A Short History of The Round Table

Cecil Rhodes, founder of the De Beers diamond mining corporation, had a vision of an Imperial Federation that would re-unify Great Britain and the United States and globalise the world.

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"But for [King] George III, war would have been unknown throughout the world today. The English-speaking race would have been reorganised as a unit, with its central Parliament meeting alternately in New York and London, and it would have given peace to the world." - *Cecil Rhodes,* July 1901/1

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ONE

At the end of the 19th century the British Empire was the largest the world had ever seen, covering some 19 million square kilometres of territory and nearly a quarter of the world's population. Britain was also the pre-eminent global power, possessing the strongest navy in the world and the largest merchant fleet and dominating the global economy as the biggest investor, banker, insurer and commodity dealer./2

According to Niall Ferguson, author of Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World (2003), this Pax Britannica was not only a force for good, but also the "nearest thing there has ever been to a world government"./3 Perhaps it was, though for the millions of indigenous peoples who had been colonised, often with great brutality, and whose lands and natural resources were now being plundered by the British while they were relegated to the status of second-class subjects, the benefits of being part of the British Empire were somewhat elusive.

Yet, despite all these apparent strengths, Britain was no longer at the peak of its power, a point it reached in the 1870s. Indeed, the start of the 20th century marked the final phases of its inevitable decline. The erosion of British power was occurring on two fronts: first, through the imperial expansion of the other European powers, which impinged on its military dominance; and second, by the gradual loss of its industrial and commercial supremacy, upon which its military might had rested. The British Establishment was already reading these portents of imperial decay. The First Lord of the Admiralty, for example, had warned in 1900 that in coming years Britain "...by itself will not be strong enough to hold its proper place alongside of the US or Russia and probably not Germany. We shall be thrust aside by sheer weight."/4

It was in the midst of this pervading sense of gloom that, in 1909, a movement emerged which sought to preserve British power by converting its Empire into an "Imperial Federation" or "Imperial Union".5 This movement was known as the Round Table. The Round Table occupies a special place in most populist accounts of the New World Order, the group given a pivotal role in the World Government conspiracy.

David Icke, for example, writes that the Round Table "spawned a network of interconnecting groups in many countries working toward a common aim...world government"./3 The reason for this focus on the Round Table is the rather sensational analysis of the group provided by Carroll Quigley (1910-1977) in his 1966 book, Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time.

A professor of history and international relations at Georgetown University, Quigley discussed the Round Table movement in some detail, claiming it formed the hub of an "international Anglophile

network" which had exercised disproportionate influence over the American and British governments for much of the 20th century. More importantly, he personally confirmed the existence of this alleged network, citing some 20 years of studying its history, including gaining exclusive access to its documents over a two-year period; even claiming that for much of his life he was "close to it and to many of its instruments"./7

For many researchers, Quigley's personal testimony has seemed reason enough to repeat his claims without exploring them much further, let alone without questioning their accuracy. Australian researcher Jeremy Lee, for instance, suggests Tragedy and Hope "exposed beyond argument" the existence of the New World Order conspiracy,/8 while numerous other researchers continue to place the Round Table in key positions in wiring diagrams, linking it to the Council on Foreign Relations and Chatham House as though it were still a powerful organisation near or at the top of the New World Order hierarchy./9

It is not the intention of this article to join this consensus position of uncritically accepting Quigley's account of the Round Table's power-an acceptance based solely on his still unproven claims of special access./10 Nor is it the intention to embrace Gary Allen's claim that the Round Table was a "secret society... dedicated to establishing a world government". /11 Equally, this article avoids the habit of more mainstream historians of minimising the role of the Round Table and relegating it to a mere footnote. Instead, this article endeavours to establish that while Quigley's claims contain some elements of truth, the Round Table's contribution to the New World Order is more complex than is commonly supposed.

In fact, the movement is an unlikely participant in the push for global governance. Founded by advocates of Anglo-Saxon racial and political superiority, their scheme for imperial federation originally intended to consolidate the British Empire to protect it from disintegration and an expected challenge from Germany, the Round Table, at least initially, represented imperialist rather than internationalist ideals.

Moreover, despite its apparent wealth and political connections and an ambitious propaganda program, the Round Table conspicuously failed to achieve its goal of imperial federation. It also fell short in its attempts to remould the League of Nations concept into a form that would support the Round Table's imperialist ambitions. The movement would also be beset by divisions between those who viewed the federation of the British Empire as an end in itself, and those who believed imperial federation should be a stepping-stone to world government.

Nevertheless, the movement's vision of a world ruled by an Anglo-American federation represented one of the first attempts in the 20th century by a power-elite clique to bypass democracy in order to achieve its goal of overriding national sovereignty and establishing a supranational form of governance. Yet, as this article seeks to demonstrate, the Round Table movement's legacy was not one of success, but of failure. Its members' efforts to arrest Britain's decline by unifying the Empire soon proved futile, and their dream of ruling the world slipped from their grasp.

CECIL RHODES AND HIS IMPERIAL VISION ~ * ~

The Round Table was the product of two people: Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) and Lord Alfred Milner (1854-1925). This was not to be a living partnership, given Rhodes's untimely death well before the Round Table was founded and their limited contacts while he was alive, but more of a posthumous association in which Milner sought to realise Rhodes's dream of a unified British Empire.

As prominent Round Table member Leopold Amery (1873-1955) later observed, "If the vision was Rhodes', it was Milner who over some twenty years laid securely the foundations of a system whose power...throughout the English-speaking world...would be difficult to exaggerate"./12 While his claims of the Round Table's power can be forgiven as wishful thinking, Amery by no means overstates the importance of Rhodes and Milner.

Cecil Rhodes is better known as the founder and primary owner of the famous diamond company, De Beers; as creator of the colonies of

Northern and Southern Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe); and as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from 1890 to 1896./13 Compelled by a life-threatening heart condition to leave Britain, Rhodes had travelled in the 1870s to southern Africa where he made his fortune in the diamond-mining boom in the Kimberley region. It was there that Rhodes first demonstrated his desire for centralised control.

Rhodes believed the intense competition between the hundreds of small mining companies was damaging the viability of the diamond industry. His solution was to establish a company with monopoly control over the supply of diamonds, thus making it more profitable in the long term. In 1888 Rhodes realised his vision, collaborating with share dealer Alfred Beit and the London bankers Nathaniel M. Rothschild and Sons to buy out rival mining companies throughout the Kimberley region. The product of this collusion was a single diamond mining company, De Beers Consolidated Mines. This bold move gave Rhodes and his backers "control of the commanding heights of the Cape economy" (Thomas) and made him, "almost overnight, the most powerful man in Africa" (Rotberg)./14

As Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, Chairman of De Beers and one of the richest and most aggressive imperialists in southern Africa, Rhodes commanded considerable power and his exploits earned him the admiring accolade of "the Colossus of Africa". Driven by an imperialist fervour, the Colossus embarked on a number of bold schemes devoted to the expansion and consolidation of British rule in Africa. Some of these plans were partially successful, such as the annexation of Matabeleland and Mashonaland in support of the British South Africa Company's goal of controlling all the land in the interior of Africa between the Limpopo and the Nile.

Other schemes, such as his attempt to overthrow the Boer government in the Orange Free State through the Jameson Raid and his plans for a trans-African railway stretching from the Cape to Cairo, were for him personally costly and conspicuous failures.

Yet, in pursuing these various projects, Rhodes was not enacting his own ideas but using the plans of others to fulfil his broader vision. As one historian observed: "Rhodes was not a thinker; he was doer. He appropriated the ideas of others rather than conceiving ideas himself."/15 Significantly, the only exception to this rule was his most ambitious grand design of all: imperial federation.

This is not an accepted fact in most accounts, including in Quigley's book where the famous British artist John Ruskin is cited as the sole source of Rhodes's enthusiasm for imperial federation. Rhodes is said to have attended the inaugural lecture given at Oxford in 1870 by Ruskin, then Professor of Fine Arts, and to have been so inspired that he kept a copy of the lecture with him for the next 30 years, regarding it as "one of his greatest possessions" (Quigley)./16

The problem with this version of events is that Rhodes did not attend Oxford until September 1873, thus obviously missing Ruskin's lecture; more importantly, as Rotberg notes, there is "absolutely no evidence ... that Rhodes was ever affected by Ruskin's popularity and the cult which helped spread his message of light, right and duty"./17

There are certainly good grounds for supposing that Rhodes would have agreed with most of Ruskin's message that Britain's destiny, "the highest ever set before a nation", was to make it "for all the world a source of light" by founding colonies "as far and as fast as she is able to"./18

There is, however, no single source of inspiration for Rhodes's dream of unifying the British Empire. The range of influences on Rhodes's imperial thinking was legion. His favourite books included the works of Classical Greek and Roman scholars, such as Aristotle's Ethics, Plato's Republic, Plutarch's Lives, Marcus Aurelius' Meditations, and Thucydides' History, or were about the Roman Empire--evident in his avid reading and rereading of Edward Gibbons's six-volume The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776-1788). These books had exposed Rhodes to the cosmopolitanism of the Stoics and also to arguments extolling the virtues of imperialism. From these, it seems, he had concluded that it was Britain's destiny to succeed Rome as the ruler of the world./19

Another key influence was William Winwood Reade's book, The Martyrdom of Man (1872), a neo-Darwinian tome which presents a universal history of humanity supporting the argument that suffering is necessary to the achievement of progress. Rhodes had read Martyrdom, describing it as a "creepy book", but he also said, somewhat ominously, that it had "made me what I am"./20

He also found inspiration in the imperialist fervour generated by Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli's expansion of the British Empire in the 1870s. Disraeli himself was an advocate of imperial federation. Arguably, it was from this rich concoction of ideas and influences, rather than from Oxford itself--where he apparently learned little--that Rhodes had developed his own unique vision of imperial federation.

RHODES AND HIS "CONFESSION OF FAITH" ~ * ~

Rhodes first put his vision of imperial unity to paper on 2 June 1877 in his handwritten testimony, the so-called "Confession of Faith". In the Confession, Rhodes stated he had concluded that his chosen calling in life was not marriage, travel or the accumulation of wealth, but to make himself useful to his country. Expressing his belief in the inherent racial and cultural superiority of Anglo-Saxons, Rhodes argued that only the British should rule the world:

> "I contend that we are the finest race in the world and the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race. Just fancy those parts that are at present inhabited by the most despicable of human beings; what an alteration there would be in them if they were brought under Anglo-Saxon influence... Added to which the absorption of the greater portion of the world under our rule simply means the end of all wars."/21

To this end, Rhodes put forward his own vision of an expanded British Empire that would be achieved by the formation of a secret society:

"Why should we not form a secret society with but one object: the furtherance of the British Empire and the bringing of the whole uncivilised world under British rule for the recovery of the United States for making the Anglo-Saxon race but one Empire. What a dream, and yet it is probable, it is possible."/22

This secret society would have "its members in every part of the British Empire", including in the schools and universities to select new members and in the Colonial legislatures, where they would "advocate the closer union of England and colonies, to crush all disloyalty and every movement for the severance of our Empire". He also envisaged this secret society owning "portions of the press, for the press rules the mind of the people"./23

Rhodes's motivation for creating his own secret society stemmed from his disappointment and contempt for Freemasonry, which he had recently joined. His disdain for the Craft had been almost immediate, demonstrated at his induction banquet in June 1877 where, as a new life member for the Apollo Chapter of the Masonic Order, Rhodes scandalised his brethren by casually revealing the mystic cult secrets of the 33rd Degree Rite./24

In his Confession, Rhodes denigrated the Freemasons as an essentially pointless organisation whose members "devote themselves to what at times appear the most ridiculous and absurd rites without an object and without an end". However, this was not a blanket rejection of secret societies, as he expressed his admiration for the Jesuits whom he believed had achieved much despite their "bad cause" and "bad leaders"./25

Elements of Rhodes's Confession were incorporated into his wills, of which eight were produced over the years as his fortune and ambitions increased but his cardiovascular problems worsened, reminding the Colossus that his time in this world was short. His second will of 19 September 1877, for example, was produced following a "heart attack" he had suffered in August of that year./26 Although it had only two executors, that document clarified Rhodes's essential vision of establishing a "Secret Society" devoted to "the extension of British rule throughout the

world", including the "ultimate recovery of the United States as an integral part of the British Empire". This would culminate in:

> "...consolidation of the whole Empire, the inauguration of a system of Colonial Representation in the Imperial Parliament which may tend to weld together the disjointed members of the Empire, and finally the foundation of so great a power as to hereafter render wars impossible and promote the best interests of humanity."/27

All that remained was to bring about this desired state of affairs, and in successive wills Rhodes continuously refined his envisaged secret society. In a letter accompanying his fourth will, written in June 1888, Rhodes instructed Lord Nathaniel M. Rothschild (1840-1915)--his collaborator and financier at De Beers and to whom he originally left most of his fortune-- to obtain the Constitution of the Jesuits and "insert English Empire for Roman Catholic Religion" so the secret society could use the document as its charter./28

But Lord Rothschild, although a supporter of imperial expansion, soon proved unworthy of this task. For one, Rothschild failed to meet Rhodes's immediate demands for assistance in achieving his various schemes in Africa. This frustrated the Colossus of Africa, who had apparently believed in the great power of the Rothschild name to work the all-too-numerous miracles he required./29

Lord Rothschild also seemed unable to absorb Rhodes's ultimate imperial vision. The disappointment was obvious. Rhodes was to confide to his friend Lord Esher in 1891 that Lord Rothschild "...is absolutely incapable of understanding my ideas. I have endeavoured to explain them to him, but I could see from the look on his face that it made no impression...and that I was simply wasting my time." The fate of Britain's richest banker was to be removed from Rhodes's subsequent wills and replaced with an anonymous trustee./30

STEAD AND THE "ANGLO-AMERICAN RE-UNION" ˜ * ˜

Rhodes was to find a more understanding audience through his friendship with William T. Stead (1849-1912), editor of the Pall Mall Gazette and founder of the periodical, Review of Reviews. Stead was an ardent supporter of imperialism, conceiving it in Ruskinian terms of Britain's moral duty to the rest of the world, which he defined as the "imperialism of responsibility". He was a supporter of imperial federation, evident in the avowed purpose of Review of Reviews of "promoting the re-union of the English-speaking race"./31

However, Stead had also been a member of the South Africa Committee, which was opposed to Rhodes's brutal methods of expanding British rule in southern Africa. Nevertheless, it was an article by Stead in the Pall Mall Gazette, endorsing an "Anglo-American re-union", that had prompted Rhodes to seek him out during his visit to England in April 1889. Their subsequent meeting was to have a profound effect on Stead, who was to put aside his previous reservations and write excitedly of his newfound admiration for Rhodes, proclaiming that he had never before "met a man who, upon broad Imperial matters, was so entirely of my way of thinking". Stead was especially impressed with Rhodes's "gorgeous" ideas for the "federation, expansion and consolidation of the Empire"./32

The impact appears to have been mutual, with Rhodes giving Stead a gift of £2,000 to settle an adverse libel judgement and promising £20,000 to promote their ideas of imperial federation through the British media. In time, Rhodes was to show his confidence in Stead by naming him a trustee in one his wills./33 Stead was also to have an impact on the Anglo-American component of Rhodes's imperial vision.

