

# A Wider Patriotism: Alfred Milner and the British Empire

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*J. Lee Thompson*

Number 2



A WIDER PATRIOTISM:  
ALFRED MILNER AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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A WIDER PATRIOTISM:  
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BY

J. Lee Thompson



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## PREFACE

It has been more than a half a century since Vladimir Halpérin's *Lord Milner and the Empire* and Edward Crankshaw's *The Forsaken Idea: A Study of Lord Milner*, both published in 1952, considered Alfred Milner and the British Empire. The following work addresses the intervening void and is also an outgrowth of research originally undertaken for a new biography. While writing this book, *Forgotten Patriot: A Life of Alfred, Viscount Milner of St James's and Cape Town*, it became apparent that there was also a need for a separate, and more in-depth, consideration of Milner's imperial career, reflecting both fifty years of scholarship and new archival sources, than possible in a life.

Tracing Milner's imperialism, from its genesis at Balliol to his death, is the aim of the following work. In addition to his official career, from Egypt to South Africa, to the Colonial Office and back to Egypt after the Great War, the book also considers such topics as Milner's 'Kindergarten' of young male acolytes of empire, and the later Round Table movement, whose 'Cliveden set' members link Milner to the later appeasement movement – which he almost certainly would have condemned. To these more famous supporters this work adds an overlooked female cadre of acolytes. During and after the Boer War these imperial ladies, including his future wife Violet, née Maxse, later Lady Edward Cecil, Violet Markham and Edith Lyttelton among others, gave staunch support to Milner in person, in published works, and by their activities in such groups as the Victoria League. The following chapters also consider anew several other issues, including Milner's relations with race in South Africa, which Milner called the 'most important question.' No other work has given lengthy consideration to Milner's post-South African campaign for a 'constructive' brand of social imperialism before World War I, his intertwined efforts in support of imperial defence and preparedness, or his links to Lord Rosebery and the Liberal Imperialists. In the pre-war years Milner also made two overlooked propaganda tours of Canada, considered the most important link in the imperial chain, and given prominent place in the following work.

Finally, Milner's imperial career was also bound up in another development, the growth in importance of public opinion in an age of mass politics, stirred by



the political press. By the time Milner served his apprenticeship in journalism in the early 1880s, politics, in its domestic and imperial aspects, had become a permanent campaign which needed constant newspaper support. In at the birth of the new journalism, Milner never forgot the lessons in 'sane imperialism' learned at the *Pall Mall Gazette* from W. T. Stead. Illuminating Milner's place in what has been called the 'information milieu' of his time, both at home and in the empire, is an underlying theme throughout.<sup>1</sup>

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The majority of Milner's private and public papers and diaries are in several hundred volumes designated as the Milner Additional Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. A large amount of material relevant to his official life is deposited at the National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office) at Kew, in the South African National Archives and the Library and Archives Canada. In addition, the papers of numerous contemporaries were also consulted for this work, which has been based, in part, on evidence not previously published. Milner recorded his imperial faith in hundreds of published speeches. These and his letters allow the following volume often to reflect Milner's ideas in his own words which remain eloquent, on the printed page at least, today.

I must express my thanks to the following individuals and institutions who made materials available to me and gave assistance without which this study could not have been completed: Mr Colin Harris, Bodleian Library, Oxford; Mrs Caroline Dalton, Archivist, New College, Oxford; the Duke of Westminster; Vyvyan Harmsworth, Associated Newspaper Holdings Limited; House of Lords Record Office; Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge; Mr Eamon Dyas, Archive of *The Times*, News International plc; Mr Robin Harcourt Williams, Librarian and Archivist to the Marquess of Salisbury; British Library; Imperial War Museum; National Army Museum; Cambridge University Library; National Library of Scotland; Public Record Office; British Library of Political and Economic Science; Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London; Mrs Lesley Hart, University of Cape Town Libraries and Melanie Geustyn, National Library of South Africa, and Library and Archives Canada. Final research for this book was undertaken as a Visiting Fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge, and I must extend my thanks to Wolfson's President, Dr Gordon Johnson. This work was also supported by a Lamar University Research Enhancement Grant and I wish to thank the staff of the Gray Library and in particular Annette Stanfield and Jane Gaglianella for inter-library loan aid.

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Finally I wish to thank once again my wife Diane, who has with good humour shared her husband with Alfred Milner for more than seven years. Without her loving support and understanding this project, as the others before it, would never have been completed. I dedicate this work to Professor James D. Startt, who gave a not-so-young scholar a leg up at the beginning of his career and whose help has been appreciated.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

When Alfred Milner was first elevated to the peerage in 1901 as Baron Milner of St James's and Cape Town, he took as his motto *Communis Patria*: roughly, 'patriotism for our common country'. By this he meant the wider patriotism of the Empire, the furthering of which became his life's work. A self-declared 'Anglo-Saxon Race Patriot', Milner's brand of imperialism has over the years been called social, radical, militant, idealist, constructive, excentric, intermediate, consolidationist and forward.<sup>1</sup>

By the time Milner came of age, revolutionary developments in communications led by the telegraph, improvements in steam navigation, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the completion of the Atlantic Cable in 1866 and the completion of the Australian Cable in 1872 had all linked the Empire as never before. Milner also grew up as Disraeli's 1867 Reform Bill ushered in the modern era of mass politics, abetted further before the turn of the century by the franchise extension and redistribution of 1884–5. While he famously engineered Queen Victoria's willing transformation into the embodiment of empire, Disraeli's second premiership also set Britain on imperial courses in Egypt and in South Africa that would profoundly affect Milner. Though the two men never met, and though he lacked the Prime Minister's political opportunism, Milner nevertheless became a self-anointed 'civilian soldier of the empire'.<sup>2</sup> No matter the cost in blood and treasure, Milner believed absolutely that whatever measures he took to further his dream of a unified British Empire were justified. As this work will show, this single-minded righteousness often blinded him to the realities, political and otherwise, of events in which he played an important role.

One year before the Suez Canal was opened (and four years prior to Milner's arrival at Balliol College, Oxford), Charles Dilke, a prominent Liberal MP, published *Greater Britain* (1868), an influential volume that unashamedly predicted future Anglo-Saxon world hegemony after a great racial conflict. This was, Dilke said, all for a higher purpose: 'the power of English laws and English principles of government is not merely an English question – its continuance is essential to the freedom of mankind'.<sup>3</sup> This notion of the unique ability of the Anglo-

Saxon race to govern itself and others through a constitutional system which combined liberty, justice and efficiency was at the core of Milner's patriotism. He also agreed with Dilke's contention that Britain's Empire was her only hope to compete in an increasingly threatening world of continental-sized military and economic juggernauts. Two clear alternatives seemed to present themselves: either national disintegration and decline, or continued world power through imperial cooperation.

Milner's unabashed Anglo-Saxon race patriotism was a powerful movement in his time, but one that seems bizarre and a bit embarrassing in the twenty-first century, fairly or unfairly linked to the European Fascist movement. The intervening cloud of the Third Reich and a twentieth century filled with racist madness and atrocities from Armenia to Rwanda has made ominous the quaint phrase Milner used to describe his imperial creed. By the early 1930s, in the light of Hitler's rise in Germany, race patriotism such as Milner's had fallen into disrepute. In 1933, eight years after Milner's death, the Round Table Sir Edward Grigg noted that though people 'in these days dismiss a belief in race as a crude and reactionary thing, savouring of ascendancy and vulgar thirst for power', it had not been so with Milner. 'He believed in race because without its support he saw no hope of steady growth for the ideals of government which were, in his opinion, the best in the world.' Such a faith was 'not mere arrogance, any more than Christian belief is contempt and intolerance towards other creeds'. In Milner's mind the 'mission of the race was not to itself alone; it was to establish higher standards, wider opportunities, and better life in everything that makes for character and happiness among all types and conditions of men'. There was no 'Hitlerism in his political faith, no wish to exclude or exterminate the best in other strains'. The mission of the Empire, as Milner saw it, was 'one of service rather than of dominance, though only through the strength of the creative race could that mission be performed'.<sup>4</sup>

But there was always something different, something a little alien about Alfred Milner. He never quite fit in with either the politics or the ruling class of his day. He remained an outsider, lacking both the 'political nostril'<sup>5</sup> and the politician's talent for self-promotion. Milner's German birth and education provided a patina of foreignness that never wore off despite legendary academic triumphs at Balliol and years of service to the Empire and the State. Leo Amery noted the German influence on Milner's 'outside view which saw England and the Empire as a whole and not through party or class spectacles, as well as a patriotism which is nowhere so intense as in an English family living in a foreign country'.<sup>6</sup> A lonely childhood, shuttled back and forth between Germany and England, and the loss of his beloved mother while still an adolescent left a void in Milner filled by a religious faith in an Anglo-Saxon race empire. This doomed him to be a man moving against the current of history, and to become

a figure by middle age who would have been quixotic had he not been jousting in South Africa against real, not imaginary, windmills armed with Mauser rifles and Krupps artillery.

