

Pacifism is not enough nor patriotism either



By Lord Lothian

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There has never been a time when there has been so widespread and determined an attack on the institution of war. There have been periods of relative peace in human history, when great empires made war impossible or unprofitable over vast stretches of the earth's surface. There have been centuries, like the last, when war was relatively rare, as compared with its frequency during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But never before, I think, has public opinion over a large part of the earth come to recognise both that war is incompatible with a civilized life and that it is an institution which ought to be and can be abolished.

On the other hand, most thinking people today realise that the great movement against war which grew up among the democracies during and after the World War of 1914-18 has failed so far to realise its promise, and that at this moment, at any rate, we are steadily drifting back towards a worse war than the last.

"War is an institution which ought to be and can be abolished."

That drift is shown by the withdrawal of Germany and Japan and the continued abstention of the United States from the League of Nations, the failure of the Disarmament Conference, the recommencement of the race in armaments, the rise in international fear and diplomatic tension, and the absence of any counter-movement, save the adhesion

of Russia to the League, to offset these melancholy events.

Moreover, it is clear that if war does come again it will be far more devastating than in 1914-18. Not only has the conquest of the air added a new weapon to the armoury of nations and a new terror for the civilian, but mass production has immensely facilitated the manufacture of all the instruments of death, and the new totalitarian states are much more highly organised for war than was any state in 1914. The next war, if it comes, will start with a far more rapid and overwhelming offensive attack, and that attack will be directed almost as much at the morale of the civilian population as at the armed forces themselves. Do not let us deceive ourselves about these things. The fury of the next war will be immeasurably greater than that of the last.

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In consequence of this return towards militarism, there is a fresh outcrop of expedients for avoiding or preventing war. Some people proclaim that war is murder and that they will go to jail or be shot as passive resisters rather than join in the organised killing of their fellow men. Others denounce the futility of war as a method of settling disputes, the inherent injustice of its decisions, the inevitable disaster it brings upon belligerents and

neutrals, victors and vanquished alike. One group pins its faith on strengthening collective security; another group preaches the virtues of the policy of virtuous isolation. There is a section which regards the armament makers as the real merchants of death and sees salvation in the nationalisation of the munition industry. The largest group still believes in the League of Nations, as the peace ballot shows, though recent events have done much to shake confidence in its ability to prevent war. But despite these efforts millions are beginning to feel that war is once more approaching and inevitable and to make preparations so that when it does come they will find themselves in the end at the top and not at the bottom of the blasted and mangled heap.

War, of course, is not inevitable. If it comes it will be because humanity has failed to take the steps necessary to end it. What is clear, however, is that the post-war peace movement has failed, so far, to find the way to prevent war. That is why I want today to probe ruthlessly to the real causes of war and to try to set out what I believe to be the only final remedy. For fifteen years the peace movement has been largely engaged in what psychologists call wishful thinking. It has not penetrated to the fundamentals or faced up to the price which must be paid if war is to be ended. That is probably a more dangerous attitude than that of the hard-boiled realist, who is solely concerned to avoid war if he can and to win it if he cannot. If we are to



make a success of a renewed attack on the institution of war we must think and act from more fundamental and eternal premises than we have yet done.

II

What is war? And what do we really mean by peace? War is armed conflict between sovereign states or states claiming to be sovereign. It may be concerned to bring about political or economic reform, or to satisfy greed or ambition; it may arise from misunderstanding or the necessity of self-defence; or it may spring from accident or a chivalrous desire to help the weak. The occasion of war is irrelevant. War is the *ultima ratio regum*, the legislative instrument whereby issues between sovereign states, which will not yield to voluntary agreement, can alone be settled. War is a struggle of will between states or groups of states each using every possible resource, including mass destruction of human life, which is necessary to enable one side to enforce its will on the other.

What is peace? Peace is not merely the negative condition in which war is not being waged. It is a positive thing. Peace is that state of society in which political, economic, and social issues are settled by constitutional means under the reign of law, and violence or war between contending individuals, groups, parties, or nations, is prohibited and prevented.

Peace, in the political sense of the word, does not just happen. It is the creation of a specific political institution. That institution is the state. The *raison d'être* for the state is that it is the instrument which enables human beings to end war and bring about change and reform by constitutional and pacific means. Never from the beginning of

recorded history nor on any part of the earth's surface has there been peace except within a state. The state may be a primitive tribal rulership in Africa or a vast Communist empire like Soviet Russia. It may be an advanced democratic republic like the United States, a totalitarian dictatorship like National Socialist Germany, or a placid constitutional monarchy like modern Sweden. But peace only appears when there is a government whose business it is to consider the interests and command the allegiance of every individual within the confines of its territory, and possessed of the power to make laws regulating society which the citizen is bound to obey and which, where obedience is withheld, it is able to enforce. Until the state appears there is only anarchy and violence and private or public war. And no other institution has ever been devised as a substitute for the state, because the coming into being of the state is itself the ending of war and the substitution for war of the reign of law.

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The state, as an institution, is in fundamentals the same under all the different forms I have mentioned. The differences lie in the method whereby and the purposes for which the omnipotent power of the state is used. The director of executive action and legislation may be a single autocratic ruler, an aristocracy, the propertied bourgeoisie, the proletariat, or a majority of the representatives of the people voting by universal suffrage. It makes a great deal of difference to the practical conditions of life how those who wield the power of the state are appointed or elected, for the nature of the laws and the consideration they will give to the

interests of the different classes of the community, will depend upon it. Civilization develops in proportion as a free public opinion replaces dictatorship as the controller of the powers of the state. But none of these things affect the principle of the state itself. The state is the institution which ends anarchy and its consequence, war, by creating an organically united community, and sets up legislative, judicial, and executive organs whereby its citizens come to live under the reign of law and are prevented, collectively or individually, from attempting to make their own will prevail by fraud or violence.

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The state itself does not eschew violence. On the contrary, it claims that it alone is entitled to use violence. It could not, indeed, exist without the use of violence. It habitually uses violence. Moreover, the violence it uses is irresistible violence. A great number of the laws it enacts and the changes which it brings about are inevitably objected to by individuals or sections of the community. They are often only obeyed by minorities because they know that disobedience involves fines, imprisonment, or death. Yet if the state did not enforce the law, and do so irresistibly, individuals and groups would inevitably begin to use violence or fraud to defend or promote their own rights or interests, and society itself would dissolve in anarchy. In one sense, therefore, the state is violence, but violence only used in accordance with law and, in a democratic and constitutional state, in the interests of the community as a whole and as a result of a decision by a majority of its citizens.





III

In the modern world the functions of the state are steadily increasing. One reason for this - though not the only one - is that modern scientific invention has immensely increased the flux and change in every aspect of human life. The need for constant legislative and administrative adjustments in order to keep society functioning smoothly and to enable its elements to live in harmony with one another is greater than it has ever been. Unless the laws of the state are changed to meet the needs of the community revolution follows; that is to say, some group tries to capture the machinery of the state by violence so as to use its power for their own ends or policies.

“Unless the laws of the state are changed to meet the needs of the community revolution follows”

The need, however, for constant change and adjustment is just as great today in the international sphere as the domestic. There was a time when the world was static, when wars were waged between kings and ruling oligarchies to obtain territory and revenue for themselves, while the life of the peasant and the merchant remained almost unaffected. That has disappeared. The world economically has become an interdependent whole. Fewer and fewer people are individually self-supporting. More and more are performing a tiny specialised job in a huge economic process which has its roots and ramifications in every part of the globe. Mankind can now only live in peace and prosperity if the constant adjustments which are necessary inside the state are also made in the international sphere. Yet the world as a whole today has no means of making these changes,

where negotiation fails, save by resort to war. The state, the instrument of peace and for political and economic adjustment by pacific means, does not exist in the world as a whole.

It is my purpose today to attempt to establish three propositions. The first is that war is inherent and cannot be prevented in a world of sovereign states. The second is that the League of Nations and the Kellogg Pact, however valuable they may be as intermediate educative steps, cannot end war or preserve civilization or peace. The third is that peace, in the political sense of the word, that is, the ending of war, can only be established by bringing the whole world under the reign of law, through the creation of a world state, and that until we succeed in creating a federal commonwealth of nations, which need not, at the start, embrace the whole earth, we shall not have laid even the foundation for the ending of the institution of war upon earth. I shall, in conclusion, endeavour to show that events are forcing us to action far more rapidly than most people realize, and I shall make a few observations about the nature and the possible ways of establishing such a federation.

IV

If you asked an intelligent citizen to name the principal causes of war he would probably choose some among the following causes: unjust treaties, racial or religious or cultural differences, maltreatment of minorities, need for raw materials or markets, imperialist ambition, strategic considerations, or the arms traffic, and he might end with one of two omnibus words, capitalism or nationalism. I venture to think that none of these things is the fundamental cause of war.

“peace, in the political sense of the word, that is, the ending of war, can only be established by bringing the whole world under the reign of law”

Most of these so-called causes of war, the grievances of minorities, the pressure of economic competition, class rivalry, differences in race, religion, culture, and language, exist inside states. They produce controversy and political conflict. But they do not produce war. They do not produce war for two reasons. First, because inside the state the government has the power and the duty to legislate and enforce solutions in what it thinks the best interest of the community as a whole. Second, because strategic considerations do not arise. The basic cause of war is that there is no authority to decide international problems from the point of view of the world community as a whole, and that in international negotiation considerations of reason, justice, and goodwill are constantly and inevitably thrust on one side by considerations of security, by the supreme and overriding necessity in a world of anarchy that nations must think in terms of what will happen to them in the event of the outbreak of war.