It is noted by Quigley that Rhodes accepted Stead's proposal to modify his vision of imperial federation to make "Washington the capital of the whole organisation or allow parts of the empire to become states of the American Union"./34 According to Stead's own account (and Quigley's most likely source), it was during Rhodes's visit to England in February 1891 that the diamond magnate had finally:

> "...expressed his readiness to adopt the course from which he had at first recoiled ... that of securing the unity of the English-

speaking race by consenting to the absorption of the British Empire in the American Union if it could not be secured any other way... [H]e expressed his deliberate conviction that English-speaking re-union was so great an end in itself as to justify even the sacrifice of the distinctive features and independent existence of the British Empire."/35

This Anglo-American arrangement thus became one of the central components of his envisaged supranational enterprise, if not an obsession. Rhodes often blamed King George III for the loss of the American colonies (see epigraph), and once lamented to Stead that "if we had not lost America...the peace of the world [would have been] secured for all Eternity!" The postscript to his will of September 1893, for example, expressed his belief that the merger of Britain and the United States would "take the government of the whole world", leading to the "cessation of all wars and one language throughout the world"./36

Elsewhere, Rhodes envisaged joining the British House of Commons to the United States Congress, establishing an "Imperial Parliament" that

would sit for five-year periods, alternating between London and Washington./37

Rhodes's vision can appear quite idealistic, even naïve, in its motivations. Quigley contends that Rhodes's utopian scheme for a world-dominating Anglo-American Federation was driven not by greed or other materialist wants but by a sincere belief in Britain's mission to spread its culture and values worldwide for the common good. However, Rhodes also made some quite rational calculations about British power, particularly its declining economic fortunes.

He recognised that British trade was suffering due to "hostile tariffs" imposed by America and Europe. As he was to tell Prime Minister Gladstone, the only logical solution was the "further acquisition of territory", giving Britain a domain large enough to maintain tariffs against the rest of the world. "Great Britain's position depends on her trade," Rhodes argued, saying that if Britain did not "take and open up the dependencies

of the world which are at present devoted to barbarism, we shall shut out the world's trade"./38

Quite simply, Rhodes did not believe that free trade in itself would benefit Britain unless there were some political action to support it, preferably in the form of imperial expansion and consolidation. "Being a Free Trader," he was to write to Stead, "I believe that until the world comes to its senses you should declare war with those who are trying to boycott your manufactures." He had been particularly taken by South African politician Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr's proposal, first raised at the 1887 Colonial Conference, of an Empire-wide two-per-cent tariff against foreign goods. "The politics of the next hundred years are going to be tariffs and nothing else," Rhodes proclaimed while Prime Minister of the Cape Colony. In his letter to Stead, Rhodes identified the only possible solution: "You might finish the [tariff] war by union with America and universal peace, I mean after a hundred years and a secret society organised like [St Ignatius] Loyola's [founder of the Jesuits]."/39

THE NEW WEISHAUPT ~ * ~

In pursuing this course, Rhodes was in many respects one of the first true modern heirs to Adam Weishaupt, founder of the Bavarian Illuminati. A Professor of Law at the University of Ingolstadt and a former a Jesuit priest, Weishaupt created the Illuminati in 1776 to achieve his radical, utopian goal of transforming society. He envisaged a world devoid of "princes and nations", in which the human race would "become one family"./40

Rhodes's similarities with Weishaupt are threefold:

- First, he came to the same conclusion as Weishaupt that creating his own secret society for the purposes of changing elite opinion was the only means to ensure that his goals could be achieved.
- Secondly, he was similarly unimpressed by the Freemasons and the Jesuits, yet he copied their methods.
- And finally, his ultimate goal was essentially the same as Weishaupt, in that he sought to create a world order in which

peace would prevail as divisions would be overcome by a global civilisation, albeit an Anglo-Saxon one.

There were a number of important differences, however, with Rhodes being influenced by Classical philosophers rather than by the Enlightenment theorists whom Weishaupt admired; this had made him into an ardent imperialist rather than the cosmopolitan idealist that Weishaupt clearly was. Unlike Weishaupt, a radical thinker who aspired to overthrow the existing political and religious order, Rhodes sought only to expand and preserve what he regarded as the absolute pinnacle of human civilisation: the British Empire.

Furthermore, Weishaupt was an academic of limited means, whose only hope of realising his vision was to use the Illuminati to try to infiltrate existing centres of power and sway elite opinion. His ambitious endeavour met with some success, but ultimately ran afoul of the Bavarian authorities, culminating in his exile and the banning of the Illuminati.

Rhodes, in contrast, with a controlling stake in southern Africa's diamond monopoly, two terms as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony and feted by Britain's Establishment, had at his disposal enormous financial and political resources--and, as such, ample opportunity to act on his ideas without fear of persecution by the state because, especially in southern Africa, he was the state.

Part Two examines Alfred Milner's role in the first efforts to realise Rhodes's vision of a secret society devoted to imperial unity.

Endnotes Part One:
1. Quote attributed to Rhodes in Frederic Whyte, The Life of W. T. Stead, Jonathan Cape, 1925, vol. II, p. 206.
2. Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000, Random House, 1987, pp. 224-226.
3. Niall Ferguson, Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World, Basic Books, 2003, p. xxiii.
4. Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, pp. 226-229 (quote on p. 229).
5. Quoted in A. M. Gollin, Proconsul in Politics: A Study of Lord Milner in Opposition and in Power, Anthony Blond, 1964, p. 16; and Walter Nimocks, Milner's Young Men: The "Kindergarten" in Edwardian Imperial Affairs, Duke University Press, 1968, p. 124.
6. David Icke, ...And The Truth Shall Set You Free: The most explosive book of the 20th century, Bridge of Love, 1995, p. 67.
7. See Carroll Quigley, Tragedy and Hope: A History of The World in Our Time, Angriff Press, 1966–1974, pp. 130-133, 144-153, 950-956; and Quigley, "The Round Table Groups in Canada, 1908–38", Canadian Historical Review, September 1962, pp. 204-224.
8. Jeremy Lee, Australia 2000: "What Will We Tell Our Children?", Pickford Productions, 1997, p. 28.
9. See, for example, David Icke (...And The Truth Shall Set You Free, p. 151), who places the Round Table at the centre of his diagram, which is in fact a copy of Stan Deyo's "Round Table of the Nine" diagram in his book The Cosmic Conspiracy (West Australian Texas Trading, 1992, p. 96). Dr John Coleman, in contrast, presents the Round Table as an offshoot of the Royal Institute for International Affairs, itself beneath the "Committee of 300"; see Conspirators' Hierarchy: The Story of the Committee of 300, America West Publishers, 1992, p. 265.
10. It is hoped that an enterprising researcher will some day analyse Quigley's research notes for Tragedy and Hope, now available at Georgetown University Library, Washington, DC, to assess Quigley's claims to privileged access to files of the "international Anglophile network".
11. Gary Allen with Larry Abraham, None Dare Call It Conspiracy, Concord Press, 1971, p. 74.
12. Quoted in Walter Nimocks, Milner's Young Men, pp. 143-144.
13. For biographies of Cecil Rhodes, see: Sarah Gertrude Millin, Rhodes, Chatto & Windus, 1952; John Flint, Cecil Rhodes, Hutchinson, 1976; Robert I. Rotberg with Miles F. Shore, The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power, Oxford University Press, 1988; and Antony Thomas, Rhodes, St Martin's Press, 1997.
14. See: Thomas, Rhodes, pp. 169-181; Rotberg, The Founder, pp. 180-214; and Rob Turrell, "Rhodes, De Beers and Monopoly", Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, May 1982, pp. 311-343.

15. John S. Galbraith, "Cecil Rhodes and his 'Cosmic Dreams': A Re-assessment", Journal of Commonwealth and Imperial History, Winter 1972–73, p. 173.
16. Quigley, Tragedy and Hope, p. 130. See also: Flint, Cecil Rhodes, pp. 27-28; and Millin, Rhodes, p. 29.
17. Rotberg, The Founder, pp. 85-88, 95. Thomas (Rhodes, p. 110), recognising that Rhodes arrived three years too late to see Ruskin, still speculates that "no doubt, he would have read the published text" of Ruskin's speech.
18. Quoted in Flint, Cecil Rhodes, pp. 27-28.
19. Rotberg, The Founder, p. 95.
20. ibid., pp. 99-100 (including quote).
21. Quoted in Flint, Cecil Rhodes, pp. 248-249.
22. Quoted in Millin, Rhodes, p. 32.
23. Quoted in Flint, Cecil Rhodes, pp. 250-251.
24. Rotberg, The Founder, pp. 101, 102.
25. "Confession" quoted in Flint, Cecil Rhodes, p. 249.
26. Rotberg, The Founder, pp. 101-102. The "heart attack", which is alleged to have occurred while Rhodes was in Oxford, is an unusual incident. His friends reportedly found Rhodes barricaded in his room "blue with fright" and insisting that "he had seen a ghost" (ibid., p. 102).
27. Quoted in ibid., pp. 32-33 (emphasis added).
28. ibid., p. 233.
29. Niall Ferguson, The House of Rothschild: The World's Banker, 1848–1998, Penguin Books, 2000, vol. II, pp. 360-362, 523 fn13 (including Rhodes quote).
30. Quoted in Rotberg, The Founder, p. 316.
31. Quoted in Estelle W. Stead, My Father: Personal & Spiritual Reminiscences, William Heinemann, 1913, p. 154.
32. Rotberg, The Founder, pp. 281-282; quotes in Stead, My Father, pp. 234, 236.
33. Rotberg, The Founder, p. 282.
34. Quigley, Tragedy and Hope, p. 133.
35. Quoted in Stead, My Father, p. 239.
36. Rhodes to Stead quoted in Millin, Rhodes, p. 172; Rhodes's will quoted in Rotberg, The Founder, p. 666.
37. Christopher Hitchens, Blood, Class and Nostalgia: Anglo-American Ironies, Chatto & Windus, 1990, pp. 299-300.
38. Quigley, Tragedy and Hope, pp. 130-131; Rhodes quoted in Millin, Rhodes, p. 171.
39. Quoted in Millin, Rhodes, pp. 172-175.
40. Quoted in Graham Hancock and Robert Bauval, Talisman: Sacred Cities, Sacred Faith, Michael Joseph, 2004, p. 379.

~*~ PART TWO ~*~

ALFRED MILNER: SERVANT OF EMPIRE ~*~

Having such considerable political and economic power at his disposal, Cecil Rhodes had the luxury of being able to delegate responsibility for realising his vision to other figures within the British Establishment; of these, Alfred Milner was to become his principal representative.

Of English and German parentage, Milner spent his early years in Germany before moving to England in 1869. He attended Oxford as an undergraduate from 1872 to 1876, becoming one of its more distinguished students. He was president of the Oxford Union in 1875 and later achieved first-class honours. Although at Oxford at the same time as Rhodes, and even in the same clubs, remarkably there is no evidence that they actually knew each other at that time.

His post-Oxford career also followed a somewhat different path to that of Rhodes. In 1881 Milner became a journalist for the Pall Mall Gazette, working with William Stead and eventually rising to the position of assistant editor. In the mid-1880s he dabbled in politics, making an unsuccessful run for Parliament in 1885.

Milner then moved into the public service, attaining a number of senior positions befitting an Oxford-educated man, including positions : private secretary to George Goschen, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Undersecretary to the Egyptian Ministry of Finance from 1889 to 1892; and, on his return to England, Chairman of the Internal Revenue Board. In February 1897 he was appointed High Commissioner for South Africa and Governor of the Cape Colony, a dual appointment that was to prove to be one of the highlights of his Government career./41

Unlike Rhodes's, Milner's exposure to the idea of imperial federation can be definitively traced to individuals he met while studying at Oxford. The primary source of this inspiration was prominent Canadian author George Parkin, who visited Oxford in 1873. Parkin had impressed and inspired Milner at an Oxford Union debate where he had argued for "a closer union between England and her colonies" in the form of an "Imperial Federation"./42

They subsequently became lifelong friends, and Parkin's vigorous advocacy of imperial federation had a strong influence on Milner. Just before taking up his post in South Africa in 1897, Milner wrote to Parkin telling him that he had been "greatly influenced" by his ideas and that in his new position he would feel "more than ever" a need for Parkin's "enthusiasm and broad hopeful view of the Imperial future"./43

Milner also alluded to Parkin's influence in his book The British Commonwealth (1919), noting that it was at Oxford where he had been "first stirred by a new vision of the future of the British Empire". In his Parkin-inspired vision, the Empire became a "world-encircling group of related nations...united on a basis of equality and partnership, and...by moral and spiritual bonds"./44

Post-Oxford, Milner's support for imperial federation received further reinforcement during his time as assistant editor at the Pall Mall Gazette. As we saw in part one, William Stead, the Gazette's editor and later friend of Rhodes, was an enthusiastic supporter of reforming the British Empire and of a much closer Anglo-American relationship. This was re-flected in the Gazette's "Gospel", a lengthy document which endorsed the "political union" of all the "English-speaking states" on the pessimistic grounds that: "The Federation of the British Empire is the condition of its survival. As an Empire we must federate or perish." The "Gospel" also stated that "inevitable destiny" would compel Britain and the US to "coalesce". When he left the Gazette, Milner remained on good terms with Stead and in frequent contact, even while posted to Egypt, with imperial unity often the topic of their communications./45

Milner's definitive personal statement of his support for imperial federation is his so-called "Credo", a document written late in his life and not published until after his death in 1925 by the Times—then under the editorship of fellow Round Table member Geoffrey Dawson. The Credo expressed Milner's thoughts about the British Empire that he had held since Oxford. It was also an affirmation of Milner's belief in the inherent superiority of the British people as a race and culture.

