

CHAPTER SEVEN
**LOTHIAN AND THE PROBLEM OF RELATIVE
DECLINE**

DAVID P. BILLINGTON, JR.

Philip Henry Kerr (1882-1940), eleventh Marquess of Lothian, was a writer and sometime British public official who tried to build a more liberal world order anchored by the advanced English-speaking nations. As Britain's ambassador to the United States from September 1939 until his death in December 1940, he laid much of the groundwork for the Anglo-American alliance of the Second World War and after. During the 1930s, though, he was a leading private advocate of appeasing Nazi Germany. He also belonged to a circle whose influence in British imperial and foreign policy from 1909 to 1939 was and still is a matter of controversy.¹

Philip Kerr came of age in 1900, as Britain entered a more acute stage in its relative decline as a great power. His subsequent life divided into two periods, each of which raises a question. In the first period, from 1905 to 1921, Kerr played a supporting role in political activity led by more senior figures, first as part of a circle of young men who were protégés of Lord Milner, and then from December 1916 as an aide and adviser to Prime Minister David Lloyd George. With Milner's support, Kerr and his friends launched a movement in 1909 to persuade the self-governing British Dominions to form a common electorate with the United Kingdom. When

¹ The authorized biography of Lothian is J. R. M. Butler, *Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr) 1882-1940* (London: Macmillan, 1960). The authoritative account of Lothian's service as ambassador to the United States is David Reynolds, *Lord Lothian and Anglo-American Relations, 1939-1940* (Philadelphia: Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 1983). More recent studies include Andrea Bosco, *Lord Lothian: Un pioniere del federalismo 1882-1940* (Milano: Jaca, 1989); Stefan Schieren, *Vom Weltreich zum Weltstaat: Philip Kerr (Lord Lothian) Weg vom Imperialisten zum Internationalisten* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1996); and David P. Billington, Jr., *Lothian: Philip Kerr and the Quest for World Order* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006). See also the essays in John Turner, ed., *The Larger Idea: Lord Lothian and the Problem of National Sovereignty* (London: Historians Press, 1989). For critical views of Lothian and his circle, see A. L. Rowse, *Appeasement: A Study in Political Decline 1933-1939* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961); and Norman Rose, *The Cliveden Set: Portrait of an Exclusive Fraternity* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000).

DAVID P. BILLINGTON, JR.

Kerr realized by 1917 that this goal was unattainable, he hoped for a continuation of the wartime partnership between Great Britain and the United States. This prospect also failed when the U. S. Senate rejected American membership in the League of Nations in 1919. The question about this period is whether Kerr and his friends could have devised a more successful strategy to secure Great Britain in a more dangerous world.

For most of the second period, from 1921 until 1940, Kerr (Lord Lothian after 1930) tried to promote closer Anglo-American ties to anchor the liberal world, and he argued that this arrangement would need to evolve into a democratic world state. Although he did not live to see it, the advanced English-speaking nations came together with other allies during and after the Second World War in an alliance system anchored by the United States. These nations, however, rejected Lothian's call to federate just as they repudiated his pre-war support for appeasement. The question from the latter half of his life is one that concerns the world since then: whether liberal nations need the goal of a community integrated and inclusive enough to function as a government of the world.

VICTORIAN BACKGROUND

In 1815, the United Kingdom emerged the victor in a world war, and for the next half century its industrial head start made Great Britain the world's leading modern economy. Following Britain, western Europe began to develop more liberal and industrial societies, while central and eastern Europe languished in an autocratic bloc dominated by Austria and Russia. The latter two states had a falling out, though, and a series of wars and uprisings from 1859 to 1870 broke Austrian hegemony, bringing independence to new parts of the continent. Like the 1990s for America, the 1860s vindicated much of what Britain had stood for in the preceding four decades. But afterward, Great Britain entered a long relative decline as the rest of the world industrialized. Germany and Russia began their rise as global challengers, as did (in a less threatening way) the United States. Domestically in Britain, changing electoral demographics helped evoke a new concern for the condition of the British underclass.

Two movements in 1870s Britain responded to these changes. The first was domestic in focus. At Oxford University, the philosopher Thomas Hill Green argued that liberal individualism denied a basis for the common good and permitted large numbers of citizens to suffer through no fault of

their own.² Inspired by Green's teaching, one of his students, Arnold Toynbee (uncle of the historian Arnold J. Toynbee), recruited students to join him in doing social service work in the slums of London. After Toynbee's death in 1883, his friends created Toynbee Hall, the first of many 'settlement houses' in London and other British cities, in which students served during or after their time at university to teach and perform other kinds of social work. Settlement houses spread to the United States, Canada, and Australia in the 1880s and 1890s.³

The other movement, given a boost in the 1880s by the historian John Robert Seeley of Cambridge University, called for Britain to federate with its settler colonies, which were now internally self-governing and on a path to peaceful independence. The federalist aim was to reconcile democracy with the conservation of British strength. Most federalists called for representation of the settler colonies either in the London Parliament or (with Britain) in a new federal government of the empire. Unlike the settlement houses, though, imperial federalism did not catch on. A majority of the voters in a federal electorate would have been British for some time to come, and Canada and Australia proved no more interested in British taxation with representation than the American colonies had earlier been to such taxation without it. Interest in Britain was also muted.⁴ Great Britain in the 1880s and 1890s instead occupied new parts of Africa and Asia, as if its world power were growing rather than receding.

The 1895 Venezuelan boundary dispute with the United States, the Boer War of 1899-1902, and German naval building after 1898 finally drove home British vulnerability. Britain settled its differences with America, signed a new alliance with Japan in 1902, reached understandings

² For the thought and influence of T. H. Green, see Andrew Vincent and Raymond Plant, *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship: The Life and Thought of the British Idealists* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

³ On Toynbee and the founding of Toynbee Hall, see Asa Briggs and Ann Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First One Hundred Years* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 1-10. See also Standish Meacham, *Toynbee Hall and Social Reform 1880-1914: The Search for Community* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987); and for the movement's spread to the United States, Allen F. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

⁴ See John Robert Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, ed. and with an introduction by John Gross (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971). Seeley's book originally appeared in 1883. On the imperial federalist movement, see J. E. Tyler, *The Struggle for Imperial Unity (1868-1895)* (London: Longmans Green, 1938); and more broadly, Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

DAVID P. BILLINGTON, JR.

with France and Russia, and launched a domestic debate on how to renew the nation's capacities as a military and industrial power.⁵ Liberals and Unionists (the latter name used by Conservatives from 1895 to 1922) agreed to build a larger fleet. But the two parties divided over economic and social policy; and party tensions soon deepened over constitutional reform and Irish demands for autonomy.

THE ROUND TABLE CRUSADE

Philip Kerr was born near the apex of British society. His father, Lord Ralph Kerr, a younger son of the seventh Marquess of Lothian, retired from the army in 1898 as a major-general. His mother, Lady Anne Fitzalan-Howard, was a daughter of the fifteenth Duke of Norfolk. A Roman Catholic, Philip attended the Oratory, a Catholic school near Birmingham, and went up to Oxford, where he earned a first-class (honors) degree in modern history in 1904. His father then obtained a position for him in the administration of postwar South Africa, where he joined a group of other young Oxford men serving as aides to Lord Milner, the British high commissioner.⁶

Alfred Milner (1854-1925) remains one of the most enigmatic figures of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain. An influential presence who never held elective office, he was perhaps the most fanatical advocate of an imperial federal electorate after 1900, yet he detested democratic politics and preferred to work behind the scenes. Milner was born in Germany to British parents of modest means, attended Oxford on scholarship from 1872 to 1876, and joined Arnold Toynbee in social service work in the slums of London. A visiting Canadian, George Parkin, converted him to the cause of imperial federation. After graduation, Milner studied law, worked briefly in journalism, and then began a meteoric rise in the civil service that included a stint in Egypt, which Britain occupied in 1882. The Unionist colonial secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, appointed him to South Africa in 1897, where Milner's hard line policies helped bring on war with the Boers. Although created a

⁵ For the pressure on Britain at this time, see Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Naval Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1980); and Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988). See also Geoffrey R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899-1914* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967).

⁶ For Kerr's family and early life, see Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 1-4.

