

June 1940,  
Great Britain  
and the First Attempt  
to Build a European  
Union



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By

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# INTRODUCTION

June 2016 could represent a turning point in British history. The decision to leave the European Union at the most critical period since its existence could bring unpredictable and far reaching consequences both for the United Kingdom and the Union itself. Outside the European Union, the United Kingdom might face a renewed challenge of disintegration—by losing Scotland and Northern Ireland—and a dramatic loss of financial, economic and political influence in international relations. The fundamental basis for the so-called ‘special relationship’ with the United States, lies in fact with the specific and key role which the United Kingdom has played, since 1973, within the European construction. The marginalization of the City of London from capital flows, a reduction of economic growth, and a general retreat from world influence could almost be inevitable.

Without Great Britain, the European Union might drift towards collapse, bringing to an end the European experiment, and opening the way to the restoration of European political division into conflicting groups of States, with the reconstruction of rival blocks. The choice is therefore, as it has always been, between reaching a union through the pooling of sovereignty, or through its exercise and projection in terms of traditional power politics.

The fundamental reason for the existence of the European Union has not been, in fact, the defence of a specific cultural, racial or religious identity, but the creation of a definite method of resolving conflicts among States by peaceful and constitutional means. The first Community institutions were actually not imagined and created 65 years ago simply to establish a free-trade area and promote economic development among its members. They were conceived as the first step in a political process which, through the pooling of certain vital governmental functions such as economy and currency, aimed to achieve a federation, not a league of nations, establishing economic stability as a fundamental condition for political stability.

June 1940 was a turning point in British history. On the afternoon of 16 June, a few hours before the French Government opted for the capitulation, Churchill made, on behalf of the British Government, an offer of “indissoluble union.” “There would have been great difficulties to

surmount,” commented Sir John Colville, Private Secretary to Churchill, “but we had before us the bridge to a new world, the first elements of European or even World Federation.”<sup>1</sup>

When a sceptical Churchill put forward to the British Cabinet the text of the declaration drafted by Jean Monnet, Sir Arthur Salter, and Robert Vansittart, he was surprised at the amount of support it received. Clement Attlee, Ernest Bevin, and Sir Archibald Sinclair had already declared themselves in support of the idea of a European federation based on the Anglo-French nucleus. The Cabinet adopted the document with some minor amendments, and de Gaulle, who saw it as a means of keeping France in the war, telephoned Reynaud with the proposal for an “indissoluble union” with “joint organs of defence, foreign, financial and economic policies,” a common citizenship and a single War Cabinet. The proposal, however, never reached the table of the French Government. The spirit of capitulation, embodied in Weygand and Pétain prevailed, and France submitted herself to the German will, for the second time in seventy years.

After the Munich crisis, Great Britain had to face the danger of another European war, with the inevitable loss of the Empire, and it was at this point that the country first began to favour the application of the federalist principle to Anglo-French relations. In this conversion to federalism, a fundamental role was played by the Federal Union, the first federalist movement organised on a popular basis, and created in the autumn of 1938 by three young men: Charles Kimber, Derek Rawnsley, and Patrick Ransome.

The contribution of the Federal Union to the development of the federal idea in Great Britain and Europe was to express and organise the beginning of a new political militancy: the aim of the political struggle was no longer the conquest of national power, but the building of a supranational institution, a federation (not a league) of nations. With Federal Union, the European federation was no longer an abstract “idea of reason”, but the first step of a historical process: the overcoming of the nation-State, the modern political formula which institutionalises the political division of mankind. Federal Union represented a paradigmatic experience since it embodied the incarnation of the idea of European unification into a movement, and as such it also signified its first and decisive step in the history of that process. To write the history of Federal Union means to analyse the formation of ideas and decisions which dominated the first months of the Second World War, bringing the

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<sup>1</sup> John Colville, *The Fringes of Power* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), 74.



federalist project to enter the threshold of the Foreign Office and Downing Street.<sup>2</sup>

Such an epic episode of the Second World War has been almost completely forgotten in Great Britain today, in spite of the fact that it deeply marked the future process of European integration. Not only the two major pioneers and architects of the European Union—Jean Monnet and Altiero Spinelli—owed much to the Federal Union for their federalist ‘conversion’, but the British political tradition—of which federalism is a major product— also provided the theoretical basis for the European construction. It is not an exaggeration to argue that the European Union is very much the creation of the British political tradition, as opposed to the Continental one.<sup>3</sup>

During the interval between the Munich Pact and the downfall of France, a large and powerful literature was actually produced in the United Kingdom by a number of distinguished representatives of Liberal and Socialist thought, such as Lord Lothian, Lionel Curtis, William Beveridge, Lord Lugard, Lionel Robbins, Arnold Toynbee, Henry Wickham Steed, Ivor Jennings, Kenneth Wheare, William Curry, Norman Angell, Norman Bentwich, James Meade, J. B. Priestley, Alan L. Rowse, Henry Noel Brailsford, Barbara Wootton, G. D. H. Cole, Julian Huxley, Ronald Gordon Mackay, Konni Zilliacus, Margaret Storm Jameson, Cyril Joad, and Olaf Stapledon. This literature, which had both a direct and indirect

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<sup>2</sup> On the role played by Federal Union in the history of the federal idea, see: Andrea Bosco ed., *The Federal Idea. The History of Federalism from the Enlightenment to 1945* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1991), 3-17; id., *The Federal Idea. The History of Federalism since 1945* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1991), 1-19; id., Introduction to *Towards the United States of Europe. Studies in the Making of the European Constitution*, ed. Patrick Ransome (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1991), 1-46.

<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of the British federalist tradition, see: Michael Burgess, *The British Tradition of Federalism* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995); John Kendle, *Federal Britain* (London: Routledge, 1997); id., *The Round Table Movement and Imperial Union* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975); Andrea Bosco, *Lord Lothian. Un pioniere del federalismo, 1882-1940* (Milan: Jaca, 1989); John Pinder and Richard Maine, *Federal Union. The Pioneers* (London: Macmillan, 1990); Deborah Lavin, *From Empire to International Commonwealth: A Biography of Lionel Curtis* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995); 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); id., *From Empire to Atlantic Order. The Round Table Movement and the Unwinding of the British Empire, 1909-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016).

influence on British political thinking at the time, has been almost completely forgotten in Britain today. However, it is held in high regard by Continental scholars, where it is referred to as the “Anglo-Saxon Federalist School,” and thought of as the most illuminating contribution to the evolution of the federal idea towards a mature theoretical articulation, and its application to the unification of Continental Europe.<sup>4</sup>

Between the winter and spring of 1940, not only intellectuals, but also a number of prominent politicians—such as Chamberlain, Halifax, Churchill, Eden, Attlee, Bevin, Sinclair, and Amery—and members of the Anglican Church—such as the Archbishops of York and Durham—openly supported the federalist project. The major national daily and weekly newspapers—*The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Manchester Guardian*, *News Chronicle*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Herald*, *Daily Worker*, *Observer*, and *Sunday Times*—gave wide coverage to a lively debate on federalism.