The Credo was also Milner's way of definitively identifying himself as British, effectively repudiating his German parentage. In the Credo, Milner declared himself a "British Race Patriot" and "a Nationalist and not a cosmopolitan". Milner, however, recognised that Britain was "no longer a power in the world which it once was" and he expressed the hope that the Dominions could be "kept as an entity". He redefined the British state from a purely geographical unit to one based on race: wherever British people were in appreciable numbers should be considered part of Britain./46

For Milner, imperial federation was but an end in itself—one that would preserve and perpetuate British power in the guise of a supranational state encompassing the United Kingdom and all its Dominions. He had made this sentiment quite clear as early as 1885 in a speech he delivered while campaigning for Parliament. Milner's speech not only expressed views that he would retain for the rest of his life—as revealed in his Credo—but also exposed his apparent conviction that imperial federation would hasten world peace.

> "...I am no cosmopolitan... I think we can foresee a time when the great Anglo-Saxon Confederation throughout the world, with

its members self-governing in their domestic concerns, but firmly united for the purposes of mutual protection, will not only be the most splendid political union that the world has ever known, but also the best security for universal peace."/47

However, unlike Rhodes and Stead, Milner was sceptical that an Anglo-American re-union was possible. In fact, he was wary of American intentions and did not believe the division caused by the American Revolution could be so easily reversed. "No doubt a great many Americans are thoroughly friendly to us," Milner was to write to a colleague in 1909, "but a great number are hostile. The best thing we can hope for is to keep on good terms with them. I neither anticipate nor desire anything more."/48

For Milner, preserving the British Empire in some new form was the highest priority; the goal of recovering the US he regarded as an unrealistic distraction. More importantly, Milner did not share Rhodes's obvious enthusiasm for enlarging the British Empire. In 1884, for example, Milner explained to the Secretary of the Oxford Liberal Association his conviction:

> "I am not anxious to extend the bounds of an Empire already vast or to increase responsibilities already onerous. But if I desire to limit the sphere of our actions abroad, it is in order that within this limited sphere we may be more and not less vigorous, resolute & courageous."49

Serving the British Empire in Cairo, Milner maintained this view in 1890, telling colleagues that he had always been "for strong unwavering masterful assertion of our power within reasonable limits" and had "no sympathy with the lust for unlimited Empire"./50 Noting the erosion of Britain's imperial footprint in China, for instance, Milner recommended against attempts to limit the expansionist aims of other imperial powers.

"The true answer to them," Milner wrote to his former employer Goschen in 1898, "is to strengthen our own position in quarters, where we on our side, can be masters if we choose..."/51 In a 1906 speech, he was more explicit:

> "Our object is not domination or aggrandisement. It is consolidation and security... [W]e wish the kindred peoples under the British family to remain one united family forever."/52

Consolidation was Milner's aim, and imperial federation was a means to that end. In a piece praising Milner, written by one of the Round Table's few American members in 1915, it was claimed that he favoured "a genuinely democratic conception of government"./53 But, in reality, Milner was contemptuous of democracy. Despite his earlier service to parliamentarians, his own political aspirations and his later service in Lloyd George's War Cabinet, he was scornful of that "mob at Westminster". "I regard it as a necessary evil," Milner wrote of democracy in a letter to fellow Round Table member Lionel Curtis on 27 November 1915; "I accept it without enthusiasm, but with absolute loyalty, to make the best of it."/54

Milner was also a socialist, though some observers suggest he adopted more of a Germanic or "Bismarckian state socialism" that favoured the application of political will or state planning rather than natural forces to achieve desired outcomes. According to Stokes, Milner sought to fit people into a "pre-arranged scheme of society"; the people were not to be involved in its creation.

Milner's enthusiasm for this state-socialist model stemmed from his "early faith in a planned society conceived and ordered by the scientific intelligence". Influenced by Otto von Bismarck's methods of uniting the Germanic people under one state, Milner had as his goal the consolidation of all the British people through an act of political will rather than through popular consent./55

Rhodes was no longer Prime Minister of the Cape Colony when Milner arrived to take up his new posting, but he remained a powerful and influential figure. That the two men dealt with each other regularly is confirmed by most accounts, but they do not seem to have been too close. Milner claimed that he got on "capitally" with Rhodes and professed to

admire his abilities as "a great developer", although he found the Colossus of Africa "too self-willed, too violent, too sanguine, and always in too much of a hurry"./56

There was also suspicion: despite his admiration for Rhodes, Milner privately admitted to finding him "enormously untrustworthy", and believed Rhodes would "give away" Milner or anybody else "to gain the least of [his] private ends"./57

Rhodes, in contrast, seemed to have few such qualms about the wily Milner. According to Rhodes's private secretary, Philip Jourdan, the Colossus "had the highest opinion of the abilities of Lord Milner as an administrator" and the two "frequently met in South Africa and discussed political matters"./58 Such was Rhodes's regard for the bureaucrat that in July 1901 he asked Milner—who was already privy to Rhodes's secret society scheme—to become one of his trustees. Milner was suitably obliging, accepting with a letter expressing his "complete sympathy" for Rhodes's "broad ambitions for the [British] race"./59

It was perhaps inevitable that the more reliable Milner, steeped in the ways of the British Establishment and possessing a more level-headed personality and unstinting devotion to the cause of imperial unity, became Rhodes's preferred heir to realise his dream of imperial federation.

As for the easily overawed and socially crusading Stead, Rhodes removed his name from his final will, citing Stead's "extraordinary eccentricity"—a reference to both his support for the Boers and what Whyte describes as Stead's newfound "obsession with spooks"./60

During the 1890s, Stead had developed a growing fascination with the paranormal, including clairvoyance, ghosts and communicating with spirits. He was a Theosophist and had met the founder of Theosophy, Madame Blavatsky, in 1888 when she came to London. Stead admitted to being both "delighted with" and "repelled by" Blavatsky, but the relationship was such that she later sent the Theosophist Secret Doctrine to his offices for review./61 These interests had diminished his public standing and had obviously raised doubts in Rhodes's mind as to his

overall reliability. Milner, in contrast, had no such stains on his public reputation or eccentricities.

VISIONS OF IMPERIAL UNITY ~ * ~

The identification of Milner and Rhodes with the cause of imperial federation is not because their vision was unique, but because of the means by which they sought to achieve it. Indeed, the idea of imperial federation was not the property of Milner, Rhodes, Ruskin, Parkin or Stead, but had a history stretching back to the time of the American War of Independence. Adam Smith, for example, raised the idea in his Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776). Recognising that the dispute stemmed from the American colonists' refusal to be "taxed by a parliament in which they are not represented", Smith advocated that representation be ensured through "the union of Great Britain with her colonies".

To this end, he envisaged an "assembly which deliberates and decides concerning the affairs of every part of the empire" and which would "have representatives from every part of [the empire]"./62 Smith's vision was, however, very much ahead of its time, and the idea of imperial union or federation did not re-emerge in Britain until the 1820s when an increasing number of colonies appeared to be agitating for self-government. Fearing that the Empire might break up, a growing number of British parliamentarians, journalists, businessmen and other influential figures endorsed the idea of the colonies having some form of direct or indirect representation in Westminster.

The debates over this issue canvassed three options for "Empire federalism":

- parliamentary—the colonies having sitting members in Westminster, while retaining their own legislature;
- extra-parliamentary—the colonies being represented in Westminster by agents acting alone or together as a Colonial Board; and
- super-parliamentary—the imperial federation model of a central

parliament.

These debates were short-lived, though, once it became apparent that relatively few colonies were sufficiently well established or at odds with London to want to break away from Britain's orbit.

The idea surfaced again in the 1870s and 1880s, then in reaction to the threat posed to Britain's great power status by Russia, the United States and Germany. During this new round of political debates over imperial federation, the concept of an imperial council emerged as the most popular option. In a speech in 1872, for example, Benjamin Disraeli, then Leader of the Opposition, endorsed the idea of a "representative council" in Westminster "which would have brought the colonies into constant and continuing relations with the Home Government". Other advocates suggested the creation of a special Colonial Council or a Colonial Committee in the Privy Council./64

At the forefront of these late 19th century efforts to promote imperial federation was one of the Round Table's predecessors—the Imperial Federation League (IFL). Founded in 1884 by Francis de Labilliere, an Australian lawyer, and Sir John Colomb, formerly of the British Royal Navy, the League aimed to "secure by Federation the unity of the Empire" by uniting Britain with its colonies in "perfect equality"./65

Parkin and Milner were both involved in the IFL; Milner's role was indirect, while Parkin's was as a full-time agent of the group, conducting tours of Australia and New Zealand on the IFL's behalf and later becoming its chief speaker and propagandist. Following the IFL's demise in 1893, Milner was instrumental in raising funds so Parkin could continue to promote the cause of imperial federation, although the funding was insufficient to sustain this effort for long./66

THE "SOCIETY OF THE ELECT" ˜ * ˜

Rhodes took his own first steps towards imperial federation on 5 February 1891 when he and Stead agreed on the structure of the secret society, or "Society of the Elect", that he had sought since 1877. Like Weishaupt's Illuminati, this proposed secret society had an elaborate hierarchical structure, based on that of the Jesuits, which comprised:

- at the top, the position of "General of the Society"—a position modelled on the General of the Jesuits—to be occupied by Rhodes, with Stead and Lord Rothschild as his designated successors;
-
- an executive committee called the "Junta of Three", comprising Stead, Milner and Reginald Baliol Brett (Lord Esher); then
- a "Circle of Initiates", consisting of a number of notables including Cardinal Manning, Lord Arthur Balfour, Lord Albert Grey and Sir Harry Johnston; and
- outside of this was the "Association of Helpers", the broad mass of the Society./67

One of the puzzles surrounding this meeting is whether the "Society of the Elect" actually came into being. Quigley claims in Tragedy and Hope (1966) that Rhodes's "Society of the Elect" was not only "formally established" in 1891, but also that its "outer circle known as the 'Association of Helpers'" was "later organised by Milner as the Round Table"./68

In his posthumous book, The Anglo-American Establishment (1981), Quigley insists that the Society had been formed and that the disappearance of the secret society idea from Rhodes's sixth and seventh wills in favour of the scholarships was only a calculated ruse. The scholarships were "merely a façade to conceal the secret society", which had remained Rhodes's objective right through to his death./69

Other researchers, though, have been less certain. Billington, for example, challenges Whyte's contention that the organisation was "stillborn", acknowledging the Society "did organise in a provisional sense" between 1889 and 1891, yet he argues that Quigley ignored its ineffectiveness and eventual collapse./70

Evidence that for a time the Society did exist in some form can be found scattered in various places. For instance, Stead had already formed the

"Association of Helpers" by 1890, when he founded Review of Reviews as a means of making Rhodes's secret society idea—in another Illuminati-like touch—"presentable to the public without in any way revealing the esoteric truth behind it" (Stead). Recognising his contribution with the Review and the Helpers, Rhodes enthusiastically told Stead: "You have begun to realise my idea..." Further progress appeared to have been made in 1891 when Lord Esher and Milner, according to Stead's account, both agreed to participate in the Society./71

There are other tantalising fragments of evidence, though they are incomplete. According to Marlowe, for instance, it was while visiting England in April 1891 that Milner saw Stead, who "talked to him about Cecil Rhodes and his scheme for an imperial secret society".

Yet Marlowe cannot tell us if Milner decided to join. He also notes that Milner met with George Parkin, Lord Roseberry and Lord Esher, all named by Quigley as known or suspected "initiates"./72 In addition, Rotberg records that Rhodes met with Esher during his 1891 visit to Britain and later corresponded with him about forming a secret league of "the English race", in which each member would be required to find two more supporters. "It could begin with you," Esher wrote to Rhodes, "and might well roll up indefinitely!"/73

We also find, in an exchange with Stead in April 1900, in which he explained that Stead would no longer be a trustee (because of Stead's opposition to the Anglo–Boer War), that Rhodes acknowledged the existence of their "Society":

> "How can our Society be worked if each one sets himself up as the sole judge of what ought to be done? Just look at the position here. We three are South Africa, all of us your boys. I myself, Milner and [F. Edmund] Garrett, all of whom learned politics from you—and yet instead of deferring to the judgment of your own boys you fling yourself into violent opposition to the war."/74

Yet in this very exchange, which Quigley cites as evidence of the endur-

ing nature of the Society, we can also see the signs that the Society was not functioning as effectively or as smoothly as Rhodes had envisaged. Milner, Esher, Stead, Rothschild and Garrett besides, there is a dearth of evidence that any of the others named in Rhodes's wish list was approached or agreed to participate in his secret society.

More importantly, it would appear that events in southern Africa, coupled with Rhodes's growing health problems, were of greater concern to his thinking than his broader imperial schemes. Thus in 1894, citing his increasingly onerous financial commitments in southern Africa, Rhodes refused a request from Stead to provide a promised income of £5,000 a year to the Association of Helpers, by then in rapid decline, effectively killing that part of his scheme./75 Judging this apparent fiasco, we can best surmise that Rhodes's infectious enthusiasm in this case clearly exceeded the practicality of his idea. But it would be a mistake to conclude that he abandoned it.

THE RHODES SCHOLARSHIPS ˜ * ˜

Rhodes did not lose his enthusiasm for Anglo-American leadership of an imperial federation, but, as his health deteriorated and events in southern Africa continued to dominate his time and thinking, he turned to other means of achieving his goal posthumously. By the late 1890s, instead of a secret society Rhodes embraced the idea of a scholarship for white men drawn from the British Empire and the United States. In choosing this course, Rhodes appears to have been influenced by the arguments of Astley Cooper, editor of the periodical Greater Britain and an ally of Stead, and Thomas Beare, from the University of Edinburgh.