Viscount after the war, he returned home in 1905 to face censure over the treatment of Chinese laborers imported to restart the Transvaal mines. Finding politics distasteful, he turned down an offer to lead the Unionist party after its defeat in 1906.⁷

From private life, however, Milner devoted himself to causes aimed at making Britain a stronger competitor in the world. The most important of these would be a new effort to federate the empire, for which he would need the young men he had left in South Africa under his successor, Lord Selborne. Walter Nimocks has described how, with the approval of Milner and Selborne, these young men launched a movement in 1907 to persuade the white settler minority to agree to a union of the four South African colonies. Britons and Boers agreed, mainly because the idea meant self-governing Dominion status on terms that kept the country under their control. But Kerr and his friends saw the union as largely the result of their effort to orchestrate public opinion, and the group resolved next to unite all of the Dominions with Britain.⁸ On their return to England in 1909-1910, the young men launched a wider movement with funds arranged by Milner.

The Round Table movement that resulted has received substantial scholarly attention in the last half century.⁹ Future scholarship may provide insight into certain themes and individuals associated with the movement that have yet to be explored.¹⁰ One such theme, to be considered here, is the

⁷ The best study of Lord Milner is still A. M. Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics: A Study of Lord Milner in Opposition and in Power* (New York: Macmillan, 1964). For his years in South Africa, see pp. 29-49, and on his censure, pp. 53-100. For his refusal of the Unionist leadership, see pp. 111-117.

⁸ See Walter Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men: The "Kindergarten" in Edwardian Imperial Affairs* (Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 17-122. See also Kenneth Ingham, "Philip Kerr and the Unification of South Africa," in Turner, ed., *The Larger Idea*, 20-32.

⁹ See John E. Kendle, *The Round Table Movement and Imperial Union* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975); and Deborah Lavin, *From Empire to International Commonwealth: A Biography of Lionel Curtis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). See also the essays in Andrea Bosco and Alex May, eds., *The Round Table, The Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1997). For a study of one dominion, see Leonie Foster, *High Hopes: The Men and Motives of the Australian Round Table* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1986).

¹⁰ Studies of the Round Table Moot have left foreign policy in the interwar period mainly to individual biographies, such as those of Curtis and Kerr/Lothian. The views and influence of other Moot members and of the group as a whole need further examination. There are also larger narratives having to do with imperial and social reform, suggested below, that could usefully explore continuities with the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries.

extent to which the movement had the potential to be a more effective response to British relative decline. The Round Table movement had a social vision and political philosophy that needs to be assessed along with its notion of external reform involving the empire, and its ability to link different parts of the English-speaking world to exchange views could be evaluated apart from the particular view that the founders tried to promote.

In keeping with Milner's inclination, his young men agreed that a new campaign should operate at first out of public view, reaching elites before it appealed to a mass electorate. Lionel Curtis and Philip Kerr worked full-time on the project and took the leading roles. Curtis created local groups in Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand to which he recruited young men from banking, business, the law, and academic life to discuss the future of the empire. The Round Table groups, as they were called, also exchanged news through a new journal of imperial and international affairs, *The Round Table*, that Kerr edited.¹¹ The Dominion groups began to debate a memorandum on the imperial situation that Curtis wrote and circulated, urging federal union as the equitable way to share the burden of a common defense. In a series of articles for *The Round Table*, Kerr argued that only through closer ties could the self-governing parts of the empire be secure against rival great powers. The founders in London formed an editorial and policy-making committee that they nicknamed the "Moot," which Lord Milner and (on his return) Lord Selborne also attended.¹²

Although focused on professional groups, the Moot also saw working people at home as part of their audience. Several of Milner's young men had served in Toynbee Hall and other settlement houses before going to South Africa, and in 1910, Milner became chairman of the supervisory board of Toynbee Hall.¹³ The Moot donated copies of *The*

¹¹ For the launching of the movement, see John Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*, 46-129; and Lavin, *From Empire to International Commonwealth*, 105-132. In addition to the Dominion groups, a small number of people in the United Kingdom also subscribed to *The Round Table* and participated in the movement's deliberations.

¹² The so-called "Green Memorandum" by Curtis is in Box 156, Lionel Curtis Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford. For Kerr's early articles, see "Foreign Affairs: Anglo-German Rivalry," *The Round Table* 1:1 (November 1910), 7-40; "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance," *The Round Table* 1:2 (February 1911), 105-149; and "The New Problem of Imperial Defence," *The Round Table* 1:3 (May 1911), 231-262.

¹³ Two members, Patrick Duncan and Richard Feetham, had served in Toynbee Hall, and Curtis served in a mission sponsored by his public school, Haileybury. See their entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). For Milner, see Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, 154.

Round Table to the Workers Educational Association (WEA), a movement founded at Toynbee Hall in 1903 that brought university-level classes to working men and women around the country. The Moot encouraged local Round Table groups to create or support WEA branches in their Dominions.¹⁴ Involvement with working-class education did not draw Milner or the Moot back into social service, nor did any workers belong to the Moot or to the Round Table movement. But in addressing the same arguments to professionals and to workers, and in thus seeing a need for both groups to deliberate on the same intellectual level, the Round Table founders tried to make their campaign more inclusive.

The Round Table goal reflected the political philosophy of Thomas Hill Green. Kerr and his friends called for an ideal of democratic citizenship defined in terms of individual rights coupled with a sense of duty to the community, which they contrasted to autocratic subordination and self-seeking individualism. The group called its idea of citizenship the “principle of the commonwealth” and the innovation of the Round Table Moot was to extend the idea from domestic society to the empire as a whole. To be true to it, in their view, the British Empire needed to give its citizens at home and in the self-governing colonies equal participation in a government of the whole. The citizens in turn owed this government their primary allegiance.¹⁵

Four difficulties, however, beset the Round Table movement. The first was the absence of the United States of America. Kerr and his friends

¹⁴ With public and privately raised funds, the WEA paid tutors to give small classes to working men and women in university subjects. These did not earn degree credit but required written work to a university standard. See Mary Stocks, *The Workers Educational Association: The First Fifty Years* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953); and Roger Fieldhouse, *The Workers Educational Association: Aims and Achievements 1902-1977* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 1977). For Round Table endorsement of the movement, see “Education and the Working Class,” *The Round Table* 4:14 (March 1914), 255-279. For later Round Table donations to the WEA, see the circulation note, September 1930, Box 127, Robert Henry Brand Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford. For Round Table encouragement of WEA work in the Dominions, see Lionel Curtis to Richard Feetham, 17 April 1914, cited in Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*, 182. See also Edward Kylic, “The Workers Educational Association,” *University Magazine* [Montreal] 12:4 (December 1913), 665-672; and Foster, *High Hopes*, 55-56.

¹⁵ For the “principle of the commonwealth,” see Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*, 171-174. For statements of the principle, see “The Ethics of Empire,” *The Round Table* 3:11 (June 1913), 484-501; and [Philip Kerr], “The Principle of Peace,” *The Round Table* 6:3 (June 1916), 391-429.

wanted to achieve a federal union patterned after the American one.¹⁶ But in the early twentieth century, the four Dominions only added about a quarter to the population and industry of the United Kingdom. The Moot expected the Dominions to grow rapidly and eventually dominate an imperial federation. In the early years, though, only partnership with America would have given an Anglo-Dominion group the weight to prevail against its likely adversaries. Closer ties may have been a possibility that Kerr tried to gauge on a visit to the United States in 1912, where he met former President Theodore Roosevelt on Long Island and some younger progressives in the federal capital, Washington. But Roosevelt lost his third-party campaign for President that autumn, and the younger Americans do not seem to have had an interest in foreign affairs.¹⁷

Another difficulty arose from the Moot's decision to remain neutral on contentious economic matters, such as trade policy. In 1903, Joseph Chamberlain had left the Unionist government to campaign for imperial preference, a system of tariffs by which Britain and the Dominions would prefer each other's trade to that of other countries. The Liberals won the election of 1906 in part by campaigning to prevent such "food taxes" against imported American grain. Although Milner favored preference, to sidestep the controversy he and the Moot limited the Round Table aim to imperial political union.¹⁸ A tariff would have also antagonized the United States, although this danger does not seem to have been a factor in the Round Table position. But the Moot's neutrality on trade alienated pro-

¹⁶ The British businessman Frederick Scott Oliver called on Kerr's generation to federate the British Empire in the way that Hamilton and American federalists had united the American states in the 1780s. See F. S. Oliver, *Alexander Hamilton: An Essay on American Union* (London: A. Constable, 1906). Oliver's book helped inspire Kerr and his friends to unite South Africa and aim for a union of the entire self-governing empire. See Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, 125-129. Oliver joined the Moot in its early years.