It was this debate on federalism in general, and on Anglo-French war-time collaboration in particular, that brought the British Government to consider the application of the federal principle in order to transform Anglo-French war co-operation into a permanent and stable political union. Jean Monnet—then Chairman of the Anglo-French Coordination Committee, a body based in London and created on the initiative of Monnet himself in order to give greater effect to the war effort—had been

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<sup>4</sup> Lionel Robbins, *Economic Planning and International Order* (London: Macmillan, 1937); id., *The Economic Causes of War Conflicts* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939); id., *The Economic Basis of Class Conflict and Other Essays of Political Economy* (London: Macmillan, 1939); id., *Economic Aspects of Federation* (London: Federal Union Publishing, 1941); Barbara Wootton, *Socialism and Federation* (London: Federal Union Publishing, 1940); William Beveridge, *Peace by Federation?* (London: Federal Union Publishing, 1940); Lionel Curtis, *Civitas Dei. The Commonwealth of God* (London: Macmillan, 1939); id., *The Way to Peace* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944); id., *World Revolution in the Cause of Peace* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947); William Curry, *The Case for Federal Union* (London: Penguin, 1940); Ivor Jennings, *A Federation for Western Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940); Ronald Gordon Mackay, *Federal Europe* (London: Michael Joseph, 1940); Kenneth Wheare, *What Federal Government Is* (London: Federal Union Publishing, 1941); id., *Federal Government* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946); Philip Kerr (Lord Lothian), *The Ending of Armageddon* (London: Federal Union Publishing, 1939); id., *The American Speeches of Lord Lothian* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941); id., *Pacifism is not Enough. Collected Lectures and Speeches of Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr)*, eds. Andrea Bosco and John Pinder (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1990); Mario Albertini, *Il federalismo. Antologia e definizione* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1979), 157-66.

strongly influenced by that lively debate. Monnet recalled that in this respect he became persuaded of the need for a federation between the two countries by just reading *The Times*, and that he took the initiative to discuss it with Chamberlain before the German offensive in May.<sup>5</sup>

From March 1940 the Foreign Office had very seriously examined an “Act of Perpetual Association between the United Kingdom and France,” drafted by Arnold Toynbee and Alfred Zimmern at Chatham House, and set up an *ad hoc* inter-ministerial Committee chaired by Maurice Hankey in order to translate it into a Constitution. The fact that the Foreign Office paid serious attention to a federal scheme in order to outline a new basis for Anglo-French relations was certainly for the strategic role played by Chatham House and, within the organisation by its main architect, Lionel Curtis. However, it would not have happened without the popular support for federalism which Federal Union had generated within British society at large. It was Federal Union actually which acted as a catalyst for ideas and behaviours which had already been relatively widespread within British society for some decades.

In order to understand the cultural climate in which Federal Union operated, it is necessary to trace a general outline of British federalism during the first decades of our century. The propulsive centre of British federalism in the years between the two world wars had definitely been the Round Table Movement, created in 1909 on the initiative of Milner’s “Kindergarten”—and particularly by Curtis, Philip Kerr (later Lord Lothian), Robert Brand, John Dove, Waldorf Astor, Lionel Hitchens, Dougal Malcolm, Peter Perry, Sir Edward Grigg, Leo Amery, Frederick Oliver, Alfred Zimmern, William Marris, Robert Cecil, and Geoffrey Dawson—in order to promote the institutional reform of the Empire on federal lines.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> PJM, AME 8/3/1.

<sup>6</sup> For an analysis, see: Walter Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men: The Kindergarten in Edwardian Imperial Affairs* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1970); William Palmer, *The Selborne Memorandum* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1925); Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*; Andrea Bosco and Alex May eds., *The Round Table Movement, the Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1997). On Milner, see: Edward Crankshaw, *The Forsaken Idea: A Study of Viscount Milner* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974); John Marlowe, *Milner, Apostle of Empire* (London: Hamish Hamilton Press, 1976); Terence Henry O’Brien, *Milner: Viscount Milner of St. James’s and Cape Town, 1854-1925* (London: Constable & Robinson, 1979); J. Lee Thompson, *A Wider Patriotism: Alfred Milner and the British Empire* (London: Pickering & Chatto Publishers, 2007).

After the Second Anglo-Boer War, the problem of Imperial defence merged with the wider problem of European and world peace because of the German threat. The burden of Imperial defence was carried by Great Britain alone, and decisions for the Dominions were taken by the British Government only, responsible to a national parliament and electorate. The defence of the Empire was necessary to prevent Germany's penetration into Western Africa and her subsequent elevation to the rank of a Great Power, with the inevitable consequence of the break-up of the nineteenth-century political system which had given Europe and the world an era of relative peace.

The movement's principal aim was to promote the creation of a central authority to conduct the foreign policy and defence of the Empire, in which the self-governing Dominions would play the role of equal partners. The Round Table advocated a division of governmental power between two organs, each responsible to the people for the exercise of power in its own sphere, and neither having power over or being accountable to the other. In defining the demarcation line between the powers to be exercised by the body representing peoples in their capacity of citizens of the Empire and those exercised by the body representing them in their national capacity, the Round Table proposed an Imperial Government for foreign policy and defence, responsible for an Imperial Parliament, directly elected by the peoples of Britain and her Dominions. Matters of national competence would be handled by the respective national parliaments. In the long run, the inevitable alternative to unity, which the movement considered a guarantee of world peace, was the disintegration of the Empire.

Although the Round Table maintained that, in theory, the solution to the problem of Imperial defence coincided with the application to the Empire of the great American political experience, they were aware that this would not be a solution in the short term. It was agreed, therefore, that a quarterly journal dealing with foreign and imperial affairs would be published to educate the peoples of the Empire on federalism. The first issue of the *Round Table*, under the editorship of Philip Kerr, was published in November 1910. In the period between the two world wars the journal became the major vehicle for the debate of the federal idea, and its application to the Empire, Ireland, India, and Europe.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For a survey of the editorial policy of the Round Table during the inter-war period, see "The Lionel Curtis-Philip Kerr (Lord Lothian) Correspondence 1909-1940," *Annals of the Lothian Foundation*, 1, (1991): 239-415. Henry Philip Kerr, became Lord Lothian in 1930, was born in London on 18 April 1882, and died in Washington on 11 December 1940. For a critical analysis, see: James R. M.