Let me apply this argument to the two omnibus explanations of war - capitalism and nationalism.

V

When people - other than educated socialists - say that capitalism is a cause of war, they mean that in their opinion the present poverty and unemployment and depression, which certainly make powerfully for revolution, dictatorship, and international tension, and therefore for war, are due to the economic





failure of the capitalist system to work. Socialists, on the other hand, regard private property in the instruments of production as the root of all evil, and war as the inevitable outcome of the capitalist system.

I venture to take exactly the opposite view. Whatever may be the merits or demerits of capitalism, it is international anarchy which is wrecking capitalism, not capitalism, as a system, which is producing either economic nationalism or war.

The main cause of unemployment in the world today is that the international division of labour, the adjustment between world supply and demand, which under a system of free enterprise is brought about by the effect of price in the market, has been interrupted by the action of the sovereign states, in going to war - a political act - in creating tariffs and other barriers in the name of self-sufficiency, and in refusing to make voluntarily the adjustments in international indebtedness which economic nationalism requires. Looking at the world as a whole, economic nationalism, the characteristic expression of state sovereignty, has gradually turned the traffic lights into toll bars, with the inevitable result that people are being forced to make things in their own countries of which there is already a glut in the world as a whole, and some producers are therefore forced to sell them at prices below the cost of production in the world market or burn them or throw them into the sea. This economic nationalism, the product of state sovereignty, has made impossible that constant movement of capital and labour to those places and occupations where they are producing goods and services which, in sum total, are

exchangeable with one another, which is necessary to full employment and a constantly rising standard of living. It is inter-state anarchy which is the fundamental cause of poverty and unemployment, of the partial breakdown of capitalism, and of war, in this modern world.

“The main cause of unemployment in the world today is that the international division of labour has been interrupted by the action of the sovereign states”

To say that capitalism is a cause of war seems to me to be a complete fallacy. Capitalism, in itself, is an international force. Businessmen have few racial or national prejudices in their business. They will trade, build, or bank wherever they can do so profitably. It is perfectly true that both capitalists and trade unions are largely responsible for ever-mounting tariffs, and endeavour to enlist the support of Foreign Offices in their search for foreign markets or to protect their interests abroad, or their standard of living at home - all of which adds to international tension. It is perfectly true that certain armaments manufacturers and certain newspapers have fomented international suspicion as a method of getting profitable orders or circulation for themselves. But these things are the consequences and not the cause of the division of the world into sixty sovereign states. The division of the world into state sovereignties long antedated modern capitalism. Capitalism does not cause war inside the state. Nor would it produce war inside a federation of nations. It is the division of humanity into sovereign states which disturbs the pacific functioning of capitalism as an international force and causes war,

not capitalism which is the cause of the division of the world into an anarchy of sovereign states.

“The root of our economic as of our political troubles is the division of the world into sovereign states.”

Can socialism remedy these evils? Only if it creates a federal commonwealth of nations. In my personal view there are only two basic ways in which it is possible to conduct the economic life of the world. One is communism - a system in which production, distribution, and exchange are planned and carried out as a single whole by an economic general staff, which determines everything as in an army and in which individual initiative and private property are necessarily entirely suppressed because to permit them would dislocate the plan. The other is the system with which we have been familiar hitherto, under which the power of economic initiative and therefore the right to private property is left open to the individual, and production, distribution, and exchange are ultimately governed by the free choice of the consumer as reflected by price in the market, but subject to an increasing social regulation by the state and to a considerable field of monopoly work and development being carried out by public authority.

It is not my purpose to discuss the merits of these two systems today. I only want to point out that the international anarchy inherent in state sovereignty makes impossible the functioning of either. The catastrophe which economic nationalism has wrought to the so-called capitalist system is now a commonplace. Everybody admits it. But the problem





would not be solved if all the sixty states became socialist states. Sixty socialist sovereign states can no more be self-supporting than can sixty capitalist states. Only Russia and the United States, by tremendous efforts, might make themselves self-contained under either system. Yet it is going to be no more easy for sixty sovereign socialist states to agree upon what each is to produce for and take from the other, with the tremendous consequences involved on the internal standard of living and the distribution of labour and employment in each, than it is for sixty capitalist states to arrange barter systems or mutually beneficial tariff systems. Their relations might even become more violent because every economic act would be an act of state which might bring ruin or starvation to other states. The root of our economic as of our political troubles is the division of the world into sovereign states. Neither capitalism nor socialism can function until this anarchy is overcome.

VI

I come now to nationalism. What is nationalism? Is it race, language, culture, religion, or civilization? Or is it, fundamentally, the product of membership of the sovereign states? I have no doubt whatever that in its evil aspect - for nationalism within its right limits is a noble and creative force - it is the product of state sovereignty.

Differences in race, language, culture, religion, or civilization are not, in themselves, necessary foundations of the state, though in the modern world they have tended to become so. There have been many states whose inhabitants have been divided in these ways which have for

long maintained unity and peace. The Russian Empire was one. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is another. The British Empire has been a third. The United States have been a fourth. Differences of this kind exist. They will continue to exist for a very long time. It will never be desirable that humanity should become a single uniform nationality. Variety of individuality, collective as well as individual, is the seasoning of an interesting society. These differences admittedly make the union or federation of states extremely difficult. They are, perhaps, the principal impediment in the way. But they are not in themselves incompatible with unity, or the cause of war. They exist, and make for controversy, and sometimes for political conflict, within the state. They exist, indeed, in greater or less degree in every state. Yet they are not a cause of war within the state. Why? Because it is the purpose of the state to make adjustments in the interest of harmony of the whole, and every individual owes loyalty and obedience to the whole before he owes it to the section to which he himself belongs.

“It will never be desirable that humanity should become a single uniform nationality.”

What makes these differences seem the cause of war is the fact that so often they coincide with divisions between state sovereignties. Then they immensely inflame every inter-state controversy with fear, hatred, and suspicion. But nationalism, at bottom, is not race or language or culture, though these are important enough; it is the feeling of common citizenship, common loyalty to the state, buttressed in every possible way by the law, by the omnipotence

of the legislative and executive authority, by diplomatic antagonisms with other states, by the duty of every citizen to lay down his life in defence of the state, if it is attacked or its rights impugned. Everything in the sovereign state focuses in the state itself.

Hence, it is the anarchy of sovereign states, not race or language or culture, which is the dynamic fountain of nationalism, the factor which stresses the separateness of every citizen from his fellow men elsewhere, which encourages him to look at international problems only from his own national point of view to view with fear and suspicion every act by another state which may affect his own state's security or prosperity, to confuse national selfishness and self-consciousness with the great virtue of patriotism.

It may be said that the growth of democracy has been a factor in intensifying inter-state divisions. This is true in so far as the process of electioneering tends to stimulate appeals to race, language, religion, and other elements of nationalism for vote-catching purposes. Thus it has been the spread of democracy which has intensified Dominion nationalism and has broken the old unity of the British Empire into an association of six, in effect, sovereign states under the Crown. The demand for that national self-determination which has Balkanized Europe has been in some measure a by-product of the democratic movement. It has been the vote, with its consequence that those who can command a majority will wield political power, which has intensified communal divisions in India, and which, if the precedent of Europe prevails, is tending to break India into states based upon race and religion, as the unifying power





of Britain is withdrawn. It is certainly true that the peacemakers of 1919 had an infinitely more difficult task than the diplomats of 1815, because they were dependent on majorities in democracies which had been inflamed by four years of one-sided wartime propaganda.

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But while hitherto democracy has intensified popular nationalism I do not think that democracy any more than capitalism is a cause of war or a permanent impediment to a world state. Democracy disrupts empire, but if it receives autonomy need not make for separate sovereignties. Thus federation is the remedy for the disruptiveness of provincialism in India, as it is everywhere. All the great federations, in fact, have been democratic. Democracies, indeed, in temperament, are less warlike and less expansionist than dictatorships, for they respect the right of others to govern themselves. They accept more readily, I think, the ideal represented by the League of Nations, the concept of the brotherhood and equality of nations, the basic presuppositions on which an organised world community must rest. In the case of democracy, as in the case of capitalism and nationalism, it is the existence of the sovereign state which is the dynamic cause that makes for war. If the separate state did not exist democracy would not create it. It would only demand provincial autonomy within a federation of nations.

I propose now to test this theoretic reasoning by the touchstone of experience. I will examine the history which led up to the World War, and

also the history of the post-war years, which, despite the League of Nations, has ended in the reappearance of the menace of world war, and see if it confirms my theoretic conclusions.

VII

For centuries before Bismarck Germany had been the cockpit of Europe. This was mainly due to the fact that Germany itself was divided into two or three hundred principalities. Napoleon reduced these states to about thirty. Bismarck saw that if Germany was to have peace, security, and prosperity she must have unity. But he found that the difficulty in obtaining united action in the old German confederation of sovereign states was insuperable. So he pronounced his famous dictum about blood and iron and by means of three wars united Germany, except for Austria, into a single federated state.

“If the separate state did not exist democracy would not create it.”