¹⁷ There seems to be no record of the content of Kerr's discussions with Americans in 1912. See Billington, *Lothian*, 24-25. Kerr met with Theodore Roosevelt in Oyster Bay, New York. For Roosevelt's attitude to Britain, see Max Beloff, "Theodore Roosevelt and the British Empire," in *The Great Powers: Essays in Twentieth Century Politics* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1959), 215-232. Kerr also met the circle of younger progressives in Washington around Robert Grosvenor Valentine. A former settlement house volunteer, Valentine served as President William Howard Taft's Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1909 until the fall of 1912, when he resigned to support Roosevelt's third-party presidential campaign. See Valentine's entry in the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: J. T. White, 1898-).

¹⁸ For the Round Table position on tariffs, see "The Unionists and the Food Taxes," *The Round Table* 3:10 (March 1913), 232-276.

tariff Unionists and, more deeply, expressed a sense that the British economy could be taken for granted.¹⁹

The dependent empire posed a third problem. A movement to federate the empire would have had to resolve the position of British dependencies, especially India, whose 300 million people formed three-quarters of the empire's population. In a memorandum to the Moot, Kerr argued for limited representation of India in an imperial federation, but Milner and the others wanted to confine a union to Britain and the white Dominions.²⁰ The Moot resolved in 1912 to leave India out of a federation but otherwise to grant it full autonomy someday as a Dominion.²¹ This was a radical idea for anyone in Britain to advocate before 1914. But Kerr and his friends could not envision Dominion status for India anytime soon and they did not press for immediate reform.

Finally, and most seriously of all, the Dominions themselves resisted closer constitutional ties to the United Kingdom. Through *The Round Table* and the local groups, Dominion members learned about the wider world and began to realize that their countries would need to take more responsibility for their foreign relations and defense. But they disagreed over whether the threat to the empire in the Atlantic took priority.²² More deeply, the London group's insistence on either closer union or breakup misjudged sentiment in the Dominions, which at the time wanted neither. As a result, the movement stalled in 1912. The Moot's methods also did not help matters. Although Curtis recruited the Dominion groups on the premise that the movement was open-ended in its aim, some subscribers correctly saw the process of debating a call for union as an attempt to guide local opinion toward a predetermined end.²³

¹⁹ Leopold Amery believed that its neutrality on tariff reform isolated the Moot from needed political support. See L. S. Amery, *My Political Life*, 3 vols. (London: Hutchinson, 1953-1955), Vol. 1, *England Before the Storm, 1896-1914*, 270. The writer Richard Jebb attacked the Round Table goal of political union and called instead for a military and economic alliance with the Dominions as independent nations in his book, *The Britannic Question: A Survey of Alternatives* (London: Longmans, 1913).

²⁰ For Round Table deliberations on India, see DeWitt Clinton Ellinwood, "The Round Table and India, 1909-1920," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 9:3 (November 1971), 183-209, especially 186-189.

²¹ [Philip Kerr], "India and the Empire," *The Round Table* 2:8 (September 1912), 587-626.

²² Australia and New Zealand objected to the concentration of the British fleet in home waters to meet the German naval challenge. See "Naval Policy and the Pacific Question," *The Round Table* 4:15 (June 1914), 391-462.

²³ For the dissenting views in the Dominion groups, see the volume of responses to the Green Memorandum collected in *Round Table Studies*, Box 156, Lionel Curtis Papers. The Canadian dissent is on pp. 399-436 and the Australian is on pp. 480-483. See also (continued)

Controversy over Ireland then pulled the Moot disastrously into United Kingdom politics. In June 1912 the Liberal government headed by Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith introduced an Irish home rule bill that Ulster Protestants pledged to resist by force. Opposing Irish separation, Milner circulated a petition in Great Britain in the spring of 1914 whose signers also pledged forcibly to resist the British government, if home rule came to Ireland as a whole before a referendum was held on the measure in the United Kingdom as a whole. Kerr had gone on leave in early 1913 to recover from a nervous breakdown and did not participate in the Irish controversy.²⁴ But some Moot members joined Milner, while others tried to head off a confrontation by pressing for a four-way devolution of power to England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.²⁵ The Liberal government depended for its majority on Irish Catholic members of parliament, however, and the government pressed ahead with a separate Irish bill. With funds secretly raised by Milner, Ulster Protestants smuggled German rifles into Ireland in April 1914.²⁶ Milner's original goal of building a stronger imperial state, primarily to defend against Germany, thus ended in preparations for a

Christopher R. J. Rickerd, "Canada, the Round Table, and Imperial Federation," and Alex May, "The London 'Moot,' Dominion Nationalism, and Imperial Federation," in Bosco and May, eds., *The Round Table: The Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy*, 191-221, 223-233; and Leonie Foster, "The Australian Round Table, the Moot, and Australian Nationalism," *The Round Table* 72:288 (October 1983), 473-484. For the views of two Canadians suspicious of Round Table motives, see Rodolphe Lemieux to George M. Wrong, 29 August 1913, B2003-0005/003 (Lemieux), and John W. Dafoe to George M. Wrong, 16 October 1916, B2003-0005/002 (Dafoe), George M. Wrong Papers, University of Toronto Archives, Toronto. For the growing sense of separate nationhood in the Dominions, see John Eddy and Deryck Schreuder, eds., *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism: Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa First Assert Their Nationalities 1880-1914* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1988).

²⁴ On Milner's activity in 1912-1914, see Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, 172-222; and Billington, *Lothian*, 30-37. Milner named his petition and movement the "British Covenant." For Kerr's breakdown, see Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 49-55.

²⁵ Amery took an executive role and Lionel Hitchens joined the general council of the British Covenant movement. For its leadership, see Walter Long, *Memories* (New York: E. P. Dutton, [1923]), 200-205. Curtis and other Moot members tried to persuade Unionist and Liberal leaders to agree to a four-way devolution of power to England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. See Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*, 130-155. Four-way devolution would have denied a separate status to Ireland that the Moot saw as a step toward independence.

²⁶ For Milner's role in funding the Ulster Volunteers, see A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis* (London: Faber, 1967), 130-140. The Moot as a group began to express doubts about the wisdom of threatening civil war in "The Irish Crisis," *The Round Table* 4:14 (March 1914), 201-230. It appears, however, that Curtis and the others were prepared to cast their lot with Milner if civil conflict broke out. See Lavin, *From Empire to International Commonwealth*, 120-124.

revolt at home using German arms to overthrow the British state. The outbreak of the First World War in August may have prevented an armed uprising in the United Kingdom. The Asquith government suspended the Irish bill until hostilities ended.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND AFTER

With the outbreak of war, Kerr resumed his editorship of *The Round Table*, and in a series of new articles he depicted the war as a struggle of liberty against tyranny.²⁷ Mounting casualties on the western front eventually enabled Unionists and dissident Liberals led by David Lloyd George to topple Asquith in December 1916. Lord Milner joined a new five-member War Cabinet and installed several of his younger men on the staffs of that body and the prime minister's own office. Kerr left his editorship to join the latter and became Lloyd George's principal assistant for foreign and imperial affairs. Kerr kept the Prime Minister informed of events and also drafted war aims statements and gave advice.²⁸ Instead, however, of enabling Kerr and his friends to fulfill their goals, proximity to power only ratified their defeat.

The War Cabinet brought the German submarine menace under control by moving vital supply ships in convoys, but a new offensive on the western front in the summer and fall gained little new ground.²⁹ In April 1917, Milner and his men bowed to necessity when Dominion leaders secured, in Resolution IX of the Imperial War Conference, language affirming their *de facto* independence at war's end.³⁰ Kerr and his friends

²⁷ See [Philip Kerr], "The War in Europe," *The Round Table* 4:16 (September 1914), 591-615; "The Foundations of Peace," *The Round Table* 5:19 (June 1915), 589-625; "The End of War," *The Round Table* 5:20 (September 1915), 772-796; and "The War for Public Right," *The Round Table* 6:22 (March 1916), 193-231.