The Round Table could be considered—in spite of its well-defined and precise character—a continuation into the twentieth century of a nineteenth-century political tradition which found in the Imperial Federation League an organisational form. With the creation of the League in 1884—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 associated the colonies with bearing the burden—financial and military—of Imperial defence, at a time of rising nationalism and power politics in Europe.<sup>8</sup>

However, following the rejection by Gladstone in April 1893 both of the League’s “Federal Plan”, and 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

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Butler, *Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr) 1882-1940* (London: Macmillan, 1960); Bosco *Lord Lothian*; id., “Lord Lothian e la nascita di Federal Union (1939-40),” *Il Politico*, 48, 2, (1983); id., “La dottrina politica di Lord Lothian,” *Annali della Fondazione Luigi Einaudi*, 18, (1985); id., “Lord Lothian e la grande illusione (1928-30),” *Critica Storica*, 21, 4, 1985); id., “L’eredità kantiana e Lord Lothian,” in *Coscienza civile ed esperienza religiosa nell’Europa moderna*, ed. Romeo Crippa (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1983); Giulio Guderzo ed., *Lord Lothian. Una vita per la pace. Atti del Lothian Colloquium. Londra, 23 novembre 1982* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1985); John Turner, *Lloyd George Secretariat*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); David Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance, 1937-41: A Study in Competitive Co-operation* (London: Europa Publishing, 1981); id., “Lord Lothian and Anglo-American Relations, 1939-40,” *The American Philosophical Society*, 93, (1983); id., “Lothian, Roosevelt, Churchill and the Origins of Lend-Lease,” in *The Larger Idea. Lord Lothian and the Problem of National Sovereignty*, ed. John Turner (London: The Historians’ Press, 1988); John Pinder, “Prophet not without Honour: Lothian and the Federal Idea,” in *The Larger Idea*, 137-50; Kenneth Ingham, “Philip Kerr and the Unification of South Africa”, in *The Larger Idea*, 20-32; Gerard Douds, “Lothian and the Indian Federation”, in *The Larger Idea*, 62-75; Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, “Lord Lothian: Ambassador ‘To a People’,” in *The Larger Idea*, 77-91; Ira Straus, “Lothian and the Anglo-American Problematic,” in *The Larger Idea*, 124-135.

<sup>8</sup> 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).

1890s, and to find a compromise among the conflicting schools which coexisted within it. Since it was the expression of heterogeneous currents of opinion, united by the common interest to promote 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, from January 1886, of the monthly *Imperial Federation*, and the creation in 1888, of the Imperial Institute.<sup>9</sup>

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 the Empire, since their existence as former distinct States—which had opted for the unitarian principle—allowed them to amend the form of union. Nationalist sentiment would have, however, welcomed the application of the federal principle, with the creation of independent legislatures and executives, as an intermediate stage towards full independence.

The Round Table took up the League’s goals not only on the question of the “organic unity” of the Empire, but also for the Irish question, advocating a federation of the four ‘spontaneous’ nationalities of the British Isles—England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland—as the only solution to the question of the Irish claim for independence. This plan dated back to the first half of the nineteenth century and had returned to the political limelight with Gladstone in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, as well as in 1904-05 when the Unionist Party considered granting administrative autonomy to Ireland, and finally at the Constitutional Conference in 1910, when Curtis thought that the federation of the British Isles should precede that of the Empire.<sup>10</sup>

As soon as the Round Table members realised, during the First World War, 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. The economic and political co-operation between Great Britain and her thirteen rebellious former colonies was then

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Burgess, “The Federal Plan of the Imperial Federation League 1892: Milestone or Tombstone,” in *The Federal Idea*, 1, 139-53.

<sup>10</sup> Frederick Oliver, *Federalism and Home Rule* (London: John Murray, 1910); id., *The Alternatives to Civil War* (London: John Murray, 1913); id., *What Federalism Is not* (London: John Murray, 1914).

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 entrance of the United States to the forefront of world power politics had permanently changed the world's balance of power, which now required the United States' direct and perpetual association with the maintenance of the world's economic and political stability. The Round Table thus envisaged the 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 on a military basis (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 world 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 for ever-growing standards of the 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 organisations which had 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 (better known as Chatham House), and the Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

On the initiative of Curtis, the Round Table achieved "the strategic object" of strengthening Anglo-American relations—in spite of the fact that they were strained—"with a necessary tactical change," namely with the creation of an "institutionalised" 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 from 1917 the Round Table had been in irreversible crisis, and the leading figures of the

movement had been involved, over and after the war, in professions that did not allow them more active engagement in the movement.<sup>11</sup>

The major exponent of British federalism during the inter-war years was certainly Lothian, whose writings on the theme of war and peace are considered among the classics of federalist thought. Lothian's contribution, for which federalists today consider him a pioneer, was to apply the Hamiltonian lesson to the situation of interdependence of the industrial age. Lothian pointed out that pacifism and patriotism were necessary but not sufficient virtues to build peace. The nucleus of Lothian's political doctrine is expounded in *The Prevention of War*, a text of three lectures delivered in August 1922 at the Institute of Politics of Williamstown, Massachusetts, and in *Pacifism is not Enough*, the text of a lecture given at Lincoln's Inn, London, in May 1935.<sup>12</sup>

The contribution of Lionel Curtis—"the Prophet" as he was called by his Round Table friends—the other great exponent of British federalism, was mainly connected with the activities of the Round Table and Chatham House. Even though he was the most dynamic leader of the movement, his name remained until recently relatively obscure in British historiography. The fruits of his political doctrine are offered in *The Commonwealth of Nations* and *Civitas Dei*, a philosophical work on the origin, development and end of history, in which he gave an ethical and teleological interpretation of history, identifying in federalism the final stage of historical development.<sup>13</sup>

The third main representative of the British federalist school is Lionel Robbins, whose writings on the economic causes of war and the economic aspects of federation are ranked among the classics of federalist thought. Robbins's fundamental contribution was to show that the working of the industrial system of production required, at both national and international levels, the existence of a government that created and implemented the rules of the system as a whole. He pointed out that the limits of the market system, if left to themselves, were bound to generate conflicts between classes at the national level, and between nations at the international level. Robbins defined, with extreme clarity, the functions and powers of the federal government in the planning of the world economy. Of fundamental importance also is Robbins's criticism of the Marxist-Leninist theory of imperialism, pointing out that they are not the interests of imperialists as a

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<sup>11</sup> Curtis to Lothian, 6 Dec. 1936, quoted in Andrea Bosco ed., *Two Musketeers for the Empire. The Lionel Curtis-Philip Kerr (Lord Lothian) Correspondence 1909-1940* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1997), 150-1.

<sup>12</sup> Lothian, *Pacifism is not Enough*.