Arriving at Benjamin Jowett's Balliol in 1873, the outsider Milner found an unlikely imperial mentor in George Parkin, who arrived from Canada the same year. At the Oxford Union Society, Parkin, a New Brunswick schoolmaster eight years older than Milner, raised the cry for imperial federation under a banner which proclaimed 'Extensior'.<sup>7</sup> Like Dilke he preached that the Anglo-Saxon race had a special capacity for political organization and that a federated Greater Britain must be the end product. Milner first heard Parkin when he spoke in a losing cause against a motion that 'the disintegration of the Empire is the true solution of the colonial difficulty'. In 1919 Milner recalled the 'new vision of the future of the British Empire' that he gained from Parkin – one in which the Empire 'appeared no longer as a number of infant or dependent communities revolving round this ancient kingdom but as a world-encircling group of related nations, some of them destined in time even to outgrow the mother country, united on a basis of equality and partnership, and united at least mainly by moral and spiritual bonds'.<sup>8</sup>

At the Union Milner joined a half dozen or so stalwarts who hammered away in support of empire, not a popular position at the time. He later commented, 'I dare say we bored our audience – on these ideas, that the growth of the Colonies into self-governing communities was no reason why they should drop away from the Mother Country or from one another'. What Milner feared most was another debacle like the loss of the American colonies, 'a dire disaster, not only in the manner in which it came about, but for coming about at all'. No political object, he believed, was comparable in importance to 'preventing the repetition of such a disaster, the severance of another link in the great imperial chain'.<sup>9</sup>

At Balliol Milner also imbibed the gospel of social reform from his close friend Arnold Toynbee and from the philosopher T. H. Green, Jowett's right-hand man.<sup>10</sup> Green, who has been credited with laying down the philosophical foundations of Liberal Imperialism, pricked the social conscience of his students, underlining their duty, as members of the educated elite, to the lower orders.<sup>11</sup> He preached that laissez faire economics protected the interests of the powerful, while it ignored the welfare of the nation. Liberalism to Green meant more than the protection of individual rights from an oppressive government. In a truly liberal state, social reforms would provide people the opportunity to fulfill their moral potential and human capacities. His political philosophy was based on moral principles that promoted the common good and recognized that people had a duty to be concerned with their neighbours' well-being. Men, said Green, were social beings who fulfilled their human potential only through rela-

tions with each other in a community, a concept which had been lost in modern industrial society. Milner and other of Green's students embraced these ideas of social service and state aid to the weaker members of society. They also opposed laissez faire economic policy, which in combination with the Industrial Revolution (a phrase Toynbee is credited with popularizing if not inventing) had led to slums and sweated labour for the working classes. Consequently, from his college years Milner took away a political philosophy that combined two seemingly antithetical ideals, the Empire and social reform.

Milner considered himself a Liberal, but was increasingly at odds with the party, which was out of power for most of his Oxford tenure. However, Conservative support of empire and its social reform agenda of 1875 both must have appealed to Milner, who defended the Prime Minister against a motion that 'Mr Disraeli's career has been such as to deserve the reprobation of this house'.<sup>12</sup> Disraeli infuriated his Liberal opponents, both with his 'jingo' adventures abroad, such as the affair of the Suez Canal shares, and by adding 'Empress of India' to Queen Victoria's titles. In response the term 'imperialism', first used in a negative sense by the Liberal press, came into popular parlance.<sup>13</sup>

The 'Jewel in the Crown' of the nineteenth-century British Empire held little interest for Milner. Though he fully realized India's importance, his dream was to link up the white settlement empire and he later opposed giving India dominion status. Milner believed 'We can only fraternize with those with whom we have something in common, morally or spiritually speaking – in other words a community of race, language, civilization, history, tradition and ideals which form the basis of the link between Great Britain and the Dominions.' It was not the same when dealing with 'the other, the Dependent Empire'.<sup>14</sup> Between the 'Two Empires', Milner's priorities were clear: 'If I had to choose between an effective union of the great self-governing states of the Empire without the dependent states, and the retention of the dependent states accompanied by a complete separation from the distant communities of our own blood and language, I should choose the former'.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, Milner's imperialism was by 1913 at least 'something wider than "Anglo-Saxondom" or even ... "Pax Brittanica"'. He considered 'The power of incorporating alien races without trying to disintegrate them, or rob them of their individuality ... characteristic of the British imperial system.' It was not by 'what it takes away, but what it gives ... opening new vistas of culture and advancement, that it seeks to win them to itself'.<sup>16</sup>

It was during the Boer War that Milner and 'Milnerism' first came under attack by a number of activists, journalists and politicians, who would be tarred as 'pro-Boers'. Among these critics was J. A. Hobson, a Radical publicist who, like Milner's friend the journalist W. T. Stead, lost his former imperial faith in the fires of the Jameson Raid and the outbreak of the war, and become a zealot for the other side.<sup>17</sup> Before the war Hobson had been in South Africa on assign-

ment for the *Manchester Guardian*, and had applauded Milner's appointment as High Commissioner.<sup>18</sup> However, afterwards he returned to England to produce a stream of articles, pamphlets and books for the anti-war cause, most famously *Imperialism* in 1902. Milner, wrote Hobson, had fallen 'quickly under the control of politicians, financiers and journalists whom [the Transvaal Government] knew to be their enemies'. The High Commissioner had been the 'easy instrument of political partizans and business men whom he has thought to use for purposes of information but who have used him for more practical purposes'. 'The apparent spontaneity of Imperialism', wrote Hobson, was a 'mere illusion: its forces obey the stimulus and the direction of financial masters'.<sup>19</sup> To do battle with critics such as Hobson, and to further his imperial aims generally, Milner fashioned a network of support at home and in South Africa. It has been often overlooked that in addition to friends in Westminster, Fleet Street and the great houses of England, Milner also had a cadre of female supporters of his contentious imperial path.

As High Commissioner in Cape Town Milner had to contend with the 'Race Question' between Briton and Boer, as well as the 'Native Question' between black and white. As the representative of the 'Imperial Factor', Milner also aimed to tame, or at least control, the 'commercial' ambitions of men like Cecil Rhodes. On his appointment, the *Spectator*, edited by John St Loe Strachey, gushed that Milner was a 'wise and able choice' to deal with the 'seething cauldron of blind political passions' in South Africa stirred by the Jameson Raid. The weekly listed the many 'suspicions' which Milner faced, including the commercial community of the Cape 'haunted by the thought that their prosperity may be ruined by changes in the railway policy which may leave them stranded in their Southern vineyards'. The people of the North were 'equally suspicious and ask whether they are to be sacrificed to the South, to have their commerce strangled and not allowed its natural outlet to the sea'. Next came the suspicion of a large number of Dutch and English, that the white men were 'to be sacrificed to the insensate philanthropy of Exeter Hall' and that the 'Imperial factor' was going to 'treat South Africa as a black man's country, and to pamper the native into insubordination or even insurrection'. Others were equally suspicious that the natives would be 'reduced to slavery if the Imperial factor does not hold the white in check'.

Milner's greatest job, the *Spectator* went on, would be to 'allay these suspicions by standing apart from and outside them' and to this task he was believed equal. The over-arching advice offered was for the High Commissioner to follow the 'essential principle ... never to move unless he is supported by South African opinion as a whole'. This, said the journal, was the policy Joseph Chamberlain had been carrying out, and 'but for Mr. Rhodes would have in a few years secured the Outlanders their rights, with the peaceful assent of the Boers'.



The 'true policy', which Chamberlain had recently reaffirmed in the Commons, would reunite the races and 'no man, from personal ambition, or body of men from commercial aims, must be allowed to destroy it'.<sup>20</sup> This was sound advice that Milner unfortunately failed to follow, choosing war instead.

Back in England after eight years in South Africa, with Joseph Chamberlain permanently sidelined by a 1906 stroke, Milner became the de facto champion of 'constructive' imperialism.<sup>21</sup> He aimed to capture working-class support by offering a 'Democratic Imperialism' which harkened back to Disraeli's popular Tory Democracy, largely discarded by the Unionist leaders Salisbury and his successor Arthur Balfour, who had little interest in social reform. However, when pressed by his many fervent admirers (first among these Leo Amery) to step forward and give substantive leadership Milner, like the Liberal Imperialist Lord Rosebery, demurred.

Milner preferred to work behind the scenes and did so in the years before 1914 (and afterwards until his death) by supporting the Round Table movement led by Lionel Curtis, Philip Kerr and others of Milner's South African acolytes who had done such able work in the reconstruction period. These men returned home in 1909 flushed by their success in the South African Union movement. With Milner's help, they now aimed to unite the wider white empire. As the following chapters demonstrate, the Round Table heavily involved Milner with one dominion in particular, Canada. Unfortunately for the overall movement, its already slim chances of success were doomed by the First World War, which only reinforced dominion nationalism, and, much to Milner's disgust, by the post-war substitution of the League of Nations as an alternative cause for many of his imperial brethren.