In doing so he ended what was left of the old concert of Europe. Europe became a mere anarchy of fifteen sovereign states. Inevitably in the interest of self-preservation these states formed groups and alliances. Gradually, after twenty years of dexterous diplomatic jugglery by Bismarck to prevent it, Europe settled down to the system whereby its destinies were controlled by two great alliances - the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and a rather doubtful partner Italy, and the Dual Alliance of France and Russia. Alterations in the political structure of Europe to meet the changing conditions of the times could thereafter only be made by

agreement between these two groups and every such question came to be judged not mainly by considerations of reason or justice but according to whether a particular proposal increased or diminished the security or the prospect of victory of either of the groups or of the particular states within it, in the event of war. Thereafter every local conflict tended to develop immediately into a general European war. As an inevitable corollary, might became the supreme element in European politics - for the ultimate question in every particular controversy was whether either side was prepared to throw the sword into the scale. This system was called *Machtspolitik* or power diplomacy, and arose not from the malignity of this nation or that, though some played it more readily than others, but inexorably from the anarchy of Europe.

By the end of the century Germany was no longer content with a purely European position. Her union had led to immense economic development. She had become interested in world trade. She became dissatisfied at finding that world politics were being decided by Britain and Japan, Britain and France, or the United States without bringing Germany into consultation. Hence the launching of the German navy Bills by the Kaiser.

“The system of power diplomacy arose not from the malignity of this nation or that, though some played it more readily than others, but inexorably from the anarchy of Europe.”

These Bills were not intended to give Germany supremacy, but, as their preamble stated, to ensure that no decision should be made without





taking Germany's wishes into account. Germany, in the old phrase, demanded "her place in the sun", a phrase which translated into postwar parlance is the word "equality". There was nothing wicked about this desire in itself. What made it fatal was that European anarchy had led to an alliance system and to an intensity of competition in armaments which turned every international question into a conflict of interest between the groups, rendered it practically impossible to alter the *status quo* except by war, and made it almost inevitable that any local conflict in which any of the major powers became involved turned instantly into a general European war.

The rest of the story is familiar. Gradually the tension rose, and with the tension the competition in armaments - especially naval armaments. In 1908 Germany threw the "shining sword" into the scale in order to induce Russia not to intervene in the crisis which arose when Austria-Hungary formally annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina from Turkey, a province which she had in fact been governing for years. In 1911 Great Britain threw the sword into the scale to induce Germany to withdraw when she sent a small warship to Agadir to show her resentment at France's monopolizing Morocco under the Anglo-French agreement of 1904 about Egypt and Morocco. Then came the Balkan crisis. The dissolution of the old Turkish Empire in Europe, the growing weakness of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as the power of the Slavs increased, and Russia's recoil to the West after her defeat by Japan in Manchuria, had created a dangerous situation; for if Austria-Hungary broke up, or if either Germany or Russia became

predominant in the Balkans, the strategic balance between the Dual and the Triple Alliance would be upset. The two Balkan wars passed off without precipitating a general war because they did not markedly affect the balance between the two groups and were fought mainly at the expense of "the sick man of Europe". Then came the assassination of Franz Ferdinand - the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne - by a Serbian assassin at Sarajevo. This was a very different pair of shoes. It affected the very existence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and therefore the future of Russia, Germany, and Italy, and was, as you all know, the event which precipitated the World War.

"It is equally possible to take the view that Europe stumbled into war without anybody deliberately pressing the button for the World War"

I am not concerned today to make any estimate of the relative responsibility of the various Powers for the outbreak of war. It is worth noting that by that time almost all the minor matters of dispute between the European Powers had been got out of the way by agreement, including the Baghdad railway. The vital issue centred round the future of the Balkan peninsula. It is possible to take the view that the inner military group in Germany and Austria-Hungary had made up their minds that the two Empires would be at their maximum military superiority between 1914 and 1917, that there was no possibility of Germany being accorded, by agreement, that position in the world to which her energy and her talents entitled her, that if she did not seize her opportunity to dominate South-

Eastern Europe by force it might never recur, because with the rise of Russian armaments she might become weaker than her rivals, and that she should seize the first chance to make herself paramount by a short and decisive campaign. On that view the opportunity which was created by the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in June 1914 was promptly seized. It is equally possible to take the view that Europe stumbled into war without anybody deliberately pressing the button for the World War, because once it had entered what Mr. J. A. Spender calls the atmosphere of war, the military time-table became predominant, and the accident of the assassination thrust the statesmen on one side and swept everybody helplessly and headlong into the abyss.

"the moment mobilization was ordered anywhere an entirely new factor entered upon the scene which rapidly and fatally swept diplomacy and the statesmen on one side."

Let me deal in more detail with the matter of the time-table because it shows the decisive influence which, under conditions of anarchy, is exercised in a crisis by strategic considerations. The murder of the Austro-Hungarian Archduke by a Serbian assassin made some kind of ultimatum to Serbia almost inevitable, for it shook the very foundations of the Monarchy. It is common form in power diplomacy that one way of preventing general war is that one side or the other should indicate that in certain events it would accept the challenge of war. Then the weaker or less resolute side comes to a compromise. That had been done by Germany in 1908 and by Britain in 1911, as I have described.





Germany, no doubt, believed that by supporting the extremely stiff Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia she would procure for Vienna a success which would restore the stability of the Monarchy and enhance her own influence and power in the Balkans, without war, because Russia, faced by the certainty of war, would retreat as she had done in 1908. There are many who think that if Britain had similarly thrown her sword into the scale on the other side Germany would have withdrawn. I shall have a word to say about this later.

“In an anarchy of sovereign states the military time-table inevitably becomes a governing factor”

But the essential difference from the 1908 and the 1911 crises was that in 1914 Austria-Hungary mobilized a large part of her army and prepared to occupy Belgrade. That was the percussion cap which ignited the World War. I will not enter into the vexed question of who was responsible for the dates and character of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian mobilizations. The point I want to make is that the moment mobilization was ordered anywhere an entirely new factor entered upon the scene which rapidly and fatally swept diplomacy and the statesmen on one side. Austria-Hungary began by mobilizing the proportion of her army which she thought was necessary to compel the submission of Serbia. Russia retaliated partly to be prepared to save her fellow Slav state, Serbia, from extinction, if necessary, partly because her general staff declared that if she did not mobilize a large part of the Russian army the Austro-Hungarian army could march unopposed to Warsaw directly its mobilization was complete. But no sooner had Russia

mobilized than the Kaiser was put into a fearful predicament - as is clearly shown by the famous Willy-Nicky telegrams. From a military point of view Germany felt herself the nut between the nut-crackers. Her very existence in the event of war - her chance of victory - depended, as she believed - upon her being able to defeat one of her two allied neighbours before the other was ready. Russia possessed much the more numerous army, but she mobilized far more slowly than her neighbours. The famous Schlieffen plan therefore provided that in the event of war the German army should put its whole strength into overwhelming France and then turn back against Russia, before the Russian 'steam roller' could reach Berlin - in order that Germany might not be caught by the necessity of fighting numerically superior forces simultaneously on two fronts. On the other hand, France and Russia realized that Germany and Austria-Hungary had the immense advantage of the interior position and could move their armies from front to front whereas the French and Russian armies could never combine. Everything, therefore, for both sides depended upon their not being caught unmobilized and unprepared. Hence as soon as the factor of mobilization was introduced strategic considerations swept Sir Edward Grey's diplomacy ruthlessly aside. Each side implored the other to cancel its mobilization if war was to be avoided. Neither was willing, perhaps able, to comply. This was the terrible time-table which dragged the whole of Europe into mobilization, with irresistible violence, and why when its mobilization was complete the German army strode through Belgium to endeavour - on the ground that it was the only way both

to avoid defeat and to gain a victory - to encircle and roll up the French army before Russia was ready.

In an anarchy of sovereign states the military time-table inevitably becomes a governing factor when the competition in armaments and alliances has reached a certain point of tension and nations began to think in terms of whether their national existence may not depend, if not upon getting in the first blow at least in not being caught unprepared. A declaration by the British Government of its intention to fight for Belgium might have affected the course of events if it had been made before Franz Ferdinand was assassinated. It could have made no difference after mobilization had been ordered.

“Anarchy, not national wickedness, was the villain of the tragic drama which ended in the World War.”

As I have already said, I am not attempting to assess relative responsibility in the acts which preceded the war of 1914. The question is irrelevant. On either view the ultimate cause of the war was the European anarchy in which every state had to depend upon its own arms or its alliances for its security, and it was nobody's business to think of Europe as a whole. Any one who believes in the general idea of the League of Nations must admit that the ultimate cause of catastrophe was that there was no collective system of any kind before the war. In an anarchic world *Machtspolitik*, power diplomacy, becomes inevitable. Nations must think in terms of security rather than of merits. And all the time the soldiers and sailors and airmen are whispering to the statesmen the risks they run if they allow their neighbours to gain an





advantage, in territory, in armament, in the diplomatic game of bluff, because it may make the difference between defeat and victory in the event of war. Then the decision begins to pass out of the hands of statesmen and Parliaments. A knave, a fool, or an accident can precipitate an event in some corner of the world which thrusts the diplomats on one side and puts the military time-table in command and slides the whole world into a war which nobody wants. Anarchy, not national wickedness, was the villain of the tragic drama which ended in the World War. The most sinister fact today is that this time-table has begun to reappear, made immensely more dangerous by the air.

VIII

Let me now turn to what has happened since 1918. During the war groups of thinkers among the allied nations, notably in Britain, the United States, and France, in seeking for an explanation for the catastrophe which had overtaken civilization and for the remedy, had been driven to the conclusion that the main cause was international anarchy.

“the decision begins to pass out of the hands of statesmen and Parliaments. A knave, a fool, or an accident can precipitate an event in some corner of the world”

They realized that war was inherent and would be chronic in a world without government - as it was before 1914 - especially as scientific invention was hourly contracting time and space - and that the only remedy was to end anarchy by creating an ordered world society based upon

the reign of law. The outcome of these deliberations, moulded by the statesmen and politicians assembled at Paris into what was regarded as being practical at that time, was the Covenant of the League of Nations.