²⁸ For the coming to power of Milner, see P. A. Lockwood, "Milner's Entry into the War Cabinet, December 1916," *Historical Journal* 7:1 (March 1964), 120-134. For the work of the Prime Minister's secretaries, see John Turner, *Lloyd George's Secretariat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). For Kerr's service, see John Turner and Michael Dockrill, "Philip Kerr at 10 Downing Street, 1916-1921," in Turner, ed., *The Larger Idea*, 33-61. On Kerr's wartime activity, see also Billington, *Lothian*, 45-54.

²⁹ See John Terraine, *Business in Great Waters: The U-Boat Wars 1916-1945* (London: Leo Cooper, 1989), 3-84; and David French, *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition, 1916-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 94-123.

³⁰ For the resolution on the Dominions, see *Parliamentary Papers (Commons)*, 1917-18, Vol. 23, Cmd. 8566, "Imperial War Conference, 1917," 5. For the Round Table's acquiescence, see "New Developments in the Constitution of the Empire," *The Round Table* 7:27 (June 1917), 441-459. The Moot had tried over the preceding year to launch a public (continued)

helped craft a reform of Indian government that became law in 1919, giving some power at the provincial level to a small Indian electorate.³¹ Kerr also served as a contact for the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann and helped win War Cabinet backing for a Jewish home in Palestine.³² The India reform did not go far enough to meet Indian demands, however, and British promises to Arabs could not be reconciled with those to Jews. With the public nearing exhaustion in 1917-1918, Philip Kerr urged the Prime Minister to lay increasing stress on the war as a moral struggle.³³ But Kerr carried out a secret mission to Switzerland in March 1918 to explore an expedient peace with Austria-Hungary, which the latter declined.³⁴

Kerr attended the Paris peace conference in 1919 with the British delegation, where he proposed to Lloyd George that nations form a permanent conference after the war to consult one another with no binding obligations. In the peace treaty with Germany, however, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson wanted and obtained clauses to found a League of Nations with powers to enforce peace.³⁵ In February, Kerr helped block an attempt by Winston Churchill to commit Britain to military intervention in revolutionary Russia on the anti-Bolshevik side. But with Lloyd George's

movement for federation by publishing their case as a short book by Lionel Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (New York: Macmillan, 1916). The Canadian Round Table leaders objected and the Moot agreed to decide after the war whether the Round Table groups should continue for discussion only or to seek political change. See Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*, 181-223.

³¹ For Kerr's role in India reform during the war, see again Ellinwood, "The Round Table and India, 1909-1920," 183-209, especially 190-202.

³² On the role of Kerr and others in the British pledge of a Jewish home in Palestine, see Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), 314-322, 344-349. See also Chaim Weizmann to Kerr, 16 September and 7 October 1917, folios 96-99, 102-105, GD 40/17/42/96-99, 102-105, Papers of the Eleventh Marquess of Lothian, National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh [hereafter Lothian Papers].

³³ For Kerr's advice to stress the moral character of the war, see Kerr, "Notes for speech on peace," no date but indexed 26 June 1917, copy, GD 40/17/640, Lothian Papers. Lloyd George stressed this theme in a speech in Glasgow, reported in *The Times*, 30 June 1917, p. 7, col. 6. See also Kerr's advice for the Prime Minister's speech before the Trades Union Congress on 5 January 1918, in Kerr to Prime Minister, 30 December 1917, enclosing memorandum, F/89/1/12, Lloyd George Papers, House of Lords Record Office, London.

³⁴ For Kerr's mission to Switzerland, see Kerr, "Report on Mission to Switzerland," 19 March 1918, F/160/1/13, Lloyd George Papers. See also French, *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition 1916-1918*, 168-170.

³⁵ Kerr gave his views on postwar international organization in memoranda to Lloyd George, GD 40/17/54/31-35, Lothian Papers. See also George Egerton, "Imperialism, Atlanticism, and Internationalism: Philip Kerr and the League of Nations Question, 1916-1920," *Annals of the Lothian Foundation* 1 (1991), 95-122.

backing, Kerr privately encouraged an unsuccessful American peace feeler to Lenin that the Prime Minister had to deny when it leaked out in April.³⁶ Kerr drafted the Fontainebleau memorandum in March, in which Lloyd George urged more moderate terms on Germany. In June, however, Kerr wrote the covering letter to the reply of the Allies to the objections of the German delegation to the peace treaty, in which Kerr condemned Germany for the war and defended harsher terms.³⁷ He watched in the autumn as the U.S. Senate rejected the treaty with Germany, mainly over Wilson's League, ending Kerr's hope of a postwar partnership of the British Empire with the United States.³⁸

Although unwilling to plunge into Russia, Kerr urged Lloyd George to cling to a postwar imperial position that was no more tenable. Kerr's response to the postwar Catholic insurgency in Ireland was to compare it to the Confederate secession, and he resisted Irish separation almost to the end.³⁹ Unable to see any reason to give Turkey moderate peace terms after the wartime deaths of Armenians, Kerr backed the hard line favored by Lloyd George but not by the British Foreign Office. Kerr's last important service to the prime minister was to be a secret intermediary to the Greeks, urging them to continue a disastrous war with Turkish

³⁶ On Kerr's role in policy toward Russia, see Billington, *Lothian*, 58-59.

³⁷ For the Fontainebleau memorandum, see *Parliamentary Papers (Commons)*, 1922, Vol. 23, Cmd. 1614, "Memorandum circulated by the Prime Minister on March 25th, 1919." For Kerr's authorship, see Lloyd George to Kerr, 25 March 1919, enclosing draft with amendments, GD 40/17/61/90-122, Lothian Papers. For the covering letter, see President Clemenceau to Count Brockdorf-Rantzau, 16 June 1919, *Parliamentary Papers (Commons)*, 1919, Vol. 53, Cmd. 258, "Reply to the Observations of the German Delegation on the Conditions of Peace," 2-11. For Kerr's authorship of the letter, see H. W. V. Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, 6 vols. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1920-1924), 1:271.

³⁸ For Kerr's hope of Anglo-American partnership, see Kerr to Curtis, 15 October 1918, reprinted in *Annals of the Lothian Foundation* 1 (1991), 383-386. See also [Lionel Curtis], "Windows of Freedom," *The Round Table* 9:33 (December 1918), 1-47. For British reaction to the U.S. Senate's rejection of the treaty in November 1919, see [Philip Kerr], "The British Empire, the League of Nations, and the United States," *The Round Table* 10:38 (March 1920), 251-253; and George W. Egerton, "Britain and the 'Great Betrayal': Anglo-American Relations and the Struggle for United States Ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, 1919-1920," *The Historical Journal* 21:4 (December 1978), 885-911.

³⁹ See Kerr to Lloyd George, 2 September 1920, GD 40/17/1280, Lothian Papers. For his view of postwar Ireland, see Kerr to Edward Lascelles, 24 December 1920, copy, GD 40/17/214/124-125, Lothian Papers. See also [Philip Kerr], "The Irish Crisis," *The Round Table* 8:31 (June 1918), 496-525; and Gary Peatling, "The Last Defense of the Union? The Round Table and Ireland, 1910-1925," in Bosco and May, eds., *The Round Table, The Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy*, 283-305.

nationalists in 1920 while Lloyd George maintained in public and to his own foreign secretary that he favored peace.⁴⁰

After another nervous breakdown in the autumn of 1920, Kerr resigned the following spring, ending a decade that had brought him, as he later observed, “almost as close to the centre of world affairs as it was possible for a man to be.”⁴¹ In 1910, he and his friends had concluded that, to survive in a world of growing rivals, Britain had to form a more centralized imperial state. But the movement they launched to reform the empire ran aground, and in 1914 their mentor, Lord Milner, almost led an insurrection against the British government. Milner and his men vaulted to the top of that government two years later, only to discover that even supreme power had its limits.

Could Philip Kerr and his friends have devised a better strategy in 1909 for British survival? The Dominions rallied to Britain’s side in both world wars without having to be federated, and the Moot’s vision of a secure commonwealth was inadequate in the absence of American support. A Round Table movement with a more limited and above-board purpose might, however, have had more success, if not before the First World War, then immediately after it.