However, by the end of Milner's official career, his Egyptian negotiations in 1919 and 1920 point towards a new realism, in this sphere at least, which his Cabinet colleagues reluctantly were forced to follow a year after he left the Colonial Office. About Egypt, Vladimir Halpérin noted that 'at two decisive points in his own career (one at the beginning of it, the other at the end), Lord Milner was the central figure of the changing political scene. He was on the critical spot at the critical hour. Through his ideals as well as through his work he did much to build up the British imperial structure in the Near East'.<sup>22</sup>

Two months after Milner's death, as a testament to his patriotism, Lady Milner arranged for his 'Credo' to be published in *The Times* in 1925. This read in part:

My patriotism knows no geographical, but only racial limits. I am an Imperialist and not a Little Englander because I am a British Race Patriot ... It is not the soil of England, dear as it is to me, but the speech, the tradition, the spiritual heritage, the principles, the aspirations of the British race. They do not cease to be *mine* because they are transplanted ...

I feel myself a citizen of the Empire ... Canada is my country, Australia my country, New Zealand my country, South Africa my country as much as Surrey or Yorkshire. We are told there is no such thing as citizenship of the Empire. In the purely juridical sense that may be true ... It is only a question of time when the expansion of the race will compel a new juridical conception, that of a common citizenship of all the countries which that race inhabits or controls.

The wider patriotism is no mere exalted sentiment. It is a practical necessity ...

This brings us to our first great principle – *follow the race*. The British state must follow the race ... wherever it settles in appreciable numbers as an independent community ... We cannot afford to part with so much of our best blood. We have already parted with too much of it, to form the nucleus of another wholly separate though fortunately friendly State. We cannot suffer a repetition of the process.

The time cannot be far distant when this practical aspect of Imperial unity will become apparent to everybody. The work of British Imperialists during my lifetime has been to hold the fort, to keep alive the sentiments which made against disruption, which delayed it, against the time when its insanity became generally apparent ...

Time was, in my young days, when the gradual dissolution of the Empire was regarded as an inevitable, almost a desirable eventuality. This view is no longer anything like so general, anything like so potent as it was. In another twenty years it is reasonable to hope that it may be altogether extinct – that all Britons, alike in the Motherland or overseas, will be Imperialists, that it will be the happier fate of those who come after us to create that State, which it has been our duty to preserve for them the possibility of creating.

What makes this result possible, what makes it, thank God, I believe inevitable, is the shrinkage of the world.<sup>23</sup>

The world would indeed shrink over the following twenty years, but those imperialists who continued to hold down the fort that Milner helped to construct would find themselves overrun by another world war which would dash any lingering hopes for a British Empire on the lines Milner envisioned. The born-again imperialist Winston Churchill, who was ironically still on hand, however reluctantly, to help guide the dissolution, had dubbed Milner the ‘Man of No Illusions’ during the Boer War. In fact his dream of a united Anglo-Saxon race empire proved one of the greatest illusions of them all.

### *Milner and the Historians*

Though Milner opened his papers for several sympathetic works on his South African service and allowed the publication of his speeches, he refused to cooperate with prospective biographers and turned down several offers from publishers for his memoirs.<sup>24</sup> Had he published them, Milner’s recollections doubtless would have radically challenged those of enemies and allies such as Winston Churchill, David Lloyd George and other great contemporaries who shaped the history of his era. Since his death in 1925 several works have revealed something of Milner’s imperial ideology and career. The first glimpse came in

two volumes of Milner's South Africa papers edited by Cecil Headlam and published in 1931–3 with the blessing of Lady Milner, who vetted his papers and became the staunch guardian of his memory and legacy.<sup>25</sup>

Lady Milner also cooperated in the writing of two book-length works devoted to Milner's imperialism, both published in 1952: Vladimir Halpérin's *Lord Milner and the Empire: The Evolution of British Imperialism* and Edward Crankshaw's *The Forsaken Idea: A Study of Lord Milner*. According to Halpérin, Milner, 'by virtue of his work in Egypt, South Africa and, lastly, in London, by virtue of what he said and what he wrote, can truly be called one of the great servants of the British Empire, and what is more, one of the fathers of the British Commonwealth.'<sup>26</sup> What Halpérin found 'so striking' about Milner's doctrine was 'an independence and a precision; even more marked than in his actions ... Imperialism stood for Milner ... not so much for acquisition and gain as for organization, prosperity and unity within those vast domains that were already beneath the British flag.'<sup>27</sup> To his school, the Empire was 'a circle whose centre is everywhere and which has no circumference.'<sup>28</sup> Its credo for continued post-war British rule over the dependent Empire, Halperin found in Milner's 1923 *Questions of the Hour*. 'For that authority is the only one capable, under present circumstances, of ensuring to the peoples of these countries the primary blessings of order and justice. Its withdrawal would be a disaster for them, and on our part a dereliction of duty.'<sup>29</sup>

Crankshaw's *The Forsaken Idea* regarded the South African years as the defining period in Milner's career. There Milner saw himself 'not as a man chosen to muddle the machine along, steering clear of disaster, but as the chief-of-staff of an operation which was to ensure the best possible deployment of South African resources in the interests of its inhabitants, Great Britain and the world at large'. Chamberlain and Selborne at the Colonial Office shared these views, but the 'Government, the Opposition and the public as a whole did not'. To them, the High Commissioner was 'the man detailed to act as a buffer between themselves and trouble emanating from South Africa' and 'to arrange as little trouble as might be'. Milner's problem was that he did not learn this lesson. To the end in South Africa he did not seem to realize he was 'up against the British version of original sin; inertia, wooly thinking, and self-deception'. Milner seemed to believe that 'if only, somehow, you could change the institutions – the System as he called it – you could change the men, forgetting that the System was the proud creation of the men themselves.'<sup>30</sup> To Crankshaw, Milner's 'only weakness, his only blind-spot', was his 'revolutionary optimism – a strange quality to find in a man popularly notorious as a rigid, cold, aloof reactionary'.<sup>31</sup> It was not because he was 'too rigid and cold that Milner could never become a national leader. It was because he was not cold enough.'<sup>32</sup>

In his 1960 *Imperialism and Social Reform* Bernard Semmel dubbed Milner a 'Social-Imperial Idealist'. To Semmel, Milner represented the 'noblest, least self-seeking side of Tariff Reform social-imperialism. For him, support of the social-imperial complex constituted – in his own words – “the highest development of patriotism.”<sup>33</sup> Two years later, in light of the then new Robinson and Gallagher imperial thesis, Eric Stokes reconsidered 'Milnerism'. As did Semmel, Stokes considered the melding in Milner of imperialism and socialism, pointing to the six lectures on socialism Milner gave in Whitechapel in 1882 which defined his lifelong belief in state regulation and endowment. Stokes's analysis also considered the liberal roots of Milner's imperialism and his mentor George Goschen's contribution, marking Milner as a consolidationist and a militant imperialist who more than Chamberlain or anyone else caused the Boer War.<sup>34</sup>

Outside John Evelyn Wrench's 1956 life, *Alfred Lord Milner: Man of No Illusions*, until 1964 no work on Milner had given consideration to his interrelated political and imperial activities in 1905–16 while out of office. Alfred Gollin then remedied this to an extent in *Proconsul in Politics: A Study of Lord Milner in Opposition and in Power*. In Gollin's view, the 'master desire' of Milner's life, 'the reason he sought power, was to serve, to serve Britain and the Empire. His chief contribution to the political thought of his generation' was his 'emphasis upon a need for Imperial Unity'. Milner desired 'not a Liberal or a Labour or a Conservative policy, but a British policy – rational, logical, thoroughly planned'. Unfortunately for the furtherance of his ideas, Milner 'lacked the qualities of a great political leader'. He was 'always more aware of what the Empire needed than of what the British people could be brought to accept'.<sup>35</sup>

From the 1960s much of the Milner historiography has to do with his role in the origins, course, and aftermath of the Boer War.<sup>36</sup> The political/strategic interpretation, which put Milner and Joseph Chamberlain at the centre of events, can be traced back at least to Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher's extremely influential *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (1961) and continued in such works as Thomas Pakenham's *The Boer War* (1979) and by Andrew Porter in *The Origins of the South African War: Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1895–99* (1980). More recently this position can also be seen in Iain R. Smith's *The Origins of the South African War, 1899–1902* (1996).

The economic arguments first wielded by J. A. Hobson and others were revived in 1979 by Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido. To Marks and Trapido, the character of Milner's role in South Africa had been 'persistently misunderstood by the historians'. 'Milner the man', they argued, 'has been overestimated; while on the other hand the nature of "Milnerism", as an expression of late nineteenth-century imperialism at both the ideological and practical levels has been underestimated and indeed virtually unexplored'.<sup>37</sup> The pair extended the 'Blainey thesis' for the Jameson Raid (that it was carried out for specific economic reasons) to 'the war

and the major divisions in the reconstruction period'.<sup>38</sup> They also introduced into the factors to be considered the 'precariousness of Britain's gold reserve' and the problems of the international gold supply, 20 per cent of which came from South Africa. It is true that Milner's mentor Goschen had been a director of the Bank of England and his years working with Goschen at the Exchequer certainly meant Milner was cognizant of such matters. But, as has been pointed out elsewhere, there is no real evidence of any sort that gold supplies played any part in his calculations.<sup>39</sup> Further, he was in fact very uncomfortable having the so-called 'Gold-Bugs' as his allies. However, because Milner saw the economic 'overspill' of the industry as essential to the rebirth of a devastated South Africa, it is only logical that he should support demands both for cheaper labour and essentials such as dynamite.