The Covenant created an assembly intended to include representatives of all the states of the world which was to meet at Geneva once a year to consider the international problems of the time, and it gave that Assembly executive organs in a Council meeting not less than four times a year and a permanent Secretariat. The main function of these bodies was to take cognizance of disputes which might lead to war and to promote a just settlement of them by peaceful means. All members undertook to submit disputes to the International Court, to arbitration or to investigation and report by the Council or Assembly of the League, which was to be rendered within six months, and to refrain from resort to war until three months after presentation of the judgement, award, or report.

“The League has given the small nations a place in the councils of mankind. It has been an effective focus for world opinion.”

The Covenant further provided that the Assembly should have the right - under Article XIX - to advise the reconsideration of treaties which had become inapplicable and about international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world, and - under Article XVI - that members were under the duty to take common action - called sanctions - against any state, member or non-member of the League, which went to war without first resorting to the pacific procedure laid down in the Covenant. One of

the primary tasks of the League, recognized to be necessary to its success, was to bring about a measure of universal disarmament. It is important to note that the Covenant did not forbid resort to war altogether, but only before the pacific procedure laid down in the Covenant had been used. The total renunciation of war as an instrument of policy, which is often erroneously attributed to the Covenant, did not take place until the Kellogg Pact of 1928.

“The League for the first time has made millions realize that it is possible to end war and substitute justice as the ruling principle in world affairs.”

Has this noble ideal succeeded in realizing the hopes of its authors? The League for the first time has made millions realize that it is possible to end war and substitute justice as the ruling principle in world affairs. It has done admirable work in settling disputes of secondary importance and in organizing reforms of non-political kind. It has given the small nations a place in the councils of mankind. It has been an effective focus for world opinion. What is much more important, perhaps, its existence and activities have broken the old spell of isolated nationalism and have begun to make multitudes of people everywhere think in collective and not merely in national terms. Its establishment unquestionably marked a turning point in world history. But it requires no argument to show that in fundamentals it has so far failed. It has not been able to secure the adherence of all nations. It has not been able to abate economic nationalism and lower the tariffs and restrictions which have caused





unemployment everywhere and destroyed democracy in many lands. It has not been able to bring about all-round disarmament. It has not been able to revise the treaties of peace except in ephemeral and minor particulars. It has not been able to mobilize the kind of strength which would enable it to compel one of the great powers to conform to that public opinion. Today, international politics are less and less being discussed on their merits, in terms right or wrong, justice or the reverse, but more and more in terms of power, prestige, and security in the event of war. What the reason for this? What is it which has thus inexorably destroyed the real effectiveness of the League and is ruthlessly wading the world back to armaments, ever-mounting tariffs, poverty and unemployment, power diplomacy and war?

we can never escape from war as long as we build on the sovereignty of the national state.

The answer is perfectly plain. It is not the malignity of any nation. It is not general international ill-will. These factors exist. But what inflames them all, and is more important than all, is that the Covenant, like the Kellogg Pact, is built on the foundation of the complete sovereignty of the signatory and member states. The fact of state sovereignty is the vital flaw in the Covenant. For acceptance of state sovereignty in effect perpetuates anarchy, and therefore, despite all our hopes and professions, tends powerfully to nullify the effect of the other provisions of the Covenant and to let loose the evils to which anarchy inevitably leads. The sovereignty of the national state has been the main cause of the failure of the League and the post-war peace

movement, as it was the ultimate cause of the World War and will be the dynamic cause of the next war, unless we can mitigate it in time.

You may reply, with justice, that nothing else was possible, that the idea that the nations, in 1918 or today, were or are prepared to abate their sovereign independence is absurd and that you must deal with the world as you find it. I don't deny this in the least. I was at the Peace Conference and know that nothing else was possible. But it does not lessen in the slightest degree the truth of what I am trying to convince you of today - that the League cannot save us from war and that we can never escape from war as long as we build on the sovereignty of the national state.

"international politics are less and less being discussed on their merits, in terms right or wrong, justice or the reverse, but more and more in terms of power, prestige, and security in the event of war."

Until the peace movement realize this central fact and base their long-distance policy upon it, it will stand in the ranks of those who follow Sisyphus. Every time it succeeds, by immense and consecrated effort, in rolling the stone of national sovereignty near to the top of the hill of international co-operation, it will find that stone slipping out of its control and rushing down to overwhelm its leaders and their followers behind them.

IX

Let me first try to justify this view on grounds of theory. There are four main reasons why the League or any system based upon the contractual

co-operation of sovereign states is bound sooner or later to fail and to lead back to anarchy and war, as every such system has done from the Confederacy of Delos, through the American Confederation from 1781 to 1789, to the League of Nations today and perhaps the British Commonwealth of Nations tomorrow.

"The Council and the Assembly are, in essence, diplomatic conferences. Thus the League has done little to create a European or world patriotism."

The first is because every unit in the League or Confederacy inevitably tends to look at every issue from its own point of view and not from that of the whole. There is no body whose business it is to consider the interests of the whole. Each representative in the Council or Assembly is, in the last resort, the delegate of his own state, controlled by it and responsible to it. Every important problem, therefore, tends to be considered as a conflict of national points of view. The Council and the Assembly are, in essence, diplomatic conferences. Thus the League has done little to create a European or world patriotism. State patriotism is, if anything, stronger today than it was in 1920.

The second reason for failure is that the Council or Assembly cannot wield any real power. By the very nature of its constitution it can possess no revenues of its own nor command the obedience of a single citizen. For its revenues and armies it must depend upon the subventions and contingents of the sovereign states. If these are withheld it is powerless. If there is a conflict of opinion between the League and any member or state the allegiance of the





individual citizen is owed to the state and not to the League. All experience shows that in Leagues and Confederations sovereign units invariably fail to act together. They may fail because of internal difficulties of their own, because they dislike the policy, or because no direct national interest of their own is involved. Directly one important member defaults others begin to default also. No league of sovereign states can proceed by majority decision. Agreement in critical matters is usually impossible to reach and decisive action is prevented by fear of provoking secession. The League, therefore, is a body incapable either of decision or responsibility. Its meetings may carry moral weight. It may reflect world opinion. But it has none of the attributes of power, either as government, legislature, or court.

“All experience shows that in Leagues and Confederations sovereign units invariably fail to act together.”

The third reason is that neither the Council nor the Assembly can revise any treaty, modify any tariff or commercial discrimination, or remodel in any way the political structure of Europe or the world, except with the voluntary consent of the state or states immediately concerned. This, in important matters, it is never able to obtain. And it is unable to obtain it, not only because sovereign states find it difficult not to behave selfishly but because in a world of national sovereignties their policy is invariably subordinated to the necessity of security. Moral considerations are thrust aside by strategic considerations. That is why disarmament is impossible under a League system. Disarmament may be possible for a time where all states in

a region are satisfied with the political *status quo*: it is impossible where some nations are dissatisfied and there is no prospect of obtaining a remedy by pacific means.

“in a world of national sovereignties their policy is invariably subordinated to the necessity of security.”

The fourth and final reason why the League system cannot end war is that the only weapon it can use either to bring about change or to prevent other nations from attempting it by aggression, is war or the threat of war. When the League can mobilize overwhelming economic and military preponderance sanctions may be effective without war. Where it is not overwhelming to use them merely risks turning a local conflict into a world war. Thus Mr. Baldwin, speaking in the House of Commons in July 1934, said: “There is no such thing as a sanction that will work that does not mean war; or in other words, if you are going to adopt a sanction you must prepare for war”. To use sanctions is to attempt to coerce a sovereign state against its will, and that means war, if the power or powers in question resist. In other words, in the last resort, the instrument of the League is war. It is not a peace system. It is only a system for making war an instrument of collective instead of national policy.

“To end war the principle of the state must be applied on a worldwide scale.”

It was this fatal flaw which forced the Philadelphia Convention in 1787 to decide that federation was the only solution of the problem presented to the revolted and independent thirteen American colonies. It saw that not only could the Federal

Government not succeed if it had to depend upon the voluntary support of the states, but that even if it was authorized to give them orders the only way in which it could compel them to obey was by war. The essence of the federal system, the only true peace system, is the division of governmental power between two organs each responsible to the people for the exercise of the powers in its own sphere and neither having power over or being responsible to the other.

“You cannot erect a peace system on a basis of the coercion of governments by governments,”

It is exactly the same on the larger world field. You cannot erect a peace system on a basis of the coercion of governments by governments, because that is trying to build a peace system on a foundation of war. The only basis for a peace system is a pooling of sovereignty for supernational purposes, that is the creation of a common nationhood, above but entirely separate from the diverse local nationhoods. To end war the principle of the state - the instrument of peace - must be applied on a worldwide scale. We must bring into being a constitutional union of nation states with a government able to look at world problems from the point of view of the well-being of the whole, empowered to legislate in matters of common concern, and to wield the irresistible power of the state to enforce obedience to the law not on the governments but on the individual in its own super-national sphere, and entitled to claim the loyalty and obedience of every individual in that sphere.