<sup>13</sup> Curtis, *Civitas Dei*; id., *The Way to Peace*; id., *World Revolution*.



class, but the interests of social groups historically determined to produce the economic causes of war. Private ownership of the means of production does not lead, in itself, according to Robbins, to international wars.<sup>14</sup>

Along with these three major exponents, one should also remember other members of the Kindergarten, such as Geoffrey Dawson (Editor of *The Times*), Leo Amery (prominent Unionist leader), Waldorf Astor (Chairman of Chatham House and owner of *The Times* and *The Observer*), Alfred Zimmern, and Arnold Toynbee (Directors of Research at Chatham House), all of whom directly or indirectly contributed to the development of the federalist debate from Munich to the downfall of France. Special mention should also be made of intellectuals such as H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell, Harold Laski, Max Waetcher, Salvador de Madariaga, and Norman Angell. Even without a political programme to offer, their indictment of national sovereignty obtained widespread support, particularly as events increasingly revealed the shortcomings of the League of Nations.<sup>15</sup>

In the panorama of British federalism, a special role was also played by the New Commonwealth Society. Founded in 1923 by Lord Davies, its aim was to create an international police force and court. Thanks to the

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<sup>14</sup> Robbins, *Economic Planning*; id., *The Economic Causes*; id., *The Economic Basis of Class Conflict*; id., *Economic Aspects*.

<sup>15</sup> Harold Laski, *The Foundation of Sovereignty and Other Essays* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1922); id., *Studies in the Problem of Sovereignty* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1917); id., *Nationalism and the Future of Civilization* (London: Watts, 1932); id., *A Grammar of Politics* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1925); Herbert George Wells, *The Shape of Things to Come* (London: Hutchinson, 1933); Max Waechter, *How to Abolish War: The United States of Europe* (London: 1924); Bertrand Russell, *Freedom and Organisation, 1814-1914* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1934); Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion* (London: William Heinemann, 1909); Luigi Einaudi, *La guerra e l'unità europea* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1984); Giovanni Agnelli and Andrea Cabiati, *Federazione europea o Società delle Nazioni* (Turin: 1919); Maurice Renoult, *La Fédération et la paix* (Paris: 1930); Bertrand de Jouvenel, *Vers les Etats-Unis d'Europe* (Paris: 1930); Roger Manuel, *L'union européenne* (Paris: 1932); Herman Kranold, *Vereinigte Staten von Europa* (Munich: 1924); Edo Fimmen, *Labour's Alternative: The United States of Europe or Europe Limited* (London: 1924). For a discussion, see: Jean-Pierre Gouzy, *Les pionniers de l'Europe communautaire* (Lausanne: Centre de Recherches Européennes, 1968); Henri Brugmans, *L'idée Européenne 1918-1965* (Bruges: De Tempel, 1965); id., *La pensée politique du fédéralisme* (Leyden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1969); Bernard Voyenne, *Histoire de l'idée européenne* (Paris: Payot Saint-Amand, 1964); id., *Histoire de l'idée fédéraliste* (Nice: Presses d'Europe, 1981); Alexandre Marc, "Histoires des mouvements fédéralistes depuis la première guerre mondiale," in *Le Fédéralisme* (Nice: Presses d'Europe, 1964); Olivier Dard, *Bertrand de Jouvenel* (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 2008).

funds given by Davies himself, the Society founded the New Commonwealth Institute, and also published a monthly journal, the *New Commonwealth Quarterly*. The Society gained the nominal support, among politicians, of Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden, and among intellectuals, of William Rappard, George Scelle, George Keeton and Salvador de Madariaga. However, it was only after the publication in January 1940 of *A Federated Europe* by Davies, that the Society was converted to federalism, advocating the transformation of the Anglo-French Alliance into a federation.<sup>16</sup>

Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi had significant influence on British federalism. In 1923 he had founded in Vienna the Pan-Europa movement, which advocated the political union of the Old Continent on a federal basis. It had the support of Edouard Herriot—who, in a speech to the French National Assembly on 29 June 1925, launched the idea of a European Union—Aristide Briand and Gustav Stresemann. Coudenhove-Kalergi revised his initial opposition to British participation in a European federation, following the entry of Nazi troops into Vienna, having acknowledged the progressive decline of France in Central Europe, and the strong involvement of Great Britain in Continental affairs. Even though he did not succeed in establishing good relations with Federal Union, Coudenhove-Kalergi's efforts were effective in forming a federalist transversal group in the House of Commons.<sup>17</sup>

British historiography has studied with special interest the state of Anglo-French relations during the so-called *drôle de guerre*, without however giving much attention to the lively debate on the war and peace aims which had developed during those months in Great Britain. In addition, little interest has been shown in the role played by Chatham House, either towards the Foreign Office in promoting Anglo-French Union, or in the formation of an *élite* opinion favourable to the federal idea as a whole. Moreover, until the publication of a volume which analyses the alternative fortune of British federalism since 1939, British historiography has also ignored the Federal Union Movement. On the contrary, much has been written on Churchill's proposal.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> David Davies, *A Federated Europe* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1940).

<sup>17</sup> Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Pan Europe* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1926).

<sup>18</sup> Pinder and Maine, *Federal Union*; Michael Newman, "British Socialists and the Question of European Unity, 1939-45," *European Studies Review*, 10, (1980): 75-100; R. A. Wildford, "The Federal Union Campaign," *European Studies Review*, 10, (1980): 101-14; Andrea Bosco, "Lothian, Curtis, Kimber and the Federal Union Movement (1938-1940)," *The Journal of Contemporary History*, 23, (1988): 465-502; Andrea Bosco and Cornelia Navari eds., *Chatham House and*

This study principally examines the first eighteen months of Federal Union, during which the movement, from its modest beginnings, was able to raise itself in the attention of the general public, and the political class, as the heir of the League of Nations Union, the organisation which during the First World War shaped the idea of “collective security”. Although the main object of this study is Federal Union—its birth and development, the activities of the branches, the internal debate and conflicts—it also deals with the federalist debate in the British and French press, and its impact on political and religious élites.

Special attention has been given to the role played by Lothian in London, helping the three young founders of Federal Union to shape the movement; and in Washington, as British Ambassador, promoting the entry of the United States into the conflict, on the basis of the federalist project. Special relevance has also been given to the tenacious work of Curtis in trying to link Federal Union with the Round Table, and in the attempt to transform Chatham House—through Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, Arnold Toynbee and Alfred Zimmern—into a bridge-head to get the federalist ideas accepted within the Foreign Office and the government. Finally, the analysis of the Foreign Office papers outlines the process which brought about the formation of the Hankey Committee for a “perpetual” Anglo-French Union, and the final failure of the enterprise. The research was based on very rich and unpublished archival material, found mainly in London, but also in Oxford, Brighton, Edinburgh, Washington, Paris, and Geneva.

