation of the League of Nations was therefore a response—at least partial—to the need to overcome the contradictions between the growth of material forces beyond the borders of the European States, and the identification, even more marked, between the State and separate national identities. Although it left sovereignty of the member States intact, and thus symbolised little more than an international diplomatic assembly, it nevertheless did represent a point of reference for promoting a peaceful solution of conflicts among nations.

European public opinion, split between support for and opposition to the League, was also divided as to the aims and ultimate goal of this international assembly. If the dividing line between supporters and opponents lay within each member country, then opinion as to the purposes of the League tended to lie along national borders. Criticism of Wilson's idea within the various States was essentially federalist. Thinkers of different—and often contrasting—cultural and political backgrounds used theoretical concepts derived from constitutional federalism, and the American political experience, to point out the contradictions of a union of sovereign States.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Luigi Einaudi, *Il buongoverno* (Bari: 1954); id., *La guerra e l'unità europea* (Milan: 1953); Giovanni Agnelli and Luigi Cabiati, *Federazione europea o Lega delle Nazioni* (Turin: 1918); Vincenzo Cento, *I nostri quaderni, gli Stati Uniti d'Europa* (Lanciano: 1926); Maurice Renault, *La fédération et la paix* (Paris: 1930); Max Leonard Waechter, *How to Abolish War, the United States of Europe* (London: 1924); Edo Fimmen, *Labour's Alternative. The United States of Europe or Europe Limited* (London: 1924); Christian Frederick Heerfordt, *A New Europe* (London: 1929); Curt Rabe, *Nie wieder krieg: die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa unter deutscher Führung; eine Voranzeige Kommender Dinge* (Naumburg: 1922); Lehmann Russbuidt, *Republik Europa* (Berlin: 1925); Herman Kranold, *Vereinigte*

In spite of understanding that the deep division which undermined the very foundations of the Geneva experiment was due to national sovereignty, critics were unable to think just beyond a theoretical opposition, and were therefore completely ineffective as far as concrete action was concerned. For a similar reason, the Covenant was able to win a large number of supporters within the public opinion of the victorious countries. The defenders of the Peace of Versailles, with its punitive and negative logic, stood out among them. In the last analysis, support for the Covenant meant endorsement for one's country's own foreign policy, which could gain a useful instrument of propaganda through the League. As long as the interests of the member countries coincided and could find broad agreement, the various governments managed to follow a multilateral policy. When the reason of State forced members to follow divergent policies, public opinion tended to follow its leaders docilely, leading to a widening and deepening gulf between the European peoples. The League of Nations, rather than representing an autonomous and authoritative voice among its member-States, ended up simply registering the agreements and, more often, the differences and contrasts among them.

7. The Round Table and the future of Imperial relations

Before it became manifest that the United States would withdraw their weight from the centre of international power politics, Kerr and Curtis became fully aware that the process towards the disintegration of the Empire was irreversible, and that the Round Table had already entered into its declining stage.

The London group thought that the "sovereign and peculiar virtue" of the British Empire had been "to harmonize different forms of national sentiment in free and willing subordination to a common ideal of law and government." The Empire had "in fact never been more needed or more powerful than today," *The Round Table* argued in 1918 and, if it fell apart, the League of Nations would not be able to replace it for the "future of international peace and order," since it was a "vain and elusive an ideal." The failure of the Imperial War Conference to call for a constitutional Convention for the Empire—initially projected for 1917—and the end of the Imperial War Cabinet system frustrated the attempt of the London

Staaten von Europa (Hanover München: 1924); Bruno Kuske, *Die Berentung Europas für die Entwicklung der Weltwirtschaft* (Köln: 1924); Oscar Newfang, *The Road to World Peace: A Federation of Nations* (New York: 1924); William Henry Smith, *Federation of Nations an Alternative to the League of Nations* (Berkeley, CA: 1922).

group to revitalize the movement, which progressively transformed itself into a network of editorial committees for the journal.⁹⁷

In Canada the Round Table strongly suffered from the death in the Flanders fields of Kylie. He was replaced by Walker who, according to Kendle, “lacked Kylie’s imagination, enthusiasm, and conviction.” Writing to Milner in May 1918, Glazebrook stated that the original admiration for “a more or less esoteric movement appealing to a rather picked lot of young men,” disappeared as soon as the war attracted them to Europe, leaving in its place membership “of a far inferior material.” The publication, under “Curtis’s dogmatic insistence” of *The Problem* turned “like a red flag to a bull to the average Canadian,” and only the campaign for the bipartisan appeal saved the movement from disaster. Humphrey Wrong, Chairman of the Editorial Committee and Secretary of the Canadian Executive after Willison resigned in 1921, recorded that the movement in Canada “has achieved an unfortunate and undeserved reputation...as a propagandist organization working for Imperial federation.”⁹⁸

By early 1919 it was manifest that the Round Table had entered a period of crisis which was to prove irreversible. If in Canada the whole organisation was “on the verge of collapse,” in South Africa, where the movement had never been strong, there was “little chance of it becoming so now that the war was over.” In India the few groups founded by Curtis collapsed as soon as the members of the Indian Civil Service were forbidden to join. The situation seemed better in Australia, but there was no “wide-flung group system,” and in New Zealand a member of the Wellington branch could not offer a better picture of the difficulties which the movement was facing in the Dominions:

Since Curtis’s departure, there has been little demand for the *Problem of the Commonwealth* or the *Commonwealth of Nations* and the attitude of the public, like that of many of the members of the groups, has been of apathy. The result is that those who are believers in a federal system are handicapped in their efforts to do propaganda work as they are scattered, find it difficult to communicate with each other, and in some of the groups

⁹⁷ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 271 3.

⁹⁸ Wrong to McGhee, 22 April 1923, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 278); *ibidem*, 260 1. Writing to Sir John Willison, Milner in 1924 stated that “the hope” for Imperial federation “has always been mine.” “My own views are unchanged and I don’t despair of the future.” Being seventy years old, Milner however was “forced to realize that these things will not come about in my day,” (Milner to Willison, 27 Jan. 1924, MF, 30D29). A. H. U. Colquhoun, *Press, Politics and People: The Life and Letters of Sir John Willison* (Toronto: 1935), 286.

are regarded as impractical idealists or else too logical for human nature's daily food. There is too much of a tendency to regard the Round Table members as a politician considering what course or compromise he can induce the House or his constituents to accept rather than as a missionary whose duty it is to discover and point out the truth no matter how unpopular or unpalatable it may be at the moment.⁹⁹

The problem of finance was becoming increasingly serious, forcing the London group in early 1919 to launch an appeal to keep *The Round Table* magazine alive. The finances of the movement had been so far provided privately by Sir Abe Bailey, Lady Wantage, the Lords Lovat, Salisbury, Selborne, and Anglesey, and the Rhodes Trust, matching private donations on a £ to £ basis in the initial years. A new subscriber was found in Sir Joseph Flavelle, with a contribution between £200 to £300 a year for five years. In 1921 Milner obtained £2,500 from the Rhodes Trust for the journal, but was unable to guarantee further funds.¹⁰⁰

"Curtis has been ill in Paris," Robert Brand wrote to Flavelle on 16 July,

Kerr has been left in Paris to look after Arthur Balfour, now that Lloyd George has left: Grigg is going to Canada with the Prince of Wales at the beginning of August: Malcom is just off to South Africa for the Chartered Company: Hichens and I are both absolutely full up with ordinary work: Zimmern has now taken on a job at a Welsh University, and so at the moment we are finding it very difficult either to reformulate our policy in the light of the war or to set about collecting a fund, but we hope that in two or three months our most important members shall be free to devote time to the work, so that our difficulties should be temporary.

By 1921, it had become quite clear that the Round Table organisation was not a 'movement' any longer, and that the magazine had "ceased to be a quarterly devoted predominantly to Empire-commonwealth concerns."¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 261 2.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, 262 4, 276. In December 1929 a five year contribution from Bailey came to an end, and even though the interests on investments amounting to £13,000 allowed the journal to pay for its running costs, 1930 ended with a loss of £500. From 1934 to 1937 Bailey gave an additional £500 a year. Lothian gained a donation from Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, South African financier. On Bailey's death the *Round Table* received an annual bequest of £1,000, upon condition that the journal continued to support the original aims of the movement, (Kendle, *The Round Table*, 282).

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, 262 4. Those difficulties were expressed also by Edward Grigg to Glazebrook on 27 September: "I really do not know how London manages to keep the Magazine going. It is a miracle that the Magazine appears at all," *ibidem*.

The editorship of the journal was taken up by Dawson in November 1919, following his resignation as editor of *The Times* after conflict of opinions with Northcliffe. Dove was appointed assistant editor in February 1920. With the return of Dawson to *The Times*, Dove became editor. As editor of *The Times*, Dawson was, according to A. L. Rowse, “one of the half-dozen most influential men in Britain.” Jebb thought that since Dawson became editor of *The Times*, its political line on Imperial and foreign affairs, including tariff reform, was “practically identical with the Round Table.” He also thought that the dropping of food taxes from the Unionist programme, and the abandonment by Austen Chamberlain of the policy of tariff reform, was essentially due to *The Round Table* and *The Times*’ joint campaigns.¹⁰²

The difficulties faced by the London group were not just temporary. The war had given the Dominions a fundamental strategic role in the achievement of victory, and the Peace Conference had disrupted the diplomatic unity of the Empire by giving each Dominion an independent representation at the negotiations table. During the war the Dominions were divided by conscription controversies, and on the battlefield they developed a sense of national identity. At the end of the war, the main argument for Imperial cohesion—the German threat—had disappeared, and a sense of international détente—centered on the League of Nations—strengthened centrifugal forces.