The late 1890s and early 1900s were a time of improving Anglo-American relations.⁴² A private Round Table movement that included the United States as well as the Dominions might have organized in the years before 1914 to exchange news and discuss world problems without a political agenda. American and Dominion elites might then have developed a more common outlook on the world (and greater clarity about matters in which their needs and interests diverged) without being forced to make divisive constitutional or foreign policy choices. It is doubtful that such a movement could have brought the United States into the First World War sooner; but after America’s entry, the movement might have debated a postwar form of world organization resembling the consultative gatherings

⁴⁰ Kerr to Prime Minister, 7 April 1920, enclosing memorandum, F/90/1/4, Lloyd George Papers. For Kerr’s role as a secret intermediary, see Lord Curzon, “Memorandum on some aspects of my tenure of the Foreign Office,” November 1924, Curzon Papers, Mss. Eur. F 112/319, Asia, Pacific, and Africa Collections, British Library, London. See also Karl G. Larew, “Great Britain and the Greco-Turkish War,” *The Historian* 35:2 (February 1973), 256-270.

⁴¹ Kerr, “The Mechanical Reason for War,” in Lionel Curtis and Philip Kerr, *The Prevention of War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1923), 8.

⁴² See Bradford Perkins, *The Great Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1895-1914* (New York: Atheneum, 1968).

that Britain had held at intervals with its self-governing colonies since 1887. An idea similar to Kerr's 1919 proposal for a permanent postwar conference might then have received more careful consideration on the American side, and if part of the peace treaty, might have met with Senate approval.⁴³

The Round Table movement faded after 1919, although the Moot continued to publish *The Round Table* in the interwar years with the help of a few surviving members in the Dominions.⁴⁴ Lord Milner retired in 1921 and died four years later, still convinced that imperial federation was the highest end toward which Britain and the Dominions could aspire.⁴⁵ Philip Kerr realized that his country would need to belong to a larger world community that included the United States of America.

THE POLITICAL PILGRIM

The two late Victorian responses to British decline took new form in the three decades after 1920. Many settlement workers realized after 1900 that their local efforts were not enough to relieve poverty, and in later life these people achieved broader social reforms, designing the American social security system in 1935 and the British welfare state of the late 1940s.⁴⁶ Imperial federalism ceased after 1920 but Round Table alumni, in conjunction with returning members of the American delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, created a network of new institutes to study and

⁴³ George Egerton notes what the world lost in not following Kerr's alternative. Egerton, "Imperialism, Atlanticism, and Internationalism: Philip Kerr and the League of Nations Question, 1916-1920," *Annals of the Lothian Foundation* 1 (1991), 119. On the colonial meetings, see John Edward Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences, 1887-1911: A Study in Imperial Organization* (London: Longmans, 1967). A majority in the U.S. Senate would have accepted more moderate terms. See Herbert F. Margulies, *The Mild Reservationists and the League of Nations Controversy in the Senate* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989).

⁴⁴ For the aftermath of the Round Table movement, see Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*, 260-300. Most of the groups disbanded, leaving a handful of members to supply a chronicle article from each Dominion for the journal and to discuss occasional memoranda on Commonwealth matters. These groups eventually dissolved. The Moot has continued, however, with new members drawn from the Commonwealth and the United States. The Moot has a website at: <http://www.moot.org.uk/> (retrieved January 2009).

⁴⁵ For Milner's "Credo" of Anglo-Saxonism, published after his death, see Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, 128-132.

⁴⁶ For the role of former settlement workers in the creation of the American and British welfare states, see George Martin, *Madam Secretary: Frances Perkins* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), 58-64, 341-356; and José Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 74-97, 365-450.

influence international relations. The two flagships of this network were the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, known as Chatham House, and the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. Where the original settlement houses had tried to educate and uplift the poor, the new institutes functioned as settlement houses to the powerful and tried to educate elites to take responsibility for a wider liberal-democratic civilization. The Council on Foreign Relations helped plan the foreign policy of the United States after the Second World War. Where the welfare states of the 1930s and 1940s aimed to strengthen domestic inclusion, the post-1945 Western alliance system tried to strengthen cohesion between the recovering liberal powers.⁴⁷

During the interwar years, however, the post-1945 world was barely imaginable. The Round Table movement had only linked and modified the two kinds of late Victorian activism in a limited and tentative way. With the Round Table failure, welfare reform and internationalism returned to their largely separate worlds to await the crises of the 1930s and 1940s that finally brought them to realization. During the interwar years, Philip Kerr lectured on occasion at Toynbee Hall and participated in discussions at Chatham House.⁴⁸ But his bridging of the two worlds was unusual and his involvement with such institutions was incidental to a more individual mission to address what he believed to be the deeper needs of his country and his time.

Kerr spent part of the early 1920s in the United States, living with American families of the Christian Science church, to which he had converted in 1914. His new faith gave him a sense of belonging to the Protestant tradition with which he identified the growth of liberty and

⁴⁷ On the institutes, see 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); and Whitney H. Shepardson, *Early History of the Council on Foreign Relations* (Stamford, CT: Overbrook Press, 1960). For the influence of the latter on U.S. foreign policy, see Robert D. Schulzinger, *The Wise Men of Foreign Affairs: The History of the Council on Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984). The Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Institutes of International Affairs were founded in 1928, 1933, and 1934 respectively.

⁴⁸ For Kerr's association with Toynbee Hall in the 1920s, see Briggs and Macartney, *Toynbee Hall*, 106, 109. In 1928-1930, Kerr chaired a working group at Chatham House that tried to improve Anglo-American relations with a counterpart group in the Council on Foreign Relations. See Priscilla Roberts, "Underpinning the Anglo-American Alliance: The Council on Foreign Relations and Britain between the Wars," in *Twentieth Century Anglo-American Relations*, ed. Jonathan Hollowell (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 25-43.

democratic government. Although it took no position on matters of policy, in its doctrine that evil and suffering were states of mind, Christian Science encouraged in Kerr the belief that he could heal not only his own body through faithful effort but also seemingly hard differences in the world. He felt himself now to be on a more personal quest, as an anonymous column that he began to write in 1925 for the *Christian Science Monitor*, “Diary of a Political Pilgrim,” made clear.⁴⁹

Kerr began to realize during the war that a tension between liberty and tyranny was not, as he had originally thought, the deeper problem of world order. In lectures to a summer institute at Williams College in Massachusetts in 1922, he declared that the true cause of war was the division of the world into sovereign nation-states. Peace would be achieved only with a democratic world government similar to the American Union. Until then, the United States and the British Commonwealth needed to work together to keep the peace. Although he believed in the need for Britain and America to anchor the liberal world, Kerr was unusual in seeing Anglo-American cooperation as a means to the end of a world state and not simply as a way to preserve the dominance of the advanced English-speaking nations.⁵⁰

Kerr became secretary to the Rhodes Trustees in 1925. In this capacity, he administered the Rhodes Scholarships, which aimed to educate future leaders in the English-speaking world.⁵¹ Kerr helped support the

⁴⁹ For Kerr’s conversion to Christian Science, see Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 85-101; and Christopher Sykes, *Nancy: The Life of Lady Astor* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 138-144. For Kerr’s view of his faith as a healing influence in the world, see The Marquess of Lothian, “Christian Science, Public Affairs, and the Christian Science Monitor,” *The Christian Science Journal* 52:10 (1935), 508-511. On Kerr’s authorship of his column, see Erwin D. Canham, *Commitment to Freedom: The Story of the Christian Science Monitor* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958), 204.

⁵⁰ For his wartime view, see [Philip Kerr], “The End of War,” *The Round Table* 5:20 (September 1915), 772-796. For his lectures at Williams College, see Philip Kerr, “The Mechanical Reason for War,” “The Psychological Reason for War,” and “The Only Road to International Peace,” in Curtis and Kerr, *The Prevention of War*, 7-74.