My debt of gratitude goes first to Professor Giulio Guderzo, founder of the “Pavia school”, which studied the historical-social aspect of the federal idea—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, on the contrary, places on governments absolute primacy for the creation of the European Union.<sup>19</sup>

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*British Foreign Policy. The Royal Institute of International Affairs During the Inter-War Period 1919-1945* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1994).

<sup>19</sup> See the proceedings of a number of conferences on the theme: Sergio Pistone, *I movimenti per l'unità europea, 1945-1954* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1992); id., *I movimenti per l'unità europea, 1954-1969* (Pavia: Pime, 1996); Ariane Landuyt and Daniela Preda, *I movimenti per l'unità europea, 1970-1986* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000); Paolo Caraffini, *Costruire l'Europa dal basso. Il ruolo del*

Let me express profound gratitude to Luigi Vittorio Majocchi, for having introduced me to the thoughts of Mario Albertini, who laid the theoretical foundations for the socio-historical paradigm developed in this work.<sup>20</sup>

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, the 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 bank of the Thames in Oxfordshire, offered me an invaluable opportunity to attain a more definite insight into Curtis's multiform, magnetic, and complex personality.

The research would not have been carried out without the generous patronage of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, and the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, which have offered fellowships several times over. Among my friends in England, Scotland and the United States who have aided me in my research and allowed me to collect valuable accounts, I should like to thank especially: Max Guderzo, Lubor Jilek, Henry Osborne, Enrica Malcovati, Alex May, Gregory Jones, and Julian Bavetta.

Last but not least, this work is dedicated to the memory of my beloved grandmother, who always helped me to overcome the considerable difficulties along the way.

Ios, Cyclades, spring 2016.

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*Consiglio italiano del movimento europeo, 1948-1985* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005); Bosco, *Federal Union e l'unione franco-britannica*.

<sup>20</sup> Luigi Vittorio Majocchi, *La difficile costruzione dell'unità europea* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1996); Mario Albertini, *Tutti gli scritti*, 9 vols. (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006-10).

# CHAPTER I

## THE BIRTH OF THE FEDERAL UNION MOVEMENT

### ***I. Lionel Curtis, Lord Lothian and “Union Now”***

Just when Hitler was about to realise, even for a short time, the economic and political union of the Old Continent, an American journalist, Clarence Streit—for nearly two decades correspondent in Geneva of the *New York Times*—decided to launch to the democracies a dramatic appeal: unite or perish. In the volume *Union Now*—privately printed by Streit himself in Geneva in 1937, and made known to the general public in March 1939, at the same time in New York and London—Streit outlined the features of a highly ambitious project, the federal union of the fifteen democracies then in existence: Great Britain, France, the United States, Ireland, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, Finland, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Clarence Streit, *Union Now. A Proposal for a Federal Union of the Democracies of the North Atlantic* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939). Clarence Kirshmann Streit (1896-1986) was a reporter on the *New York Times* at the League of Nations, from 1929 to 1939. In 1949 he created the “Atlantic Union Committee”, and in 1962 the “Association to Unite the Democracies”. On Streit’s contribution to the formation of Atlantic politics, see Tiziana Stella, “Euro-Atlantismo. L’eredità del federalismo americano nel secondo conflitto mondiale,” in *Storie e percorsi del federalismo. L’eredità di Carlo Cattaneo*, eds. Daniela Preda and Cinzia Rognoni Vercelli (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), 1043-1090. More generally, on Streit see: Joseph Preston Baratta, “Clarence Streit e l’idea dell’unione delle democrazie,” *Il Federalista*, 30, 2, (1988): 129-40; Tiziana Stella, *Federalismo e Atlantismo nella politica estera degli Stati Uniti*, PhD Diss., University of Pavia, 1998-99. For a background of the debate on Atlantic unification in the context of Streit’s writings and action, see: Owen J. Roberts, *Background for Atlantic Union. A Study of International Federalism: Its Implications and Possibilities in Our Times* (Washington, DC: American Association of G.P.O., 1950); Joseph Schwartz, *Atlantic Federal Union* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1950); Estes Kefauver, *Atlantic Union: The Way to Peace* (Washington, DC: United States

The categorical imperative seemed to Streit to give life to democracy at the international level, overcoming therefore the contradictions which had reduced it to a pure simulacrum: first of all, national sovereignty. The goal that Nazism aimed to reach by war, democracy could have reached through an institutional revolution. The result would have been quite different: to an empire held together by German militarism, the democracies would have opposed a federation based on popular consent. Streit proposed for the fifteen democracies a common citizenship, defence, customs system, currency and postal organisation.

He observed that one could not find a more homogeneous group than these fifteen democracies. No two of them had been at war with each other for more than a century. Each bought most of its goods from and sold the majority of its products to the others; they owned almost half the countries of the world, and ruled all its oceans; they governed half the world's population and handled two-thirds of world trade.

Lionel Curtis had met Streit in early January at a Conference held at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York to present his volume *Civitas Dei*—published in Great Britain in June 1938, and re-released in the United States in October 1939—with a foreword by Lawrence Lowell—President of Harvard University—under the title *World Order*. In the debate which followed the Conference, Streit criticised Curtis for having supported the view that the advent of the federation was God's project, which would sooner or later be realised. If the federation had not been made within six months, Streit argued, Western civilization would have been destroyed. Curtis replied that it certainly could not be realised in such a short space of time, "everything" depending on "the movement of opinion in the United States." It would take, Curtis thought, "perhaps not years, but generations."<sup>2</sup>

Curtis then read the proofs of *Union Now* on his return trip to England, and he had been so impressed to think that Streit had triggered a movement of even greater importance for the world than that of the American founding fathers, and similar to that for the abolition of slavery. Streit had moved, according to Curtis, "the assault" to "an almost

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Press, 1953); Barbara Ward, *Britain's Interest in Atlantic Union* (Washington, DC: Friends of Atlantic Union, 1954); Georg Schwarzenberger, *Atlantic Union: A Practical Utopia?* (Washington, DC: Federal Educational and Research Trust, 1957); Istvan Szent-Miklosy, *The Atlantic Union Movement, Its Significance in World Politics* (Southlake, TX: Fountainhead Press, 1965); Ellen Gould Harmon White, *Atlantic Union Gleaner Articles* (Payson, AZ: Leaves-of-Autumn Press, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> Curtis to Streit, 9 Feb. 1939, CP, 13/115-7.

universal obsession,” namely the myth of unlimited national sovereignty. Governments, Curtis thought, would take the initiative to set some limits, indispensable to the maintenance of world order, only when that movement had succeeded to “disintegrate” that obsession in the minds of people. Like John Woolman, the initiator of the movement for the abolition of slavery, Streit had “lit a candle” which, by God’s grace, would never be extinguished. The final victory might have taken decades, “perhaps a century,” but it was one of those things which “had to happen.” As soon as people realised that the nation-State was not the final stage on the road of political progress, and that it was not possible to create any stable social system on the basis of agreements between sovereign States, they would also understand that federation was the only alternative. Mankind “will achieve world government,” Curtis concluded, but on the corpses of politicians, and professors of political science.<sup>3</sup>