With the recognition of the principle of equal partnership between the Dominions and Great Britain, the development of independent military and diplomatic apparatuses, and the questions of Irish and Indian independence, Anglo-Dominion relationships had changed for ever. Even Curtis recognized that federalism was no longer on the agenda, in spite of the fact that Coupland recorded that “most if not all of the members of the Moot are convinced that the case for organic union has been strengthened

¹⁰² Rowse, *All Souls and*, 2; Jebb to Colonel James Allen, 31 Jan. 1913, (quoted in Kendle, *The Round Table*, 168); Jebb to Deakin, 23 March 1913, quoted in *ibidem*, 168; [Anon.], “An Alternative Government,” *The Round Table*, (Sept. 1912): 689–708; “The Unionists and the Food Taxes,” *The Round Table*, (March 1913): 232–76. After reading the first instalments of Curtis’s *Green Memorandum*, Jebb became a sworn opponent of the Round Table, denouncing its policy in a series of letters to Dominion statesmen, writing *The Britannic Question*, and publishing the *Britannic Review* to counteract the influence of this “intellectual guide of regenerate Conservatism” (Jebb, *The Britannic Question*, 77). Jebb’s copy of the *Green Memorandum* is preserved in the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, with Jebb’s notes. His comments were printed in *Round Table Studies* (the “Annotated Memorandum,” 1911) as those of correspondent 118.

by the war and its sequel." The Round Table reverted to a policy of "marking time."¹⁰³

Kerr was the first Round Tabler to realize that the war had both revealed and accelerated the historic decline of the Empire everywhere, as well as the emergence of a new and more dynamic insular power, one which would inevitably oust the old. The peace of Versailles undoubtedly signalled the transition from a European to a world system of States, with Germany at the centre of the international power struggle. The study of the Round Table brings us, actually, to the central question of the first half of the Twentieth century, the Anglo-German rivalry, which resulted in two world wars because of the weakness of the British Empire. In the Nineteenth century, from the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Britain was successful, from an isolationist position, in preventing the spread of the various European wars of regional character from extending into a general conflict. During the Twentieth century, however, Great Britain failed twice in the task, losing her insularity in continental alliances—before the entry into operation of the combination of naval and air power—and prevailed on Germany only thanks to the intervention of the Dominions, India, and her thirteen former colonies on the other side of the Atlantic.

During the Peace Conference, Kerr, as Private Secretary to Lloyd George, contributed to drawing up a framework for peace which reflected the factors which had most contributed to victory. "The underlying idea at Paris in 1919," Kerr was to say in his Burge Memorial Lecture sixteen years later, "was that the United States, France, and the British Empire should collectively discharge through the League of Nations, which gave representation to all peoples, the ultimate stabilizing function which Great Britain alone had performed in the preceding century and in an even more liberal way", since "what preserved the peace of the world during the Nineteenth century and ended the long series of world wars of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries was the complete naval supremacy of Britain after Trafalgar." In an era of air navigation and of technological and scientific discoveries which had tended to increasingly reduce the size of the world, Great Britain would be able to continue with her historic role of maintaining the balance of world power only in close collaboration with the United States.¹⁰⁴

"Much the most important work that lies in front of the Round Table group or anybody else dealing with world politics," Kerr observed writing

¹⁰³ Curtis to Wrong, 3 Nov. 1920, RTP, c811, 10 11; Coupland to Australian Groups, 22 March 1919, RTP, c802, 183 84; Coupland to Dove, 28 Feb. [1923], RTP, c804, 197; Minutes of Round Table meeting, 4 May 1917, LP, 474, 4 8.

¹⁰⁴ Lothian, *Pacifism is not enough*, 255 6.

to Curtis in March 1927, “is to find the positive basis for co-operation between the English-speaking nations.” Again, on 2nd September 1927, Kerr wrote to Curtis:

the English speaking nations have either got to bring themselves under one sovereignty or they will drift into antagonism. The problem is fundamentally exactly that which confronted you in South Africa after the Boer War and which confronted the thirteen colonies after the Revolutionary War...America...is now by far the richest and most powerful nation in the world. It is being sorely tempted to succumb to the lure of imperialism in bad sense of the word, to buy up the rest of the world, to mobilise the irresistible force in its own hands, and yet to refuse co operation with other nations or to submit itself to the reign of law. Personally I am convinced that the forces for righteousness are so strong in the United States that when they awake to the question they will bring the United States into line for the world commonwealth.¹⁰⁵

It was in Paris, during the most critical period of the peace negotiations, that the members of the Round Table present there decided to reverse the order of their priorities. A letter of Curtis to Kerr of 1936 offers us an extremely valuable insight into this fundamental turning point in the history of the Round Table organization:

When Union [in South Africa] was achieved, more rapidly than even we had hoped, we felt that it was up to us to apply the same process to Imperial relations, especially in view of the German menace. The Round Table Groups and the magazine were the result...In the course of the war, the Dominions as well as the British Government seized on men trained in the Round Table Groups to help them with Imperial relations and Foreign Affairs, with the result that a large number of us found ourselves together at the Conference at Paris in 1919. Our years of Round Table experience had taught us the supreme importance of genuine research; but it had also taught us that genuine research is hampered in so far as it was connected with any element of propaganda. The Round Table, founded by people who believed intensely in the British Empire, necessarily suffered from this limitation. We, therefore, set out to establish a separate organ of research in which people of all differences of opinion, however great, could unite; an organ debarred from all propaganda. All this was settled in Paris in 1919. When in 1920 the work of creating and organising the projected institute was taken in hand it was Abe [Bailey] who stepped forward with a cheque which enabled a room to be hired, and stationary and stamps to be paid for, so that invitations could be sent out to some hundreds of people representing all parties to join the new institute. It was later on that Abe gave the institute permanence by giving it a perpetual endowment of £5000 a year. Apropos of the above, the time is gone when

¹⁰⁵ LP, 227.

we need to be afraid of admitting...that Chatham House was the outcome of Round Table work. I have always lived in hope that a day would come when my Round Table colleagues would acknowledge their child and drop the habit of imputing its sole parentage to me.¹⁰⁶

According to Curtis, the major architect of the Institute of International Affairs, and for many years the great wire-puller, the persistent operator behind the scenes, “the foundation of Chatham House was a necessary tactical change to effect the same strategic object.” When in 1919 Curtis realised “the unforeseen limits of the Round Table organisation which represented our tactics,” he put forward a scheme to achieve the revised objectives of the Round Table: the strengthening of Imperial and Anglo-American relations, through the creation of an ‘institutionalized’ foreign policy élite, in spite of the fact that Anglo-American relations in 1919-20 were characterized by “strain and tension.”¹⁰⁷

With the foundation of the Institute of International Affairs, the Round Tablers tried to accomplish that “strategic object...with a necessary tactical change.” That change was necessary not only because the Dominions groups had reduced their activity to the preparation of quarterly articles for the magazine, or because the members of the London group had, during and after the war, become involved in or taken up professions which could not give them enough free time to run the organisation. It was also that the Empire, even a reformed Empire, was no longer able to guarantee, by itself, international stability. The centre of gravity of world power had already shifted from the Channel to the Atlantic—reflecting on the political scale a process which on the economic and financial scales had already manifested itself since the beginning of the Twentieth century—but the United States did not present the subjective conditions for their association into the direction of world politics. Kerr and Curtis felt that they had to prepare the transition from an Anglo-French to an Anglo-American dyarchy in the management of world power. The Anglo-French dyarchy, which had constituted the centre of gravity of international relations since the Italian and German unifications, appeared no longer able to guarantee a peaceful revision of the *status-quo* established by the Treaties, and thus prevent a regional conflict from spreading worldwide.

¹⁰⁶ Curtis to Lothian, 6 Dec. 1936, (quoted in Bosco, *Two Musketeers for the Empire*, 150 1).

¹⁰⁷ B. J. C. Kercher, “‘The Deep and Latent Distrust’: The British Official Mind and the United States, 1919 1929,” in *Anglo American Relations in the 1920s: The Struggle for Supremacy*, B. J. C. Kercher ed. (London: 1991), 1.

Apart from the changed international situation, which rendered obsolete the original *raison d'être* of the organisation, another cause of its crisis has to be found in the changed role of Curtis within it. In 1918 it became apparent that the majority of its members would not endorse Curtis's plea for a federal structure of the Empire, as set forth in *The Commonwealth of Nations* and *The Problem*. As a consequence, Curtis suspended his salary as General Secretary of the organisation. He returned to draw a salary from the Round Table funds after he married in 1920, but a few months later he was appointed acting Under-Secretary for Irish Affairs at the Colonial Office, once more serving the movement from a detached position. He worked as a civil servant till 1924, and it was in this period that he spent most energy in the establishment of the Institute.¹⁰⁸

8. *The founding of the Institute of International Affairs*

Curtis's attempt "to embody as much of our Round Table movement as possible in a permanent institution" materialized at a joint conference of British and American members of their delegations at the Paris Peace Conference at the Hotel Majestic on 30 May 1919. It was attended by thirty-seven members of both delegations. The British were represented by twenty-eight members, mainly from the Foreign Office, but also from the War and Colonial Offices, including Robert Cecil, Lord Eustace Percy, Major Harold Temperley, James Headlam-Morley, Philip Baker, Harold Nicolson, Kerr, Curtis, Major Charles K. Webster, Captain Clement Jones, Captain Frank P. Walters, Cecil Hurst, Captain James R. M. Butler, Colonel Frederick Kisch, Edward F. Wise, Alexander W. A. Leeper, Captain Edgar Abraham, Charles Strachey, Sir Robert Garran, Francis B. Bourdillon, Sir Eyre Crowe, Sir Cecil Hurst, Dawson, Geoffrey M. Gathorne-Hardy and Herbert J. Paton.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Kendle, *The Round Table*, 274. Kendle offers a clear picture of the situation of the movement in 1921: "The New Zealanders prepared a statement for the press each year on current problems, but this was never a very stimulating document. In Canada and South Africa the organisations lapsed completely into editorial committees for the preparation of articles, and in May 1921 at a meeting in Toronto it was decided not to revive the local groups," *ibidem*, 272.