During the 1890s, Cooper and Beare had advocated the concept of "Empire scholarships", with the aim of strengthening "those invisible ties...which will keep together...the Anglo-Saxon race". Rhodes ruminated on the scholarship idea throughout the last decade of his life, eventually incorporating it into his sixth and seventh wills. However, it was in his final will of 1 July 1899 that the idea took its penultimate form as the "Rhodes Scholarships"./76

Rhodes's detailed instructions for the scholarship scheme provided for 60 students from the Empire, 32 from the United States and a smaller number from Germany to be taught and accommodated at Oxford for one year. The primary objective of the scholarships, according to Rhodes's will, was to instil in the minds of the students "the advantages to the Colonies as well as to the United Kingdom of the retention of the unity of the Empire"./77

While his vision of imperial unity has not been achieved, Rhodes's scholarship scheme has become one of his more enduring and successful legacies. A disproportionate number of its candidates have achieved high office. For example, prominent Rhodes Scholarship alumni include the former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke and US President Bill Clinton, as well as at least nine senior officials in the Clinton Administration and 11 in the Kennedy Administration. This has prompted some observers to claim that the Rhodes Scholarships have produced a "permanent party of government as it exists in law, business, intelligence, diplomacy and the military" (Hitchens)./78

While such claims are debatable—there appear to be few Rhodes Scholars in the current Bush Administration—there can be little doubt that the Rhodes Scholarships have advanced the careers of many aspiring politicians and bureaucrats to a remarkable degree.

MILNER'S "KINDERGARTEN" ~ * ~

Although the "Society of the Elect" failed to eventuate in Rhodes's lifetime—itself cut short by heart failure in March 1902—Milner, with his so-called "Kindergarten", had inadvertently planted the seeds of its realisation in southern Africa.

The Kindergarten was a group of young Oxford graduates, mostly from New College, who had been drawn to southern Africa to serve in the British colonial administration during and after the Boer War (1899–1902). They included J. F. (Peter) Perry, Lionel Curtis, Hugh Wyndham, Patrick Duncan, Geoffrey Robinson (who took up the surname Dawson in 1917), Philip Kerr, Lionel Hichens, Richard Feetham and Robert H. Brand.

This group of recruits, almost all in their twenties and unmarried, came with a belief in the superiority of English civilisation and a strong commitment to imperialism, fulfilling Milner's criteria of having "brains and character". They served under Milner to reconstruct the devastated Boer republics and were all inspired by his visions of a united South Africa and an imperial federation. For the members of the Kindergarten, Milner was "the centre of their world" (Kendle); he was their "father-figure and Socrates", whom they considered "the fountainhead of political wisdom and the greatest statesman of the Empire" (Nimocks)./79

Milner had first ventured to southern Africa convinced that it was the "weakest link" in the British Empire; to "prevent it snapping" and to maintain British supremacy in Africa, he believed that waging war on the Boers would be necessary./80 When Milner retired in April 1905 in the wake of bitter controversy over his plan to import indentured Chinese labour, he returned to Britain deeply pessimistic about South Africa's future in the British Empire. This view was not shared by the Kindergarten, whose members remained convinced they could finish the work that Milner and Rhodes had started (it was their machinations that had contributed to the outbreak of the Boer War) and integrate the now devastated and defeated Boer states into the Empire.

>>To push the cause for closer unity in South Africa, the Kindergarten employed a number of measures aimed at shaping popular and elite opinion. Drawing on a range of funds, including The Rhodes Trust,/81 the Kindergarten kept out of public view as much as possible while carefully managing their propaganda organs, seeking to create support for union. These methods of organised propaganda included their periodical The State, which Kindergarten members edited from 1907 to 1909, and the formation of Closer Union Societies, which further propagated unification propaganda but under the guise of bipartisan political leadership. Finally, a united South Africa was popularised in the lengthy propaganda pieces The Selborne Memorandum and The Government of South Africa, both written by Kindergarten member Lionel Curtis (1872–1955)./82 <<

It is questionable, though, that the Kindergarten's role was as pivotal as its members chose to believe. Well before the Kindergarten had launched its campaign, Britain was already receptive to the idea of a united South Africa. Moreover, key Boer leaders Jan Smuts and Louis Botha, confident that they would in time dominate the proposed union, had also embraced the concept. According to historian Norman Rose, for example, despite their "at times, hysterical lobbying", which often did no more than soften the opinion of British settlers, the Kindergarten in fact played "a marginal role"./83

Nimocks, in his detailed history of the Kindergarten, is more dismissive of the movement's impact on South African unification:

> "It is obvious...that Milner's young men did not unite South Africa. Their efforts were important in bringing closer union to the attention of the general population and keeping it there. And members of the group did exert some influence upon those, both British and Boer, who determined the final form of the constitution. But forces far more powerful than anything the kindergarten could muster were responsible for South African unification."/84

>> But in the overall scheme of things, such observations are perhaps redundant, for, as Kendle notes, the Kindergarten "left South Africa convinced of the merits of organized propaganda and behind-the-scenes discussion", which they now hoped to apply to the unification of the British Empire as a whole./85 Having consolidated the colonies of southern Africa, they now set their sights on the world. <<

Part Three examines the founding of the Round Table and its efforts to secure the support of the Dominion governments for imperial federation.

Endnotes to PART TWO

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43. Quoted in Kendle, The Round Table Movement, p. 6.
44. Quoted in Nimocks, Milner's Young Men, p. 13.
45. Frederic Whyte, The Life of W. T. Stead, Jonathan Cape, 1925, vol. II, pp. 12-13, 322-323 (including quotes); Nimocks, Milner's Young Men, p. 14.
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49. Quoted in Eric Stokes, "Milnerism", The Historical Journal, vol. 5, no. 1 (1962), p. 49.
50. ibid., p. 50.
51. ibid., p. 51.
52. Quoted in George Louis Beer, "Lord Milner and British Imperialism", Political Science Quarterly, June 1915, p. 304 (emphasis added).
53. ibid., p. 301.
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62. Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations, University Paperbacks, 1961, vol. II, pp. 137, 139 (first pub. 1776). See also David Stevens, "Adam Smith and the Colonial Disturbances", in Andrew Skinner and Thomas Wilson (eds), Essays on Adam Smith, Clarendon Press, 1975, pp. 202-217.

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64. ibid., pp. 88-89; Disraeli quoted in W. D. McIntyre, Colonies into Commonwealth, Blandford Press, 1968, 2nd edition, pp. 121-122.

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68. Quigley, Tragedy and Hope, p. 131.

69. Carroll Quigley, The Anglo-American Establishment: From Rhodes to Cliveden, Books in Focus, 1981, pp. 33, 34, 38; excerpts at http://userscyberone.com.au/ myers/quigley.html.

70. David P. Billington Jr, "The Tragedy and Hope of Carroll Quigley", The American Oxonian, Fall 1994 (found through the Wayback Machine Internet archive at http://www.leonardo.net/davidpb/quigley.html); Whyte, The Life of W. T. Stead, vol. II, p. 210.

71. Stead and Rhodes quoted in Estelle W. Stead, My Father: Personal & Spiritual Reminiscences, William Heinemann, 1913, p. 240.

72. Marlowe, Milner: Apostle of Empire, p. 21.

73. Quoted in Rotberg, The Founder, p. 416.

74. Quoted in Miles F. Shore, "Cecil Rhodes and the Ego Ideal", Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Autumn 1979, p. 256. Garrett, the Pall Mall Gazette's correspondent in southern Africa and later Editor of the Cape Times, is described by Quigley as an "intimate friend" of Stead, Milner and Rhodes (The Anglo-American Establishment, pp. 43-44).

75. Rotberg, The Founder, p. 416; and Billington, "The Tragedy and Hope of Carroll Quigley", ibid.

76. Rotberg, The Founder, pp. 664-668.

77. Quoted in Rotberg, ibid., p. 667

78. See Christopher Hitchens, "Minority Report", The Nation, 14 December 1992, pp. 726, 743. See also William F. Jasper, "Reviewing the Rhodes Legacy", The New American, 20 February 1995.

79. Milner quoted in Rose, The Cliveden Set, p. 2; Kendle, The Round Table Movement, p. 21; Nimocks, Milner's Young Men, p. 132.

80. Quoted in Kendle, The Round Table Movement, p. 8.

81. Through Milner, £1,000 was secured from the Rhodes Trust in 1906, but on the condition the funding source be kept secret; see Marlowe, Milner: Apostle of Empire, p. 206.

82. Kendle, The Round Table Movement, pp. 22-45; Nimocks, Milner's Young Men, pp. 54-108.

83. Rose, The Cliveden Set, p. 65.

84. Nimocks, Milner's Young Men, pp. 121-122.

85. See also Kendle, The Round Table Movement, pp. 22-45.

PART THREE

THE KINDERGARTEN RETURNS HOME ~ * ~

More than a few researchers have found attractive Quigley's argument that Cecil Rhodes's essential vision for the unity of the English-speaking peoples was a benevolent one. Commenting on the "international Anglophile network" that had grown out of both Rhodes's money and vision of Anglo-American unity, Quigley described as "commendable" this group's "chief aims", including to "maintain the peace" and "help backward, colonial and underdeveloped areas to advance toward stability, law

and order, and prosperity..."/86

Taking his cue from Quigley, one prominent researcher suggested that Rhodes founded the Round Table "possibly with the best of intentions", including "a desire to stop wars", but following Rhodes's death in 1902 "the big switch was made and the Illuminati, in classic fashion, hijacked his creation"./87

To be sure, Rhodes was interested in world peace; but the Round Table was founded seven years after his untimely death and we cannot forget that in his "Confession" Rhodes dismissed non-British peoples as "despicable". But if we put aside these elementary errors it is worth noting that when the Kindergarten returned to Britain in 1909, it was not Cecil Rhodes's ideas they drew upon but Milner's visions and ambitions. More importantly, as we have already seen in part two, Milner's ideas on imperial federation fell somewhat short of the Anglo-American world government sought by Rhodes.

The Kindergarten received many reminders of Milner's commitment to imperial consolidation and disinterest in expanding the British Empire. Before his return to Britain in 1905, for example, Milner had given a farewell speech on the "great ideal of Imperial Unity" in which he argued for an empire "united not in an alliance—for alliances can be made and unmade...but in a permanent organic union"./88 In 1904, also in Johannesburg, Milner had declared himself prepared "to see the Federal Council of the Empire sitting in Ottawa, in Sydney, in South Africa—sitting anywhere within the Empire—if in the great future we can only hold it all together"./89

Another influence on the Kindergarten was Frederick Scott Oliver (1864–1934), an American businessman, aspiring politician and author of Alexander Hamilton: An Essay on American Union (1906)/90—a book hailed by leading Round Table members Leo Amery and Lionel Curtis as "the Bible" and "great inspiration" of their movement.

According to Nimocks, rather than its being merely a biography of the famed American statesman, Oliver's book "is more accurately described as a five-hundred-page plea for imperial unity". Oliver drew comparisons between Hamilton's push to centralise authority in the North American colonies, and then argued for the British Empire's need to consider a similar course./91 Like Milner, Oliver was an advocate of imperial consolidation, not further expansion. He also shared a disdain for democracy; in fact, Milner believed Oliver to have "an aversion for Democracy"./92

LIONEL CURTIS'S PLAN FOR IMPERIAL UNITY ~ * ~

It was Lionel Curtis, probably the most zealous and idealistic of the Kindergarten members, who took the initiative, devising a step-by-step plan to unify the Empire based on their South African experience. This was perhaps inevitable, as he was the most avid proponent of the Kindergarten's devotion to imperial unity—hence his nickname, "the Prophet". As Amery noted, "His passionate sincerity and energy, as well as the indisputable logic of his arguments, tended to dominate our councils"./93

Educated at New College, Oxford, and one of the first of Milner's recruits in 1901, Curtis very much defined all that contemporary critics disliked about Milner's Kindergarten. According to one biography of Curtis, the then young, confident, single-minded Curtis was considered a "flagrant example of precocious Kindergarten cocksureness" (Lavin). Curtis was also the Kindergarten's most enthusiastic advocate of the "organic union" of South Africa, writing its two most important propaganda tracts, The Selborne Memorandum (1907) and The Government of South Africa (1908). He possessed an unbounded zeal for extending the project of "organic union" not only to the British Empire but also to the world./94 Curtis sought the support of Milner and The Rhodes Trust both to refine the plan further and bring it to fruition.

After returning to Britain in 1905, Milner turned to various other pursuits. Despite his socialist orientation, he refused a government pension and instead sought employment in the City, London's financial district, subsequently joining the boards of the London Joint Stock Bank, the Bank of West Africa and the Rio Tinto Company. He also continued his work with The Rhodes Trust, becoming its "most active member" ac-

cording to Marlowe.

At the same time, Milner renewed his acquaintance with Sidney and Beatrice Webb, founders of the Fabian Society. It was an odd relationship. Milner viewed his controversial departure from South Africa as proof that events were moving their way, while his "house of cards" was "tumbling down". Beatrice Webb in turn pitied Milner, thinking of him as "bitter and obsessed" and lacking in spirituality; only "God and a wife", she believed, would turn him into a "great man"./95

Milner also maintained his political interests, joining two dining clubs devoted to his pet concerns of imperial unity and tariff reform: the "Coefficients" and the "Compatriots".

Founded by Sidney Webb in 1902, the Coefficients met monthly to discuss defence, imperial issues and the economy. The Compatriots, which concerned itself with tariff reform and imperial unity, was established by Leo Amery, a journalist who had associated with Milner and the Kindergarten while working as a correspondent for the Times during the Boer War and who, after the Kindergarten's return to Britain, was employed by Milner as one of his assistants. Milner provided funding to these groups and other activities out of The Rhodes Trust.