The pacifist may lay down his life in order to refuse to kill his fellow men. He will have done little to end war. The League of Nations enthusiast may bind himself in the name of collective security to take sanctions and go to war against an aggressor anywhere. He will have done little to end war. He may wage wiser and better wars than national states have done, but he will wage war none the less and run the risk of turning every local conflict into a world war. The isolationist may hope to escape war. He will fail because every war now tends to become a world war and so imperil the security of his own state and compel him to take sides. There is no way of ending war and establishing peace and liberty on earth save by creating a true Federation (not a League) of Nations. That is the central truth which I want pacifists and realists alike to realize, Only then shall we begin to move, however, slowly, towards our real goal.

X

I want now, once again, to test these theoretic criticisms of the League as an instrument for preventing or ending war by the touchstone of the experience of the last fifteen years.

“There is no way of ending war and establishing peace and liberty on earth save by creating a true Federation (not a League) of Nations.”

Few will dispute that economic disorder has been one of the main causes not only of poverty and unemployment since the war, but of the breakdown of democracy, the rise of the dictatorships, and the international friction which has led to the revival of militarism and of competition in armaments. In

President Wilson’s original plan one of the functions of the League was to reduce obstructions to trade. Yet the League and its ancillary institution, the International Labour Office, have been utterly unable to turn the international traffic lights from “stop” to “go”. In fact they have gone not from amber to green but from amber to red. Why? Because the system of state sovereignty makes economic nationalism inevitable. Economically every state thinks first of its own interests, and follows the famous advice given to Parliament by Canning after the breakdown of the collective system created in Europe after the Napoleonic wars: “Every nation for itself and the devil take the hindmost”.

The universal economic disorder of the modern world is the inescapable effect of political anarchy - an effect which the League system cannot prevent or control, because it is the state and not the League which is sovereign.

“the system of state sovereignty makes economic nationalism inevitable.”

Then there has been the problem of political reform. Most people now agree that a real pacification of Europe requires some revision, by agreement, of the Treaties of Peace. The Western peoples are as clear as ever that the basic principle which triumphed in the World War - the right of every nation to independent self-government - was true as compared with the alternative then presented, that of military empire. But because of the number of belligerents, the effects of wartime propaganda on democracies, and the necessity for prompt decisions over so gigantic a field if the world was to get back to work, the treaty was both one-sided and imposed

after far less discussion and negotiation than was likely to produce a result in which everybody could acquiesce. The Treaty of Vienna, thanks to Wellington, was drawn up while Talleyrand, the representative of France, was present. Yet a large part of that settlement had been eroded by events twenty years later. So today, if Europe is to settle down to peaceful neighbourliness, revisions both of the Treaties of Peace and of many other treaties are already necessary and more will be necessary tomorrow. Wilson in introducing the Covenant to the Peace Conference sadly expressed the hope that one of the central functions of the League would be to bring about peaceful revision of injustices which war passion made unavoidable at the time.

But the League has never been able to do this, either under Article XIX or Article XI or Article XV. Reparations have disappeared - but through the pressure of facts, not of agreement. The unilateral disarmament of Germany has disappeared, not by agreement, despite three years of discussion, but by unilateral action. The only important agreed relaxation has been the evacuation of the Rhineland five years before the appointed day. It has never been possible seriously to discuss the Polish-German frontiers, the question whether Austria was to have a free choice as to her own destiny, the duration of the unilateral demilitarization of Germany’s western frontiers, the colonial question, the Hungarian frontiers. If there is to be real peace, agreed solutions for some of these questions are essential. In the Far East the League made a gallant attempt to revise treaties by pacific means, but failed.





Yet every day revision is becoming more difficult. Why? Because as armaments increase every problem is more and more considered in terms of security in the event of war and less and less on its merits. It is often said, for instance, that even to talk about revision, however just in theory, in face of the menace of totalitarian National Socialist Germany is to show weakness and to encourage and inflame its spirit of aggression. In other words, as Germany moves towards the use of force to recover full "equality" her neighbours consolidate their forces to maintain the full treaty *status quo*. Again, the Treaty of Trianon forbade the Anschluss, not because any one wanted to prevent Austrian-Germans from uniting with German-Germans, but because the Anschluss would undermine the strategic security of Czechoslovakia, Italy, the Balkans, and of Europe as a whole. These considerations are becoming more powerful than ever now that Germany has re-armed. It is the same with even minor revisions of frontiers. They also have strategic effect.

"so long as mankind is organised on the basis of state sovereignty, that reform of political conditions which is essential to any healthy or peaceful society is almost impossible."

Why, for instance, do we object to returning a colony? Not because we are purse-proud about territory. It is partly, no doubt, because of the arguments against continually changing the rulers and forms of government from the point of view of the native, but far more because colonies may be used as naval or air bases in the event of war. In other words, so long as mankind is organised on the basis of state

sovereignty, that constant and often far-reaching reform of out-of-date treaties and of other political conditions which is essential to any healthy or peaceful society is almost impossible. The League has tried to bring about reform but it has been unable to succeed, partly because nothing can be done without the voluntary consent of the sovereign states concerned unless it is prepared to use force - war or the threat of war - to compel them to yield, but far more because so long as state sovereignty exists every state's decision is governed not by the merits of the case but by considerations of its own security in the event of war.

XI

It has been the same with disarmament. The ideal of disarmament, essential to the functioning of the League, has been destroyed by the need of the sovereign state for security. Armaments are the instruments for ensuring national security in an anarchic world. If all nations are agreed and satisfied, as they have been for short periods in history, a limitation of armaments is possible - as in the Washington Treaties in 1922. But where some are not satisfied and there is little hope of their needs or their desires being met by pacific agreement, the dissatisfied begin to look upon their arms as instruments with which to obtain what they desire, by power diplomacy or war, and their neighbours begin to regard them as the instruments of self-defence whereby they can keep what they have got. That is what began to happen about 1900 and ended in the World War, and what, commencing once more in Manchuria in 1931, is beginning to happen in Europe and the Far East

again today. Every nation declares, and probably perfectly honestly, that it is against war and thinking only of its own security. But no nation, in fact, relies on the League for its security. It relies on nothing less than its own armaments, supplemented if necessary by a military alliance, though that alliance may be disguised in League phraseology. Therefore every state endeavours, either by superior numbers, equipment, efficiency, speed of mobilization, strategic position, or by alliances, to obtain a decisive preponderance so that it can deter its neighbour from war, get it own way without war, or come out on the top of the heap in the event of war. In other words, it tries to assure its own security through its neighbour's insecurity, and that spells competition in arms and alliances.

"But no nation, in fact, relies on the League for its security. It relies on nothing less than its own armaments,"

Have we not all witnessed the power of this inexorable law of anarchy during the last year or so? What has prevented agreement on disarmament? Not malignancy, but the unwillingness of any state to surrender any weapon or any advantage in numbers or position that it thought necessary for its own security - so long as war was a possibility. France had to consider the superior *potential de guerre* of an equal Germany. Germany had to consider that she might have enemies to meet on two fronts. So did Russia. The security of Japan depended upon being able to keep the United States and Great Britain at a distance from the Far East. The United States had to have large cruisers because she had no overseas bases. Britain wanted a





superiority in small cruisers to defend her vital trade routes. Air disarmament was impossible unless all the nations of the world acted in unison and not only abolished military air forces but internationalized their civilian aircraft. And now we have reached the second stage of the competition when every nation has begun to calculate its need for armaments in terms of the alliances and pacts and treaties of mutual assistance which its neighbours have signed.

“Obedience to moral principle is only possible inside the state, where the reign of law has replaced the reign of naked force.”

What is this competition in arms and alliances leading to? Two things: in the first place fear, suspicion, secrecy, hatred between nations - often exploited by governments in order to get credits for the armaments which will keep them ahead in the race. Fear and suspicion is once more giving credence to every rumour. Economic strain is producing hate. Diplomacy is becoming less and less a search for justice and more and more a game of poker, in which guile and deceit and intrigue are accepted as ‘military necessities’, just as in war killing is justified as no murder, because under conditions of anarchy, self-preservation is the highest law. “War”, said Clausewitz, “is the continuation of policy”. But under conditions of anarchy diplomacy tends to become a continuation of the purpose of war, which is the imposition of one will on another. “All war”, said Napoleon, “is a struggle for position”, and if you can gain a position by diplomacy without war you have, in effect, won a war without the cost of war. The

inescapable result of anarchy is that morality is dethroned in international affairs. Obedience to moral principle is only possible inside the state, where the reign of law has replaced the reign of naked force. That is the reason for the sense of moral frustration and paralysis which everyone feels who has to engage in what used to be called the old diplomacy - the diplomacy which is now rapidly returning to control - and why the League, which was intended to rest on moral ideas, and to solve international problems on grounds of reason and justice, is inexorably being prevented from doing so by the necessity which its members feel of putting the consideration of national security first.

The second consequence of competition has been the re-emergence of the fatal military time-table as a factor in policy. The general staffs, feeling that war is possible, are once more beginning to consider the most favourable moment for themselves, and to plan how the other side can be deprived of the advantage of the initiative. As the alliance system becomes more complete the factor of time will become more decisive. How quick will be the German mobilization as compared with the French or the Russian, the Italian, or the Japanese? In the event of war, will it be necessary for Germany or Russia to attempt to defeat one of their neighbours before the other is ready? Today the air arm is making the time factor infinitely more imperative. The question of the power of air initiative to delay and paralyse mobilization or munitions production or food supplies is becoming a dominant consideration? Are not other and bigger and more terrible Schlieffen plans inherent in such a situation whereby every local

war will become immediately not a European but a world war, and whereby the world war can be “let off” by an accident, a knave or a fool, as the war of 1914 was “let off” by the accident of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand. For what will start the conflagration will not be a deliberate decision to go to war but the first act which begins to bring the security of other states into jeopardy, unless they take equivalent action. For instance, supposing, after the alliance system is complete, the people of Austria decided for the Anschluss - not at all a wicked act - and suppose one of their neighbours ordered mobilization or a movement of its air force to prevent it, would not the general staffs of all Europe and possibly of Asia as well go to their respective heads of state and demand equivalent mobilization so that their own countries might not be caught at a disadvantage, and as the mobilizations proceeded might not the argument for starting instantly an air bombardment to delay the mobilization of their neighbours and so give its initiator the advantage, rapidly become as powerful in the minds of the general staffs as the argument which led Germany in 1914 to violate the neutrality of Belgium which she had guaranteed? And when national existence is at stake what statesman can resist?