Milner's disdain for the mine owners, and his background and training generally, make his imperial profile appear (outside his pro-Tariff Reform stance at least) to be compatible with the City-oriented paradigm of 'Gentlemanly Capitalism' put forward by P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins in their sweeping two-volume analysis, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688–1914* and *British Imperialism: Crisis and Deconstruction 1914–1990*, both published in 1993. Cain and Hopkins take issue with those, such as Thomas Pakenham, who would lay the Boer War at Milner's feet. In their view, a longer and wider perspective is needed and, although Milner 'helped to stir the pot, he did not supply the ingredients. More important agents were the imperial government and, indirectly, the mine owners. Neither wanted war; both exerted the pressures that brought it about. The imperial government knowingly adopted a high risk policy.'<sup>40</sup>

More recently, John Darwin has noted the limitations of both the strategic and commercial explanations for the 'character and timing' of British imperial interventions. To Darwin the 'crucial variable' was the 'bridgehead: the purchase achieved by British interests on their zone of operations'. British intervention in South Africa was in his view 'predicated as much upon the reinforcement of the local mean to regional primacy – the loyalist population (on which Milner laid such emphasis); the Uitlanders; Rhode's political machine; his preemption of Zambezia; and, not least, the economic potential of the goldfields – as upon the urgency of any strategic or commercial threat'. The South African case was to Darwin also a reminder that 'we must also look to the domestic end of the imperial axis, to a "second bridgehead": those enclaves of empire-minded or imperial-oriented interests in the metropole whose mobilization was crucial to Milner's success in creating the "moral field" on which Lord Salisbury, to his chagrin, was forced to play'.<sup>41</sup> Such an examination, concerning South Africa and the wider Empire, plays an important part in the following work.

## 2 IMPERIAL PROPAGANDIST: THE PRESS, POLITICS AND PUBLIC OPINION

One key foundation stone of Milner's future success in the imperial sphere was laid in the early 1880s in his five-year career as a journalist. The anti-imperialist gadfly Wilfrid Scawen Blunt later noted that Milner's experience in Fleet Street gave 'him the length of John Bull's foot very accurately, so that he is invaluable to the Empire builders'.<sup>1</sup> Not only did Milner gain an insight into public opinion and newspaper methods, he also fashioned a network of contacts and supporters who would be invaluable to his South African and later policies. In 1880, only a year after leaving Oxford, Milner began submitting articles to the London press. The first pieces, mainly on German topics, were published in two Liberal journals, the *Fortnightly Review* and the penny evening *Pall Mall Gazette*, both edited by John Morley, the future Viscount Morley of Blackburn. Described as an agnostic Radical of Whiggish temperament, Morley was also an anti-imperialist who the previous year had dubbed Sir Bartle Frere a 'Prancing Proconsul' for his federationist policy in South Africa.<sup>2</sup> W. T. Stead, who joined the paper in 1880 as Morley's second-in command, describes him as a cautious man with strong conservative instincts who does 'not like new-fangled notions' and 'shrinks from leaps in the dark and venturesome experiments'.<sup>3</sup> The *Pall Mall Gazette* reflected his serious and sober tenor.

When Morley was absent from the Northumberland Street offices, Stead was left in charge, but confined by Morley's injunctions against 'purple patches' in the leaders. A self-styled 'barbarian of the North', Stead had made a national reputation for himself at the Darlington *Northern Echo*. The assistant editor had great ambitions for the *Pall Mall Gazette*. He wanted the paper to 'lead the leaders of public opinion' and 'combine the function of Hebrew prophet and Roman tribune with Greek teacher', while at the same time being 'lively, amusing and newsy'.<sup>4</sup> Further, Stead hoped to foster greater unity among English speaking nations, improve and reform British imperial policy, and crusade for education, land and other reforms. By the fall of 1880 Milner was contributing almost daily pieces for the 'Occasional Notes' section of the *Pall Mall Gazette*; however, Stead was not at first much impressed with his work. Nevertheless Milner persevered,

and was promoted to leader writing. The two men cooperated in fashioning the *Pall Mall Gazette* into one of the earliest examples of the popular new journalism. Though very different in personality, they saw eye to eye concerning two areas: the Empire and social reform.

Milner later wrote that he could not recall 'any newspaper in any country' ever having 'exercised so much influence upon public affairs' as the *Pall Mall Gazette* did in Stead's first years as editor. This was, he said, 'entirely due to the force of his personality'. The two found themselves 'always in hot water with one or other large portion of the public' because the 'tremendous energy ... with which the Pall Mall of those days urged its invariably very pronounced opinions naturally excited no little animosity'. Not that he and Stead minded much. They were both young and were, 'despite the greatest possible differences of temperament and training', in agreement on the great lines of policy. Milner went on, 'We were both enthusiasts about the Race and Empire' and both 'shedding very fast the old tradition of the laissez faire school and believed in the power and the duty of the State to take vigorous action for the improvement of the conditions of life among the mass of the people'.<sup>5</sup> Stead later credited Milner for being the first in the English press who 'sounded the note of revolt against the doctrines of the old school ... It was in this way that he became known as the recognized exponent of the ... Municipal Socialists.' Milner's articles were an attempt to 'popularize and Anglicize the theories of the more practical and opportunist school of German socialists'.<sup>6</sup>

In 1881 and 1882 the *Pall Mall Gazette* devoted much attention to the developing political crisis in Egypt, the outcome of which would have direct consequences on Milner's future career. The 3 January 1882 edition noted the publication of the manifesto of the Egyptian Nationalist Party led by the army officer Arabi Pasha. Calling Arabi a 'well-meaning but ignorant enthusiast' the paper commented that to 'dream of establishing a solid Government' on his 'pronunciamento' was 'worse than to try and build a house on the sand'. While closely following the 'stormy petrel of Egyptian politics' the paper also supported the Liberal party line against the new Fair Trade movement which challenged the prevailing Free Trade orthodoxy by proposing that Britain reciprocate against countries like Germany which put up tariff walls. In lauding the publication of a new *Imperial Dictionary*, the paper noted that the term 'Fair Trade' was missing, commenting, however, that the omission was 'excusable, as the term is only the creation of yesterday, and will probably have an ephemeral existence'.<sup>7</sup>

Though Gladstone professed considerable sympathy for Egyptian nationalism, that summer the Prime Minister was forced to use British ships and troops to put down the challenge. The threat, both to European bondholders and to the Suez Canal (the strategic lifeline to India whose traffic was mainly British), could not be ignored. The *Pall Mall Gazette* supported the defence of the Canal

and called for an 'Oriental Belgium' to be created in Egypt to turn a country that had been a 'centre of international rivalry, intrigue and exploitation into a self-governing community'. In doing this, the paper went on, 'it can be no object to keep a single man in Egypt an hour more than suffices to get the army thoroughly into hand and to secure a chance for a pacific and orderly government'. Those who argued that 'once we get in we shall never get out', were as 'rash as those who five years ago insisted that Russia would never get out of Bulgaria'.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, it would be impossible to duplicate Palmerston's Belgian coup of fifty years before. Egypt was occupied, but not annexed, and would be a troublesome bone of contention between Britain and the other powers of Europe, particularly France (which chose at the last moment not to join the military action) for years to come.

The experienced diplomatist Lord Dufferin was sent out to investigate and to draw up a set of proposals for Egypt's reform and reorganization on the way to self-government. The *Pall Mall Gazette* lauded his courage in the face of those who argued that it would be easier to 'create a soul within the ribs of death'.<sup>9</sup> To carry out Dufferin's recommendations, Sir Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer), a qualified and, considered at the time, safe Liberal choice was sent to Cairo as Consul General. Baring's task, commented *The Times*, was 'nothing less than that of keeping in motion and guiding in the right direction by a steady and firm pressure the whole machinery of Egyptian administration as it has been reconstructed, or is being reconstructed'. To those who called for a quick evacuation and 'Egypt for the Egyptian', the paper responded that a 'task less likely to be brought to conclusion in a few months, or a few years, could hardly be conceived'.<sup>10</sup> Twenty-four years later, when Baring finally left Egypt, the process was still not concluded. Along with Baring, Stead and the *Pall Mall Gazette* began as supporters of Gladstone's early-as-possible evacuation plan, but Stead, once he became editor, would denounce the Prime Minister's stated intention as a 'policy of scuttle' and 'cut and run' diplomacy.<sup>11</sup>

In 1883 Milner was much impressed by a new book very much along the lines of his own imperial outlook, John Robert Seeley's *The Expansion of England*, which sold 80,000 copies in its first two years of publication. Seeley challenged the prevailing Whig and constitutionalist interpretations by bringing imperial and foreign affairs to the forefront of English history. He dismissed the popular view that Britain's possessions must inevitably go their own way, as had the thirteen American colonies in the eighteenth century. Unlike the majority of British historians who neglected it, Seeley put the American Revolution at the centre of British history, proposing that the nation learn from the experience both to keep her white colonies and to emulate the American federal example: to become not only a large, but a great, nation. The book predicted the rise of the United States and Russia to superpower status and argued that the only way for Britain to keep



up in the current international competition of world-states was to form a federal union with the predominantly white Empire.