Quigley characterised the Compatriots and Coefficients as some of the "numerous groups and organizations founded by Milner...to create an inmense nexus of influence and patronage for directing public policy in imperial and other matters"./96 This is an odd claim, given that Milner abandoned the Coefficients on the grounds that it was too divisive and then the Compatriots, once it was superseded by a more enduring creation—the Round Table./97

There was no network—at that stage. Instead, with the return of the Kindergarten in 1909 and the appearance of Curtis's plan, Milner was suddenly seized with a desire to establish a more substantial movement for imperial federation, telling Amery of his newfound enthusiasm for creating a "single Imperial Unionist party all over the Empire"./98 During July and August 1909, Milner, Amery, Curtis, Oliver and other members of the Kindergarten, plus a host of other British establishment figures who were taken by Milner's vision of imperial federation, met in a number of exclusive London clubs to discuss Curtis's plan. Curtis's scheme had three essential components:

1. to produce a memorandum, similar to The Selborne Memorandum, which would define the "imperial problem" as a basis for discussion;
2. to contact influential supporters of imperial federation throughout the Empire, especially in the press and parliaments, using the memorandum as a talking point, to establish a political organisation to promote the cause;
3. to publish magazines and other periodicals throughout the Empire that would carry the message of imperial unity, but under central supervision to ensure the message remained consistent.

As for the preferred model of imperial unity, according to Curtis biographer Deborah Lavin he proposed establishing "a central sovereign imperial authority directly elected by the people of the Empire to conduct foreign policy and control the armed services, raising taxation through its own officers"./99

CONFERENCE AT PLAS NEWYDD ˜ * ˜

In September 1909, Curtis's proposals to create an organisation to influence elite opinion in the cause of imperial federation were debated at the estate of Lord Anglesey at Plas Newydd in Wales. In retrospect, the Plas Newydd conference became the model for other elite policy-planning groups in the 20th century—a model copied faithfully, if unwittingly, by the founders of the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderbergers, the Club of Rome and the World Economic Forum—with the power-elite gathering in exclusive and isolated locations for private conferences on grand geopolitical schemes.

Thus at Lord Anglesey's well-appointed estate (it even had a golf course and a cricket pavilion), with Milner leading the proceedings, the gathered supporters of imperial federation discussed the plans further. >> Curtis's

blueprints for the propaganda methods of the organisation underwent little modification, and the immediate production of a memorandum on "imperial problems" was endorsed. <<

That the British Empire must unite or disintegrate was accepted as a self-evident truth; however, the options of voluntary associations or alliances between Britain and its dominions were rejected as unstable and unsuitable alternatives to unity. As recorded by Philip Kerr (later Lord Lothian; 1882–1940), "it was thought that in the long run some form of organic union was the only alternative to disruption". Funding for the movement was also discussed, and was obtained from a number of benefactors including South African mining magnate Sir Abe Bailey and The Rhodes Trust. According to Quigley, The Rhodes Trust was to provide almost £24,000 to the Round Table in its first decade./100

At a subsequent meeting, held on 23 January 1910 in Milner's offices in Manchester Square, "organic union" of the British Empire was formalised as the ultimate aim of the Round Table movement. According to a memorandum of the meeting, this required the "establishment of an Imperial Government constitutionally responsible to all electors of the Empire and with power to act directly on the individual citizens". The plan was to establish an organisation or "moot" (an old English word for "meeting" or "assembly"), headquartered in England and with other branches throughout the empire, to discuss, debate and, it was hoped, bring to fruition the goal of "Imperial Union".

In addition, a decision was made to publish a quarterly journal, The Round Table, as the movement's propaganda organ. It was at that point that Milner and his supporters "finally took the plunge and resolved to launch a political movement" (Watt). The movement quickly spread, with numerous Round Table groups made up of local "men of influence" forming in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India./101

This moment also marked the realisation of Rhodes' dream of an empire-spanning political network supporting imperial federation. With Round Table groups spread across the British Empire, and its members located in parliaments and the press—including Geoffrey Dawson as edi-

tor of the Times newspaper—the essential elements of Rhodes's original plan seemed in place. Could it succeed?

PROPAGANDA MESSAGE: "IMPERIAL PROBLEMS" ˜ * ˜

The Round Table founders hoped to achieve the "organic unity" of the British Empire, but in pursuing this goal they were motivated by three concerns. The first was their growing realisation that Britain was in decline; its ability to project power worldwide was beginning to ebb away. Milner, for example, in the introduction to a collection of his speeches published in 1913, warned that even though Britain was providing "peace and order" and "civilised conditions" for "2/5ths of the human race", "[s]ooner or later the burden must become too heavy for the unaided strength of that portion of the race which...dwells in the United Kingdom"./102

Secondly, it was maintained that the British Empire in its current form was quite inadequate to the task of providing for the defence of all the dominions and colonies. Related to this was the third factor—and according to Quigley, one of the "dominant considerations" behind the founding of the Round Table—which was "the fear of Germany, and federation was but one possible way of strengthening imperial defence"./103

Amery had best expressed these combined fears in a political speech in 1906, in which he also named the United States as one of Britain's new rivals:

> "Every year the competition for power among the great world states is getting keener, and unless we can continue to hold our own...we shall be starved out, invaded, trampled under foot and utterly ruined. But how can these little islands hold their own against such great and rich Empires as the United States and Germany are becoming...? How can we...compete against states nearly double our size?"/104

Believing the British establishment was not sufficiently aware of this reality, the Round Table sought to ensure that warnings of Britain's inade-

quate defences and the growing threat from Germany formed an integral part of the propaganda efforts. These messages were subsequently incorporated into a two-stage program. In the first part, the litany of "imperial problems" was to be given widespread exposure, while in the second, once the message of a weakened and vulnerable British Empire had sunk in, imperial union or federation was to be presented as the obvious and only solution.

The primary means by which their propaganda message was transmitted was through their journal The Round Table. As historian Walter Nimocks wrote in his study of the movement, this publication was noteworthy for the "remarkable consistency" in the content of its articles. This was because nothing the Round Table intended for public distribution was released without having been reviewed and debated at the moots and then revised to reflect the consensus position. Issues which eluded agreement, such as trade, were left out. This is clearly evident in the first four years of publication, where:

>> The reader was constantly reminded of deficiencies in imperial administration which imperilled the future of the Empire. The irrational organization of the British parliament, the ineffectual nature of Imperial Conferences, and the injustice over the system which gave to Britain war-or-peace authority over supposedly self-governing nations were frequently examined... [and] the whole body of Milnerian criticism, and usually the Milnerian solution, was offered./105 <<

In the first issue of The Round Table (November 1910), for example, all these themes, including the threat from Germany, were explored. The preface, written by editor Philip Kerr, introduced the new journal with the observation that "times are changing... [and] the methods of yesterday will not serve in the competition of tomorrow". Noting the possibility of "conflict" between Britain and Germany and that there was "no means of marshalling the whole strength and resources of the Empire effectively behind its will", Kerr hinted that there should be "some other means" whereby Britain and the dominions could quickly make the required decision./106

Another article in the same issue, also by Kerr, titled "Foreign Affairs: Anglo-German Rivalry", asserted that "the central fact in the international situation today is the antagonism between England and Germany... [and] the solution of this rivalry...is the most difficult problem which the [British] Empire has to face". Kerr characterised Germany as inherently aggressive and expansionist, as it was dominated by Bismarck's approach to world affairs: the relentless use of power.

The growth of the German Navy meant that Britain could no longer protect the dominions. Moreover, Britain could not hope to rely upon an alliance with the other European powers, France and Russia; nor could it anticipate that an outbreak of "true democracy" would overthrow Germany's existing regime, curtailing its push for "world domination". There was only "one policy" left: that of shoring up British power to the extent that it would become "impossible for Germany to achieve her ambitions except by force". The logic was simple: Britain could no longer protect its empire under existing defence arrangements./107

[
THE SOLUTION: IMPERIAL FEDERATION ˜ * ˜

The preferred solution to this dilemma was conveniently explained in the May 1911 issue of The Round Table on the eve of that year's Imperial Conference:

> "The conclusion is inexorable. Either the nations of the Empire must agree to cooperate for foreign policy and defence, or they must agree to dissolve the Empire and each assume the responsibility for its own policy and its own defence... There is no third alternative. The present system cannot continue.108

This is, however, the high watermark of what the movement was prepared to reveal of its ultimate goals, at least in the early years. Most Round Table members agreed that advocating imperial federation too soon could prove unpopular. These fears were soon proved justified at the 1911 Imperial Conference, when the New Zealand prime minister, Sir Joseph Ward, proposed forming a permanent "Imperial Council of

State" consisting of representatives from all the dominions.

The British and Canadian prime ministers rejected his proposal outright, causing Milner to despair that the conference outcome had been "calculated to dishearten Imperialists everywhere". Opponents of the proposal were somewhat more joyous. "We have destroyed root and branch the proposal for an Imperial Council of State or Parliament", as South Africa's new prime minister, Louis Botha, cheerfully reported home./109

Within the Round Table, dismay and anger abounded as suspicions grew that Curtis, who had coincidentally visited the New Zealand prime minister just before the conference, must have encouraged Sir Joseph to make his statement. The accusation was perhaps unfounded, yet it demonstrated their fear that Curtis's zeal for federation was such that he would recklessly disregard his own propaganda plan.

The other reason for the Round Table's reluctance to provide a detailed solution in its first few years is that its consensus position on imperial federation had yet to be finalised. The movement's hope was that it would soon have its own equivalent of the Kindergarten's Selborne Memorandum from which, in the words of one Round Table member, the "conspiracy would become the crusade"./110 Yet the ensuing process of developing this model would not be smooth, revealing not only the growing divisions among these self-appointed crusaders for imperial federation but their failure to foresee the impending failure of their grand scheme.

THE "GREEN MEMORANDUM" ˜ * ˜

The task of devising an acceptable model of imperial federation fell to Lionel Curtis. Immediately after Plas Newydd, Curtis was dispatched to Canada on a fact-finding mission on dominion nationalism. The report of his trip, the Green Memorandum (1910), followed a standard pattern. It identified the growing danger to the British Empire posed by a militant Germany, and then, after dispensing with other proposed remedies including "Imperial Cooperation", it launched into Curtis's preferred solution of "organic union".

Curtis called for the creation of an "Imperial Government" that would have absolute and unfettered control over all Empire defence and foreign policy matters. It would have the power to raise taxes, and there would be an "Imperial Federal Parliament" with two chambers to make necessary legislation. Britain and the dominions would retain some powers, including setting tariffs, but would still be beholden to the imperial government on other matters. It was an ambitious document but one that seemed to cause more problems than it purported to resolve, spurring a long debate within the movement over the means and ends, which would overwhelm even Curtis's "mesmeric hold" (Rose) over his associates./111

According to Quigley, the Round Table "pretended to represent diverse opinions when as a matter of fact it insisted on unanimity...and eliminated diverse points of view very quickly"./112 The inaccuracy and illogic of Quigley's charge become evident when we consider the scope and vehemence of the Round Table's internal disagreements. In fact, the façade was the Round Table's outward image of ideological unity, maintained through the anonymous articles in The Round Table—a practice that merely hid the diversity of views and bitter debates within.

These divisions were most evident in Curtis's stormy relationships with his peers, his grandiose schemes on imperial unity leading to frequent clashes with Milner and Amery. While Curtis put his faith in a political solution, Milner and Amery both believed that economic unity was the key to establishing an imperial federation. For Milner, this meant complete free trade amongst its members but with a common tariff against the rest of the world that would bind Britain and its dominions more closely together.

Amery took a similar view, believing that economic solidarity would form the bedrock upon which a federal structure could then be placed. Closer economic union, he maintained, was the "master key of the whole problem". Milner also found fault with Curtis's idea of an imperial parliament, preferring full partnership for the dominions rather than their remaining permanently subservient to London./113

These were important criticisms. However, Curtis had a number of personality faults, including a dogmatic indifference to inconvenient facts—such as the growing desire of the dominions for independence—and an inability to assimilate contrary opinions. Subsequently his later works, in particular the three-volume Project of the Commonwealth, parts of which were published as The Commonwealth of Nations (1916) and The Problem of the Commonwealth (1916), again endorsed the construction of an organic union through a radical constitutional overhaul in Britain and the dominions and the establishment of a new supranational level of government./114

In The Problem of the Commonwealth, for example, Curtis argued that the "problem of government" in the British Empire would "lead to certain and world-wide disaster unless corrected". Curtis's solution was to create a "Commonwealth Cabinet"—ultimately responsible to a "Commonwealth Parliament"—that would "control defence, foreign policy and the decision of peace or war, and have the power to raise revenues for imperial purposes"./115 For Curtis, there was only one alternative to "organic union": the dismantling of the British Empire. However, despite Curtis's intentions, his incendiary proposals in Commonwealth came close to splitting the Round Table and eroded support for imperial federation in the dominions.

Within the movement, Leo Amery opposed Curtis's proposals, arguing that it would be "constitutional hari-kari" [sic] to sacrifice the British system of government in order to establish an imperial union based on the US federal system. He also regarded as an illusion, if not a delusion, Curtis's belief that the political federation of the British Empire would inevitably lead to a "world-state"./116

THE MOVEMENT FAILS ~ * ~

The internal bickering over the sensibility or otherwise of Curtis's increasingly utopian proposals for imperial federation were to prove of marginal concern in the long run. The fundamental issue of whether the dominions would support any proposal for imperial federation or "organic union" was neglected. In particular for Curtis, who conducted numerous trips to local chapters of the Round Table in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa, it was inconceivable that the dominions would reject imperial federation. Yet for all his journeys, Curtis failed to see that the Round Table groups were hardly representative of dominion opinion.