“The inescapable result of anarchy is that morality is dethroned in international affairs.”

If and when the military time-table comes into force in Europe once more - and while it is not yet drawn up, it is only a question of time before it is drawn up, if we go on as we are now going - Europe and Asia will begin to quake under the knowledge that a minor incident





anywhere may let off a world war, which, unless air defence overtakes air attack, will probably begin by an intensive aerial bombardment by thousands of bombers of all the industrial and nerve centres, which may come out of the blue at a few hours' notice. That is the horrible truth. And it is no use blaming the ruthlessness of the National Socialists in Germany, or the failure of France to make concessions in time or seize her opportunities, or the feebleness of British policy, or any of the causes it is fashionable to talk about today. The root reason is the anarchy which is inherent in state sovereignty and the fact that the League of Nations is unable to do anything effective to counteract the inexorable consequences of that anarchy because its own constitution is based upon the sovereignty of its members.

XII

But, you will ask, what about Article XVI, what about the principle of collective security? Article XVI, of course, is a different thing from the "collective security" people are talking about today. The sanctions provided for under Article XVI presuppose a League of which all the great powers are loyal members, universal disarmament, and a general willingness both to submit disputes to third-party investigation and report and to combine against any state which goes to war without resorting to the pacific procedure of the League. "Collective security" is what members of the League are driven to fall back upon when the fatal element of state sovereignty has carried three or four of the great powers outside the League, because they are dissatisfied with the *status quo* or the prospect of its being altered by the League.

"Collective security" then tends to mean little more than a military alliance to prevent that *status quo* from being altered by war. It may be the best method of self-defence, of preserving the liberties of small nations, of securing the democracies against defeat by the dictatorships, and of preventing a return to the crude balance of power. If its members are really strong and united and are prepared for a just revision of treaties by pacific means, it may prepare the way for a return to the full League system. Even so it has certain inherent limitations. In the first place it is liable to the weaknesses inherent in all coalitions. Sanctions, economic and otherwise, may be effective enough when the great powers are united in coercing a small power. Their action has then something of that irresistibility which is the characteristic of true police action. But when the delinquent is a great power, sanctions may well spell war of a most formidable kind.

"collective security is not a peace system. It is a system for using war, or the threat of war, as the instrument of collective policy."

And because this is so, when the crisis arises, how many of the members will actually take the decisive step? The small nations will plead impotence or gravitate to the side most likely to assure their security. The big nations, unless their own vital interests are involved, will find excuses for avoiding definite commitment and not going beyond moral reprimand. Collective security, therefore, tends to become no more than a military combination of the nations whose security and possessions are menaced by powerful nations outside the League. In the second place, "collective

security" is not a peace system. It is a system for using war, or the threat of war, as the instrument of collective policy. Like the old alliance system, therefore, it may simply become a system for turning every local dispute into a world war. That, I believe, was Lord Morley's fear about the League - that while it might prevent some local wars it might multiply world wars. Already Europe is becoming a network of so-called regional pacts, for the maintenance of the *status quo*, nominally independent of one another but really part of an indivisible whole through the Covenant and the Locarno Pacts. It is not peace but liability to war which is indivisible under a system of collective security.

XIII

Some people believe that while the League in its present form cannot give security to its members or bring about revision, or establish peace, it might be able to do these things if it is equipped with new institutions. The best known of these proposals is the scheme associated with Lord Davies for creating a tribunal of equity to adjudicate on all matters which cannot be settled by agreement and an international force capable of enforcing the decisions of the tribunal and of preventing war. Another proposal is that for making the League the sole possessor of air power, both military and civil. All these proposals, however, are attempts to make the League perform the functions of a world state without facing the fundamental difficulty of pooling state sovereignty. The fatal fact of national sovereignty will destroy all these schemes as it is undermining the League. To succeed it would be necessary to induce all the Powers to accept the decisions of an independent tribunal in matters of





high policy and carry them voluntarily into effect, to agree to reduce their own forces to the police level, to subscribe regularly the immense sums necessary to maintain an international army or air force capable of certainly and overwhelmingly defeating any national army, or coalition of armies, and to agree both as to the supreme command and as to the occasions and purposes for which it was to be used. There is no evidence in all history that national sovereignties can ever co-operate in this way - except in the stress and agony and danger of war. It was difficult enough to get unity of command among the Allies even at the height of the Great War, and even then it was never suggested or possible that the national armies could be fused into a single international force financed by subsidies by the several allies. If nations are ready for these steps they will be ready for federation.

“There is only one way of ending war and of establishing peace and that is by introducing into the international sphere the principle of the state”

But even if these prodigious difficulties could be overcome there would remain two insuperable obstacles - the first that the allegiance of the individual would still be owed to his national sovereign state and not to the League, and that when there is a difference of opinion it will be his legal duty to support his state against the League; the second that the only method the League would have of stopping aggression or of compelling resort to the tribunal of equity or compliance with its decisions, would be by coercing sovereign governments - that is by

threatening or using war. No peace system can rest upon the use of war.

There is only one way of ending war and of establishing peace, in the political sense of the word, and that is by introducing into the international sphere the principle of the state, that is, by creating a federation of nations with a government which can wield the taxing, executive, legislative, and judicial power, and command the exclusive allegiance of the individual in the super-national sphere.* Until that is accomplished the system of state sovereignty will continue to operate against the forces of reason and goodwill and to force us back towards the old armed and competitive alliance system which is the inevitable outcome of anarchy, and which will in future tend to embrace, not Europe alone, but the whole of the world.

XIV

If the only final remedy for war is a federation of nations, what is to happen in the intermediate stages through which we must pass before that consummation is reached? For the world commonwealth or the federation even of a group of like-minded nations is still a long way off. One of two alternatives, I suggest, will happen. The first is a reconstitution of the League of Nations. The second is a return to the alliance system. I have stressed the tremendous power exercised by state sovereignty and its overriding demand for security in defeating

* If any want to study the basic principles involved I would recommend them to read the classic statement on the subject - a book called *The Commonwealth of Nations*, by Lionel Curtis, published in 1916 by Macmillan.

projects for international co-operation and in driving the nations back towards war, because it is essential that we should recognize what the retention of state sovereignty implies. But that does not mean that the sovereign nations themselves, if they recognize the danger, will not make a determined effort, even while retaining their sovereignty, to live together in reasonable amity, at any rate for a time. The great merit of the League system is that it makes it far easier for the sovereign states to do this, if they so desire. It is possible, therefore, that the nations, now that they are confronted by the abyss into which a renewed competition in armaments is leading them, may agree to make a fresh attempt to make the League of Nations work. The great powers may come to terms which will give a respite from war for a definite term of years, and that respite may make possible a renewal of the League experiment. If the League, however, is to be successful four conditions must be fulfilled. The first is that it should include all nations and especially the United States. The second is that it should recognize that its purpose is just as much to bring about revision by pacific means as to prevent revision by war. Otherwise it becomes a mere combination to maintain the *status quo*, which sooner or later will end in war. The third is an all-round agreement for the limitation of armaments. The fourth is a return to the principles set forth in the Covenant and distorted since 1928 by the Kellogg Pact. The principle underlying the Kellogg Pact - that is, the total outlawry of war - is irreproachable in itself, but it is a principle which can only be realized by the creation of a world federation. The principle of the state applied to the world as a whole is





the only instrument whereby the ideal embodied in the Kellogg Pact can be realized. In so far as the world state is still out of reach the Covenant is a more practical document. It recognizes that it is impossible to escape the use of force in this world - either inside or outside the state. Force is an indispensable element in the maintenance of the reign of law. The Covenant does not try to abolish war altogether but to bring it under some measure of control. It provides that an individual member state may resort to force, but only after having full recourse to collective pacific procedure as laid down in the Covenant.

“the ominous vertebrae of the world alliance system are beginning to appear”

The resort to force - or the knowledge that failing redress force may be resorted to - may often be the only method by which overdue reform and revision of treaties can be effected. But the Covenant also provides that a real attempt must first be made to settle disputes by collective pacific means by requiring all members to take sanctions, under Article XVI, against an aggressor, but it defines an aggressor not as a nation which resorts to war or violates a treaty but only as one which resorts to war without having first used the machinery set up for the pacific settlement of disputes.

The League cannot be made to perform the functions of a world state. It cannot end war altogether. It will break in our hands if we attempt to make it do so. We shall only see how to use the League properly so long as we remember that it is not a government but a piece of diplomatic machinery, and that the League is no more than what the governments in the national capitals

make it. If the League is to succeed as an intermediate system it will be because its members are resolved that grievances can be remedied and treaties reformed by its collective procedure, that they can rely upon one another for security against aggression unless there has first been resort to that procedure, and that if war does break out over some dispute which will not yield to pacific methods it can be localized and prevented from leading to a world war. The League will be unable to assure these results or bring about the disarmament which is essential to prevent the re-appearance of the military time-table, only if all the great powers are members and are resolved to live up to their obligations under the Covenant.