Now best remembered for the phrase 'we have conquered half the world in a fit of absence of mind', at the time what caught the public attention was Seeley's contention, as T. O. Lloyd puts it, that 'If Greater Britain really existed, Canada and Australia would be to us as Kent and Cornwall'.<sup>12</sup> John Morley led the Radical attack on the book and the idea of imperial federation in a *Macmillan's Magazine* review which contained a long list of practical objections to Seeley's scheme and asserted that, even if some sort of imperial assembly were created, the Empire would never support solely British commitments, using the unlucky example of the defence of Belgium.<sup>13</sup> That year Morley became Liberal MP for Newcastle-upon-Tyne and would be an ardent supporter of Gladstone for the rest of the Prime Minister's life. When Morley resigned from the *Pall Mall Gazette* to devote himself exclusively to politics, editorial control passed to Stead, who invited Milner to become his chief assistant.<sup>14</sup>

Stead rather grandly attributed the conversion of the nation to the imperial cause to the pro-empire crusade he and Milner carried out after Morley's departure in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. 'We founded in those days, Milner and I, a veritable school of political thought.'<sup>15</sup> To fill Milner's old place Stead suggested E. T. Cook, another Balliol product who joined the staff that August. Six months later Cook wrote to a friend of the change at the paper from Morley to Stead: now 'you never know whether you will hear the voice of culture (that's me, you know, and Milner), or the blatantest vulgarity'.<sup>16</sup> Stead's first 'vulgar' new journalism campaign began 16 October 1883 when the *Pall Mall Gazette* ran a leader in support of the charges made shortly earlier that year by Andrew Mearns in a pamphlet *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*. 'Is It Not Time', Stead's title asked, for the public's attention to be brought to the filth, brutality and immorality of the city's slum life and a solution found? The paper particularly pointed a finger at the tenement owners and their exorbitant rents, but also placed blame on the churches and the many 'wealthy men, intellectuals and politicians' who had done little or nothing about 'the one great domestic problem'.<sup>17</sup> The 'Bitter Cry' crusade went on for several months and its indictment of the establishment, something not done before in a 'respectable' newspaper, caused a sensation.

This campaign set a pattern for the future: a shocking first revelation; followed by signed articles on differing aspects of the problem by experts; excerpts from articles in rival papers on the problem; accounts of the relevant speeches of politicians and many letters to the editor printed on both sides of the issue. In this case the first week's correspondents included General Booth of the Salvation Army. Though inundated with schemes to solve the problem, the *Pall Mall Gazette* offered no substantive plan of its own, although Milner weighed in with

an article calling for the enforcement of currently neglected laws, more aggressive action from local government bodies and a strengthening of the existing Sanitary Boards.

On the imperial front, the *Pall Mall Gazette* carried out a successful 'Chinese Gordon For the Soudan' campaign which helped to pressure the Government into the ill-fated dispatch of the General on a mission to evacuate Khartoum after the massacre of 'Hicks Pasha' and his army at El Obeid by the Mahdi. Of more import to Milner's future story was the attention the paper paid to South African affairs, in particular the negotiations being carried out in London between Lord Derby, the Colonial Secretary, and the wily Paul Kruger, the President of the Transvaal. These talks were brought on by Boer unhappiness with the 1881 Pretoria Convention negotiated to settle the brief Anglo-Boer War of 1880–1, a conflict marked by a humiliating British defeat at Majuba Hill and, to many, an even more mortifying response from Gladstone, who made peace rather than war. Apparent transgressions of the Pretoria terms by the Dutch-descended burghers of the South African Republic led Stead to rage that the British should 'shoot them down if necessary' to end their defiance of Britain.<sup>18</sup> The key question was whether the British would enforce the uncertain 'suzerainty' granted them over Boer affairs in the preamble of the Pretoria Convention. Derby was handicapped in his negotiations with 'Oom Paul' by his fear that the British might create 'another Ireland in South Africa' and by the low priority accorded the matter by a Prime Minister and Cabinet more concerned with Egypt, the Sudan and other pressing domestic political and franchise reform questions.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to the suzerainty question, in 1884 a territorial dispute arose over Boer designs on Bechuanaland (the future Botswana), to the north of the Cape Colony and considered a gateway for expansion and trade. In this controversy imperial, humanitarian and religious impulses were all intertwined. Milner, Stead and the *Pall Mall Gazette* had in the previous year allied themselves with the British champion of the native peoples of Bechuanaland, the Reverend John Mackenzie. A missionary as well as an imperialist of humanitarian and idealist stripe, Mackenzie campaigned in Britain against ceding the territory to the Transvaal, arguing instead that it was Britain's duty to administer. The white supremacist Boers had trekked north from the Cape fifty years before in part because of Biblically inspired disagreements with the British over slavery and their general view of the place of natives in their society. Mackenzie, however, put aside this brutal record, asserting that the present dispute was 'not a question of "freedom" ... it is a question of paramountcy.' Was Bechuanaland to be 'retained by England with and for the Cape Colony, and the more civilized South African communities', or was it to be 'handed to the Transvaal?' He wrote to Stead that what the Boers wanted was the 'supreme political position in South Africa ... the highway to the interior, to have the native policy of the future ... all in their

hands'. In a *Pall Mall Gazette* leader, Mackenzie declared that 'Bechuanaland is the key to the interior and the key to political supremacy in Southern Africa'.<sup>20</sup>

At the same time in the Cape another figure of importance to Milner's future also became involved in these debates – Cecil John Rhodes. The budding Cape politician had only recently gained his pass degree from Oxford after many years spent alternating between Oriel and amassing a diamond fortune at Kimberley. Although their tenures at Oxford actually overlapped for a time, Milner never met Rhodes there, and would finally be introduced to him by Stead several years later. By 1884 Rhodes had begun to preach his doctrine of Cape colonial imperialism in opposition to the dominance from London of what he derisively labelled the 'Imperial Factor'. He declared Bechuanaland the 'Suez Canal of the trade of this country, the key of the road to the interior ... The question before us is this – whether this Colony is to be confined to its present borders, or whether it is to become the dominant state in South Africa.'<sup>21</sup> In the end Sir Hercules Robinson (later Lord Rosmead), the British High Commissioner, was able to use his influence to ensure that Bechuanaland became a British, not a Boer, protectorate. Otherwise, however, the 1884 London Convention (in which there was no longer a mention of suzerainty) would prove no more satisfactory than the Pretoria Convention it was meant to replace. Disagreements over its clauses would constitute one of the causes of the Second Anglo-Boer War with which Milner would be intimately associated fifteen years later.

In addition to his newspaper work, in 1884 Milner became a private secretary to George Joachim Goschen, since 1880 Liberal MP for Ripon. The two men shared many Liberal and imperial ideas, had similar family ties to Germany and valued principles above party attachments. Their close relationship over the following years was critical in shaping Milner's political identity and future prospects. Milner's new employer had accepted office in Gladstone's first Government, but had become a critic of the current Liberal administration's 'Little England' leanings in foreign policy and Radical bent on the franchise reform question.<sup>22</sup> Goschen had a particular interest in Egypt, which he had visited in 1876 as the representative of British bondholders in negotiations on the Egyptian debt. This experience led him to disagree with Gladstone's stated policy of evacuation. Goschen attracted a small band of moderate supporters within the faction-ridden Liberal party dominated by Gladstone.

Sharing Goschen's critical view of Gladstone's foreign policy cost Milner several opportunities to stand for Parliament, the first in March 1884, when the Cheltenham Liberal Hundred approached him about a possible candidacy. Over the following months offers were also received from York and Oxford. The last was particularly appealing. He explained to the Oxford Committee that there was 'no conceivable position wh. I should be more proud to occupy than that of member for Oxford'. However, while with regard to Home questions he

was 'a strong & advanced Liberal', he dissented from the majority of the party on points of foreign policy, and his 'dissent was never stronger than it is now from the course wh. the Govt has pursued & is pursuing in Egypt'. 'I am no Jingo', Milner continued, 'I am not anxious to extend the border of an Empire vast or to increase its responsibilities already most onerous. But if I desire to limit the sphere of our actions abroad, it is in order that, within this limited sphere we may be more & not less vigorous, resolute & courageous. To try to escape from responsibilities once assumed (under whatever specious phrases the retreat may be effected) can only increase, not lessen our difficulties.'<sup>23</sup> He asked that his views be read before the Oxford Committee. The verdict, rendered with regret, was that Oxford supported the Government. Liberal foreign policy would remain Milner's particular bogey. He complained to Goschen that the 'one great and necessary Reform, far before Franchise or House of Lords or anything else, is to take a very large broom and sweep the whole contents of the Foreign Office right out into the street.'<sup>24</sup>

Though he would continue at the *Pall Mall Gazette* for another year, by August 1884 Milner had grown weary of Stead's crusades and increasingly uncomfortable with the editor's sensational tactics. On 15 September the paper began a three-month 'Truth About the Navy' campaign which trumpeted the peril from the growing fleets of the other great powers and questioned Britain's true capability. The series was based on information gained from several naval insiders, including Captain John Fisher (later Lord Fisher of Kilverstone), the commander of the *Excellent*, the principal naval gunnery school at Portsmouth. This episode inaugurated the intrigues Fisher carried out with the press for the rest of his long career.<sup>25</sup> Once again newspaper headlines and popular opinion helped to push a reluctant Government into action.