¹⁰⁹ Curtis to Hichens, Dawson, Brand and Lothian, 6 Aug. 1930, LP, 252, 627 32. Lord Eustace Percy was British representative from the Foreign Office on the League of Nations Commission, 1919, Conservative MP, 1921 37, Minister of Health, 1923 24, President of the Board of Education, 1924 29, Minister without Portfolio, 1935 36, author. Major Harold Temperley was Member of British Military Section, Paris, 1919, editor of *A History of the Paris Peace Conference*, 6

The American Delegation was represented by nine participants, mostly members of the Inquiry set up in September 1917 by Colonel House. They included Shepardson, Beer, James T. Shotwell, Archibald Cary Coolidge, Thomas Lamont, Captain Stanley K. Hornbeck, and Ray Stannard Baker. They agreed to create an Institute “which would act as a telephone exchange between the few hundred men in each country who administer foreign affairs and create public opinion on the subject.”¹¹⁰

Vols. (London: 1920 24). James Headlam Morley was Foreign Office adviser (Political Section) at Paris, 1919, and diplomatic historian. Philip Baker was Foreign Office adviser and Head (under Cecil) of the League of Nations Section at Paris in 1919, Labour MP 1929 31, and 1936 70, British delegate to the League Assembly, 1929 31, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 1947, and Professor of International Relations at University of London, 1924 29. Harold Nicolson was Foreign Office adviser at the Political Section, National Labour MP, 1935 45, and historian. Major Charles Kingsley Webster was Secretary to the Military Section of the Foreign Office and diplomatic historian. Captain Clement Jones was Assistant Secretary to the War Cabinet, 1916 20, and secretary of the British Empire Delegation at Paris. Captain Frank Walters was Private Secretary to Lord Robert Cecil, 1919, senior officer of the League of Nations secretariat, and author of *A History of the League of Nations* (London: 1952). Cecil Hurst was Foreign Office League Adviser, 1916 29, Secretary of the Legal Section of the Foreign Office in Paris, and judge of the Permanent Court of International Justice, 1929 46. Captain James R. M. Butler was a Member of the Military Section of the Foreign Office, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, Regius Professor of Modern History, University of Cambridge, 1947 54, chief historian for Official Military Histories, 1939 45, and author of the ‘official’ Lothian biography. Colonel Frederick Kisch was a Member of the Military Section of the Foreign Office in Paris. Edward Frank Wise was an economist, and in Paris was Ministry of Food adviser. Alexander W. A. Leeper was Special Adviser to the Foreign Office Political Section, and Head of League of Nations and Western Department of the Foreign Office, 1933 35. Captain Edgard Abraham was an Indian Civil Servant, and British Secretary to the Council of Ten at Paris. Charles Strachey was Colonial Office representative at Paris. Sir Robert Garran was Solicitor General of Australia and member of the British Delegation at Paris. Francis Bernard Bourdillon was a member of Admiralty Intelligence Department, 1916 19, and Secretary of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1926 29. Herbert James Paton was member of Admiralty Intelligence Department, 1918 19, adviser to the Political Section of the Foreign Office on Polish affairs, and Professor of logic at Glasgow University and of moral philosophy at Oxford.

¹¹⁰ George Beer was a businessman and historian of the British colonial system in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries, a member of Wilson’s Inquiry 1917 19, and of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace in Paris. James T. Shotwell was a historian at Columbia University, a member of the Inquiry and of the American Delegation in Paris. Archibald Cary Coolidge was Professor of Eastern

The Inquiry had been set up on Wilson's mandate, because of his distrust of his own foreign apparatus—specifically his Secretary of State Robert Lansing; and also because of being “naturally inclined,” as argued by Williams, “to the advice of fellow academics,” to prepare materials for the peace negotiations. House's brother-in-law, Sidney Mezes—President of the City College of New York—became its director, Lippmann became its secretary, and Isaiah Bowman—director of the American Geographical Society—offered them the facilities of the Society's New York headquarters. Lippmann gathered 126 young talented scholars and business leaders, “skimming the cream of the younger and more imaginative scholars,” men of “sheer, startling genius.” With the growth in size and strategic profile of the organization, Bowman progressively moved from the peripheral position of the host to the central role of the leader, in fact replacing Mezes. The leadership conflict produced, however, Lippmann's resignation before the end of the war.¹¹¹

The peace settlement should be, according to the Inquiry, a “scientific peace,” a peace “not predicated on the national power interest of any single government,” but “based on the disinterested finding of specialists whose work would reflect those principles acceptable to the nations participating in the peace.” The Inquiry widely contributed to the drafting of Wilson's Fourteen Points.¹¹²

European History at Harvard University, a member of the Inquiry, and of the American Delegation. Captain Stanley K. Hornbeck was Professor of Political Science at Wisconsin University, a member of the United States Tariff Commission, 1917-18, a member of the Inquiry and of the American Delegation, and head of the State Department's Far Eastern Division. Ray S. Baker was Director of President Wilson's Press Bureau at Paris, and editor of Wilson's private papers. “George Louis Beer,” *The Round Table*, 40, (Sept. 1920), 935.

¹¹¹ Charles Seymour ed., *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, vol. 3 (London: Benn, 1926), 169; Seth Tillman, *Anglo American Relations at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 17-18; Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 119, 127; Andrew Williams, *Failed Imagination? The Anglo American New World Order from Wilson to Bush* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 37; Jonathan Nielson, “The Scholar as Diplomat: American Historians at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919,” *The International History Review*, 14, 14, (1992): 232.

¹¹² Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy: A Comparative Study of the Role and Influence of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1939-1945*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 26; id., “Anglo American Elites in the Inter war Years: Idealism and Power in the Intellectual Roots of Chatham House and the Council on Foreign Relations,”

The American Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference included 35 Inquiry members. As Chief of the Intelligence Section, Bowman managed to obtain for the Inquiry's delegates prominent positions at the Conference—is some cases above even State Department and Military Intelligence's representatives—producing what become well-known as the *Black Book*—“An Outline of Tentative Recommendations”—soon followed by a *Red Book*, “feverishly requested it as soon as its existence became known” by other delegations. According to Nielson, the attitude of the Inquiry “was unmistakably anti-German and, with few exceptions, enthusiastically pro-British,” producing “decidedly negative assessments of French, and especially Italian diplomacy.”¹¹³

In February the Inquiry was merged by Wilson with the American Commission to Negotiate Peace into the Division of Territorial, Economic, and Political Intelligence, and its members represented the United States within the Conference committees. Being academic researchers, they lacked diplomatic competence, as lamented by Sir James Headlam-Morley, who on 3 February however received confidential “instructions to have a free interchange of views with the Americans.” Even if “there was a fundamental community of purpose and interest between the United States and the British Empire,” Tillman observed that “this basic unity, although often expressed in parallel and even identical policies, it was almost never translated into a common strategy for the attainment of common objectives.” According to Nielson in February 1919, “no one in

International Relations, 16, 1, (2002); Smith, *American Empire*, 118 120; Lawrence Gelfand, *The Inquiry: American Preparations for Peace, 1917 1919* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1976), 16; Williams, *Failed Imagination?*, 38 39.

¹¹³ Gelfand, *The Inquiry*, 168 169, 183; Nielson, “The Scholar as Diplomat”, 243. If among the officials of the American Delegation there was suspicion about the role that the Inquiry's members would have at the Conference, the 23 members who travelled to Paris with the rest of the American Delegation felt frustrated and resented the poor accommodations offered to them aboard the *USS Washington*, which landed at Brest on 14 December 1918, (Smith, *American Empire*, 145); Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy*, 225; Gelfand, *The Inquiry*, 169 176; Smith, *American Empire*, 146, 147 8. If the *Black Book* dealt with territorial and labour matters, the *Red Book* regarded colonial issues, (Nielson, “The Scholar as Diplomat,” 237 238, 250). According to Gelfand the *Black* and *Red Book* “will remain for the historian the central statement of the work of the Inquiry and its contribution to the Peace Treaty,” Gelfand, *The Inquiry*, 182. For an assessment of the Inquiry, see *ibidem*, 235 238, 265 267, 322 325.

the U.S. delegation expected unity or harmony” in Paris, “except perhaps with the British.”¹¹⁴

According to Headlam-Morley, James Shotwell anticipated

a revival of the distrust with which Great Britain is traditionally regarded and thinks that the pro German feeling which was strong in large sections of the population before the war will revive...there will be many people in America who will incline to the view that Germany has been purified, but that England has not been. The traditional republican feeling...is very strong and American sympathy will tend to drift towards a republic in Germany.¹¹⁵

As soon as the peace terms were made public in May, a sense of disillusionment pervaded both the American and the British delegations. Adolf Berle observed on 15 May that the draft treaty “abandoned both the letter and spirit” of the American war-aims, failing to “serve either the idealistic or material interests of America, or, indeed, of humanity.” As a consequence, Berle resigned, and was joined by William Bullitt, Joseph Fuller, John Storck, George Bernard Noble, and Samuel Eliot Morison. Bryce—who, even if not a member of the British Delegation, kept in constant contact with it through Kerr—felt that the “vindictive ferocity” of the draft treaty would produce “a Peace of Revenge, which will produce a counter-revenge.”¹¹⁶

The dissatisfaction among the delegates convened by Curtis and Beer at the Majestic was well expressed by Cecil, who argued that there was “no single person” in the room who was “not disappointed” with the terms they had drafted. “Yet England and America have got all that they want,”

¹¹⁴ Nielson, “The Scholar as Diplomat,” 237, 240; James Headlam Morley, *Sir James Headlam Morley: a Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, Agnes Headlam Morley et al. eds. (London: Butler & Tanner, 1972), 8, 18; John D. Fair, *Harold Temperley: A Scholar and Romantic in the Public Realm* (Lanham, MD: University of Delaware Press, 1992), 148; Tillman, *Anglo American Relations*, 401. Headlam Morley’s association with Kerr allowed him to put the case for the protection of minorities in front of the inner circle which drafted the Treaty, (Alan Sharp, “Sir James Headlam Morely as Historical Advisor,” paper presented to the International History Conference on Historians and Officials, London School of Economics, 28 30 June 1993.)

¹¹⁵ Headlam Morley, *Sir James Headlam Morley*, 38 39.

¹¹⁶ Adolf Berle, *Navigating the Rapids, 1918 1971: From the Papers of Adolf A. Berle* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 12 3. The resignations were reported by the *Daily Herald* on 22 May 1919; Bryce to Eliot, 20 March, 1919 and 4 June 1919, BP, USA 2.183, 187. Kerr assured Bryce that he would “do everything” he could “to keep your point of view before the British delegation,” Kerr to Bryce, 14 Jan. 1920, BP, 206.4, 245.64; LP, 207.