If it proves impossible to revitalize the League, and the necessary conditions will be difficult to realize, the world will inevitably drift back towards the old alliance system. The alliance system, of course, means that in the last resort diplomacy will rest on might. Power diplomacy does not necessarily mean the deliberate use of war. Indeed, the power diplomat whose policy ends in war has failed. It is the essence of successful power diplomacy that it should bring about changes which cannot be effected by agreement, by coercion, but without war by putting the other side in a position in which it will yield rather than incur certain defeat. The evil of power diplomacy is that it dethrones morality in favour of might in international affairs and that in the end, after a series of crises, it becomes more and more difficult for either side to give way, the *status quo* becomes unalterable save by war, the tension in armaments becomes intolerable, war seems inevitable, the military time-table becomes predominant, and it is

possible for an accident, a knave or a fool, to precipitate an act which sets the whole vast military machine in motion all over the world.

“If it proves impossible to revitalize the League, and the necessary conditions will be difficult to realize, the world will inevitably drift back towards the old alliance system.”

It is in this direction that we are drifting today. Already the ominous vertebrae of the world alliance system are beginning to appear. The rearmament of Germany ended the forcible pacification of Europe by the predominance of France and her allies. It was followed first by the Franco-Italian *rapprochement* and, after Germany had announced her intention of creating a huge conscript army of 36 divisions, by the Franco-Russian Treaty of Mutual Assistance. Logically each side will tend to try and create a preponderance of force in its own favour either by expanding or improving its own armaments, in the air, on the land, or on the sea, or by making alliances and pacts with other powers. Finally, the inexorable principles of the Schlieffen plan will come into effect, whereby in the event of war each side endeavours by seizing the initiative to end the war rapidly in its own favour by annihilating the preparations of its rival. So will the inexorable demand for security in an anarchic world gradually drive all the sovereign states of Europe and Asia to associate themselves with one of two or more great, highly armed, military groups. Great Britain will vainly endeavour to confine her commitment to Western Europe, though the alliance system itself and the military time-table must instantly turn any way into a general





European or Europe-Asiatic war as soon as it breaks out. The United States and to some extent the Dominions will try to avoid commitment altogether and will try to occupy the position held by Great Britain alone in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They will arm but endeavour not to form part of the balance of power between the two alliances. But, as used to be the case with Great Britain, they will eventually be dragged into any war which breaks out, partly because their weight will be decisive in determining which side shall win - probably a matter vital to themselves if one side is democratic and the other dictatorial - and partly because their own security will compel them to intervene to prevent aggressive and expansionist powers from obtaining territory or naval or airbases near their shores. However pacifist they may be, the need for security in an anarchic world will force their hands.

“As the alliance system tightens it will become more and more difficult to settle major international questions on grounds of justice and reason.”

As the alliance system tightens it will become more and more difficult to settle major international questions on grounds of justice and reason. Every issue will tend increasingly to be considered in the light of its effect on the relative security of the two sides. War will more and more become the only instrument of change, and every war will tend to become instantly a world war.

It is a sobering and a melancholy reflection that twenty years after the outbreak of the world's greatest war we should once more be drifting back to an alignment making for a

repetition of the same kind of struggle but on a vaster and far more devastating scale, because we have been unable to grapple with that anarchy of state sovereignties which is the root cause of war.

XV

Is this our only destiny? There is, in my view, only one possible way of breaking out of the vicious alliance circle today, and that is to return to the underlying concept of the Peace Conference of 1919, a concept now quite lost sight of, which was embodied in the Anglo-American Treaty of Guarantee to France. The League was to have a centre of gravity - the three victorious democracies - collectively so strong that no state could challenge their authority - even if they disarmed in a disarmed world - yet so liberal that no one would fear them. There was to be in the League a preponderant centre which would have done for the world what Great Britain did for the Empire - and for the world up to 1914. What enabled the old British Empire to keep the peace so long was the overwhelming power of Great Britain, which rendered any successful local war impossible and made it possible for her to arbitrate disputes within it. What preserved the peace of the world during the nineteenth century and ended the long series of world wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the complete naval supremacy of Britain after Trafalgar. It was impossible for any nation to bring about world war because no nation could dream of successfully challenging British sea power outside the Continent of Europe.

The underlying idea at Paris in 1919 was that the United States, France, and the British Empire should

collectively discharge through a League of Nations which gave representation to all peoples, the ultimate stabilizing function which Great Britain alone had performed in the preceding century and in an even more liberal way. The possibility of this kind of stability disappeared with the withdrawal of the United States to the isolation of absolute national sovereignty and the return of Great Britain and the Dominions to that semi-detachment from Europe which followed M. Poincaré's decision to reject the British proposal of guarantee and to invade the Ruhr. France, for a time, created a local military preponderance in Europe with Poland and the Little Entente. Once Germany began to rearm that preponderance disappeared and the inevitable occurred. Unable to rely on the United States, France turned to Russia to maintain the European balance, despite the menace that such a course might imprison both Europe and Asia in the terrible military and air time-tables which are implicit in the alliance system.

If such a central combination were possible - a combination, for instance, of the democracies fronting on the great oceans of the world and between them controlling all the entries into those oceans, Panama, Hawaii, Singapore, Suez, Gibraltar, the Straits of Dover, and the North Sea, and committed to free institutions - it might create a "pax" for a large part of mankind. For it would be a combination which if organized to bring its resources into play would be invulnerable to attack, a centre of world gravity which might therefore escape from automatic commitment to the Europe-Asia alliance system and the military time-table, yet which, by its economic, military, and air strength, would be an immensely powerful influence to





deter other nations from resorting to war except under the conditions provided for in the Covenant, or if war did break out to localize it, end it on reasonably just terms, and in any case prevent it from becoming a world war in which they themselves would inevitably become involved. Such a system can be brought about by no political propaganda. If it comes into being it will be in response to the pressure of events. And in this uncertain anarchic world, in which groupings constantly change and revolution follows revolution, events may well make some other combination - the combination, for instance, once dreamed of by Cecil Rhodes - the centre of gravity against world war. I am solely concerned today to argue that in the creation of such an independent central block may be found the only alternative, in present conditions, to a repetition of that fatal alliance system which produced the world war of 1914, and which would now embrace the whole world.

XVI

May I now return to the fundamentals with which this lecture began. I have made an excursion into the by-path of contemporary diplomatic problems partly because I wanted to analyse the tremendous forces which the anarchy inherent in state sovereignty inevitably lets loose and the unexpected effect they have on national policy. But I have done so partly for another reason. Some of you, no doubt, have thought that my argument that the federation of nations is the only foundation for the ending of war and the establishment of the reign of peace was academic. I believe, on the other hand, that while public opinion today may be far from thinking in these terms,

events are driving the issue to the front with tremendous speed.

“while public opinion today may be far from thinking in these terms, events are driving the issue to the front with tremendous speed.”

It is inconceivable to me that we can continue much longer as an anarchy of twenty-six states in Europe and over sixty states in the world, each raising its tariffs to the clouds against one another, each armed to the teeth, and each darkening the skies with bombing aeroplanes whose most fatal destruction would be directed against the civilian population. Some form of integration - both economic and political - is bound to come, and if this does not come by voluntary federation it will come by way of empire. The method of empire has been that most commonly used to give peace to a distracted world. Empire gives unity and with unity peace. That is its supreme merit - a merit which peoples are willing to acknowledge so long as the memory of anarchy and war persist. Japan already is trying to give “peace” to the Far East by this road today, as we gave it to India a century ago. It is true that sooner or later empires decay, partly because they become rigid and rotten at the centre, partly because despotism gradually atrophies the vigour and initiative of their subjects. It is true also that federation is the only lasting method of unity and peace, because it preserves those elements of freedom and justice which are the principle of vitality and growth, though it is much more difficult to achieve, for race, language, culture, history, all obstruct. The road of a free federation has practically never been successfully applied outside the

English-speaking peoples and Switzerland. None the less anarchy, because it presses constantly towards war, presses also towards integration either by the road of empire or the road of federation.

Suppose a general war broke out again, and nobody can now say it is impossible, what would it be fought about? It certainly would not be fought merely about the readjustment of frontiers. The catastrophic destruction and gigantic power of modern war might be unleashed over some minor issue, but the war itself would become more and more a war to end war. Both sides would inevitably come to fight to end the possibility of further war by establishing a permanent ascendancy - at any rate in their own part of the world. That was what Germany and her associates were planning - and inevitably planning - when they considered what their peace terms would be during the last war. If the alignment in such a war was the same as in the last they would even more certainly endeavour, in the event of victory, to “pacify” Europe by establishing a permanent military and economic ascendancy over most of the Continent.

“if unification does not come by voluntary federation it will come by way of empire”

And what of ourselves? If another general war broke out, should we fight to perpetuate the anarchy which raised the number of sovereign states in Europe from fifteen to twenty-six and to recreate a League of sixty sovereignties which had conspicuously failed to give us peace? I think not. We should think much more realistically. We should realize that if we were victorious we should have to carry the idea of the





Anglo-American Treaty of Guarantee much farther and perpetuate in some form the combination of free peoples which won the war so that world war - if not local war - should be impossible again. And when we began to think in these terms, is it not certain that if we rejected the solution of empire, as we should, we should be driven to consider its only alternative, the solution of federation?