In January 1885 Milner accepted the first of many invitations to Mentmore, one of the grand houses of the Liberal politician Archibald Primrose, Fifth Earl of Rosebery. Jowett arranged the visit and apparently had in mind a private secretary's position for Milner with the Earl, who was already a power in Scotland and a growing force in England. A dynamic speaker, also possessed of a magnetic personality, Rosebery attracted many Liberal Imperialist followers over the next two decades. The continuing question was whether or not he would be willing to lead. Rosebery had stage-managed Gladstone's famous Midlothian campaign in the previous General Election and felt himself, probably with good cause, slighted in the offices offered him. The Earl's relations with Gladstone were complicated further by his openly Liberal Imperialist outlook. Rosebery refused to join the Gladstone Government, citing the weak response to the Sudan crisis as his reason.

Like Sir Charles Dilke before him, Rosebery had returned from a tour of the Empire infused with grand ideas of closer imperial union and in 1884 began

hatching plans for an organization designed to further this aim, which would be born as the Imperial Federation League.<sup>26</sup> In its 'Programme 1885', the 1 January 1885 *Pall Mall Gazette* also called for the 'Unity of the British Realm' through imperial federation.<sup>27</sup> The short-lived Imperial Federation League's crowning achievement came two years later, when its pressure encouraged the Salisbury Government to call the first in a series of Colonial Conferences held before the Great War. At this Jan Hofmeyr, the leader of the Afrikaner Bond party in the Cape Colony, suggested that Britain and the self-governing Empire should place a 2 per cent duty on all outside imports, with the money raised to be used to strengthen imperial defence. Thus Hofmeyr broached the key imperial debates of the next decades: imperial preference, tariffs and the intertwined questions of defence and foreign policy. Germany's expansionist policy under Bismarck made the colonies, particularly Australia, aware of their vulnerability and more willing to commit funds to the Navy. New Zealand, the Cape Colony, Natal, Newfoundland and Malaya all followed suit with contributions in the years before 1914.

The news reached London on 5 February 1885 that Khartoum had fallen. That day's *Pall Mall Gazette* headlines declared:

TOO LATE!  
Khartoum Captured by the Mahdi.  
The Fate of General Gordon Unknown.  
Sir Charles Wilson Two Days Too Late.  
The Steamers Wrecked in the Nile.

When the news was confirmed that Gordon was dead, the paper joined the chorus which placed the blame on the inaction of Gladstone. Jeered by angry crowds on the street whenever he appeared, the G. O. M. (Grand Old Man) found himself transformed into the M. O. G. (Murderer of Gordon). Milner was in the visitor's gallery to see the 'chilly reception' given Gladstone's rather feeble explanation to Parliament and his announcement that Britain would respond militarily. In the Commons debate Goschen was among the Liberals who supported a censure motion over the matter. In a close division the Government survived, but considered resignation. Gladstone's policies, Milner wrote in his diary, had 'dragged England through a quagmire of blood & dishonour'.<sup>28</sup>

In April the Government was able to recover some lost credit from the Gordon humiliation when a new crisis arose in Afghanistan, the Penjdeh incident. In the face of this Russian incursion, resolute Cabinet action forced a Russian climb down. The threat to the Indian Empire also gave cover for a reversal of policy and a withdrawal from the Sudan, with the result that Gordon would not be avenged for thirteen years. In June, to no one's dismay, the Gladstone Government fell over an amendment to the Budget on beer duties. Because of the time

needed to finalize the details of the redistribution, the election was delayed for some months. The Conservative leader Salisbury formed a caretaker government with an understanding of Liberal tolerance in the interim.

Milner turned out not to be quite so politically hopeless as he had thought, for after losing several offers on account of his foreign policy views, he was accepted in one of the newly created constituencies, the Harrow Division of Middlesex. Milner's contest at Harrow marked the end of his newspaper career while at the same time Stead carried out his most famous and lurid newspaper campaign, 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon'.<sup>29</sup> In a letter to Cook, Milner complained of the *Pall Mall Gazette* that he was 'no longer prepared to accept the embarrassments which its sayings and doings cause me'. It was bad enough, he went on, 'while one agreed more or less with Stead, but when one differs violently about three things out of every four, it is rather too much to suffer for one's supposed approval of what one hates'.<sup>30</sup> As it fell out, Milner resigned from the paper effective 1 September.

In the election campaign, Goschen and Milner were not the only Liberals to differ with Gladstone over the Empire. Dilke called for imperial federation, a strong navy, a special 'white' army for colonial service, development of the voluntary movement, and an 'imperial' parliament. Rosebery accepted the 'Liberal Imperialist' jibe aimed at him, explaining that this simply meant he was a Liberal 'passionately attached to the empire and interested intensely in the best means of sustaining and promoting the interests of that Empire'. Further, that the 'external policy of Great Britain is one that should be founded not on interference but on reticence and on an independent attitude of our own ... that the Empire is best maintained on the basis of the widest democracy'.<sup>31</sup> This echoed the imperial strategy Milner had shared with Goschen in which the '*Duty of Democracy*' entailed:

- 1) concentration – as a condition of strength. Limit your sphere of duty and interest and then stick to them. 2) maintain your credit, both with a view to foreign nations & colonies who have to be made proud of mother country. 3) treat your policy as a whole ... Impossible to go on without regard to possible alliances, bargains, compromises & c. All these things, however, depend upon 4) adequate force ... & above all 5) greater moral force – resolution to be a great nation, to take an interest in foreign affairs ... & make sacrifices for national greatness.<sup>32</sup>

One notable speech Milner gave in the contest, titled 'Liberalism and Foreign Policy', was particularly significant for bringing together several themes he would pursue over the following decades, including imperial cooperation and eventual union, preparedness and universal military training. England's 'true policy', Milner argued, should be to 'cling to the sea', the 'world-encircling ocean, which unites us in India, and above all to the great communities of our own

race and language, to Australia, to South Africa, to North America, the heirs of the civilization of the future'. To this end Britain needed an 'overwhelming Navy' and, with the cooperation of the colonies, he believed the Navy could be 'even more clearly predominant than it is already'. The standing army 'never need be large' but should be 'the most perfect' to be found anywhere in intelligence, training, equipment and mobility, and needed more scientific officers. Milner admitted that he wished volunteering were made universal. He did not believe in great standing armies, but did believe in the military training of all citizens. The physical effect would be invaluable, especially to the dwellers in great cities, and the moral effect no less.<sup>33</sup>

The 'only true spirit' in which to approach foreign policy, Milner concluded, was one of 'enlightened patriotism'. He was no 'cosmopolitan'. He had 'no sympathy with the "patriots of every country but their own"'. If he urged a policy of concentration and limitation, it was not because he esteemed lightly the imperial position of England, but because 'our Empire is already so vast and of such great natural expansiveness that our only strength and our only safety lies in striving for its development rather than its extension'. To Milner there was no more hopeful sign of the times than the 'growth of a sentiment of common nationality between Englishmen at home and Englishmen beyond the sea': 'If only we take care to strengthen that sentiment and with it the conviction of our common interest in remaining united for purposes of mutual defence, then I think we can foresee a time, when the great Anglo-Saxon Confederation throughout the world ... will not only be the most splendid political union that the world has ever known, but also the best security for universal peace'.<sup>34</sup> This speech, like most of the hundreds he would deliver over the next four decades, comes across more convincingly on the page than it did on the platform. In person Milner remained too much the scholar whose involved arguments and 'squeaky' voice did not excite. He failed, said his cousin Oliver Ready, 'to catch on'.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the efforts of Goschen and an impressive array of notables and friends who campaigned for him, Milner lost to his Conservative opponent, William Ambrose, by a count of 4,214 to 3,241. Overall, the *Pall Mall Gazette* declared the December 1885 vote 'as near a dead heat as possible in politics'.<sup>36</sup> The electors had returned 335 Liberals, 249 Conservatives and 86 Irish Nationalists with the number of Liberals exactly equaling the combined Conservatives and Nationalists. As a result of the 1884 franchise reform and subsequent redistribution the Nationalists almost swept the board in Ireland and held the political balance. Believing Salisbury's party more likely to aid their cause, the Irish allowed the Prime Minister to continue in office. It would be a brief and uneasy alliance.