Curtis guaranteed the appearance in *The Times* of February 24, of a press release by Reuter, which announced the publication of *Union Now* in New York, and its imminent release in London, stating that Streit’s plan contemplated the creation of a common citizenship, defence, customs and financial system among those democracies—monarchies or republics—which were willing to join. He also took the initiative to send copies of

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*; Curtis to G.V. Ferguson, n.d., CP, 13/172-3; Curtis to Streit’s wife, 25 Feb. 1939, CP, 13/228-9; Streit to Barrington-Ward, 23 Feb. 1939, CP, 13/240; Curtis to G. W. Howard, 1 Feb. 1939, CP, 14/2. Lionel Curtis (1872-1955) was a member of Milner’s “Kindergarten” in South Africa, from 1904 to 1908, and in 1909 took part in the creation of the Round Table Movement, becoming its leader. In 1919 he was co-founder of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and from 1921 he was a *fellow* of All Souls. On Curtis see: M. S. Donnelly, “J. W. Dafoe and Lionel Curtis: Two Concepts of Commonwealth,” *Political Studies*, 7, 2, (1960): 170-85; Deborah Lavin, “Lionel Curtis and Indian Dyarchy,” in *The Federal Idea*, 1, 193-209; Andrea Bosco, “Lord Lothian, Lionel Curtis and the Making of the Indian Federation,” *Annals of the Lothian Foundation*, 1, (1991): 123-55; Gerard Studdert-Kennedy, “Political Science and Political Theology: Lionel Curtis, Round Tablers and India,” *Annals of the Lothian Foundation*, 4, (1994): 299-319; Deborah Lavin, *From Empire to*; Gerard Studdert-Kennedy, “Lionel Curtis: Federalism and India,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 24, 2, (1996): 200-7; id., “Curtis, Lionel George: Intense Beliefs of,” in *The Round Table, the Empire/Commonwealth*, 251-65; David Meredith, “Lionel Curtis, the Round Table Movement and the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (1919),” in *The Round Table, the Empire/Commonwealth*, 381-405; Bosco, *Two Musketeers for*; Daniel Gorman, “Lionel Curtis, Imperial Citizenship, and Quest for Unity,” *The Historian*, 68, (2005): 67-96. Of special interest is Curtis’s portrait by Streit: Clarence Streit, “Lionel Curtis: The Federalist,” *Freedom and Union*, 9, 4, (1949): 8-20.

*Union Now*—and the text of one of his lectures delivered in support of the Streitian project at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, on February 21—to seventy-one leading figures of the international political and cultural community, including the Lords Davies and Cecil, Sir Arthur Salter, Harold Nicolson, Wickham Steed, Anthony Eden, Herbert Morrison, Winston Churchill, the Counts Sforza and Titulescu, Henry Rollin, Alexis Leger, Paul Van Zeeland, and Arthur Henderson.<sup>4</sup>

In the letter which accompanied Streit's volume Curtis returned to a theme often expounded, observing that agreements between sovereign States are founded "on sand," and the reign of law, if based on those agreements, tended inevitably to create "conflicts of loyalty." The interdependence of the industrial age produced the need, according to Curtis, for the creation of a "world government," responsible not in front of the States, but "of all citizens." Streit had elaborated a project which for the first time in history immediately gained broad popular support, and the study of details for its realization had become imperative. That had to be the task of the four major institutions in the English-speaking world dealing with international affairs: the Council on Foreign Relations in New

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<sup>4</sup> Curtis to Streit, 25 Feb. 1939 CP, 13/275, 139; 13/154-5. David Davies, Baron Davies of Llandinam (1880-1944) was a businessman, politician, and philanthropist. Liberal MP for Montgomeryshire (1906-29), he became Baron in 1932, and played a prominent role within the League of Nations Union. Sir Arthur James Salter, Baron Salter of Kidlington (1881-1975), was a member of the Commission for the Reparations of the League of Nations (1922-30). From 1934 to 1944 he was Gladstone Professor of Political Theory and Institutions at Oxford University, and, from 1937 to 1950 Independent MP for Oxford University. He was then Conservative MP for Ormskirk, from 1951 to 1953, and became Baron in 1953. Sir Harold George Nicholson (1886-1968), diplomat, author and politician, was an officer at the Foreign Office from 1909 to 1929. He was Labour MP for Leicester West from 1935 to 1945. Wickham Henry Steed (1871-1956), journalist at *The Times* since 1896, was foreign Editor, from 1914 to 1919, then Editor, from 1919 to 1922. He was Editor of the *Review of Reviews*, from 1923 to 1930, and Professor of History of Central Europe at London King's College, from 1925 to 1938. Herbert Morrison (1888-1965), was among the founders of the Labour Party, and became its President, from 1928 to 1929. He was Major of Hackney, from 1920 to 1921; a member of the London County Council, from 1922 to 1934; Labour MP for South Hackney, from 1923 to 1945; Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, from 1945 to 1951; Foreign Minister, from 1951 to 1955, and Deputy General Secretary of the Labour Party, from 1951 to 1955. He was elevated to the peerage in 1959. Arthur Henderson (1863-1935) was President of the Labour Party, from 1908 to 1910, from 1914 to 1917, from 1931 to 1932. He was Home Minister in 1924, Foreign Minister, from 1929 to 1931, and Chairman of the International Conference for the Disarmament in 1932.



York, the World Peace Foundation of Boston, the Institute of Pacific Relations, and Chatham House, which was based in London, and had branches in all of the Commonwealth's capitals.<sup>5</sup>

Curtis also tried to align the League of Nations Union—which still had more than one hundred thousand members—in support of *Union Now*, even though Gilbert Murray—leader of the organisation—while recognising in national sovereignty the “fatal obstacle” to the achievement