Cecil observed, and concluded: “our disappointment is an excellent symptom: let us perpetuate it.” Curtis and Beer attempted “making permanent the intellectual bond that had developed between the technical experts” of the Anglo-American delegations, since the future of Anglo-American relations “would depend upon how far public opinion in these countries would be right or wrong. Right public opinion was mainly produced by a small number of people in real contact with the facts who had thought out the issues involved.”¹¹⁷

Informal meetings, initiated by Curtis, and involving Percy, Headlam-Morley, Seton-Watson, and Allen Leeper, began in February 1919. In the spring of 1919 Curtis suffered a nervous breakdown and withdrew to Morocco to rest, returning to Paris in May, just in time for the founding meeting at the Majestic. By the end of May, a committee consisting of three American and three British representatives (including Headlam-Morley and Percy) had been formed to prepare a scheme for the Anglo-American institute, based on the philosophy put forward by *The New Europe*, *The New Republic* and *The Round Table*. “Until recent years,” a report from the Provisional Committee stated, “it was usual to assume that in foreign affairs each government must think mainly, if not entirely, of the interests of its own people. In founding the League of Nations, the Allied Powers have now recognised that national policies ought to be framed with an eye to the welfare of society at large.” The underlying idea of the proposed Institute was to provide the essential knowledge to the intellectual leadership which had the responsibility for the making of foreign policy.¹¹⁸

The very origins of the Institute emerged however out of a dinner for former Balliol students present at the Peace Conference. “Besides meeting on the Commissions, where the daily work was done,” Headlam-Morley

¹¹⁷ According to Shotwell “it was chiefly Curtis himself and the American correspondent of *The Round Table*, the historian George Louis Beer, who conceived” this idea. Even if Shotwell mentioned that this meeting included Germans, there is no evidence from other eyewitnesses of this, even if the Institut für Auswärtige Politik was in fact created in Hamburg in 1923 as a sister institute to the British Institute of International Affairs. James T. Shotwell, “Address before the International Conference of Institutes of World Affairs,” 20 Oct. 1953, RTP, 853.152; Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919* (London: Methuen, 1964), 352 353; Headlam Morley, *Sir James Headlam Morley*, 132; Arnold Toynbee, *Experiences* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 60 62; Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy*, 27 28; Fair, *Harold Temperley*, 148.

¹¹⁸ CHP, Report of the Provisional Committee appointed to prepare a Constitution, and select the original members of the British Branch of the Institute of International Affairs, n.d., 1; Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*, 260 263.

recollected that “the British and American specialists were constantly dining with one another in their respective hotels.” At the Majestic and Crillon hotels, which hosted respectively the British and American delegations,

were congregated under one roof trained diplomatists, soldiers, sailors, airmen, civil administrators, jurists, financial and economic experts, captains of industry and spokesmen of labour, members of cabinets and parliaments, journalists and publicists of all sorts and kinds. Many of them came from the various Dominions, India, Egypt or the Crown Colonies. At meals, and when off duty, there was no convention to forbid discussion of the business in hand. A unique opportunity was thus given to every specialist of grasping the relation of his own particular question to all the others involved, and of seeing its place in the vast problem of reconstruction before the Congress.¹¹⁹

The climate at the Majestic’s dinners was, according to Shotwell “the most remarkable I have ever witnessed, and I suppose I shall never see another like it.” On 15 January he recorded:

At different tables sat the delegations of the different parts of the British Empire. Behind me was Australia, with Premier Hughes...Next to Australia, but separated by a wide strip of carpet, was a large round table for the Indian Empire, with the new Indian Under Secretary, Sir S.P. Sinha, and the Maharajah of Bikaner, and others. Farther down that side of the room another young Empire was presided over by Sir Robert Borden...Next to the Canadian table was a large dinner party discussing the fate of Arabia and the East with two American guests, General Bliss and George Louis Beer. Between them sat that young successor of Mohammed, Colonel Lawrence, with his boyish face and almost constant smile the most winning figure, so everyone says, at the whole Peace Conference...At the same table Chirol, the best informed man on European politics, Cecil and Curtis.¹²⁰

Dinners at the Majestic became “a happy hunting-ground where Curtis would stalk and bag his game.” As soon as Curtis gained the full endorsement of senior members of both delegations—Robert Cecil for the British, and Colonel Edward House, Henry White and General Tasker H. Bliss for the American—he diverted to the new venture the enthusiasm and the energies which he had beforehand given to the South African

¹¹⁹ Michael L. Dockrill, “The Foreign Office and the ‘Proposed Institute of International Affairs’, 1919,” *International Affairs*, 61, (1980): 665-72. CHP, “Report of the Provisional Committee appointed to prepare a Constitution, and select the original members of the British Branch of the Institute of International Affairs,” HDLM Acc 727, 43.

¹²⁰ James Shotwell, *At the Paris Peace Conference* (New York: 1937), 121-2.

Kindergarten and to the Round Table. "Only one picture comes back to my mind," Toynbee acknowledged, recollecting that evening at the Majestic,

and that very clearly: an evening meeting at the Majestic, with a pretty large number present, but only one man making himself felt. This was of course Lionel Curtis. He held the floor and dominated the proceedings. Before he had done, the Institute was launched, and he marched out of the room with Headlam Morley firmly grasped under one arm and Lord Robert [Cecil] under the other. Neither of those two eminent men would have taken the initiative or have been able, if he had taken it, to put the thing through. LC is *the* Founder...My forgetting everything about the launching of the Institute except that one scene, with one figure in it, tells a tale.¹²¹

"Under his own rules, because he had known me as a schoolboy," Clement Jones, Assistant Secretary to the British Empire Delegation, recalled the Paris 30th May meeting,

Curtis had a perfect right, in later life, to ask me to do anything he wanted. With him a request was a command and for those of us who 'served under him' it was great fun. There can be few men who ever 'roped in' more friends and casual acquaintances in support of his projects...Chatham House was one of his major round ups.¹²²

Curtis opened the meeting offering the chairmanship to General Bliss, and proposing that a Committee of three Americans and three British be appointed "to prepare a scheme" for the creation of the Institute to "be submitted to a meeting of those present" at the evening of the 30th May, plus a number of personalities "whom the Committee may see fit to add." Curtis was motivated to make the proposal by the fact that the peace settlements made in Paris "were mainly the resultant of the public opinions of various countries concerned," being public opinions "often in conflict." The future "moulding of those settlements" would depend "upon how far

¹²¹ Clement Jones, Diary, 17 June 1919 (quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 167); Arnold Toynbee, "Early Days of Chatham House," 10, CHP, 2/1/2A.

¹²² Clement Jones, "The Origins of Chatham House," Chatham House 2/1/2, RTP, c. 869. Lord Robert Cecil, Minister of Blockade, 1916 21, Head of Foreign Office League of Nations section, 1918 19, and Leader of the British Delegation on the League of Nations Commission, Paris, 1919, Lord Privy Seal, 1923 24, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (with special responsibility for League of Nations affairs), 1924 27, President of the League of Nations Union, 1923 45. Colonel Edward House, Special Adviser to President Wilson at Paris. Henry White, American diplomat and American plenipotentiary to the Peace Conference, 1918 19. General Tasker H. Bliss, former United States Army Chief of Staff and United States plenipotentiary to the Peace Conference.

public opinion in these countries would be right or wrong.” Public opinion was in fact “mainly produced,” according to Curtis, “by a small number of people in real contact with the facts who had thought out the issues involved.”¹²³

Although it was “unofficial,” the Institute was intended to be “strictly of the nature of public service connected with [the] objects of the present Peace Conference.” The Paris Peace Conference had brought together officials and experts who were playing a major role in the process of formation of foreign policy in their own countries. It seemed vital to establish among them an institutional link to continue the work done in Paris, certainly keeping in mind national interests, but also raising the question of the general interest of the world as a whole. Since the creation of such an institution which included all nations appeared unrealistic, Curtis proposed to start with the two leading English-speaking democracies. Having in mind the model of the Royal Geographical Society, Curtis proposed the creation of two central branches on the two sides of the Atlantic, and peripheral branches within each country, producing a year-book or “Register” of international affairs under joint Anglo-American editorship. Curtis could rely on George Louis Beer and Whitney Shepardson—his former student at Oxford, with whom he had worked closely in Paris—in order to promote direct involvement of the United States in the post-war settlement. The Anglo-American Institute would be a joint venture “by the two great commonwealths which had the advantage of a common tongue.”¹²⁴

Curtis’s proposal received warm support from all present at the meeting. General Bliss and Cecil gave the meeting political leverage; Sir Eyre Crowe and Cecil Hurst, Beer and James Shotwell brought recognition from senior officials; and Sir James Headlam-Morley added intellectual gravity. The only objections were raised by Crowe, who thought that the proposed Institute would create misunderstandings and

¹²³ Minute by Curtis, 21 June 1919, FOP, FO 608/152; “Peace Congress. Political, General” 502/4/1; Minutes of meeting at Hotel Majestic May 30, 1919, FO 608/152. General Tasker Bliss had read Curtis’s article “Window of Freedom,” and regarded him “the most intelligent man and evidently deeply informed on world affairs of great importance,” (quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 162). On 22 Dec. 1918 Beer introduced Curtis to Bliss, who was so involved in the conversation as to miss President Wilson’s honorary degree ceremony at the Sorbonne (*ibidem*).

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*; Louis, “Great Britain and the African Peace,” 71 2; “Minutes of Meeting at Hotel Majestic,” 30 May 1919, FOP, FO 608/152; Markwell, “Sir Alfred Zimmern Revisited,” 280.

tensions with the Foreign Office's staff. Crowe made "the most interesting speech of the evening," Curtis wrote to Campbell later in August, "if only because it was the only one in which any doubts were expressed on the merits of the proposal as a whole." Crowe represented the traditional attitude of the Foreign Office officer, so much concerned about its monopoly in influencing public opinion, and nervous about the existence of independent moulders of public opinion. Crowe "disliked and distrusted outsiders (even those from other government departments)," Curtis observed, "and considered them intruders in a highly skilled craft." The questions of official secrets, and the difficulty of co-operation among officials, did not however appear to be insoluble. "The danger of not providing for such intercourse," Curtis commented, was "even greater."¹²⁵

Crowe—who played, as has been discussed, a prominent role in building an anti-German attitude within the Foreign Office, directly influencing Grey—had always been an antagonist to the Round Table agenda in general, and in particular to Kerr. As British representative at the Supreme Council in Paris, and Assistant to Lord Hardinge, Permanent Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs, Crowe accused Kerr of concealing the recommendations of the Foreign Office from Lloyd George and of hiding those in Lloyd George's communications which were in disagreement with his own views. "Since when is Mr Ker [sic] Prime Minister?" Crowe questioned in a note during the Paris negotiations, and again, "I gather that Mr Kerr continues to withhold papers from the Prime Minister." Crowe's irritation reached its limit when Lloyd George sent Kerr to Paris during the night of 6-7 December 1918, to prevent Great Britain getting involved in an Allied ultimatum to Germany, which had not fulfilled its obligations, and against which France was calling for military sanctions as required by the Armistice. Crowe, who together with Clemenceau had been the moving force behind the ultimatum, had confined himself to carrying out the instructions of his superiors and therefore interpreted the Prime Minister's counter order—which was nasty and humiliating—as an unreasonable concession to pressure from Kerr.