The Salisbury Government's fate was sealed in December 1885, when Herbert Gladstone leaked word to the newspapers that his father had come round to the idea of granting some sort of Home Rule to Ireland.<sup>37</sup> When the next month

the Government announced that a new Irish Coercion Bill would be introduced, Gladstone, in cooperation with the Irish, decided the time had come to turn them out. In the vote on 27 January 1886 eighteen Liberals, including Goschen and Lord Hartington, the leader of the Liberal Whig faction, supported the Government; seventy other Liberals abstained. Joseph Chamberlain, leader of the party's Radical wing, and creator of the politically powerful National Liberal Federation, was annoyed by the distraction from other social reform and imperial measures that the Irish question caused, but voted with Gladstone, willing to wait and see what sort of Home Rule he would propose.

Goschen and Hartington refused to join the new Cabinet, in which Chamberlain was given the rather insignificant post of Head of the Local Government Board. Goschen declared that there was 'no sign more dangerous in this Irish controversy than the effect which surrender and defeat in Ireland will have upon our position in the world – on our moral position, on our material position, on our political position, on our imperial position.'<sup>38</sup> At the same time, he called on Salisbury seeking a 'treaty between us to secure his friends from being opposed by us at an election if they joined in opposing the Govt.'<sup>39</sup> Chamberlain, Hartington and their followers were not yet prepared to break with the Liberal party. In March 1886, after seeing an outline of Gladstone's Home Rule and Land Purchase proposals for Ireland, Chamberlain (and another Radical George Trevelyan, the Secretary for Scotland) resigned from the Government. The Radical programme that had helped win the Liberals many seats in the previous election was forgotten as the Irish question swept all before it.

On 14 April, six days after Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill, an extraordinary joint rally of anti-Home Rulers from both parties was held at the Her Majesty's Theatre, the Opera House in the Haymarket. Salisbury, Goschen and Hartington shared a platform and took turns denouncing Gladstone and the leader of the Irish Nationalist party, Charles Stewart Parnell. Goschen seconded Salisbury's resolution to petition Parliament to reject Home Rule and his address attacked Gladstone's cry of justice for Ireland. Goschen asked what justice there was for the loyalist Irish who wanted to remain part of the Empire? However, many constituency Liberal organizations were not comfortable with their leaders on the same platform as the Conservatives. Consequently, to carry on the struggle Goschen and Hartington started a separate Liberal Unionist organization. Milner told Goschen that he did not 'care two straws' about the Union with Ireland, but he saw the larger potential threat to imperial unity and followed him into the Liberal Unionist camp.<sup>40</sup>

Milner said of the zeal put into this effort to defeat Gladstone and his Home Rule Bill that 'for the Liberal-Unionist propaganda we slaved ourselves to shreds. We poured out pamphlets and leaflets. When we were all nearly dead, we used to say to each other, "Never mind; go on; Dagon must be thrown down."<sup>41</sup> An



electric atmosphere of intrigue and excitement surrounded the following General Election battle in which Milner chose to stay on the sidelines organizing the party. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, led by Stead, supported Home Rule and called on Gladstone to retain Irish members at Westminster. Milner wrote to his friend that 'to lose Ireland and to keep the Irish members seems a rum deal ... You are going to make the Old Parliamentary Hand [Gladstone] drop the only redeeming feature of his rotten Bill! Not approving, I cannot but admire!'<sup>42</sup>

Milner reported to Goschen that he had been 'writing letters till I am quite sick ... I hope we shall have sent out a cloud of circulars and leaflets by the end of the week ... The more of your influential & rich Whig friends that you can write to for their adhesion the better. We get lots of names, but they are not quite of the effective kind. *We have no bait when we want to angle for big fish.*' The movement, he told Goschen, was 'trembling on the verge of a really big success, but with no names to put before the world' would not have the means to ensure one. He asked: 'Where are the Dukes with the long purses? They will never have another chance of asserting themselves politically, if they mean to be walked over now. The Whigs have committed themselves. They can't simply stand aside now.' Never, he wrote, was '*De Laudace* ... more exclusively the way of salvation ... But oh! these Whigs, these Whigs. We want a little more of the Opera House style in all of them.'<sup>43</sup>

Besides the Whigs, Milner also pursued Chamberlain's support, but the Radical leader chose to remain uncommitted for several months. He did agree, however, to allow one of his speeches to be used in the propaganda. Goschen foresaw a public repudiation, however, Milner reassured him that he did not think 'it very likely that Chamberlain will slap us in the face.'<sup>44</sup> To the end, Milner feared Gladstone's political magic would win back many Radicals and other 'waverers and wobblers' or convince them to abstain. However, on 8 June, despite the Prime Minister's eloquence, his Home Rule Bill was defeated on the second reading by thirty votes. Ninety-three Liberals voted against the measure. In the following election the Conservatives kept their pledge not to challenge the Liberal Unionists where this might give the race to a Gladstonian. Goschen was defeated at East Edinburgh, but otherwise the July 1886 contest proved a triumph for the combined Conservative and Liberal Unionist cause: 316 Conservatives, 78 Liberal Unionists, 191 Gladstonian Liberals and 85 Irish Nationalists were returned.

On 20 July, the same day Gladstone resigned, at a meeting of Liberal Unionists a large majority opposed a coalition, afraid of being absorbed into the Conservative Party. Salisbury suggested that Hartington form a Government in which he would serve. Hartington demurred, but promised 'an independent but friendly support'. Salisbury's entreaties to several Liberal Unionists to take Cabinet posts in his government were all declined. Goschen was among

the few willing to consider the idea.<sup>45</sup> Lord Randolph Churchill, the dashing, mustachioed leader of a Conservative ginger group called the 'Fourth Party' was brought into the Government as Chancellor of the Exchequer, leader of the Commons and to all appearances, Salisbury's heir apparent. However, at the end of the year Churchill's petulant resignation led to Goschen's appointment to the Exchequer, with Milner as the new Chancellor's private secretary. This invaluable financial training gave Milner the expertise needed three years later to accept Sir Evelyn Baring's invitation (on Goschen's strong recommendation) to come out to Egypt as Director-General of Accounts for the Khedive Tewfik.

### 3 CROMER AND EGYPT

In November 1889 Milner arrived in Cairo to take up his duties as Director-General of Accounts for the Khedive Tewfik. He succeeded Elwin Palmer, who was promoted to the position of Financial Advisor when Sir Edgar Vincent (later Lord D'Abernon) resigned to become Governor of the Imperial Ottoman Bank at Constantinople. As Director-General of Accounts, Milner was the number three man in the Egyptian Ministry of Finance, under Palmer and Julius Blum, an Austrian banker who was Under-Secretary of State. The Director-General, Milner explained to George Goschen, was a great deal more than an Accountant-General, he was the Treasury and Controller-General 'rolled into one *plus* any number of delicate miscellaneous duties, appointments, pensions ... heaped upon him for want of anybody else, to whom they could be conveniently entrusted'. He told Goschen that he found the position 'a more important place than I imagined when I took it, *as far as the internal administration of Egypt is concerned*'. But, if on the administrative side the position was a very big one, Milner complained that it was 'politically nil'.<sup>1</sup>

By the time Milner arrived, Sir Evelyn Baring (created Baron Cromer in 1892) had been British Agent and Consul General in Cairo for six years and, with the help of Vincent's financial wizardry, had got Egypt through the worst of her debt crisis, which Milner called the 'Race against Bankruptcy'.<sup>2</sup> The Egyptian Government's freedom of action was circumscribed by an 1880 Law of Liquidation (amended at the 1885 Conference of London) which placed her finances in the hands of foreigners, who had in addition been granted special capitulatory rights including extra-territorial status in regard to most Egyptian laws.<sup>3</sup> An international body, the Caisse de la Dette Publique, had been created after the bankruptcy crisis of 1876 to regulate Egypt's finances and to represent European bondholders. Roughly half of Egypt's yearly income was given over to the Caisse to pay the debt, made up of several different loan arrangements. The Daira and Domains loans, both secured by former Khedival lands, caused particular problems during Milner's tenure. Britain and France dominated the new system, which came to be called the 'Dual Control'.<sup>4</sup>

The Caisse reflected in microcosm the power politics of Europe so that Britain's freedom of action in Egypt was always limited by possible international repercussions, making finance and reform all the more delicate and difficult. Even though the Salisbury Government was constantly harassed on account of the Egyptian occupation, by 1889 the Prime Minister had amended his earlier sympathetic view of evacuation. In line with British public opinion, Salisbury, who also acted as Foreign Secretary, came to value the strategic importance of Egypt as a hedge against growing German influence on an Ottoman Empire which seemed more and more likely to disintegrate. Nevertheless, Britain had to deal with the Sultan, who remained Egypt's titular overlord.<sup>5</sup> The Khedive made a substantial yearly payment to the Sublime Porte for the privilege of ruling Egypt according to a firman (license) granted at the beginning of his reign. The British hierarchy officially only advised the Khedive and his government, staffed in the main by a non-Egyptian Turco-Circassian elite, headed by the Prime Minister, Riaz Pasha. It was a curious system, in which, Cromer later commented, 'one alien race, the English, have had to control and guide a second alien race, the Turks, by whom they are disliked, in the government of a third race, the Egyptians.'<sup>6</sup>