As one New Zealand historian later observed, "In all the colonies the Imperial Federation movement seems to have been a stuffed shirt affair". Most of the imperial federation supporters in the dominions, especially the politicians, had their own expedient interpretations of the concept, which they were quick to modify. Moreover, they all operated in an environment of growing nationalism, which caused many of them to dispense with the federal idea once its popularity declined./117

What was invisible to Curtis had long been obvious to Round Table editor Kerr, who harboured growing misgivings about the entire project. Following his journey to Canada with Curtis in 1909, Kerr wrote to fellow member Robert Brand expressing his doubts about the whole enterprise, including his feeling that forcing the federal solution on the dominions might only hasten their desire for independence:

> "Lionel [Curtis] believes that the only hope for the Empire lies in "organic unity"... I think, now, that organic unity of that kind is impossible at any rate until science has revolutionised communication and transportation, and that to try to bring on a movement of that kind would be almost certain to break up the Empire... If you forced Canada to choose now between imperial federation and independence, I think she would take independence."/118

Kerr's analysis of the inherent reluctance of the dominions to forgo the possibility of independence would soon prove quite accurate./119 Why he stayed on as Round Table editor, despite harbouring these doubts, is another matter. One explanation offered is that Kerr's "devotion to Curtis and his other friends" caused him to suppress his doubts. For Kerr,

this was to be an unsuccessful venture and is the most likely cause of his nervous breakdown in 1912, leading to his withdrawal as Round Table editor for nearly two years./120

During the First World War, though, it became apparent to other Round Table members that Kerr had been right. At a conference sponsored by the Empire Parliamentary Association in 1916, for example, Milner outlined the Round Table's project for imperial federation, making many references to Curtis's works, "but found that not one Dominion member present would accept it" (Quigley). The dominions' real preference was made clear to all at the Imperial Defence Conference of 1917, at which South Africa's minister for defence, Jan Smuts, drafted a resolution calling for "full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations in the Imperial Commonwealth".

It was in response to this growing evidence of dominion nationalism, according to Quigley, that the goal of imperial federation was "replaced or postponed in favour of the commonwealth project of free cooperation". /121 The collapse of the Round Table's crusade for imperial federation became apparent at the imperial conferences of 1921, 1923 and 1926. The dominions (Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand) decisively rejected the model of imperial federation, in particular the calls for a constitutional conference that had arisen at the 1917 conference.

The final blow came with the Balfour Declaration of 1926 (not to be confused with the first Balfour Declaration of 1917 that paved the way for the founding of Israel), which finally defined the role of the dominions including their "equality" of status, "autonomy" in external and internal affairs, "common allegiance" to the Crown and "free association" within the Commonwealth./122

If the first Balfour Declaration can be said to have led to the creation of one state, the second such declaration bearing that name effectively marked the beginning of the end of the British Empire, converting it into a Commonwealth based on the free association of its member states. On 11 December 1931, the declaration was enforced when the British Par-

liament passed the Statute of Westminster, which established the "legislative independence of the dominions". It also "solemnised the renunciation by England" of its "imperial mission" (Kelly)./123 With that, the cause of imperial federation was dead in the water and the ineffectiveness of the Round Table's attempts to decisively mould elite opinion revealed.

Endnotes for PART THREE

86. Carroll Quigley, Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time, Angriff Press, 1974, pp. 950, 954.
87. David Icke, The Robots' Rebellion: The Story of the Spiritual Renaissance, Gateway Books, 1994, p. 154.
88. Quoted in Walter Nimocks, Milner's Young Men: the "Kindergarten" in Edwardian Imperial Affairs, Duke University Press, 1968, p. 130 (emphasis in original).
89. Quoted in George Louis Beer, "Lord Milner and British Imperialism", Political Science Quarterly, June 1915, p. 306 (emphasis added).
90. See Frederick Scott Oliver, Alexander Hamilton: An Essay on American Union, MacMillan & Co, 1906.
91. Nimocks, Milner's Young Men, pp. 127, 129 (Amery and Curtis quotes).
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93. Quoted in Wm Roger Louis, In The Name Of God, Go! Leo Amery and the British Empire in the Age of Churchill, W.W. Norton & Co., 1992, p. 42.
94. John E. Kendle, The Round Table Movement and Imperial Union, University of Toronto Press, 1975, pp. 16, 20, 57; Deborah Lavin, From Empire to International Commonwealth: A Biography of Lionel Curtis, Clarendon Press, 1995, p. 36; and Norman Rose, The Cliveden Set: Portrait of an Exclusive Fraternity, Pimlico, 2000, pp. 59-63.
95. Quoted in John Marlowe, Milner: Apostle of Empire, Hamish Hamilton, 1976, pp. 176-179.
96. Carroll Quigley, "The Round Table Groups in Canada", Canadian Historical Review, September 1962, p. 204.
97. Nimocks, Milner's Young Men, pp. 145-146; Marlowe, Milner: Apostle of Empire, pp. 176, 179.
98. Nimocks, ibid., pp. 133, 146; Milner quoted in Gollin, Proconsul in

Politics, p. 163.

99. Nimocks, ibid., pp. 134-136, 147-148; Lavin, From Empire to International Commonwealth, p. 108.

100. Nimocks, ibid., pp. 148-151 (including Kerr quote); Kendle, The Round Table Movement, pp. 63-64; Lavin, ibid., pp. 108-109; Quigley, "The Round Table", pp. 210-211.

101. Kendle, ibid., pp. 70-71; David Watt, "The Foundation of the Round Table", The Round Table, November 1970, p. 425 (including quote from memorandum); and Rose, The Cliveden Set, p. 88.

102. Quoted in Marlowe, Milner: Apostle of Empire, p. 201.

103. Quigley, "The Round Table", p. 219.

104. Quoted in Louis, In The Name Of God, Go!, pp. 53-54 (emphasis added).

105. Nimocks, Milner's Young Men, p. 190.

106. Quoted in ibid., pp. 188-189.

107. Kerr quoted in Kendle, The Round Table Movement, pp. 108-110; and Rose, The Cliveden Set, p. 56.

108. Quoted in Kendle, ibid., p. 111.

109. Milner quoted in ibid., p. 114; Botha quoted in Rose, The Cliveden Set, p. 67.

110. Anonymous quote in Marlowe, Milner: Apostle of Empire, p. 212.

111. Kendle, The Round Table Movement, pp. 74-80; Rose, The Cliveden Set, p. 66.

112. Quigley, "The Round Table", p. 218.

113. Marlowe, Milner: Apostle of Empire, pp. 183, 214; Louis, In The Name Of God, Go!, pp. 37, 42-43.

114. See Lionel Curtis, The Commonwealth of Nations, MacMillan & Co., 1916; and Curtis, The Problem of the Commonwealth, MacMillan & Co., 1916.

115. Curtis quoted in Kendle, The Round Table Movement, pp. 179-180, 185-186; and Lavin, From Empire to International Commonwealth, pp. 111-112, 128-129.

116. Amery quoted in Louis, In The Name Of God, Go!, pp. 42, 37.

117. J.D.B. Miller, "The Utopia of Imperial Federation", Political Studies, vol. IV (1956), p. 196, quoting Keith Sinclair's monograph, Imperial Federation: A Study of New Zealand Policy and Opinion, Athlone Press, 1955.

118. Quoted in Watt, "The Foundation of the Round Table", p. 431.

119. One might also note Philip Kerr's quite prophetic words on the importance of technological change to making the dream of a truly unified global political entity possible. As related with some enthusiasm in books such as Thomas Friedman's The Lexus and the Olive Tree (Harper-Collins, 2000), recent rapid technological advances in communications and transportation have been the main physical drivers in the current era of globalisation. The main political drivers have been the globalist elites.

120. Watt, "The Foundation of the Round Table", p. 432.

121. Quigley, Tragedy and Hope, p. 147; Smuts quoted in Rose, The Cliveden Set, p. 99.

122. Lavin, From Empire to International Commonwealth, p. 131; W.D. McIntyre, Colonies into Commonwealth, Blandford Press, 1968, 2nd ed., pp. 139-141; Kendle, The Round Table Movement, p. 272.

123. Paul Kelly, "Child of Empire", The Weekend Australian, 10–11 March 2001, p. 23.

PART FOUR

THE ROUND TABLE AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS ~ * ~

The Round Table's failure to achieve its primary objective of imperial federation is a significant fact, yet it is ignored by most New World Order researchers. Quigley, though, much to his credit, was not shy of addressing the issue with this trenchant observation: "...whether this group succeeded in transforming the British Empire into a Commonwealth of Nations or merely succeeded in destroying the British Empire is not clear, but one seems as likely as the other"./124 Arresting Britain's decline was the ultimate goal of these would-be elite conspirators, but the tide of history and the growing nationalism of the dominions were against

them.

Events during the First World War and the Paris Peace Conference also signalled that there were growing limits to British power and Round Table influence. The catastrophic war against Germany and its allies had accelerated the erosion of Britain's global position. In fact, by the start of 1917 Britain was facing a financial crisis as its reserves of gold and American bonds became seriously depleted, impeding its ability to purchase much needed supplies from the United States.

Britain's financial dependence upon the US had reached such a stage by mid-1917, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer had warned that US President Woodrow Wilson would soon be "in a position, if he wishes, to dictate his own terms to us"./125

Fortunately for Britain, Wilson stopped short of using America's financial power to force both sides to mediate; instead US troops joined the war against Germany. But Wilson did exploit America's newly pre-eminent economic position to introduce on 8 January 1918, what he described as a "programme of the world's peace...the only possible programme..." the "Fourteen Points".

The first four points were unashamedly internationalist, calling for the abolition of secret treaties, absolute freedom of the seas, the elimination of trade barriers and global disarmament. Most of the remaining points sought to redress territorial disputes within Europe, except for the fourteenth point, which set out Wilson's overall global vision: "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike"./126

Wilson's proposal was subsequently realised as a "League of Nations" at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The Round Table's response to this development is generally assumed to have been positive, although its role in the League's creation is disputed. Mainstream historians, such as Kendle, for example, claim the Round Table "had its major wishes fulfilled when both a League of Nations and a mandates system were estab-

lished by the Peace Conference". Yet, he cautions, the Round Table's "actual effect" on the Peace Conference was "very little" and "should not be exaggerated"./127 Quigley, in contrast, maintains the Round Table had "a great deal to do with the formation and management of the League of Nations and of the system of mandates"./128

Outside of the ivory tower, David Icke goes further to claim the Round Table actually played a central role in the League's creation:

> "Through Milner, [the Round Table] was the chief influence in the British War Cabinet of Lloyd George (Comm 300) in the First World War. It would dominate the British delegation at the 'Peace' Conference of 1919, when the shape of the post-war world and German reparation was being decided. It was also the major power behind the creation of the League of Nations, the first attempt at world government by stealth."/129

Which of these interpretations is most accurate? There is no simple answer, but as will become apparent, the Round Table attempted to shape the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference though not in ways most would expect. In fact there was an attempt by some well-placed Round Table members to weaken the League of Nations. Though that action failed, the Round Table was arguably more successful in subverting the mandates system, transforming it into little more than a League-approved imperialist land-grab. This period would also reveal how divided the Round Table had become between imperialists and advocates of world government.

A "LITTLE BODY OF ILLUMINATI" ~ * ~

The Round Table had reached the apex of its political power and influence during World War I. During the years 1916 to 1919 many Round Table members occupied senior positions in the government of British Prime Minister David Lloyd George. This was no accident, for since January 1916 a number of key Round Table members, including Milner, Kerr, Dawson, Amery and Waldorf Astor had begun to cultivate the ambitious Lloyd George. Dining together every Monday, often at Amery's

residence, the primary obsession of this so-called "ginger group" was the need to replace the then Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, with "firm leadership".

For most Round Table members the obvious choice as Prime Minister was Milner. However an apparently blundered attempt by Dawson and Astor to convince Asquith to resign in favour of Milner merely paved the way for the more politically astute Lloyd George to assume the prime ministership in December 1916./130 Although Milner was trumped, Lloyd George's triumph was an immediate boon to the Round Table as its members joined the new government at a variety of levels. Milner was appointed to the five-member War Cabinet, initially as a minister without portfolio; but in April 1918 he became Secretary of State for War.

Other Round Table appointments included the following:
- Philip Kerr as Lloyd George's private secretary and foreign policy adviser;
- Leo Amery as an Assistant Secretary to the War Cabinet Secretariat;
- William Waldorf Astor was appointed as Lloyd George's Personal Parliamentary Secretary;
- Robert Brand, already serving on the Imperial Munitions Board based in Ottawa, was promoted to Deputy Chairman of the British Mission in Washington DC; and
- John Buchan joined Lloyd George's staff as Director of Information.

Also joining the government was new Round Table member Alfred Zimmern who was shifted from the Ministry of Reconstruction to the Political Intelligence Department at the Foreign Office in 1917. Only Lionel Curtis was excluded from Whitehall, retaining his teaching position at Oxford (and travelling to India in the meantime) until called upon in late 1918 to join the British delegation at the Paris Peace Conference.

The presence of so many Round Table members within Lloyd George's government, in the War Cabinet, Cabinet Secretariat, the Foreign Office and especially in his private secretariat or "Garden Suburb"—so named because they were housed in huts constructed in the garden of 10 Downing Street—did not pass unnoticed. In February 1917 one British journalist wrote scathingly of a "little body of illuminati" from "the class of travelling empirics of Empire, who came in with Lord Milner" and had now taken up residence in the "Garden Suburb", he argued, for the sinister purpose of "cultivat[ing] the Prime Minister's mind"./131

Even some academic historians have concluded there was "a good deal of truth" (Lockwood) to these claims of "Fabian-like Milnerite penetration" (Naylor) of Lloyd George's government./132 More importantly, this "Milnerite" ascendancy came at the expense of the Foreign Office, which "might more properly have been described as a 'passed-over' department with little influence on the policy-making process"./133

Milner and his acolytes had justified their new dominance by painting the Foreign Office as incompetent. According to Kerr, the Foreign Office had "no conception of policy"; Amery accused it of a "general absence of definite purpose"; and Milner charged that its lack of "energy and promptness of action" was threatening Britain's interests./134 With Lloyd George sympathetic to such sentiments, Round Table influence over British foreign policy only grew, much to the chagrin of the Foreign Office. Thus it was not surprising that in mid-1917, the Foreign Office's Permanent Undersecretary, Lord Hardinge was privately complaining about his experienced officials being sidelined while "amateur diplomacy holds the field"./135

A HOUSE DIVIDED ~ * ~

In view of the Round Table's rise to power it is ironic that it was divided on the question of the League of Nations. In fact some of its key members were deeply sceptical of Wilson's scheme.