⁵¹ On Kerr’s appointment and service as Rhodes secretary, see Anthony Kenny, “The Rhodes Trust and its Administration,” in *The History of the Rhodes Trust 1902-1999*, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 25-39. Lord Milner joined the Rhodes Trustees on his return from South Africa and Rhodes funds helped underwrite the Round Table movement until about 1920. After the war, Moot members cycled in and out of the Rhodes Trust. Geoffrey Dawson succeeded George Parkin as secretary to the Trustees in 1919. Sir Edward Grigg replaced Philip Kerr as secretary to Lloyd George in 1921 and replaced Dawson as Rhodes secretary in 1922, when Dawson resumed his editorship of *The Times* (begun in 1912 and interrupted in 1919). Upon Grigg’s appointment as Governor of (continued)

delicate task of a reform, led by Americans, to make nominations from the United States more selective. His Rhodes work continued afterwards to take him annually to the United States, where he developed contacts all over the country and gave talks on world affairs.⁵² Kerr tried privately to mediate the Anglo-American naval dispute of 1927-1929. Although neither government took up his own ideas, in articles and private meetings he helped each side understand the other's official position and he earned American gratitude.⁵³

Kerr's interest in cooperation did not extend to closer ties with the continent of Europe. He opposed any commitments to eastern Europe beyond those associated with British membership in the League of Nations, and he only reluctantly agreed to endorse the British pledge at Locarno in 1925 to defend the mutual borders of France, Belgium, Germany. Alarmed by the resolve of the French to collect postwar reparations, he came to believe that restoring Germany to military parity with France was a prerequisite for lasting peace. The war, he believed, had been fought not to establish the dominance of one group of nations over another, but to defeat a temporary act of aggression. For one side to maintain permanent domination of the other was unconscionable.⁵⁴ Kerr never asked if the Germans had abandoned the goal of avenging their wartime defeat; he saw only French determination to keep the Germans down.

As part of his Rhodes work, Kerr also traveled to South Africa, where he was troubled by the erosion of black African rights under the

Kenya in 1925, Kerr became Rhodes secretary. See the entries for these men in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁵² On the American reform, see David Alexander, "The American Scholarships," in Kenny, ed., *The History of the Rhodes Trust 1902-1999*, 127-140; and Billington, *Lothian*, 80-85. For an itinerary of his speaking engagements on a typical trip, see Philip Kerr, "Report to the Trustees on Visit to Canada and the United States in 1927," 24 January 1928, file 2657, Rhodes Trust Files, Rhodes House, Oxford.

⁵³ On Kerr's private efforts to mediate Anglo-American tensions, see Billington, *Lothian*, 91-97. For American appreciation of Kerr's role, see Christian A. Herter to Kerr, 5 April 1928, GD 40/17/228/244, and Frank B. Kellogg to Kerr, 19 June 1928, GD 40/17/231/565/567, Lothian Papers. Kellogg served as U.S. secretary of state in 1925-1929; Herter was secretary of state in 1959-1961. For the centrality of Anglo-American relations in Kerr's life and thought, see Priscilla Roberts, "Lord Lothian and the Atlantic World," *The Historian* 66:1 (April 2004), 97-127.

⁵⁴ For Kerr's skeptical view of Europe, see [Philip Kerr], "Europe, the Covenant and the Protocol," *The Round Table* 5:58 (March 1925), 219-241. Kerr shared the hostile British reaction to the French occupation of the Ruhr, described in David Williamson, "Great Britain and the Ruhr Crisis, 1923-1924," *British Journal of International Studies* 3:1 (April 1977), 70-91.

Union that he and his friends had helped to create two decades earlier. Conservatives in Britain pressed in the 1920s for the creation of a new white settler Dominion in the British territories of Kenya, Tanganyika, and Uganda to the north. Kerr believed that white settlement of Africa was advantageous to the development of the continent and he did not challenge white minority rule in South Africa. But in 1927 he urged London to represent Africans as well as settlers on legislative councils in the British colonies north of the Zambezi River. His suggestion made no headway but neither did plans for a new white Dominion.⁵⁵

Kerr tried to find a middle way through economic problems at home. He saw the tariffs that Conservatives continued to seek and the nationalization favored by the new Labour Party as attempts to save declining technologies from necessary modernization. In a private exchange with John Maynard Keynes, who was beginning to argue that private economic activity could be managed in new ways by government policy, Kerr argued instead that the private sector itself needed to change, with labor and capital working as partners rather than as adversaries. An idea similar to Kerr's took hold in Scandinavia (independently of his ideas). But in the English-speaking world, where labor and management were less organized, Keynes had greater appeal.⁵⁶

In March 1930, Philip Kerr became the eleventh Marquess of Lothian, inheriting not just a title but substantial wealth, which won him new social prominence, as well as a seat in the House of Lords. He remained Rhodes secretary until 1939 and continued to write articles for *The Round Table*. He also wrote letters and opinion pieces for several newspapers, including *The Times*, to which he had privileged access through its editor Geoffrey Dawson, a fellow Round Table Moot member.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ On Kerr's anxiety over race relations in South Africa, see Kerr to Patrick Duncan, 13 April 1926, copy, GD 40/17/222/130-131, Lothian Papers. He gave his thoughts about British Africa to the Rhodes Trustees in Kerr, "The African Highlands," 25 February 1927, copy, GD 40/17/83/4-23, Lothian Papers. Copy in Box "Dr. Rendall's and Other Reports," Rhodes Trust Files. Kerr published his views in [Philip Kerr], "The New Problem of Africa," *The Round Table* 17:67 (June 1927), 447-472.

⁵⁶ For Kerr's views on the British economy and industrial relations, see Kerr, *The Industrial Dilemma*, The New Way Series, No. 14 (London: Daily News, 1926). For his exchange with Keynes, see Kerr to John Maynard Keynes, 25 August 1927, copy, Keynes to Kerr, 31 August 1927, and Kerr to Keynes, 2 September 1927, copy, GD 40/17/229/309-310, 320, and 330-333, Lothian Papers.

⁵⁷ For Lothian's inheritance, see Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 144-158. He succeeded to the title upon the death of a cousin. For Geoffrey Robinson (Dawson after 1917), see again his entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

In his writings on public affairs, Lothian continued to urge a moderate course for British policy at home, in the empire, and abroad. Unfortunately, the 1930s were anything but a decade of moderation.

Lothian joined other Liberals in calling for new spending on public infrastructure to address the deepening Depression after 1929. While also urging the modernization of private industry, he saw no contradictions in adding labor-saving capacity at a time of high unemployment. In 1933, he argued that nationalism was the obstacle to economic recovery. He did not recognize the extent to which economic nationalism was a response to saturated markets rather than the initial cause of the collapse.⁵⁸

Lothian's major concern in the early 1930s, though, was India. The British government began a review of the 1919 India Act in 1927, and after conferences with Indians in 1930-31, the government proposed that India receive self-rule at the provincial level and limited autonomy at the center. As under-secretary of state for India, an appointment he accepted in 1931, Lord Lothian chaired a committee of British and Indian notables that toured India in 1932 to devise a wider franchise. The panel recommended giving forty percent of men and ten percent of women the vote in provincial elections, leaving the smaller 1919 electorate of ten percent men and one percent women to choose a central legislature. Lothian supported the reservation of legislative seats for the principal minorities in each province.⁵⁹

The proposals disappointed many Indians, including members of Lothian's committee, while at home Winston Churchill, a former colonial secretary, attacked the provisions as a step toward dissolution of the British Empire.⁶⁰ But in the parliamentary debate that followed in London, Lothian played a crucial role retaining the support of Indian moderates, without whom the Conservative government could not have passed the India Act of

⁵⁸ See David Lloyd George; The Marquess of Lothian; and B. Seebohm Rowntree, *How to Tackle Unemployment* (London: Press Printers Ltd., 1930); and The Marquess of Lothian, *Liberalism in the Modern World* (London: Lovat Dickson, 1933).

⁵⁹ For Lothian's work on 1930s India reform, see Gerard Douds, "Lothian and the Indian Federation," in Turner, ed., *The Larger Idea*, 62-76. For the work of Lothian's committee and the subsequent decision on Indian representation, see *Parliamentary Papers (Commons)*, 1931-32, Vol. 8, Cmd. 4086, "Report of the Indian Franchise Committee," and Cmd. 4147, "Communal Decision."