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<sup>5</sup> CP, 128/191-201. On Chatham House, the Council on Foreign Relations, the World Peace Foundation, and the Institute of Pacific Relations, see: Stephen King-Hall, *Chatham House: A Brief Account of the Origins, Purposes and Methods of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937); Laurence H. Shoup, “Shaping the Postwar World: The Council on Foreign Relations and the United States War Aims During World War Two,” *Insurgent Sociologist*, 5, 3, (1975): 9-21; Laurence H. Shoup and William Minter, *Imperial Brain Trust: The Council on Foreign Relations and United States Foreign Policy* (New York: Authors Choice Press, 1977); Elisabeth Jakob, “The Council on Foreign Relations,” *Book Forum*, 4, 3, (1978): 418-31; John K. Fairbank, “William Holland and the IPR in Historical Perspective,” *Pacific Affairs*, 52, 4, (1979): 587-90; Robert D. Schulzinger, *The Wise Men of Foreign Affairs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); William L. Holland, “Source Materials on the Institute of Pacific Relations,” *Pacific Affairs*, 58, 1, (1985): 91-7; Paul Hooper, “The Institute of Pacific Relations and the Origins of Asian and Pacific Studies,” *Pacific Affairs*, 61, 1, (1988): 98-121; James Perloff, *The Shadows of Power: The Council on Foreign Relations and the American Decline* (Appleton, WI: Western Islands Publishers, 1988); Gerald Studdert-Kennedy, “Christianity, Statecraft and Chatham House: Lionel Curtis and Word Order,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 6, 2, (1995): 470-89; Inderjeet Parmar, “The Issue of State Power: The Council on Foreign Relations as a Case Study,” *Journal of American Studies*, 29, 1, (1995): 73-98; Peter Grose, *Continuing the Inquiry: The Council on Foreign Relations from 1921 to 1996* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1996); Hiroaki Shiozaki, *Seeking International Order: The Lineage of the RIIA, CFR, and the IPR and their Interconnections to the Two World Wars* (Fukuoka: 1998); Tomoko Akami, *Internationalizing the Pacific: The United States, Japan and the Institute of Pacific Relations in War and Peace, 1919-1945* (London: Routledge, 2001); Andrew Williams, “Before the Special Relationship: The Council on Foreign Relations, The Carnegie Foundation and the Rumour of an Anglo-American War,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 1, 2, (2003): 233-51; Laurence H. Shoup and William Minter, *Imperial Brain Trust: The Council on Foreign Relations and United States Foreign Policy* (New York: Authors Choice Press, 2004); Inderjeet Parmar, “Anglo-American Elites in the Inter-war Years: Idealism and Power in the Intellectual Roots of Chatham House and the Council on Foreign Relations,” *International Relations*, 16, (2002): 53-75; Christian Haase, “In Search of a European Settlement: Chatham House and British-German Relations, 1920-55,” *European History Quarterly*, 37, 3, (2007): 371-97.

of a world order, and in the federation the only guarantee for peace, on 11 February 1939 claimed in *Time and Tide* that “all we want” was to re-read the Covenant, to understand it, to strengthen it a little, and “above all to keep it.” According to Murray, member-States should be represented within the League by their governments, not by members elected in a supranational Parliament. Also, its decisions had to be taken with unanimity which, according to Murray, had “never paralysed” the actions of the League. Discouraged by this statement, which in fact did not take into account the evidence of twenty bitter years of experience of the League, Curtis asked Wickham Steed, Lord Webster, Arnold Toynbee, and Lord Lytton for their help to induce the leaders of the Union to take the side of Streit, and to invite the members of the organisation to read *Union Now*.<sup>6</sup>

Curtis also tried to propagate *Union Now* in South Africa, where he had influential friends, including Sir Abe Bailey, whose generous

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<sup>6</sup> Murray a Curtis, 10 Feb. 1939, CP, 13/267; Curtis to Murray, not sent, 24 Feb. 1939; Curtis to Wickham Steed, 24 Feb. 1939, CP, 13/265-6; Curtis to Lytton, 1 March 1939, CP, 13/258. Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889-1975), was an officer at the Foreign Office from 1915 to 1919; Professor of Greek at the University of London from 1919 to 1924; Director of studies at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and Professor of International History at the University of London, from 1925 to 1955. Lord Victor Alexander George Robert Lytton (1876-1947) was Under-secretary of State for India from 1920 to 1922; Governor of Bengala, from 1922 to 1927; and Viceroy for India in 1925. Lord James Brabazon Forrester (1910-1960) was a businessman. On the League of Nations Union see: Robert Cecil, *A Great Experiment. An Autobiography by Viscount Cecil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941); id., *Letters from Sir Robert Cecil to Sir George Carew*, ed. John Maclean (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2007); Henry R. Winkler, *The League of Nations Movement in Great Britain* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1952); Donald S. Birn, *The League of Nations Union, 1918-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). On the central role played by the League in British foreign policy, see: George W. Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation of the League of Nations: Strategy, Policy and International Organisation, 1914-1919* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1978); id., “Collective Security as Political Myth: Liberal Internationalism and the League of Nations in Politics and History,” *International History Review*, 5, (1983): 497-522. On American public opinion and the League, see: Michael J. Hogan, *Woodrow Wilson’s Western Tour: Rhetoric, Public Opinion and the League of Nations* (Tamu, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006); Francis Anthony Boyle, *Foundations of World Order: The Legalist Approach to International Relations, 1898-1922* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Wilsonianism: Woodrow Wilson and His Legacy in American Foreign Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

patronage had played a decisive role in supporting the activities of the Milnerian Kindergarten, the Round Table, and Chatham House itself. On February 12, Curtis sadly remarked that Great Britain was spending ten per cent of her national wealth in the effort to save civilization, while the Germans were spending double the amount in order to destroy it. And he concluded that the only way he could see to prevent that rapid lean towards chaos, was the one illustrated in Streit's book.<sup>7</sup>

Writing to his friend Alexander McLeod, Editor of the *Rand Daily Mail* of Johannesburg, Curtis urged him to review *Union Now*, being "absolutely sure" that Streit's idea would "sooner or later" be realised "in one form or another." The question of time would depend on the speed with which ordinary people, like the ones who read the *Rand Daily Mail*, would be induced to understand that it was not "simply an academic proposal," but a project which "can and must be achieved."<sup>8</sup>

Curtis managed to secure review articles of *Union Now* for *The Times*, *The Observer*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *Reynold's Weekly*, and *The Express and Star*.<sup>9</sup>

Curtis also tried to convince the Primate of St. Paul's Cathedral, Walter Matthews, to read *Union Now*, where he would find the theoretical and factual reasons for the failure of the League of Nations, to which the Anglican Church had hitherto granted an unconditional trust. Streit was according to Curtis one of those rare men who could read facts, and during his stay in Geneva had understood that the League was unable to guarantee peace, "but only to jeopardise it." Had the churches, Curtis wondered, had the courage to say that they too had read the experience of the last two decades, and come to see the need for "a world authority responsible in front of men and not the sovereign States?" Streit's volume, he concluded, was already gaining support within the Anglican Church.

It was wrong, according to Curtis, to argue about the immediate applications of Streit's plan. It rather appeared necessary to wonder whether or not they were based on sound reasoning and "on truth" and, if so, to act in order to make them less remote. If the "transition from national sovereignty to the international one" was a process in theory that was irrefutable, but appeared in practice and was immediately unachievable, because people were unreasonable, then the Christian faith in reason was "a mere illusion," and a world based on force "was the only reality." The fact that the federation was not immediately achievable was not essential, according to Curtis. "Our Lord," Curtis observed, did not ask

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<sup>7</sup> Curtis to Bailey, 12 Feb. 1939, CP, 13/150-1.