Milner had little faith in the concept, telling an associate in 1919 that he was "very doubtful about the success of the League of Nations". He believed the League could only work "by virtue of the influence of the British Empire and America", but without that support, "the larger League has no future"./136 Milner also cautioned Lloyd George against

relying on the "shadow" of the League of Nations at the expense of the "substance" of the British Empire./137

Amery was more scathing, dismissing the League on various occasions as "moonshine", "a farce", and a "sham structure"./138 In one acerbic communication to Lord Robert Cecil—later Britain's Foreign Secretary and co-author of the League covenant—Amery wrote: "leagues of peace, disarmament etc are all fudge". An unimpressed Cecil dismissed Amery's criticisms as "pure Germanism"./139

Philip Kerr also had his doubts about the League. In articles he had written for The Round Table during the war, Kerr had endorsed Anglo-American cooperation and the spread of democracy as the basis for international peace. He had also focussed on recreating the so-called "Concert of Europe" that had kept the peace following the Napoleonic wars. In private discussions with the US Ambassador to Britain, Walter Page, Kerr had rejected the idea of a "peace league" in favour of a permanent great-power conference based on voluntary participation, no surrender of national sovereignty and an organisation that "would have no executive authority or military power". Kerr was, according to Egerton, "emphatically opposed to the plans for guaranteed or enforced peace now being propounded by pro-league groups in Britain and America"./140

In pursuing this course, observes Kendle, Kerr was "supported by the majority of the [Round Table's] London group"./141 But this scepticism about the League was not unanimous. Lionel Curtis was a keen supporter of the League as was Alfred Zimmern, whom Curtis admired because his mind was "not shaped in the iron Milnerian mould". It was through Zimmern that Curtis had joined the League of Free Nations Association, a pro-League group formed by Fabian Society member H.G. Wells.

The Association later joined with another group, the League of Nations Society—also dominated by Fabians including Leonard Woolf, author of International Government (1915)—to form the League of Nations Union (LNU). Curtis soon became a strong presence in the LNU, convincing Wells to adopt the Round Table's research methods, and driving its agenda towards supporting world government as the only means of elimi-nating war./142

The LNU later published its proposal, "The Idea of a League of Nations" in the Atlantic Monthly in 1919. They presented the issue as a choice between "a general agreement on the part of mankind to organize a permanent peace" and the "progressive development of the preparation for war and the means of conducting war" that would "ultimately...destroy civilization". They also rejected as a "delusion" the notion that war could merely be restricted rather than abolished./143 Yet this "League of Nations project" would not only eliminate war forever, it would deliver "a new economic phase in history" in the form of "economic world-control".

The League was no mere "little legal scheme", wrote Curtis, Zimmern and their fellow LNU collaborators, but a "proposal to change the life and mentality of everyone on earth". They also claimed it was "fatuous" to "dream of compromises" with any "political institutions or social methods" that stood in the way of this project; such obstacles were presumably to be eliminated. The demands of their "World-League of Nations" project were enormous and could not be diluted: "it is either to be a great thing in the world, an overriding idea of a greater state, or nothing"./144

Curtis had already spelled out his own ideas on the League in an article for The Round Table, "The Windows of Freedom" (December 1918). Curtis made three points. First, he made an impassioned plea for Anglo-American cooperation to ensure the League would function. The war had revealed to America "the world is one" and that it was "now impossible" to retain its policy of isolation. "Having put her hand to the plough, can [America] look back?", Curtis asked rhetorically. "Can she now go back to the plea that American interests are the dominating principle of her policy?"/145

Secondly, he warned the League of Nations "will not constitute a world government", and would be little more than "scaffolding" until it was composed of popularly elected representatives who were able to levy taxes. In fact, until it had "developed the structure of a world government", a powerless League "plastered with phrases and made to look like stone" would become "the greatest danger which can threaten mankind". Al-

though optimistic, the world would "live to see" a "Government speaking and acting in the name of mankind". Curtis cautioned: "the hour is not yet"./146

Finally, Curtis proposed a trusteeship system in which the League would direct certain powers to bring "peace, order and good government" to those "races who cannot as yet hope to govern themselves" in tropical Africa and the Pacific./147

Zimmern's article in the same issue of The Round Table was more effusive in its support for the League of Nations. A true ideologue, Zimmern claimed the "real work" of the "coming age" was to "moralise" states both internally and externally, as "[b]etter States" would create "better citizens" who were "more public-spirited" and "fully-conscious of their obligations". When all states were dominated by such "civic dedication", only then could the "machinery of the League ever develop into the organic union or world-State to which all students of the political affairs of mankind are bound to look forward to"./148

Continuing this theme, Zimmern averred:

> "It is only by the co-operation of States which have common ideals that the new world order can be built up, and the idea of the commonwealth, the principle of the conscious and responsible co-operation of the citizen in the making of laws by which he is bound, is the only possible foundation for the world-State of the future."/149

The other purpose of Zimmern's article was to influence the deliberations of the Paris Peace Conference. Thus to achieve the third of Wilson's Fourteen Points—which called for the "removal...of all economic barriers" and the global "equality of trade conditions"—Zimmern recommended creation of a "permanent commission on Commercial Practice". Much like the World Trade Organisation of today, this proposed body would address "controversies on tariff discrimination, dumping and similar questions"./150 Zimmern even warned of the "dangers" to civilisation posed by "international syndicates" and "international trusts" who were becoming "real and serious rivals to the power of free

governments". Although he noted the "[m]eans...exist for controlling them", it was "too early" to describe those controls./151

Of these it was Curtis's article—subsequently reprinted in the New York Times (21 December 1918) and published by the LNU as its first study—that was the most influential. General Jan Smuts and Lord Cecil, key contributors to the League of Nations Covenant, both drew on Curtis's paper; and it was on the strength of "The Windows to Freedom" Cecil had invited Curtis to join the League of Nations Section at the Paris Peace Conference./152 Fate though, had decreed that it was the League sceptics—Milner, Kerr and Amery—who had the ear of Lloyd George, not Curtis.

WEAKENING THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS ~ * ~

The position of Philip Kerr is perhaps the most important in this episode as he was the closest Round Table member to Lloyd George. As the private secretary and foreign policy adviser to Lloyd George from 1916 to 1921, Kerr's influence has been much debated. Recent academic accounts paint Kerr as the "gatekeeper" (MacMillan) and "intimate companion" (Warman) to Lloyd George, who was able manipulate him with ease due to his absolute control over the flow of information to the Prime Minister./153 Some contemporary observers, however, suggested Kerr's influence was exaggerated. As Thomas Jones, Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, for example, observed in 1917: "Kerr pumps things into [Lloyd George] and he seems to agree and then he goes and does the opposite"./154

In the case of the League of Nations, however, it is clear that Kerr's influence over Lloyd George was more substantial than not. This is confirmed by a little-known incident in January 1919, when at Kerr's instigation Lloyd George attempted to force Cecil—Britain's representative at the League negotiations—to make substantial changes to the League Covenant.

Kerr had been attempting for quite some time to seek Lloyd George's support for a less ambitious League arrangement. In December 1917,

for example, Kerr had suggested that Lloyd George support the creation of a "League of Allied Nations" based on the Supreme War Council at Versailles as the centrepiece of any post-war arrangement. Kerr advocated transforming the Supreme War Council into a "permanent international agreement" that would commit the Allies to enforcing the peace settlement, though they would only need to meet "from time to time"./155

A particular concern of Kerr was Wilson's insistence on territorial guarantees, automatic sanctions against violators of the international peace, and that League members would have a compulsory obligation to uphold the Covenant. Kerr had repeatedly warned that "no international machinery or treaties" could guarantee international peace; only a less ambitious permanent conference, based in Versailles, and comprised of representatives of the "Greater States" could deliver./156

Kerr's influence eventually bore fruit when in December 1918 Lloyd George declared in a War Cabinet meeting his view that the League "must not be constituted as a body with executive power" but as a body "whose authority rested with governments"./157 In short: national sovereignty was not to be compromised.

Unlike Lloyd George, the British representative in the League negotiations, Lord Robert Cecil, was more sympathetic to Wilson's vision and had prepared a draft covenant—the 'Cecil-Miller' draft—to that end. It was because that draft went well beyond what the Imperial War Cabinet had authorised, that on 31 January 1919 Lloyd George had confronted Cecil with a list of changes. That list was in fact a memorandum prepared by Philip Kerr.

The Kerr memorandum rejected the collective security program embodied in Wilson's original proposal for territorial guarantees and upheld by the Cecil-Miller draft. Instead it argued that if the League attempted to "impose obligations" on members to "go to war in certain stated conditions", it would result in the "destruction of the League itself". The only real option was a system of "continuous consultation" among the nations of the world, with solutions to each crisis to be decided on a case-by-case basis; the "paper obligations" the League members entered into should be "reduced to the absolute minimum..."/158

Cecil, who was due to meet with Wilson in a matter of hours, chose to totally disregard Lloyd George's new instructions. Believing Lloyd George's "thoroughly bad" plan to be part of a French plot to delay resolution of the League question—rather than a Round Table plot to weaken the League of Nations—Cecil also kept details of the confrontation secret from the American delegation./159

THE AMERICAN CONNECTION ˜ * ˜

This was perhaps a wise move on Cecil's part as Wilson was already suspicious of Milner and his acolytes. In a private discussion with future Rockefeller aide Raymond B. Fosdick while en route to the Paris Peace Conference, for example, Wilson had dismissed Milner as "a Prussian". /160 Wilson also opposed the cultural formula for Anglo-American unity—the centrepiece of Cecil Rhodes's vision—telling a British diplomat in December 1918, the British should not describe Americans as their cousins or brothers, as they were "neither". Due to its ethnic diversity the US could not be part of any Anglo-Saxon world, Wilson argued. Only a "community of ideals and interests" could form the basis of an Anglo-American alliance./161

As chairman of the commission at Versailles charged with drawing up the League Covenant, and aided by a sympathetic Cecil, Wilson was in a good position to prevail. According to Knock, there was a "fair measure of congruence" between the original Wilson-House draft covenant of August 1918, and the covenant produced by the League Commission in February 1919. In fact it could be argued the League Covenant had been "thoroughly reconstructed along Wilsonian lines"./162

It is therefore ironic that while the London branch of the Round Table failed to make the League more compatible with British imperialism, it was a group of Americans sympathetic to Anglo-American unity who succeeded in crippling Wilson's creation.

Lead by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, a majority of US Senators put forward a plethora of reservations. Their primary aim was to ensure that American freedom of action at home or abroad would not be restricted by joining the League of Nations. Wilson, though, refused to compromise and on 8 March 1920, the US Senate rejected membership of the League Covenant.

The failure of the US to join the League has been celebrated by many New World Order researchers as a triumph of popular will over elite hegemony. This might be an erroneous assumption. Lodge had long been close to former President Theodore Roosevelt and a number of his acolytes, including naval strategist Captain Alfred T. Mahan and the author Brookes Adams. Roosevelt openly admired Cecil Rhodes's "great and striking conquest for civilisation" in southern Africa, which he hoped to duplicate in Latin America and the Pacific./163

Adams endorsed an "Anglo-Saxon coalition" to check German and Russian ambitions; while Mahan advocated an "Anglo-American re-union", especially a naval alliance, as the two powers "united upon the ocean" would be "all-powerful there"./164 In the 1890s Roosevelt, Lodge, Mahan and Adams had often met in the Metropolitan Club in Washington DC to discuss the virtues of America becoming an imperialist power. /165 They were also close to the business community, especially J.P. Morgan./166

As President (1901-1909), Theodore Roosevelt had maintained his imperialist impulse. Declaring himself an "expansionist" he had sought to establish the US as a world power. Inevitably, until his untimely death in 1917, Roosevelt was one of the most vehement critics of Wilson and the League of Nations. Roosevelt's preference, curiously enough, was for a "League of Allies".

It is perhaps no coincidence that in the same month as the final Senate vote that Philip Kerr wrote a lengthy piece in The Round Table finding favour with the Lodge-Roosevelt approach while rejecting Wilson. The League Covenant had "aimed too high and too far", Kerr observed; it was also now apparent that support for the League from "one of its most important members"—the US—was "very unlikely". In fact: "The emphasis of public sentiment in all nations is now on the rights of national sovereignty, rather than on international right..."/167

Kerr acknowledged that joining the League required "the complete abandonment of the doctrines of the Fathers of the American Republic" and credited the US Senate with expressing "the real sentiment of all nations with hard-headed truthfulness". Few nations were genuinely willing to subordinate their "national sovereignty to an international code and an international ideal". The United States, Kerr wrote, had "reaffirm[ed] the principle of national sovereignty as over-riding the ideal of world government enforcing a world interest..."/168

Believing popular support for the League was waning, Kerr argued the "proper course" was to "revise and restate" Britain's League policy. He suggested three guidelines for Britain's League membership. Britain should: (1) avoid any "general obligations"; (2) not make any commitments beyond its capabilities; and (3) "definitely denounce the idea" that the League could enforce its rules by "military or economic pressure on recalcitrant States". For Kerr there could be no alternative course because the "influence of the League of Nations upon British Imperial relations has for the moment been misleading and dangerous"./169

MANDATE FOR EMPIRE ~ * ~

One area where the imperialist faction of the Round Table did secure a victory was on the issue of League mandates. The Round Table had a key role in formation of the concept. Curtis had proposed a trusteeship system for "derelict territories", arguing that the only hope of these races who cannot as yet govern themselves or ever learning to do so is in tutelage by some great democratic civilised nation". Through such a system the League would "render obsolete the old, pernicious idea of empire..."/170

Kerr had also been contemplating the issue and was "against handing back the colonies" Britain had seized from Germany. He supported "civilised control over politically backward peoples" as Africans and many

Asians had "proved unable to govern themselves". The solution he sought was for European powers to intervene and protect these peoples from "demoralising influences"./171

Additional work was being done by the Round Table's primary US member, George Louis Beer (one of Kerr's recruits), who now served on "The Inquiry" as its colonial expert. Beer's correspondence with Curtis and two other Round Table members had produced the idea of the US having mandates over former German colonies in East Africa. At the Paris Peace Conference in December 1918, Beer had taken Curtis to meet with senior US representatives Colonel House and General Tasker Bliss to sell the idea. Curtis also talked with Milner, Kerr and Lloyd George as well about the proposal. Beer appeared to be successful when Wilson announced on 30 January 1919 that the US would accept mandates./172

This moment of triumph for Beer soon unraveled when it became apparent Britain and France had already secretly divided the spoils of war. According to Kendle, Milner as the newly-appointed Colonial Secretary was "at the heart of things and deeply involved". This was no understatement: Milner was personally conducting the "out of court" negotiations with the French at the Paris Peace Conference./173 He was also chairman of the commission established at the Peace Conference to draft the mandates putting him in a "commanding position"./174

Kendle suggests that Milner was defying Round Table views on the mandate, but this is doubtful for there was no firm consensus. Moreover, Milner had always been an imperialist and suddenly overcame his previous reluctance to acquire new territory now that Germany was defeated. He had advocated American acquisition of mandates as a means of establishing a "bond of union...between the United States and [Britain]". But he had little time for Wilson's dreams of "self-determination" and actually opposed giving the US mandates in East Africa arguing that it would deprive Britain of a vital line of communication running the length of Africa./175

The rewards of this venture were, for Britain, France and some other powers, substantial. One obvious result, in the words of Lord Balfour, was "a map of the world with more red on it". Milner seemed untroubled by his efforts; but a confused Curtis suffered a nervous breakdown and retreated to Morocco to recuperate./176 Beer accepted the position of chairman of the Permanent Mandates Commission, even though he despised the outcome of the Peace Conference. He died suddenly in March 1920. In its tribute to him the Round Table admitted that Beer was its "American correspondent" and praised him as "an internationally minded man" who was "the centre of a considerable group of men whom his criticism and advice had a powerful influence"./177 That influence, however, clearly had its limits. Whitney Shepardson, an American Rhodes Scholar and intimate friend of Curtis, took his place.