¹²⁵ CHP, 2/1/2; Lionel Curtis, "Record of interview with Sir Austen Chamberlain on 18 June 1929", CHP, 4/BAIL; Report of the British Members of the Joint Committee on the selection of original members of the Institute of International Affairs, CHP, 2/1/2; Minutes of the Provisional Committee, 18 June, *ibidem*; Curtis to R. H. Campbell, Foreign Office, August 20, 1919, FOP, FO 608/152. On the Foreign Office attitude, see Zara S. Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1891 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 139 140; Minute of Meeting relative to proposed Institute, May 30, 1919, FOP, FO 608/152; Headlam Morley, *A Memoir*, 132.

Kerr's mission to Paris had actually been decided by the Government, which sent him on a special train as far as Dover, via a destroyer to Boulogne, and then on a military vehicle from there to Paris. Not finding the vehicle waiting at Boulogne, Kerr reached Paris as best he could.¹²⁶

Curtis managed to isolate Crowe's concerns, and at the meeting it was agreed to create a provisional Committee with Curtis and W. H. Shepardson as joint secretaries, and composed of Headlam-Morley, Percy and Lieutenant-Commander J. G. Latham on the British side, and James Brown Scott, Professors Coolidge and Shotwell on the American. It produced reports and resolutions which were submitted to plenary meetings on June 9 and 17, 1919. The Institute should be composed of members of the British and American delegations at Paris, and a limited number of experts of foreign affairs would be co-opted. The subscription fee would not "exclude anyone otherwise qualified for membership," and each branch would be independent in producing "monographs on special subjects." The Constitution would be drafted by members of each branch.¹²⁷

The Institute should not degenerate, Kerr warned, into "a home for bores or the happy hunting-ground of international cranks," and that danger would be prevented by bringing in "live men not figure-heads," and women of Gertrude Bells's profile, rather than "old ladies from Kensington who might bring their knitting and go to sleep."¹²⁸

Headlam-Morley and Curtis thought that "if the thing is to be effective," admission had to be "difficult so as to avoid a great mass of incompetent members who are admitted to many other learned societies in order to get funds." The crucial question of selection, upon which "the success or failure" of the proposed Institute would depend, was delegated to a special Committee, consisting of Cecil as convener, Hurst, Sir Valentine Chirol, the Master of Balliol, Clement Jones, Geoffrey Dawson, Philip Baker and G. W. Prothero as members. A permanent governing

¹²⁶ Michael Dockrill and Zara Steiner, "The Foreign Office at the Paris Peace Conference," *International History Review*, 2, 1, (Jan. 1980): 54-82; LP, 1183. For Crowe's role at the Peace Conference, see Edward Corp, "Sir Eyre Crowe and Georges Clemenceau at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919-20," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 8, 1, (March 1977): 10-9.

¹²⁷ Lionel Curtis, "Report of the British members of the Joint Committee appointed May 30," FOP, FO 608/152; "Report of the Committee Appointed by an informal meeting of persons attached to the British and American peace delegations at the Hotel Majestic, on May 30, 1919," *ibidem*.

¹²⁸ Kerr to Cecil, 20 March 1920, LP, 206; Curtis to Sir W. Fletcher, 1 Jan. 1920, CHP, Chatham House 2/1/2.

body would enter into office once members had been selected and a proposed constitution approved. The two committees started to work in London under the co-ordination of Sir John Tilley, Temperley and Percy (replacing Chirol and Hurst, who left in the meantime with Milner for Egypt).¹²⁹

“The tragedy of the situation” was, according to Curtis, that the “better understanding between thinkers and workers within the narrow circle of Paris availed so little to affect the main issues” of the peace settlement. Political education was impossible without research, which required access to information. The Paris experience persuaded Curtis that it could be provided by an international gathering of specialists, officials and publicists. The future leadership of international relations depended on the creation of an institutional platform on which they could perpetuate that innovative approach. The South African experience had taught Curtis, according to Lavin, that “information, research and communication...had been the means by which he and his friends had set out to educate the political public of the four colonies in the idea of closer union.”¹³⁰

“No disasters are quite so terrible and far-reaching,” Kerr pointed out, “as those brought about by the wrong management of international relations.” Knowledge “not merely among experts but in the public,” was “the first condition of their right management.” International relations would improve if in each country there could be established “a properly equipped institution where men of all ways of thinking who seek to influence public opinion about Foreign Affairs can meet to study their common problems.” Such institutions should be “in some sort of touch with those founded for the same purpose in other countries.” The British declaration of war on Germany taught “that the foreign policy of the

¹²⁹ Headlam Morley, *A Memoir*, 133; Curtis, “Report of the British members of the Joint Committee appointed May 30,” FOP, FO 608/152. Hurst was former Foreign Office official. Sir Valentine Chirol was foreign editor of *The Times*, 1896-1912. Clement Jones had been private secretary to Lord Milner in South Africa and London, 1901-1910; Geoffrey Dawson was editor of *The Times*, 1912-19, and again in 1923-41. G. W. Prothero was Foreign Office Librarian and editor of the *Foreign Office Peace Handbooks* for members of the British Delegation. Sir John Tilley was Chief Clerk at the Foreign Office, 1913-18. Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference*, vol. 1, viii.

¹³⁰ Lionel Curtis, “Report of the Provisional Committee appointed to prepare a Constitution, and select the original members of the British Branch of the Institute of International Affairs”, CHP, Chatham House 2/1/2. F. Whyte, “The British Institute of International Affairs,” *The New Europe*, (July 1920): 308-9; Lavin, “Lionel Curtis and the Founding of Chatham House,” *Chatham House and*, Bosco and Navari, 62.

British Empire cannot be democratic and representative in any adequate degree” unless some means were found “for continuous consultation and co-operation by Ministers to all the British parliaments.”¹³¹

This was a view supported in Great Britain by the Union for Democratic Control. The “most democratically governed country,” should initiate, according to Arthur Ponsonby, “a great reform in procedure with regard to foreign affairs in the same way as we initiated parliamentary government and representative institutions.” The main aim of the Union for Democratic Control—founded in the first months of First World War by J. Ramsay MacDonald, Alfred Zimmern, Charles Trevelyan and Norman Angell—was in fact to put an end to “secret diplomacy,” and secure “real parliamentary control over foreign policy.”¹³²

Attempts “to enlighten public opinion” would fail unless they had “their roots in original thought,” and were “based on continuous enquiry into fact.” The Institute would provide “a common market of ideas” to experts of international relations, making their studies available to the public at large. Officials should be brought in without limiting their independence or breaching secrecy. Like a university, the Institute should not depend on public funding, but preserve its independence by generating an endowment fund on the base of individual and corporate subscriptions.

¹³¹ Kerr to Robert Cecil, 23 Nov. 1919, LP, 207; Philip Kerr, “The British Empire, the League of Nations, and the United States,” *The Round Table*, 38, (March 1920): 248.

¹³² Arthur Ponsonby, *Democracy and Diplomacy. A Plea for Popular Control of Foreign Policy* (London: 1915), 6. Educated at Eton and Oxford, the 1st Baron Arthur Ponsonby was Private Secretary of Campbell Bannerman (1905 1908), Liberal MP for Stirling (1908 1918), and Labour MP for Brightside (1922 1930). From 1929 31, he was junior minister, and in 1931 became Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Michael Bentley, *The Liberal Mind 1914 1929* (Cambridge: 1977), 167; Phillip Darby, *Three Faces of Imperialism. British and American Approaches to Asia and Africa* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 102; Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire. British Radical Attitudes to Colonialism in Africa 1895 1914* (London: 1968), 221. In *The Political Conditions of Allied Success: A Plea for a Protective Union of the Democracies*, Norman Angell advocated in 1918 the continuation after the war of co operation among the democracies in creating common institutions for the strengthening of the Atlantic community, through a process of democratization which would associate public opinion in the foreign policy decision making process, Norman Angell, *The Political Conditions of Allied Success: A Plea for a Protective Union of the Democracies* (New York: 1918). For a discussion on Angell and Liberal internationalists, see Lucian M. Ashworth, *Creating International Studies: Angell, Mitran and the Liberal Tradition* (Farnham: Ashgate, 1999).

The Round Table method of enquiry “keeping abreast of the facts, discussing the issues in private study groups and publicly communicating the results” became, according to Lavin, “an acknowledged model” for seminars in Oxford, the research section of the early League of Nations Union, the Next Five Years Group, which Ramsay MacDonald “later acclaimed as ‘the Chatham House technique of enquiry’,” or what became universally recognized and imitated as the ‘Chatham House method’.¹³³

As for the South African movement of the closer union societies and the Round Table itself, the Institute had initial financial backing from Bailey, implemented the same method of study-groups and had a journal with the objective of influencing the process of formation of Britain’s and the Dominions’ foreign policy at the highest level. The study-groups method derived from the Round Table, and was described by Stephen King-Hall as “unofficial Royal Commissions” charged with the investigation of specific problems, composed of experts drawn from the academic and business worlds but steered by Curtis and Toynbee, the first Director of studies who was also in charge of a study-group on the Near East. Seton-Watson had been appointed to direct a study-group on the Balkans. Sir George Prothero helped Curtis to bring the Foreign Press Review of the War Office under the Institute’s competence, thus creating the Chatham House press-cutting library.¹³⁴

Percy and Beer were appointed joint editors of the “Register of International Affairs” and a meeting of members of both delegations held at the Majestic on June 25 discussed Curtis’s proposal to ask Temperley to edit a history of the Peace Conference. Contributions would be from Colonel J. M. H. Cornwall, Edwyn Bevan, Ray Stannard Baker, Headlam-Morley, Kerr, Kisch, Wise, Hornbeck, Dudley Ward, Shotwell, and Zimmern. Scott and Clement Jones would approach the Dominions’ representatives at Paris to become members of the Institute, while Curtis would deal with the British and Americans. Jones guaranteed the involvement of Seton-Watson, Allen Leeper, Felix Frankfurter, Francis B. Bourdillon, Edward H. Carr, Charles Webster and Ivor Thomas.¹³⁵

¹³³ Memorandum by Lionel Curtis and Whitney H. Shepardson, CHP, Chatham House 2/1/2; Lavin, “Lionel Curtis and the Founding of Chatham House,” *Chatham House and*, Bosco and Navari, 62 3.