⁶⁰ For the dissents by Indian members of Lothian's committee, see Cmd. 4086, 197-199, 206-220, 221-246. Dawson lauded the committee's report in *The Times*, 3 May 1932, p. 15, col. 2. For Churchill's criticism of Lothian and Dawson, see his speech to the Carlton Club on 25 May 1932, in Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill* (1966-1988), Vol. 5, Companion Volume, Part II, 434-436.

1935. Although no one foresaw the end of British rule in India that came in 1947, in correspondence with leading Indians Lothian privately defended the 1935 Act as an irreversible step toward Dominion status. After the 1931 Statute of Westminster, such status meant independence.⁶¹

After 1933, Lothian's attention focused on the increasingly dangerous international situation. The new administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt in the United States dashed Lothian's hope that America might cancel Allied war debts, and Britain's default in 1934 led the U.S. Congress to prohibit future loans for war purchases.⁶² To avoid antagonizing the United States and Canada, Britain had allowed its prewar alliance with Japan to lapse in 1922. In 1934 Lothian and the Moot helped publicize an attempt by the British Foreign Office to explore new ties to Japan, forcing the British government to back down to avoid incurring the hostility of Washington.⁶³ In a private meeting with President Roosevelt, however, Lothian was unable to interest him in a more formal Anglo-American partnership to contain Japan.⁶⁴

The coming to power of Adolf Hitler in Germany in 1933 alarmed Lothian.⁶⁵ But he blamed the Nazi takeover of Germany primarily on its postwar treatment by the Allies. He believed that ending the restrictions on German military power would moderate the extremism of the new regime.⁶⁶ In January 1935, Lothian visited Hitler in Berlin and returned proclaiming the Führer's peaceful intentions, and he approved the German annexation of the Rhineland in March 1936.⁶⁷ In 1914, to uphold Ulster's right to

⁶¹ See Lothian to M. R. Jayakar, 14 September 1934, copy, GD 40/17/174/326-330; Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to Lothian, 3 April 1934, GD 40/17/174/273-275; and Lothian to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, 16 November 1934, copy, GD 40/17/286/673-677, Lothian Papers.

⁶² For his hopes, see [Lord Lothian], "The Opportunity at Washington," *The Round Table* 23:90 (March 1933), 270-285.

⁶³ See D. C. Watt, "Britain, the United States and Japan in 1934," in *Personalities and Policies: Studies in the Formulation of British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1965), 83-99.

⁶⁴ See Lothian, "Interview with the President," 11 October 1934, copy, GD 40/17/285/576-579, Lothian Papers. Lothian's meeting on October 10 is noted in the White House Stenographer's Diary, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, NY.

⁶⁵ See [Lord Lothian], "The Recoil from Freedom," *The Round Table* 23:91 (June 1933), 477-496.

⁶⁶ See Lothian, letter to *The Times*, 15 November 1933, p. 10, col. 4. See also [Lord Lothian], "The Future of the League," *The Round Table* 24:94 (December 1933), 1-13.

⁶⁷ For the transcript of Lothian's interview with Hitler, see Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 330-337. The original is in GD 40/17/201/73-84, Lothian Papers. For Lothian's public statements on his return, see his articles in *The Times*, 31 January and 1 February 1935, appearing both days on p. 15, col. 6. In an address the following year to the Anglo-German Fellowship in (continued)

remain British, Lord Milner had obtained German arms to threaten the British state; in the 1930s, to restore what he believed to be their right to national equality, Lothian endorsed German efforts to rearm themselves and remilitarize their borders.

Although Lothian's appeasement rested on wishful thinking, he tried to give it a strategic aspect. He had come to believe in the 1920s that France and Germany would never be at peace until they came to an understanding as equals. To this idea he added an American angle. The United States wanted no part of any future war in Europe but Lothian believed that America might be open to a maritime alliance with Great Britain, if the latter limited its commitment in Europe to the defense of Belgium and France. He appears to have been unique in making influence on the United States a motive for trying to conciliate Nazi Germany. The United States showed no interest, though, in jettisoning its isolation, and Lothian did not explain how Britain could stay out of a war between Germany and an eastern neighbor that drew France into the conflict. He discounted the threat to neighboring countries that a rearmed Germany would pose if Hitler was not content to coexist with them.⁶⁸

The deeper motive for Lothian's appeasement, though, was not strategic but moral. In attempting to moderate Germany, he took the Round Table logic of his youth to a grim conclusion. The "principle of the commonwealth" that underpinned his earlier imperial federalism held that individual liberty and obligation to a community were each necessary to the other. The problem with this idea as a basis for world order was that it could work only with peoples who felt a common sense of belonging. None of the peoples to whom Lothian offered greater equality in a British or Anglo-American world system wished to make the reciprocal commitments that Lothian expected in return. Philip Kerr and his friends gave self-government to the white Afrikaners in South Africa without truly winning them over to the British Empire. Canada and the other Dominions resisted federation with the United Kingdom, and Catholic Ireland fought a war for its independence. The United States rejected partnership after the First

London, Lothian approved Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland and his other violations of the Treaty of Versailles, although he criticized the Nazi regime for its domestic conduct. See "Anglo-German Fellowship Dinner," 14 July 1936, GD 40/17/317/32-38, Lothian Papers.

⁶⁸ See again note 54, and [Lord Lothian], "The Foundation for Disarmament," *The Round Table* 23:89 (December 1932), 1-20. For his hope of drawing the United States out of isolation, see [Lord Lothian], "World Crisis," *The Round Table* 26:103 (June 1936), 443-460; and The Marquess of Lothian, "The World Crisis of 1936," *Foreign Affairs* 15:1 (October 1936), 124-140.

World War and India sought more complete self-government. Finally, Nazi Germany accepted British concessions only to turn against liberal civilization.

Lothian's failure was, first, to confuse the idea of community itself with the imperial and then liberal-world communities that he successively advocated, and then more disastrously, to apply the same policy to Hitler as to other nations. In so doing, he also affirmed an earlier unilateralism. In his youth, Kerr argued that Britain had a duty to bring change to the less developed world, if necessary by force.⁶⁹ In trying to conciliate local nationalism, he seemed to repudiate such imperialism. But in a deeper sense he continued to believe that his own country's actions were the relevant factors in how other countries changed. The resistance to Lothian's notions of community did not vitiate the principle of a more integrated world based on equality and consent. But in the 1930s, democratic principles were in grave danger and needed first to be defended.

Lothian visited Hitler again in May 1937 and found the Führer evasive about his intentions.⁷⁰ Over the following year, Lothian began to speak less of making amends and more of containment.⁷¹ He approved the Munich agreement in September 1938 but the Nazi pogrom against the Jews in November finally shattered his belief that appeasement was possible.⁷² On a second visit to Roosevelt in January 1939, he urged the president to take up Britain's burden of defending civilization, only to evoke a brusque response. But in the spring Roosevelt approved Lothian's appointment as the next British ambassador to the United States.⁷³ The new

⁶⁹ See P. H. Kerr, "Political Relations between Advanced and Backward Peoples," in A. J. Grant *et al.*, *An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1916), 141-182.

⁷⁰ For the transcript of his second meeting with Hitler, see Butler, *Lord Lothian*, 337-345. The original, and interviews with Hermann Goering and Hjalmar Schacht, are in GD 40/17/204/294-317, Lothian Papers.

⁷¹ See [Lord Lothian], "The Commonwealth and the Dictatorships," *The Round Table* 27:111 (June 1938), 435-452.

⁷² For his relief over Munich, see Lothian to Lady Cecil Kerr (his sister), 30 September 1938, GD 40/17/470/6, Lothian Papers. For his abandonment of appeasement, see Lothian, "Britain Awake!" *The Observer*, 20 November 1938, p. 16, col. 5.

⁷³ On his second meeting with Roosevelt, on 2 January 1939, see the White House Diary for that date and Roosevelt to Roger B. Merriman, 15 February 1939, copy, in file "Great Britain," Box 32, President's Safe File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, NY. For the president's assent to Lothian's appointment as ambassador, see David Reynolds, "FDR and the British: A Postscript," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Vol. 90 (1978), 106-110.

ambassador arrived in Washington at the start of September, just as the Second World War broke out.