THE "INTERNATIONAL ANGLOPHILE NETWORK" ˜ * ˜

The political defeat of the Round Table's world government faction at Paris merely followed the severe blows administered to the movement as a whole by the First World War. The war, according to Kendle "had had a disastrous effect on the movement". Many members in the dominion branches, especially in Canada and Australia, had been lost in the war. Added to the public controversy stirred up by publication of Curtis's incendiary, The Problem of the Commonwealth, more members were lost than gained causing some groups to collapse. Round Table groups in India and South Africa soon disappeared, while the remaining members in New Zealand succumbed to apathy./178

The movement was not dead, though its members moved off in different directions adapting to the changed world of the 1920s and 1930s. According to Quigley, the Round Table was transformed into an "international anglophile network". This process was led by "the mastermind", Curtis—"who established, in England and each dominion, a front organisation to the existing local Round Table Group". The main fronts were the Royal Institute for International Affairs (RIIA or Chatham House) in Britain and the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and Institute for Pacific Relations (IPR) in the US./179 Though mocked in some quarters, Quigley's record of events is accurate on many counts.

In May 1919 Curtis returned to Paris where he called a meeting at the Majestic Hotel. Thirty members of the British and US delegations participated. Curtis had proposed that a committee be formed to "pre-pare a scheme for the creation of an institute of international affairs". He justified this proposal with the argument that as the Peace Conference had revealed: "Right public opinion was mainly produced by a small number of people in real contact with the facts who had thought out the issues involved". Curtis had then suggested creation of an "institute of in-ternational affairs" with "one branch in England and the other America" to ensure that expert opinion could be cultivated./180 Sure enough at subsequent meetings of this Majestic-thirty group in June 1919, the com-mittee recommended formation of an "Institute of International Affairs" with two branches, one in Britain and the other the US./181

Out of the deliberations of this Majestic-thirty, the RIIA and CFR emerged to take their respective places in the British and US foreign policy establishments. They were not only were led and dominated by Round Table members in their early years—Curtis, Zimmern and Kerr at Chatham House, and Whitney Shepardson at the CFR—but subscribed to many of the Round Table's goals. "The foundation of Chatham House", Curtis acknowledged in 1938, "was a necessary tactical change to effect the same strategic object" as the Round Table.

The "time is gone", Curtis wrote to Kerr in 1936, "...to be afraid of admit-ting...that Chatham House was the outcome of Round Table work"./182 Both organisations also retained the Round Table's divisions; advocates of world government co-existed with proponents of a world order built on an Anglo-American alliance. Despite their differences, the ties between the core Round Table group members endured in other forms, most notably the so-called "Cliveden Set".

During the inter-war years Milner (before his death in 1925), Kerr, Brand, Dawson, and Curtis were regular visitors at the palatial residence of Waldorf Astor at Cliveden. Due to the higher political circles the As-tors mixed with, the suspicion that greater intrigues were underway at Cliveden soon gripped the public imagination. The dominant theory, ad-vocated by Claude Cockburn, editor of the political newsletter The

Week in the 1930s, claimed there was in fact a "Cliveden Set" intent on appeasing Nazi Germany. This was not without foundation—Philip Kerr had endorsed accommodating Nazi objectives in Eastern Europe, and had most of the "Set" agreeing with him until Nazi aggression became too serious a challenge to appease./183

There were other ventures involving the Round Table remnants. In the late 1930s Kerr and Curtis were both heavily influenced by Clarence Streit's book Union Now (1939). Streit, an American Rhodes Scholar and New York Times journalist, had recommended "the union now of the United States with other Democracies, under one Federal Union Government, as a practical first step toward World Federal Union..."/184

Kerr had made many similar proposals during the 1930s and in July 1939 he and Curtis had supported the establishment of the Federal Union movement. As Britain's Ambassador to the US from 1939 to 1940, Kerr had continued to support closer Anglo-American co-opera-tion. In 1940 he seemed to resurrect Cecil Rhodes's ideas with his advo-cacy of a "standing council in Washington representing all the states of pan-America and the British Commonwealth" and a "Pan-American British Empire Conference"./185 Kerr would never see his vision re-alised, however, dying unexpectedly on 12 December 1940 while visiting Britain.

As an organisation, however, the period from the 1920s onward was marked by the decline of the Round Table. Dawson resigned as editor of the Times in October 1941 and died in November 1944. Amery, in-creasingly impatient with Curtis's wild schemes, had drifted away to be-come a member of parliament. Curtis, though, had become embroiled in a number of clashes with the new younger members of the movement who disagreed with his views. Nevertheless Curtis stuck doggedly to his faith in world government through some form of imperial federation as the path to world peace; a view he maintained until his death in 1955.

As for the other Round Table members, Brand and Zimmern, the shift in world power following World War II seemed to hasten their own shifts into obscurity. The Round Table journal also changed, losing its

anonymity by the 1960s and becoming more a venue for ideas on the Commonwealth than a platform for a secretive elite clique.

A LEGACY OF DECLINE? ~ * ~

The Round Table's main legacy has been its unintentional role in hastening the replacement of the Empire with the Commonwealth of Nations. This is clearly ironic, given that the aim of its members was the exact opposite, and reveals that their cherished propaganda methods were also somewhat less effective than they realised. Moreover, the Commonwealth—being little more than a portentous name attached to those dominions and colonies that once formed the British Empire—has struggled to establish itself as an effective international organisation.

Commonwealth leaders have made many optimistic declarations about the Commonwealth's pivotal global role. In 1966, Commonwealth Secretary-General Arnold Smith claimed an essential global role for the Commonwealth in promoting more "understanding and tolerance". Smith argued, "We have to develop quickly the habits and insights of co-operation on a global basis. The Commonwealth gives us one of the promising instruments for this purpose". While one of his later successors, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, at the 1999 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Durban, suggested a world leadership role for the Commonwealth with his claim that, "In a very real sense the Commonwealth is now a club of democracies"./186

Yet, as a successor to the British Empire, the Commonwealth, as a number of commentators have ruefully observed of late, is a very poor substitute. "[I]t lacks much relevance in today's world...", claimed a scathing editorial in the Brisbane Courier-Mail after the annual CHOGM meeting—then scheduled to be held in Brisbane, Australia, in September 2001—was cancelled in the wake of the terrorist attacks on America. The Courier-Mail continued, "It cannot enforce discipline among its own members when they abuse human and property rights (as in Zimbabwe) or devalue their democratic institutions (as in Fiji). And now it has, in effect, acknowledged that it would contribute little to the struggle against terrorism"./187

ANGLOSPHERE: THE RESURRECTION ~ * ~

The divisions within the Commonwealth, particularly between the former dominions with large Anglo-Saxon populations and the former colonies where most of the population is indigenous, have not gone unnoticed by those seeking a reprise of the Rhodes-Milner vision of a racially and culturally homogenous federation. In the 1950s and 1960s, for example, a number of federalists proposed consolidating the Anglo-Saxon members of the Commonwealth. One Canadian supporter suggested forming a "CANZUK Union", comprising Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom./188

The real initiative, though, has been taken by those seeking to resurrect the original Rhodes-Stead dream of the unification of the United States with the British Empire. Since the 1990s an increasing number of Anglo-Saxon enthusiasts on both sides of the Atlantic have called for a "grouping that is natural rather than artificial" through "some form of unity between countries of the same legal and political—and linguistic and cultural—traditions..." Robert Conquest of the Hoover Institution, for example, endorsed the merging of the US with Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada into an "English-Speaking Union", which would act as "a model and centre from which the eventual progress of the entire world may proceed"./189

Other advocates include the now-disgraced media mogul Conrad Black, political commentator John O'Sullivan, policy analyst John Hulsman, and journalist James Bennett. The objective is known as "Anglosphere" and proponents believe that "network civilisations" are emerging using technological innovations in travel and communications to link nations together on the basis of culture rather than geography. One of these "network civilisations", they contend, is the English-speaking Anglosphere.

Since 9/11 the notion of Anglosphere has gained considerable currency. More than a few commentators observed that the partnering of the US and Britain to invade Iraq in 2003 with substantial assistance from relatively few allies other than Australia, made it more of an "Anglo-Saxon"

exercise than any of the other formulations the Bush Administration tried to popularise.

Tensions between Europe and Britain over its relationship with the US have also contributed to this idea that Britain and America's embrace may tighten at the expense of the European Union. Moreover, the overtly imperialist policies of the Bush Administration have raised the spectre of an American Empire dominating the world. There is still scope for a reversal, but it seems that over a century after his death, the dreams of Cecil Rhodes—of Anglo-American unity and imperial expansion—have had new life breathed into them.

CONCLUSIONS ~ * ~

If there can be said to be an enduring bequest to the New World Order by the Round Table, it is providing an organisational blueprint. The Round Table is arguably the father of the plethora of think-tanks and unofficial policy-planning organisations we see around the world today.

All the features that distinguished and were pioneered by the Round Table — including exclusive membership, private off-the-record meetings, financial support from the business community, a focus on changing elite rather than popular opinion and a high-profile periodical—have been adopted by countless other organisations around the world. Perhaps the most important of these organisational successors to the Round Table include the Council on Foreign Relations, Chatham House, the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderbergers and the World Economic Forum.

It is therefore a bitter irony of history that the Round Table organisation, a posthumous product of Rhodes money and idealism, which still exists and still publishes its periodical, should be so marginalised at a time when the idea which motivated its founders has found new life. But this probably reflects the fundamental reality that formation and objectives of the Round Table were in fact "an admission of weakness".

According to Norman Rose in his book The Cliveden Set:

> "It reflected a widespread premonition that Britain was falling behind in the great power race. Anxious to keep up with the future giants, Germany and the United States, their projects were designed to preserve in time a status that was fast disappearing—as it happened, forever. On every count their game plan was doomed to failure...Dominion nationalism was on the rise...Nor would it fade away...it flowered, leading the Commonwealth down a different road from that intended by Curtis and his followers..."

By the time the Round Table had been formed in 1909, Britain's moment as a great power had already passed. As this series has sought to illustrate, despite their valiant and conspiratorial efforts, Rhodes, Milner, Curtis and their cohorts were too late to save the Empire and create the English-speaking union that they believed would bring peace to the world. Instead, primary responsibility for establishing the New World Order was to fall to elite groups within the United States. Britain's destiny then, as now, was to become a junior partner in a program for global control largely devised and implemented from Washington DC, rather than in London.

Pax Americana was the future. Britannia would rule no more...

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141. Kendle, ibid, p.252.

142. Lavin, From Empire to International Commonwealth, pp.158-159 (including Curtis quote).

143. H.G. Wells, H. Wickham Steed, Viscount Grey, Gilbert Murray, Lionel Curtis, J.A. Spender, William Archer, A.E. Zimmern and Viscount Bryce, "The Idea of a League of Nations (Part One)", The Atlantic Monthly, January 1919 at www.theatlantic.com.

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145. [Lionel Curtis], "The Windows of Freedom", The Round Table, December 1918, pp.5, 33.

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147. ibid, pp.32-33.

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154. Quoted in Priscilla Roberts, "Lord Lothian and the Atlantic World", The Historian, Spring 2004, p.98. Jones (1870-1955) was Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet from 1916 to 1930.

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157. Quoted in George Egerton, "Conservative Internationalism: British Approaches to International Organization and the Creation of the League of Nations", Diplomacy & Statecraft, March 1994, pp.8-9.

158. Quotes in Egerton, ibid, pp.17-19; and Egerton, "Ideology, Diplomacy, and International Organisation", p.37.

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164. Adams quoted in Howard K. Beale, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power, (John Hopkins Press, 1956), p.78; Alfred T. Mahan, "Possibilities of an Anglo-American Reunion", North American Review, November 1894, p.558, 559, 555 & 560.

165. [Philip Kerr], "The British Empire, The League of Nations, and the United States", The Round Table, March 1920, pp.225, 226 (emphasis added).

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167. ibid, pp.246-247.

168. [Curtis], "Windows of Freedom", pp.25, 33.

169. Quoted in Kendle, The Round Table Movement, pp.2254-255.

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174. Balfour quotedi n Louis, ibid, p.892; Kendle, The Round Table Movement, p.259.

175. "George Louis Beer", The Round Table, June 1920, pp.934-935.

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178. Quoted in M.L.Dockrill, "The Foreign Office and the 'Proposed Institute of International Affairs 1919'", International Affairs, Autumn 1980, pp.665-667.

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