¹³⁴ Stephen King Hall, *Chatham House: A Brief Account of the Origins, Purposes and Methods of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 67.

¹³⁵ Curtis to Major Webster and 19 others, June 20, 1919, FOP, FO 608/152; Michael Palairet to Campbell, Aug. 16, 1919, FO 608/152; Wilfred Knapp, “Fifty Years of Chatham House Books,” *International Affairs*, (Nov. 1970): 139 140;

8. The Foreign Office and the proposed Institute

Crowe's opposition to interference in foreign affairs by authors and other "busy-bodies" raised at the Majestic persisted, and was outlined in a minute addressed to Curzon and Balfour, trying to keep the Foreign Office out of Curtis's new venture, which raised "a very important question of public policy." The suggested involvement of Foreign Office officials in the proposed Institute, "in discussions of foreign policy which, although considered confidential, will necessarily become known to a wide non-official audience," would draw the Foreign Office into the process of moulding public opinion, and expose officials to public attacks. The "same machinery...in the very measure in which it is successful" would also lend itself "to the inverse process," offering "outside opinion" to "seek opportunities...to influence the judgment and attitude of our officials." Crowe pointed out the danger that the proposed Institute would "degenerate into a kind of press-bureau on the model of that set up in the German Foreign Office," and "that private interests may use the machinery to direct the policy of the Foreign Office into channels specially fertilizing those interests."¹³⁶

Since officials were "likely to be chiefly recruited from among the junior and more inexperienced and more irresponsible of the members" of the foreign service, Crowe feared that "only the Secretary of State himself or someone specifically authorized and instructed by him to this effect," would be "really able to discharge...without risk of embarrassment," the "difficult duty" of presenting to the country the government's official policy and educating public opinion. Discussion of foreign affairs needed "to be approached with every kind of special precaution," and the disclosure to the public of secrets of State "might be highly dangerous and even lead to war." Junior officials "not always fully informed, and without

Clement Jones, Diary, 17 June 1919 (quoted in Lavin, *From Empire to*, 167); Harold W. V. Temperely, *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, 6 Vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1920 4). Robert Vansittart, was Adviser to the Political Section at Paris, Permanent Under secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1930 38, and Chief Diplomatic Adviser, 1938 41. FO 608/152. Colonel J. M. H. Cornwall was in Paris as a member of the Directorate of Military Intelligence of the War Office. Edwyn Bevan was a member of the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, 1918 21, and lecturer in Hellenistic history and literature at King's College, London, 1922 33. Dudley Ward was Treasury Officer, and member of the Financial Section of the British Delegation at Paris.

¹³⁶ Minutes by Crowe, June 26, 1919, and Hardinge (undated), FOP, FO 608/152.

responsibility,” were not “the most suitable exponents of grave matters of foreign policy to the outside world.”

Crowe also raised “the general question of authorizing the permanent civil service to break one of the fundamental rules of its constitution by ventilating not only official information, but their own private opinions on the affairs which they are called upon to conduct in accordance with their official instructions.” This innovation in Foreign Office practice needed the approval of the Secretary of State, in spite of open support for the scheme by Cecil.¹³⁷

Lord Hardinge—Permanent Under-Secretary to the Foreign Office, and Superintending Ambassador at the Peace Conference, with whom Curtis and Kerr had crossed swords during the peace negotiations—supported Crowe’s hard line. “I may be old-fashioned but the scheme does not please me,” Hardinge minuted. He was “brought up in a school where it was considered irregular to discuss or criticise, outside the walls of the F. O., the policy of the Govt in foreign affairs for which the S. of State is solely responsible to the Govt.” Membership “of the F. O. & Diplo Service in the proposed institute” seemed to Hardinge absolutely incompatible.¹³⁸

Curtis shared Crowe’s view “that a ruling should be obtained as soon as possible on the position of Officials with regard to the scheme.” Curtis thought that “existing regulations scarcely” covered the case which was “to some extent a new one.” Curtis then suggested applying to the proposed Institute the same conditions for membership as applied to members of the Royal Geographical Society, where frontiers were “freely discussed,” and “a ruling which would involve their retirement from existing societies would naturally be considered with great care.”¹³⁹

According to Toynbee, Crowe defended “a monopoly of the conduct of foreign affairs,” represented by a Foreign Office “family-circle’s historic prerogative.” The Foreign Office in fact was then “still about zero per cent public relations-minded and one hundred per cent security-minded.” If permanent officers of the Foreign Office were initially banned from being involved in the Institute’s activities, they received permission just after its inauguration to become members and to attend meetings, where they were allowed to express their views.¹⁴⁰

Curzon, who would take over from Balfour after the signing of the Paris Treaties, was asked by Balfour himself to take a final decision. This came on July 28, with Curzon expressing “serious doubts as to the wisdom

¹³⁷ *Ibidem.*

¹³⁸ *Ibidem.*

¹³⁹ Curtis to Crowe, June 26, 1919, FO 608/152.

¹⁴⁰ Toynbee, *Experiences*, 63 5.

of going the full length contemplated by its promoters.” “To allow individual members of the Foreign Office to join a Society,” Curzon pointed out, “whose main object is the free interchange and propagation of opinions upon matters connected with the business of the Department, would seem to me to be subversive of discipline and derogatory to the authority of the Secretary of State.” Curzon could not “subscribe to the view” that the Secretary of State and his staff were separate entities, since “the latter are the servants of the former.” Whatever views the officials expressed “within the four walls of this building (where little if any restriction is placed upon their liberty of thought or expression),” Curzon did “not consider that they are at liberty without the express authority of the Secretary of State, to ventilate them outside.” The Secretary of State was, with the exception of the Prime Minister, “the sole mouthpiece of the Government in matters of foreign policy, except in so far as he may choose, in particular cases, to delegate this function to others.”

The attitude of the Foreign Office towards the proposed Institute should be “one of helpful sympathy,” and officials would be “ready to receive and consider any information” the Institute might offer or views it might propound. The Foreign Office could supply the Institute, “whenever we properly can, with anything” it “may desire from us,” but individual officers should be prevented from assuming “the obligations *however slender* entailed by membership.” It would be “contrary to the best traditions of the Service, and, in the long run, prejudicial to the public interest.” Curzon felt then “very reluctant” to give it his sanction.¹⁴¹

Hardinge was “very pleased with the decision taken,” while Cecil expressed “profound disagreement.” “I am sure,” he commented, “that the conception of the Foreign Office, that it is the private property of the Secretary of State, is incompatible with any real confidence in it by the public.” Curtis invited Curzon to wait and not take a final decision on the involvement of the Foreign Office in the proposed Institute until its Constitution had been drafted. “We presume,” Curtis observed, “that there would be no desire on the part of the S. of S. to record a decision as to the position of officials until he had a scheme before him.” He reassured Curzon that the Institute would abstain “from forming, recording or propounding any view on international affairs.” Members would not be able to use its headed paper. It would provide a venue for study, research

¹⁴¹ Sir George Clerk to Sir Ronald Graham, Aug. 1, 1919, FOP, FO 608/152. Curzon was Acting Foreign Secretary in London while Balfour was in Paris. Curzon to Balfour, July 28, 1919, FO 608/162.

and exchange of information. "I can assure you," Curtis stressed, "that this will not be accepted in a Pickwickian sense."¹⁴²

As a tactical measure, Curtis tried to involve the Foreign Office in drawing up the Constitution, and suggested the name of Sir William Tyrrell as representative of the Foreign Office. In order to show all his good intentions, Curtis promised to send a copy of the history of the Paris Peace Conference to the Foreign Office before publication in order to prevent diplomatic embarrassment. In any way, he had "nothing to do with the account of the making of Peace." On the base of an initial donation of £200 from Bailey, Geoffrey Gathorne-Hardy was appointed to draw up the rules. Eleanor Cargin (succeeded, after her marriage to Whitney Shepardson, by Margaret Cleeve) and Clement Jones were appointed organizing secretaries, while Curtis was nominated Hon. Secretary.¹⁴³

The British Institute was officially inaugurated on 5 July 1920, at the Astors' London residence in St. James's Square, in the presence of Balfour, Grey and John Robert Clynes. The presence of Balfour at the inaugural meeting of the Institute brought Clement Jones to remark that "the Foreign Secretary himself is playing on our side from the start of the game."¹⁴⁴

At the inaugural meeting the former Foreign Secretary, Viscount Grey, had urged the new Institute

to try to do for the present something like what history does for the past...if year by year it will...produce something like an annual register of foreign affairs, showing what has happened in the previous year, and accompanying it by an explanation or preface, which will not only tell the facts, but show their relation to each other and give us an idea of the value of the respective facts, it will be doing a most important work. It will not interfere with policy, but provide materials from which politicians, statesmen and journalists can form sound opinions in regard to policy.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Minute by Hardinge to Campbell, Aug. 2, 1919, FOP, FO 608/152; Cecil to Campbell, Aug.7, 1919, FO 608/152; Curtis to Campbell, Aug. 2, 1919, FO 608/152.

¹⁴³ Curtis to Campbell, Aug. 20, 1919, FO 608/152. Sir William Tyrrell (1866-1947) was British representative on the Polish Commission at Paris 1919, Assistant Under secretary at the Foreign Office, and Permanent Under secretary, 1925-28.

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in Paul Williams, "A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Empire, Intellectuals and the Chatham House Project, 1919-1939," *International Relations*, 17, (2003): 41.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in *Survey of International Affairs*, Research Committee, June 7, 1955, Appendix B/1, CHP, section 2/1/e.