<sup>8</sup> Curtis to McLeod, CP, 13/64-5.

<sup>9</sup> Curtis to W. R. Howard, 9 March 1939, CP, 13/57-8.

that the Kingdom was realised before he was put on the cross. The task of each man of good will was to gain proselytism, and in so doing to shorten the “painful road that humanity has to travel before reaching the day of his resurrection.”<sup>10</sup>

Young people who more than adults seemed ready to recognise the truth, were organising themselves in a movement, and multiplying their followers until they were numerous enough “to attract the attention of political leaders.” The church, Curtis was wondering, would it just watch? The Sermon on the Mount had to be “translated into political terms,” and as long as mankind was divided into national sovereignties, although democratic, that translation could not be complete. The only possible way to maintain and extend freedom, with all its spiritual implications, was to realise a transition from the national to the supranational level. It was not enough that religious authorities exhorted people to pray to God to avert war, since God had given man “the power to abolish war.” The “special mission” of Christianity was to overcome the cult of nationalism, and participate in the creation of those political institutions that would realise peace on earth.<sup>11</sup>

On his return to London from the United States in late February 1939, he did not fail to send the draft of *Union Now* to his friend Lothian, who had been particularly impressed by the clarity of the Streitian project. Lothian then engaged himself in a campaign to support Streit’s book, using it as a lever to favour the birth of a federalist movement in Great Britain. In a letter of 28 February 1939 to Jonathan Cape, he observed that “the importance” of *Union Now* was that it

penetrated through the jungle of political confusion and economic compromise which have befogged the world since 1920 to the only principle which can solve the problem of war and prosperity in the modern world. Only when the democracies grasp the profound nature of that principle and begin to give effect to it will they resume their leadership of mankind.<sup>12</sup>

Lothian regarded Streit’s book as standing “in the direct succession from Washington and the Fathers of the American Constitution, the writers of *The Federalist* and Abraham Lincoln.” On 6 March, Lothian

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<sup>10</sup> CP, 16/39-42, 49-54.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*. See also a letter by Curtis to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 8 June 1939, CP, 17/36-43. Walter Robert Matthews (1881-1973), theologian, was Professor of Philosophy of Religions at London King’s College from 1918 to 1932, Primate of Exeter from 1932 to 1934, and of St. Paul from 1934 to 1967.

<sup>12</sup> LP, 369/42.

wrote to Frank Aydelotte—President of the Swartmore College in Pennsylvania, and in charge of the Rhodes Trust in the United States—advocating the creation of an organisation in the United States:

I have no doubt that *Union Now* will have an immense press welcome, but unless my judgement of American public opinion is wrong, within a week or two it will be pushed out of people's minds by some new sensations unless there is a pretty solid piece of organisation possessed of some funds to keep the idea in front of the public mind and to build up support for it. I hope you will see your way to taking an active hand in the game.<sup>13</sup>

Writing to Henry Hodson, young Editor of the *Round Table*, who sent Lothian a draft review article of the book for publication in the journal, Lothian made it clear that the “essence” of Streit's volume was not the draft Constitution “but the argument that the democracies have no choice between war, possible defeat and the loss of liberty and union.” Streit told Lothian

that he put in the draft scheme simply because so many people had told him that it was impossible to formulate a scheme so he had produced the best he could as something to be shot at...I have never thought that Federal Union of Nations would take the same form as the American constitution. Nationality is too vigorous and valuable a plant to allow itself to be treated like statehood in the USA or Australia or a province in Canada. What matters is making it clear that co-operation between sovereign nations cannot be made to work and that they must find some system for organic union which will pool the sovereignty of all their people for certain purposes without losing the national individuality of the parts. Your article in its present form will strike the reader as being a theoretical approval and then a blasting criticism of Streit's plan, as if that plan was really the essence of this proposal.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> LP, 369/42.

<sup>14</sup> LP, 386. On the Round Table, see: Dewitt Clinton Ellinwood, “The Round Table Movement in India,” *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, 9, 1, (1971): 183-209; Leonie Foster, *The Men and Motives of the Australian Round Table* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1986); Bosco and May, *The Round Table*; Henry Hodson, “The Round Table: Until the Early 1930s,” *The Round Table*, 352, (1999): 677-94. For an analysis of the Imperial ideology supported by the Round Table, see: Andrew Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Politics, Economics, and Ideology of Empire, 1880-1932* (Harlow: Longman, 2000); John Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945* (Harlow: Longman, 2007): 215-25; Daniel Gorman, *Imperial*

Lothian sent copies of *Union Now* to influential friends, in order to test the ground for the creation of a popular movement in support of Streit's ideas in Great Britain and the United States. At the end of February the Round Table discussed at Blickling Hall—Lothian's county house—ways of implementing Streit's project.

In support of Streit's project, Lothian intervened publicly with three editorials in *The Observer* in early March, just when the first reports about the German violation of the Treaty of Munich were dispatched to the Foreign Office from the British Ambassador to Berlin. Taking up a central theme of his political thought, Lothian proposed the creation of an Atlantic bloc of the democracies for the control of naval power which, in his opinion, was the only effective instrument of international policing able to deter dictators from resorting to further acts of strength. Democracies should have come together, in international relations, to play the stabilising role that British sea power had performed by itself in the course of the nineteenth century after Trafalgar. This alliance, dictated by the emergency, could open the way for negotiations, contributing to the reduction in trade barriers, the main cause of unemployment, and restoring trust in democratic institutions, so gravely threatened by the apparent success of the totalitarian regimes. The North Atlantic would have then become the centre of gravity of Western civilization, and the federal system would offer the democracies the legal instrument for transforming a temporary and precarious alliance into a permanent and organic union. *The New York Times* of March 6 recorded this pronouncement by Lothian—whose nomination as Ambassador in Washington was not yet official—presenting him as the most active and prominent British politician in the campaign for closer Anglo-American cooperation.<sup>15</sup>

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*Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

<sup>15</sup> On Lothian's political doctrine, see: Bosco, *Lord Lothian*, 267-287; id., "Lord Lothian's Political Doctrine," *Annals of the Lothian Foundation*, 4, (1994): 321-42. On isolationist and internationalist currents within American public opinion, see: Walter Johnson, *The Battle Against Isolation. FDR and the Era of the New Deal* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 1973); Ronald E. Powaski, *Towards an Entangling Alliance: American Isolationism, Internationalism, and Europe, 1901-1950* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991); Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Daniela Rossini, *From Theodore Roosevelt to FDR: Internationalism and Isolationism in American Foreign Policy* (Keele: Keele University Press, 1995); Robert David Johnson, *The Peace Progressives and American Foreign Relations* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World*