Congress amended U.S. neutrality laws so that Britain could purchase munitions on a cash-and-carry basis. The Destroyers-Bases deal in the summer of 1940, at the height of a presidential election in which both candidates pledged to stay out of the war, was a tribute to Lothian's diplomacy, as was the groundwork he laid for the Lend-Lease program before he died at his embassy in December 1940. Just as his service under Lloyd George revealed the limits of Round Table power, so did his tenure in Washington reveal the limits of his personal influence. In public speeches and private meetings after the fall of France, Lothian could not persuade Americans to enter the war as a belligerent power. But his diplomacy helped Churchill and Roosevelt at a critical time, and the Anglo-American partnership that finally came a year after his death vindicated his nearly lifelong campaign to achieve it.⁷⁴

After 1921, Philip Kerr worked for a stronger form of English-speaking preponderance to replace the British maritime hegemony of the nineteenth century. But he also believed that an Anglo-American partnership someday had to evolve into an inclusive world state. To preserve an imperium of the few over the many, Lothian argued in 1934 in support of India reform, would sooner or later undermine liberty at home.⁷⁵ He also observed, in a 1935 criticism of the peace movement, that democratic liberty and the rule of law could not stop at national boundaries without forever being hostage to the balance of power between nations.⁷⁶

The world in his time, however, resisted being shaped to a universal purpose. Philip Kerr and the Round Table fellowship could not orchestrate world events, as they had set out in their youth to do (and came closer than most to doing). In the 1930s, the British concessions that Lothian backed may have prevented a more intense clash with Indian nationalism but helped precipitate an even greater conflict in Europe. The question about his legacy is whether he was also mistaken to believe that liberal civilization needed a federative purpose. America's foreign relations since 1945 may be seen in a different light if the United States could have

⁷⁴ On Lothian's embassy, see Reynolds, *Lord Lothian and Anglo-American Relations, 1939-40*, and the chapters in this volume by Greg Kennedy, J. Simon Rofe, and Gavin Bailey. For Lothian's private efforts to influence Americans, see Billington, *Lothian*, 144-154.

⁷⁵ See his warning in *Parliamentary Debates (Lords)*, 5th Series, Vol. 95, 12 December 1934, cols. 295-296.

⁷⁶ See The Marquess of Lothian, *Pacifism is Not Enough, Nor Patriotism Either* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935).

done more to build an integrated world community able to sustain itself without a single dominant national power.

LESSONS FOR THE UNITED STATES?

Unlike the British Empire, which Kerr and his friends tried to refashion into the nucleus of a universal state, the United States of America began in a declaration of universal principles, and by 1900 the country had become the world's most powerful industrial nation. But America did not seek to absorb the world into its union. After 1945, the United States became the center of a maritime sphere of liberal welfare states linked by new peacetime alliances. With the end of the Soviet threat in 1991 and the subsequent development of Asia, though, the United States began a relative decline that is unlikely to be reversed if the rest of the world continues to modernize.⁷⁷

Could America have averted this prospect by taking a different path earlier in the twentieth century? In March 1939, an American Rhodes Scholar, Clarence Streit, published *Union Now*, a book calling for the democracies of the North Atlantic to federate. With the help of Lionel Curtis and Philip Lothian, Streit launched a federalist movement in the last desperate months before World War II.⁷⁸ When the effort failed, the

⁷⁷ For a forecast of U.S. relative decline, see *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* (Washington, DC: National Intelligence Council, 2008). For a more optimistic view, see Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008). The analysis in Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987), may outlast the criticism that greeted its publication.

⁷⁸ See Clarence Streit, *Union Now: A Proposal for a Federal Union of the Democracies of the North Atlantic* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939). Streit included all of the British Dominions in his proposed union. Materials relating to his movement may be found in the Clarence Kirshman Streit Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. For the Moot's endorsement, see "Union Now," *The Round Table* 29:115 (June 1939), 476-488. Streit's Federal Union movement should not be confused with a separate British-based movement of the same name to unite only the democracies of western Europe that Lothian and Curtis also simultaneously backed. For this effort, see Sir Charles Kimber, "Federal Union," in *Britain and the Threat to Stability in Europe, 1918-1947*, eds. Peter Caterall with C. J. Morris (London: Leicester University Press, 1993), 105-111. Materials in GD 40/17/377-389, Lothian Papers, and Boxes 14-16, Curtis Papers, document the efforts of Lothian and Curtis to recruit dignitaries in the United Kingdom to both movements. The Archbishop of Canterbury approved Streit's book in a letter to Lord Lothian, 26 April 1939, GD 40/17/380/182, Lothian Papers. William Beveridge mentioned his joining the federal European movement in *Power and Influence: An Autobiography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), 266-267.

movement dwindled. But several of its American adherents helped forge the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance after the war.⁷⁹ In 1949 some backed a limited federal union of the NATO member states.⁸⁰ Unlike the British Empire of 1909, a North Atlantic federation after the Second World War would have had the strength to meet external challenges, and it might have opened itself to new countries and grown into a true world state. A North Atlantic union would, however, have faced challenges similar to those that would have confronted an Anglo-Dominion union a half-century earlier, including the need to agree on how to meet a powerful adversary, how to define military obligations elsewhere, whether to give taxing powers to the union, and how to resolve the needs of unrepresented peoples for full inclusion or independence.

Just as Britain and the Dominions were able to fight two world wars without needing to federate, so were America and its allies able to meet their security needs after 1945, through the Marshall Plan and NATO, without having to form a political union. Europe began a process of coming together as a region but its nation-states did not give up the most important attributes of their sovereignty. As they move further into the twenty-first century, though, the United States and its Cold War allies may come to resemble Britain and its Dominions after the 1870s, if the former resemble the latter in consisting of a relatively declining liberal superpower with self-governing dependencies that together lack the strength to prevent a more strongly multipolar world from emerging.

The United States may yet bring its traditional allies and other countries into a new kind of partnership, with the long-term goal of turning a multipolar world into one of stronger cooperation. In contrast to the

⁷⁹ The Americans Theodore Achilles, John D. Hickerson, and Will Clayton supported the Streit movement in 1939. As State Department officials in the late 1940s, they helped bring about the NATO alliance. See Ellen Clayton Garwood, *Will Clayton: A Short Biography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), 34-35; Ira Straus to David P. Billington, Jr., 12 March 1986; and Wilson D. Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947-1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 113-140. The earlier federalism of these individuals was not the same as the world federalism of the late 1940s that sought to unite communist countries and democracies.

⁸⁰ See the Atlantic Union Committee Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. The committee formed in 1949 under the leadership of former Justice Owen Roberts of the U.S. Supreme Court as an offshoot of Clarence Streit's Federal Union organization. Its goals were a common defense and foreign policy, a common currency and trade policy, and a common citizenship. The two vice presidents were Robert P. Patterson, President Harry S. Truman's Secretary of War (1945-47), and Will Clayton of the State Department.

Round Table movement, the United States could propose more limited forms of new cooperation instead of seeking radical change. America's allies and other nations might welcome an American offer to share decision-making in new ways in exchange for new shared commitments. Debates over new ties will be more successful if they engage a broader public opinion from the start and if economic life is not taken for granted.

The obstacles to a more integrated world are nevertheless obvious and formidable. Cooperation between nations is more developed today than a century ago, but nations continue to guard their sovereignty and rising countries may see no need to accommodate relatively declining ones. If the democratic world resists any step toward closer union, and if the great powers cannot develop a larger and stronger community for security as well as trade, the future will depend on whether a multipolar world in the twenty-first century can avoid repeating the mistakes of 1914 to 1945.

It may be argued that the consequences of relative decline are less dangerous for America today than they were for Britain. Relative decline is a relative concept: the United Kingdom is more powerful now in absolute terms than it was at its zenith in the nineteenth century, and America is relatively more powerful today than Britain was in the 1870s. Whether a nation is endangered by its relative position also depends on the intensity of competition between nations. In the first forty-five years of the twentieth century, there was no limit to violence between states and as a result a declining Britain was in grave danger. Since then, nuclear weapons have inhibited states that possess them from risking all-out conflict.

Conditions could change in the twenty-first century, though, if inhibitions on the use of extreme force lessen, or if new technologies supersede the weapons and defenses that have kept the peace since the Second World War. The degree of continuity in international relations since the nineteenth century still casts a long shadow. America after 1945 tried to learn from British experience what not to do in response to a more dangerous world. What needs to be done is a more difficult and more important question.