The Institute should develop, according to Grey, into “an organisation which will provide the material from which those who are most influential and who have the greatest amount of knowledge, comprehension and perspective in foreign affairs can form public opinion.” He urged the press and politicians to use the services of the Institute and in so doing “lay the foundations for sound public opinion.” The formation of élite public opinion, however, could not in fact always be done overtly. Frank discussion, it was pointed out, would be endangered unless concealment of some of the discussions could be assured.¹⁴⁶

The founding of the Institute was greeted with wide coverage by the ‘quality’ press. *The Observer* welcomed the Institute as signalling a new era of democratic control of foreign policy, “the rightful successor to the dynastic and imperialistic policies which have harvested periodic war all down the ages.” The key to such democratic control was, the article suggested, “popular knowledge” and “public education.” *The Observer* fully supported the Institute’s aims and working methods, which would place interest in foreign affairs “stirring in an ever-widening circle.” The article concluded with the hope that the Institute would soon “have proved itself one of the war’s most fruitful consequences and a powerful factor in a sound, instructed, and alert public opinion.” *A Times* editorial welcomed the founding of the Institute as “likely to be a useful educational agency” especially in supporting the League of Nations. In a fairly lengthy leader, the editor warned the new Institute “to shut out the pushful crank and pedants of a certain aggressive creed, the politician fair and even generous to every country but his own, and the many varieties of Bolshevists, avowed or unavowed.”¹⁴⁷

Evidently, the exclusion of left-wing opinion within the Institute was definitely resolved from its very establishment. In a separate article covering the inaugural meeting, *The Times* gave considerable space to Clynes, Labour MP and a founder of the Institute. Speaking in favour of the decision to establish the Institute, Clynes argued that it was particularly important for the education of the labour movement, the leaders of which were becoming progressively aware of foreign affairs. Clynes felt that “it was indeed strange that the power which presided over the fate of nations should not have called into being an institution such as that proposed many years ago.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ *The British Institute of International Affairs* (London: 1920), 12 4.

¹⁴⁷ *The Observer*, (4 July 1920): 12; *The Times*, (5 July 1920): 15.

¹⁴⁸ *The Times*, (6 July 1920): 16. Clynes was an MP 1906 31, and 1935 45; Home Secretary, 1929 31; and one time President of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers.

“Institutes are usually composed of men presumably too old ever to know better,” the *Saturday Review* reported, but the British Institute of International Affairs was “surprisingly low in the average of its years per member.” Its international mix appeared as “something almost entirely new in politics.” It did not represent “the old internationalism of the working classes, which aimed at a horizontal division of Europe,” or the internationalism “of cosmopolitan trade or banking, which regards a frontier as an inconvenience when it does not happen to be an opportunity.” It was rather an internationalism “which respects frontiers, values the principles of nationality, and seeks to comprehend and sympathise with the various countries of the world in their national aims and activities.”¹⁴⁹

In fact the Institute’s objects were officially presented

To encourage and facilitate the study of international question, to promote the exchange of information and thought on international affairs, with a view to the creation of better informed public opinion, and to publish works with these objects.¹⁵⁰

The proposed Institute should focus on educating the educators, the ‘quality’ end of the range of public opinion. The Institute would be like a “common market of ideas of educators and at the same time...the logical training ground for under-secretaries of state.” Curtis further emphasised that “even the proposed yearbook should not be designed for direct consumption by the public at large.” It should be produced so “as to concentrate public opinion on the questions which most demand attention at any given time.”¹⁵¹

According to Parmar the reasons for the strategic interest of the proposed Institute in the formation of public opinion as an instrument to achieve its aims, were firstly to “undermine the influence of conservative forces that adhered to autocratic styles of making foreign policy,” and secondly that “a properly ‘educated’ public opinion would permit the formation and implementation of more ‘sound’ foreign policy,” which would offset the specific interests of party politics. Finally, Parmar argued that an ‘educated’ public opinion would contribute to legitimising official foreign policy once implemented. According to Donald C. Watt, Chatham House’s definition of public opinion was “in the Edwardian sense of those

¹⁴⁹ *Saturday Review*, 10 July 1920.

¹⁵⁰ British Institute of International Affairs, Rules, CHA, 1919 25.

¹⁵¹ Memorandum by Lionel Curtis and Whitney Shepardson, CHA 2/1/2, 2, 11, 13.

close to parliament, the City, the universities, industrial and public affairs." Parmar included the press and London's gentlemen's clubs.¹⁵²

The Institute received its Royal Charter in 1926. On the other side of the Atlantic attempts to establish a branch were characterized by "unfruitful zeal," in Curtis's words. Shepardson in vain tried to involve in the undertaking the Foreign Policy Association—heir of the League to Enforce Peace—until in 1920 he succeeded in setting up, with the assistance of Frances Kellor—Vice-President of the New York based Inter-Racial Council—"a sort of Praesidium for that part of the Establishment that guides our destiny as a nation—wealthy East-Coasters like Cravaths, Bowmans, Polks and Dulleses." Curtis was instrumental in raising grants from the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations, which made the creation of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Institute of Pacific Relations possible. The Steering Committee included George Wickerham and Hamilton Fish Armstrong—first editor of *Foreign Affairs*, journal of the Council—and the directors Elihu Root, Paul Cravath, Edwin Gray, Isaiah Bowman, and Allen Dulles.¹⁵³

The fulfilment of the original "strategic object" could not have been achieved merely by setting up a London-based centre for the study of and debate on international relations. It required a proper overseas network. If the ultimate goal was the creation of an Anglo-American alliance strong enough to prevent the outbreak of a world war and capable of preparing the conditions for a more stable world order, it was necessary to educate the American and Commonwealth public on its merits. One of Curtis's first duties was, in fact, to reproduce the Round Table network of local groups by founding independent institutes in the capitals of the Commonwealth, while adding New York to the network. The creation of the Dominions branches of the Institute was in fact largely due to Round Table members: in Australia to Eggleston, Sir Thomas Bavin and H. S.

¹⁵² Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy*, 166; Donald C. Watt, Foreword to *Chatham House*, Bosco and Navari, i; Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power*, 167.

¹⁵³ Lionel Curtis, "America and the Institute of International Affairs," CHP, 4/CURT; "The American Institute," BrP, 39; Whitney Shepardson, *Early History of the Council on Foreign Relations* (Stamford, CT: Overbrook Press, 1960); Foster, *High Hopes*, 56 7; R. H. Rovere, *The American Establishment and other Reports, Opinions and Speculations* (London: 1963), 238. On the role of Armstrong in the creation of the Council on Foreign Relations, see Priscilla Roberts, "'The Council Has Been Your Creation,' Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Paradigm of the American Foreign Policy Establishment," *Journal of American Studies*, 35, 1, (Apr. 2001): 65 94.

Nicholas; in New Zealand to Downie Stewart and A. R. Atkinson, and in South Africa to E. A. Walker.¹⁵⁴

If Curtis succeeded in establishing the Institute, it was because he managed to bring along most of the Kindergarten. Curtis's enthusiasm "dragged his friends at his chariot wheels," David Watt observed. Lord Meston was the first Chairman of the Institute, Astor was its Chairman for most of the inter-war period, Brand was its first Treasurer, Kerr and Amery were members of the Council. Another Round Table legacy was the use by Curtis of the London offices during the critical early months of the Institute—until Abe Bailey put forward a loan of £200 to cover the initial office expenses—while ransacking *The Round Table* subscription lists in order to build the initial membership of the Institute, producing Dove's irritation at being engulfed in paperwork and at identification of the new Curtis venture as "your Institute."¹⁵⁵

The most significant help to Curtis came from Colonel Reuben Leonard, a Canadian magnate and Curtis's convert to the idea of the Commonwealth, who donated 10 St. James's Square as British headquarters for the nascent Institute. The donation of the magnificent Eighteenth century house, which made the Institute well known to the international public at large as Chatham House, represents the ideal link and heritage of the Institute with the Round Table. The idea had originated from Curtis, who envisaged the creation, in collaboration with the English-Speaking Union, of a Library in memory of the American Ambassador Walter Page. When this did not materialize, the home of Chatham and Gladstone at 10 St. James's Square was donated to the Institute after the granting of the 'Royal' Charter upon direct intervention by the Duke of Devonshire, Colonial Secretary. This was due to Curtis's pressure, and guaranteed the patronage of the Prince of Wales. With the acquisition of Chatham House, the Institute launched an appeal to underwrite the purchase of books and modern maps and the creation of a press-cutting library.¹⁵⁶

It is difficult to define the role which Chatham House played within British society at large, and in particular in the foreign policy-making process. If one accepts the thesis put forward by Donald C. Watt—who has been for a long time associated in the post-war years with Chatham

¹⁵⁴ Lavin, *From Empire to*, 168.

¹⁵⁵ Watt, "The Foundations of", 431; Lavin, *From Empire to*, 168.

¹⁵⁶ Curtis to Leonard, 21 June 1923, CHP, 4/LEON; Curtis to Leonard 19 July, 26 July, 13 August, 15 Aug. 1923, *ibidem*; Curtis to Shepardson, 3 Jan. 1924, RTP, c. 872; Kenneth Younger, "The Study and Understanding of International Affairs," *International Affairs*, (Nov. 1970): 150 164.

House as editor of the annual *Survey of International Affairs*—that Britain is essentially an “oligocratic society,” one in which “power is exercised by a minority of its citizens grouped together in a cluster of smaller groups,” it is possible to recognize Chatham House as the institutional locus of one of these groups. According to Watt these groups should be

consistent enough in their membership over time...to be treated not only as a political but as a social phenomenon, and for the characteristics of their social organisation to be an essential element in the manner in which they perform their political function.

Chatham House’s membership varied over time with the varying of the political actors, but so far as the inter-war period is concerned it was consistent with that political and social phenomenon known as ‘broad church’ liberal imperialism. Curtis’s and Kerr’s imperialism developed from the racial, during Milner’s early influence, to the cultural, an attachment to the fundamental principles which lie at the heart of Anglo-Saxon civilisation, which were seen as exportable, universal and inclusive.¹⁵⁷

Within the inter-war British foreign policy élite, Chatham House belonged, according to Watt, to one of “a numerically very limited but strategically important groups of mid-Atlanticist Americophiles.” The founders of the Institute had “a triple interest in the United States.” Firstly they were attracted by the American success “in the absorption and unification of a great mass of different people and traditions,” being a model for a unified British Empire. Secondly, they “subscribed largely to the theories that the two countries shared a common culture and a common purpose.” Then they saw the United States as partners with whom to establish “an Anglo-American world hegemony”, and “dominate the world, widening and strengthening the Pax Britannica, the world order on which they set so much store.”¹⁵⁸

Chatham House’s “political function” was, according to Curtis, “to apply scientific methods of thought to international problems so far as they

¹⁵⁷ Donald Cameron Watt, *Personalities and Policies. Studies in the Formulation of British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century* (London: 1965), 1. For a discussion on the legacy of European imperialism, see: Saul Dubow, *The Rise and Fall of Modern Empires: Colonial Knowledge* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013). According to Curtis it was problematic to discern “qualities inherent in the English which distinguish them above their neighbours on the Continent,” and “it is impossible to establish any theory of racial superiority.” Therefore, “English success in planting North America... must, in fact, be traced to the respective merits not of breed but of institutions,” CP, 156/9, 207.