So, unless you think the question of war is purely academic, the issue of unity by federation or unity by empire, if not for the globe as a whole at least for great sections of the globe, is not academic. It is the issue which the re-emergence of the possibility of war is rapidly bringing to the front. And that is why I want the peace movement to think about it, so that if war does reappear, it will be prepared, next time, with a solution which will really end war.

XVII

I imagine that the Burge Memorial Trust does not desire that its lectures should deal mainly with political policy. It is rather concerned, I think, with those spiritual and metaphysical truths which are seldom the stock-in-trade of day-to-day politics but to which, if they are widely enough recognized by the people, political policy has in the long run to conform. So I return to reason with my pacifist friends, men and women who hate war, who are prepared to make any personal sacrifice to end war, but who are in doubt as to how they should proceed so as to produce the result for which they strive. They will at least have no doubt about my opinion. It is that if they want to end war and establish permanent peace among men they must work for nothing less than the merging of part

of national sovereignty in a federation of nations. That is the predestined method by which alone the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man can come into visible expression on earth. It is interesting to remember that the Founder of Christianity was sent to his death by the Palestinian mob because he refused to lend his support to the Jewish nationalist movement to break out from the "Pax Romana".

"It is that if they want to end war and establish permanent peace among men they must work for nothing less than the merging of part of national sovereignty in a federation of nations."

The establishment of a federation of nations, of course, cannot be done by empire. The state is sometimes regarded as being necessarily an engine of rigid and dictatorial violence. That is only the old Prussian and the modern totalitarian conception - itself the outcome of the pressure of anarchy outside the state. In essence the true commonwealth is the result of the recognition by people in a great territorial area of their essential unity - a unity which can only be assured by the creation of the machinery necessary to the establishment of the reign of law - law which in the democratic state conforms to public opinion and whose main sanction is not the police but the voluntary obedience of the overwhelming majority of the citizens. The creation of a federation of nations, therefore, will in essence be the outcome of a spiritual movement - the lessening of those national and racial and linguistic and cultural divisions to the point which makes possible an organic combination for common

supernational affairs. A sufficient degree of moral or spiritual unity must be a reality before an enduring federal commonwealth can come into being, for premature union may break down in secession or civil war. Force may have to play its part in overcoming obstacles but it cannot be the main foundation of a lasting federation. In the profound words of Admiral Mahan: "The function of force is to give time for moral ideas to take root". No one has seen the true place of force in the world or applied it more wisely than Abraham Lincoln. But the process must be moral and spiritual growth, and the end an organic act - the enactment of constitution which will unite men and nations, make permanent universal individual and national liberty, stop the pressure towards dictatorship and tyranny, poverty, unemployment and those hideous and non-moral processes which spring from international anarchy, and abolish the institution of war from the earth.

"A sufficient degree of moral or spiritual unity must be a reality before an enduring federal commonwealth can come into being"

This last and greatest achievement in what Aristotle regarded as the noblest activity of man - human government - may come through the people rising to the level of Tennyson's famous vision or being driven to unity by bitter suffering. Its first beginnings - for it will begin small and grow through the adhesion of those who accept the principles of its constitution - may come from a political movement like the federations of the United States, or Canada, or Switzerland. It may be the outcome of another great struggle, like that of 1914, for right against might, in world affairs, as





nations come to recognize the moral impossibility of isolation when certain vital issues of freedom or justice are at stake. It may be that its foundations will first have to be laid by that marvellous yet almost invisible process whereby early Christianity spread through the pagan Greek and Roman world, by a light of understanding and brotherhood passing from mind to mind, until, despite persecution, repression, and indifference, religion became the foundation of a new order which, despite the collapse of the old machinery of empire, gave some measure of unity and freedom to all the peoples of Christendom. I will not attempt the dangerous role of prophecy. I would, in conclusion, say two things about the nature of the future federation of nations.

The first is that the physical obstacles in the way are no longer insurmountable. You may remember that in a famous oration Edmund Burke recognized that the formation of a constitutional federation was the only solution of the Anglo-American quarrel in 1776. He would have recommended it, but, as he said, *Obstat Natura* - the Atlantic forbids. It was impossible to create a common parliament for two countries separated by 3,000 miles of ocean crossed only by the tiny vessels of that age. Therefore, if the method of empire was no longer practicable in America, it was better to separate in friendliness than to fight. These arguments have disappeared. Nature no longer forbids. Steam, electricity, the internal combustion engine, the printing-press, the aeroplane, and the radio have made the whole earth smaller than was Britain in the days of Burke. If during the era of self-determination many peoples have learned second languages in the name of

nationalism, it ought not to be difficult in a period of integration for all peoples to learn a second common language in the name of unity and peace. And today, despite the emphasis on race, the civilization which all peoples practice is rapidly becoming one. No doubt some new constitutional device will have to be contrived. Democracy in the days of Pericles was confined to the city-state - because an assembly could not be larger than the number who could hear a single orator's voice. England discovered how to apply the representative system to political institutions and so brought into being the national commonwealth. The United States discovered the federal principle and made possible commonwealths of a continental size. Some equivalent discovery will have to be made whereby a government controlling those matters which lie beyond the national domain can enact and enforce law and command the obedience of all citizens in its own sphere of power and be responsible to them. In this case, as before, when the will is there the way will be found. The main obstacles are only tradition and opinion.

"Those who will establish peace on earth in this way will have learnt that neither pacifism nor patriotism is enough."

The second point I want to make is set out in a conversation which I had some nine months ago with an eminent American pacifist divine, which brings out very clearly, I think, the fundamentals of the case. My friend has taken his stand in the United States as an out-and-out pacifist on lines very similar to those adopted in this country by the Rev. Dick Sheppard. He has come the

conclusion that war is wrong. He has publicly proclaimed that in no circumstances will he take part in any future war and that he will go to jail rather than be coerced into doing so. He recently helped to circularize 20,000 ministers of religion in the United States, of whom 14,000 replied that they believed that the Christian churches should refuse to sanction or support any future war, 13,000 replied that it was their present intention to refuse to participate in any future war as combatants, and 8,000 replied that they would refuse to serve as chaplains.

I put to him the usual question, "How do you reconcile this form of negative pacifism with support of the policeman inside the state? If you don't prevent international lawlessness and aggression, sooner or later gangster rule will triumph internationally as it would inside the nation if the citizens and the police did not resist". He replied: "I the League and the Pact for what they are worth, for they are the crude beginnings of the new world order, and because the nations are not likely to take the next and vital step until they have substituted co-operation for unrestricted self-centredness and have discovered in practice that co-operation is not enough. But none of these methods can end war or create the conditions in which it is possible for mankind to live a free and civilized life. These will only be established when enough citizens of national states, while retaining their full autonomy in national affairs, are willing to form themselves into a world nation for common purposes, to enter into that organic and indissoluble bond which is the foundation not of a League but of a Commonwealth of Nations.





Pacifism is not enough

Those who will establish peace on earth in this way will have learnt that neither pacifism nor patriotism is enough. The virtues which make a good citizen of a parliamentary democracy are different from those which make a good citizen of a state which is fighting for justice as against might as the ruler of mankind. Brotherhood, tolerance, public spirit, a capacity for intelligent discussion are essential in the one, as self-sacrifice, discipline, dedication, a capacity to lay down one's life for one's friends are essential in the other.

"the troubles of the world are due not to the malignity of their neighbours but to the anarchy which perverts the policies of all nations"

The peace movement of the future will consist of those who combine both these sets of virtues. Its members will see all men and nations as one brotherhood, and recognize that the troubles of the world are due not to the malignity of their neighbours but to the anarchy which perverts the policies of all nations. And they will have to be prepared, not only to pool their national sovereignties in order that a true reign of law - the

only ending of war, and the only true peace - may be established on earth, but, if necessary, to use force - even war itself - to vindicate justice and the triumph of wrong over right - the road of death - until the time is ripe for peace and unity to come by the road of organic federation - the road of liberty and life. When there are enough "elect" men and women of this kind in the world, and not before, there will arise that city, foreshadowed in Revelation, in which there is no more war because the Glory of the Lord is the light thereof, and the former things have passed away.

About Lord Lothian

The 11th Marquess of Lothian (Philip Kerr, 1882-1940) devoted much of his life to working for world peace through the creation of more solid links amongst the nations of the British Commonwealth and between the Commonwealth and the United States. As a young man he was a member of Lord Milner's group (the 'Kindergarten') in South Africa during the period of reconstruction after the Boer War. As editor of The Round Table from 1910 to 1916, Lothian was an active proponent of closer imperial union, and as Private Secretary to Lloyd George from

1917 to 1921 he had a significant influence on British foreign policy, particularly during the Paris Peace conference of 1919.

During the inter-war years he devoted much of his influence to improving Anglo-American relations and to bringing about the Indian Federation. He studied the problem of national sovereignty, developed a theory of supranational organisation and became a severe critic of the League of Nations. After Munich he took a leading part, with Sir Charles Kimber, Lionel Curtis, Sir William Beveridge, Barbara Wootton and Lionel Robbins, in the establishment of the Federal Union movement. His writings on international relations inspired Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi who, during their internment under Mussolini, developed the case for a federated Europe after the war on the basis of the Federal Union literature. Today Lothian is honoured in Europe as a founding father of the British federalist school and a pioneer of European unification.

This text was written as the Burge Memorial Lecture, delivered on 28 May 1935. It is rightly recognised as one of the essential texts in the history of federalism. This edition was edited by Richard Laming.

Join Federal Union

Federal Union was founded in 1938 to campaign for federalism for the UK, Europe and the world. It has argued since then that democracy and the rule of law are ideas that extend beyond the nation state. It is the UK section of the Union of European Federalists.

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