¹⁵⁸ Watt, *Succeeding John Bull*, 49; id., *Personalities and Policies*, 30.

can be applied to international data.” According to Toynbee, the nature of the proposed “centre of authoritative opinion” would be that of a “private society for the scientific study of international affairs,” producing “objective, unbiased, unpartisan, un-emotional” information, on which vital political decisions would be taken.¹⁵⁹

Chatham House had to “ascertain facts and see them with eyes unclouded by wishful thinking, propaganda and, above all, Government influence,” and the prestige gained by Chatham House internationally as well as nationally was, according to its main architect, “largely due to the fact that all responsible people in public affairs” recognized that Chatham House worked “free from all Government influence.” The purposes for which an Institute of International Affairs was needed,” Curtis stated in the first *Annual Report*, “are not those of today or tomorrow, but of all time.” Before mankind there was “a period of reconstruction second in importance not even to the transition accomplished in the first foundation of the Roman Empire.” In a blend of “idealism and pragmatism in more or less equal proportions” Curtis engaged himself in the most demanding and lasting achievement of his life.¹⁶⁰

On the record of the early years there is the publication of *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*—made possible by an advance of £2,000 by Thomas W. Lamont, Vice-President of the First National Bank, and representing the United States Treasury at the Paris Peace Conference—a number of scholarly monographs, the *Survey*, and the quarterly journal *International Affairs*. The original *Surveys* continued the work done by Headlam-Morley in his regular contributions to *The Round Table* on the “Problems of Europe.” The *Survey* was financed from 1925 by an endowment of £20,000 from Sir Daniel Stevenson, who also sponsored a research Chair of international history at the University of London, held by Toynbee. The *Survey of British Commonwealth Relations* was financed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and edited by Keith Hancock, Chichele Professor of economic history at Oxford. The Institute also hosted a Chair in international economics sponsored by Sir Henry Price with an endowment of £20,000, and held by Allan G. B. Fisher; and the Abe Bailey Professorship in Commonwealth relations filled by Nicholas Mansergh. The Institute also had an official role in the selection of candidates for the Wilson Chair of international politics at the University College of Wales at Aberystwyth, from 1919 to 1939 held by associates of

¹⁵⁹ Lavin, “Lionel Curtis and the Founding,” 62; Toynbee, *Experiences*, 61; Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919*, 353.

¹⁶⁰ *First Annual Report*, British Institute of International Affairs (London: 1920); Lavin, “Lionel Curtis and the Founding,” 62.

the Round Table: Zimmern, C. K. Webster, Jerome D. Greene, and E. H. Carr. The Round Table Group controlled the Chair from its founding by David Davies in 1919, though Davies had severed relations with the Round Table because of disagreements on the League of Nations and European collective security.¹⁶¹

Toynbee, Headlam-Morley and Zimmern played the most prominent role, with Curtis, in the creation, development and early history of the Institute. If Toynbee was the first Director, Headlam-Morley served on the Executive Committee of the Institute during the 1920s, and was largely

¹⁶¹ Zimmern was the first chairholder, (1919 21). Sir Charles Kingsley Webster (1886 1961), Professor of Modern History at Liverpool University, 1914 1922; General Staff of the War Office, 1917 1918; Secretary, Military Section, British Delegation to the Conference of Paris, 1918 1919; Wilson Professor of International Politics, University of Wales, 1922 1932; Professor of History, Harvard University, 1928 1932; Stevenson Professor of International History, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1932 1953; Foreign Research and Press Service, 1939 1941; Director, British School of Information (New York), 1941 1942; Member of British Delegation, Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco Conferences, 1944 1945; Member, Preparatory Commission and General Assembly, United Nations, 1945 1946; President of the British Academy, 1950 1954, and Foreign Secretary, 1955 1958. While Professor of International Relations at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth he wrote his two major books on the foreign policy of Lord Castlereagh. Jerome Davis Greene (1874 1959) was an American banker and was involved in several organizations and trusts including Lee, Higginson & Co.; Secretary of the Corporation of Harvard University, 1905 1910, and 1934 1943; Joint Secretary of the Reparations Committee at the Paris Peace Conference; Secretary and Trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation, 1913 17, and in 1928 1939; Chairman of the Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations, 1929 32; Trustee of the Brookings Institution of Washington, DC, 1928 1945. He was one of the early figures in the establishment of the Council on Foreign Relations, and obtained the professorship at Aberystwyth, 1932 4, through Curtis's intervention. Edward Hallett Carr (1892 1982) was educated at the Merchant Taylors' School, London and at Trinity College, Cambridge. Carr began his career as a diplomat in 1916, and participated in the Paris Peace Conference as a member of the British Delegation. He resigned from the Foreign Office in 1936 to begin an academic career. From 1941 to 1946, Carr worked as an assistant editor at *The Times*. In 1936, Carr became the Woodrow Wilson Professor of International Politics at the University of Wales, using his position to criticize the League of Nations, which caused much tension with Lord Davies, who had established the Wilson Chair in 1919 with the intention of increasing public support for the League. This was a position which he kept until 1947, when he was forced to resign. On Davies, see Brian Porter, "David Davies and the Enforcement of Peace," *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis: Inter War Idealism Reassessed*, David Long and Peter Wilson eds. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 58 78.

responsible for the appointment of Toynbee as Director of studies. Zimmern was particularly engaged in establishing relationships between the Institute and other organisations and interest groups. Each of them had served in the Department of Political Intelligence in 1918-1919. Other members of the PID who played a role in the Institute were Lewis Namier, Eustace Percy, Rex and Allen Leeper, Edwyn Bevan and George Saunders.

“The influence of Chatham House,” Quigley argued, “appears in its true perspective, not as the influence of an autonomous body but as merely one of the many instruments in the arsenal of another power.” The power of the Round Table in the fields of education, administration, politics, newspapers and periodicals was, according to Quigley, “terrifying,” not because it “was used for evil ends,” but because “a small number of men” were allowed “to wield such power in administration and politics,” to obtain an “almost complete control over the publication of the documents relating to their actions,” to exercise “such influence over the avenues of information that creates public opinion,” and “to monopolize so completely the writing and the teaching of the history of their own period.”¹⁶²

Chatham House and the Council on Foreign Relations played, in fact, a hegemonic role in the process of formation of British and American foreign policies in the inter-war period. On the initiative of Curtis, the Round Table achieved “the strategic object” of the strengthening of Anglo-American relations “with a necessary tactical change,” namely with the creation of an Anglo-American ‘institutionalized’ foreign policy élite. Kerr’s and Curtis’s masterpiece had been to realize, through Chatham House, Rhodes’ dream of the restoration of the First British Empire—or the British Empire before the “Intolerable Acts” of 1774—with the progressive inclusion of most of Europe. Milner could not follow his former protégé because it would inevitably have meant the passing of the torch. Milner was too nationalistic, too British-centred, to acquiesce in Great Britain handing over the driving seat to the United States. Milner was, moreover, deeply an anti-democrat. He could not understand—what Kerr, and before him Bryce, understood—the deep meaning of American democracy.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Quigley, *The Anglo American*, 197.

¹⁶³ On the creation of an Anglo American Establishment, see Priscilla Roberts, “The American ‘Eastern Establishment’ and World War I: The Emergence of a Foreign Policy tradition,” 2 Vols., PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1981; Donald C. Watt, “America and British Foreign Policy Making Elite, 1895 1956,” *Personalities and Policies* (London: 1965), 19 52; H. C. Allen, *Great Britain and*

The policy of Atlantic Alliance was not therefore the result of just a temporary convergence of the reasons of state of Great Britain and the United States—as occurred during the First World War, from which followed, once the dust had settled, the return of the United States to isolationism—but the accomplishment of a political project pursued by two organizations specially created at Paris in May 1919, and active since then on both sides of the Atlantic. They succeeded because the project

the United States: A History of Anglo American relations, 1783 1952 (London and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1954). An example of the ideological and strategic continuity between the British Empire and the 'Atlantic system' is offered by the fact that the Americans played, towards the process of European unification, exactly the same role as played by the British towards the process of Canadian unification, being aware that Canada would become, once united, their crux. The United States promoted European unification because that was the only way to prevent West Germany and after her, Italy and France from falling under the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. Great Britain acted in the same way in order to prevent Canadian provinces from falling under the United States' sphere of influence. Not by chance the Canadian Federation was established two years after the conclusion of the American War of Secession. Another example, on the economic and financial spheres, is offered by Kennedy's attempt renewed by the present American Administration, and the object of current negotiations to establish with the European partners a 'more perfect union', with the creation of a transatlantic commercial community. In this attempt to establish the largest 'single' market in the world could be seen depending on the final conditions a renewal of the fateful protectionist Ottawa agreements of 1932, which represented not only the posthumous and ephemeral victory of Milner over Lothian, but also a tremendous boost to the rise of Hitler to power. The fundamental difference compared with 1932 is that the European Union today has a single currency, which is not the dollar, and quasi federal institutions, while in 1932 the Dominions were marching in random order. In the same way as Canada unified under British leadership represented an insurmountable obstacle to the transformation of the British Empire into a federation, so the European Union established under American leadership could represent an insurmountable obstacle to the realization of the Kennedian project the young Kennedy had been an admirer of Lothian, and met him in Washington of a 'more perfect union' between the two shores of the North Atlantic. Already there exists a common not yet single army under American leadership, just as for instance the leadership of the army and the navy in the British Empire had always strictly been under British control. Once the parity between the two currencies were fixed, it would be possible to create a single currency as well. The fact that these goals are reachable in the near future is demonstrated by the present activism of Russia's foreign policy, since she would be fatally excluded from the Atlantic block, isolated, and further weakened by the inevitable loss of pieces of her former Empire (Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus, and so forth), which would inexorably be attracted within the Euro American orbit.

was, in fact, rooted in the Anglo-Saxon political tradition—of which federalism is a component—and because of a twenty-year-long process of elaborations, debates, and clashes among political organizations active on both shores of the North Atlantic. The Round Table was the most prominent among them, playing a pioneering role, both on the theoretical and organisational profiles. The historical role of the Round Table had been that of theorizing, promoting, and managing the transition from a British to an American world leadership, playing a decisive role in the survival of Anglo-Saxon world hegemony through the creation of the Atlantic order.

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