The real power in Egypt lay in the hands of Baring, backed by a few thousand British troops.<sup>7</sup> Theoretically only one of the numerous diplomatic envoys resident in Cairo, Baring succeeded Sir Edward Malet as Agent and remained the centre of British rule for twenty-four years. He arrived in September 1883 from India, where he had spent most of the previous decade, first as private secretary to his cousin Lord Northbrook during his term as Viceroy and then as financial advisor to Northbrook's successor, Lord Ripon. Baring had been selected by the Gladstone government because of his experience, which included two years as Britain's representative on the Caisse, but also because he was considered a safe 'anti-jingo' Liberal. However, the Mahdist uprising in the Sudan erased in him any optimism for an early British evacuation. Heavily influenced by his Indian experience, Baring came to believe the Egyptians incapable of ruling themselves and saw it as his, and England's, mission to save Egyptian society from falling prey to internal and external enemies. His priorities were retrenchment, civil service reform, and improvement of the position of the fellaheen, the peasant lower classes. To carry out this program meant the British occupation must go on for some time.

Milner's view of Baring verged on hero worship. He called him the indispensable man and appraised his 'unostentatious supremacy' as a 'real masterpiece of political management'. In turn Baring later considered Milner one of three men in the Empire qualified to replace him.<sup>8</sup> Of Baring, Milner told Goschen two months after his arrival, he had 'seen little yet, though he is always extremely friendly. You don't need me to tell you that he is the real ruler of Egypt.' Con-

sidering the enormous difficulties, both native and foreign, Milner sometimes wondered 'how we could possibly get on without him. Certainly the real test of the capacity of the half-dozen men who run Egypt so successfully under his eyes, will never be tested, until he goes.'<sup>9</sup>

As for the Prime Minister, Riaz, Milner told Goschen that he had 'in my heart of hearts, a rather heterodox opinion about that imperious little Turk'. He ventured to express his 'most private inward doubt, whether, in the long run, the Riaz system will work'. It was an immense advantage to have a Prime Minister who was 'disinterested, straight forward & a fierce economist'. But on the other hand Riaz was 'rather a strong-willed man to keep perpetually in leading strings'. The premier's 'nationalist' policy, said Milner, 'while it may be all very well as long as it is confined to bullying the non-Egyptian orientals', might lead to some rather unpleasant results, particularly the development of 'native fanaticism', not only against Syrians (Riaz's favourite targets), but against 'foreigners & Christians generally'. At present, Milner went on, 'we are so delighted with him for hating the French, that we don't stop and ask ourselves, whether in his heart of hearts he doesn't hate us all'.<sup>10</sup>

The struggle with France over Egypt, which had begun in earnest after the British occupation began in 1882, continued to be a major problem in Milner's years at Cairo and was prominent in his correspondence. In an attempt to blunt the growth of British influence, the French objected to almost every reform put forward, including abolishing the *corvée* labour system imposed on the fellaheen, the Egyptian peasantry. The *corvée*, brutally enforced by means of the *kourbash*, a hippopotamus-hide whip, was used to carry out various large-scale projects, most importantly the continual shoring up of the banks of the Nile needed both to prevent flooding and to maintain the country's absolutely vital irrigation system. Reformers in Britain likened the *corvée* to slavery, and the institution, along with its endemic flogging, were both greatly diminished, but not ended, by the time Milner arrived. This progress was made despite French objections to the resulting high cost of paying the labourers, which became another bone of contention. As much of the country's debt was held by its citizens, France also objected to converting Egyptian loans, which the British put forward as cost-saving measures. In every negotiation, the French attempted to force from the Salisbury government a date for eventual withdrawal and a proclamation of Suez Canal neutrality in time of war. However, agreements were hard to come by. Time and again, either the British, the French or the Sublime Port, balked at final signature. Consequently, no substantial settlement was reached until the Entente Cordiale of 1904.

After a few months at his new post, Milner reported that he was feeling very well and the work was 'not extremely heavy'. Six or seven hours a day kept things straight, but this did not include the time required in 'getting up the whole

subject of Egypt or in struggling with Arabic – a truly appalling language for which none of one's past studies have prepared one in the least'. There was, he believed, no complete mastery of Egyptian things possible without it and since he planned to be there a while longer he felt it worth the effort. As an intellectual exercise it was rather attractive, but, he complained to Goschen, 'the amount of time it takes is fearful'.<sup>11</sup>

Spending time cramming Arabic was unusual for British officials, most of whom devoted their off-duty hours to the fashionable and closed world of social engagements, riding and other diversions such as polo and golf at the Gezira Sporting Club, dubbed the 'temple of British snobbery'.<sup>12</sup> All these pursuits except riding Milner quite deliberately avoided as much as politeness allowed. This was also true of his participation in the whirl of the winter social season which opened soon after he arrived. Milner commented in December 1889 on the 'rush' in Cairo brought on by what he considered a ludicrous attempt to recreate the London season. It was, he said, a 'remarkable fact that even the English colony can't reproduce it here – though they may do their best, the idiots, with their endless social functions and tremendous demands of etiquette'. Following Baring's lead, the British in Cairo stayed aloof, both from the other Europeans and the Turkish ruling classes. With foreigners, said Milner, 'one practically doesn't mix'. In one of the few instances in which he disagreed with the Consul General, Milner considered it a 'lost opportunity' and a political mistake to have no social intercourse with either the foreign residents or the upper-class minorities, and hoped to rectify this situation when he had gained sufficient authority.<sup>13</sup>

In March 1890 Milner informed Goschen that Cairo 'has been more than ever like London in the season during the last month, crowds of visitors & not a few celebrities'.<sup>14</sup> These included Prince Eddy, the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, who Milner noted had been 'so much run down as next door to an idiot', that he was surprised to find a 'natural and amiable young man ... with an inherited grace of manner'.<sup>15</sup> A more important celebrity for Milner's future career was the increasingly imperial-minded Joseph Chamberlain, with whom Milner was able to talk at length for the first time. Chamberlain's trip to Egypt followed journeys to the USA and Canada which had stirred his imperial fervour. He returned to England from Cairo with a new conviction that the occupation would take 'many long years'.<sup>16</sup>

In August 1890, Julius Blum, the Under-secretary of State for Finance, decided to return to his family bank, the Credit Anstalt in Vienna. Milner was 'determined not to allow anyone but myself to be put in his place'.<sup>17</sup> Despite Riaz's wish to have a non-European in the position and French objections to an Englishman replacing the Austrian Blum, Baring saw to it that Milner received the promotion. Milner had moved up the ladder, but remained, as he wrote to

Clinton Dawkins (who had taken his place as Goschen's secretary), 'only a second after all ... and second unfortunately to anything but a first-rate man, with whom I shall get on perfectly as long as I efface myself totally'.<sup>18</sup> Official etiquette required that Milner travel to Alexandria to give personal thanks for the appointment to the Khedive, whom he found 'very friendly, though not exactly cordial'. After that he was for some time 'pretty well flooded with the work of my new office, wh. is both less well organized & less well manned than my other one'.<sup>19</sup>

That autumn, the pending question of Milner's successor in the director-generalship was solved by dividing the job between a controller of accounts and a controller of direct taxes. The first went to a Riaz appointee and the second to Eldon Gorst, who had been in Egypt as a member of the British diplomatic corps since 1886 and was one of the few who spoke Arabic.<sup>20</sup> Though Milner certainly did his part, Gorst acted as Baring's chief propagandist, using his position as the secret correspondent of *The Times* in Cairo. The gadfly and conspiracy theorist Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, who was one of the most vocal British critics of the Egyptian occupation, claimed that Milner's official duties in Egypt were only a ruse, and that his actual job was to carry out a secret pro-occupation press campaign.<sup>21</sup> Milner did indeed act as a willing propagandist for Baring and a continued occupation, but he needed little prompting to do so and it was certainly no secret.

Milner's service in Egypt first brought him into contact with Horatio Herbert Kitchener, who had made a name for himself, and earned a colonel's rank, for courageous service in the Sudan. Tall, thin, ambitious, arrogant, and with the trademark luxurious moustache later made famous in the 1914 recruiting poster, Kitchener aroused the intense jealousy of his brother officers. He irked the rest of the British community with his scarcely concealed contempt for society in Cairo with which Milner largely agreed. On visits home, Kitchener became the darling of the best country houses and scaled the heights of London society. Like Milner, he used these contacts well to further his ambitions. Soon after Milner arrived Kitchener was made Inspector-General of the Egyptian Police and undertook the reform of the endemic corruption in the Ministry of the Interior under which the police operated. He took the rather thankless job only after gaining assurances from Baring that he would be considered for Sirdar, commander of the Egyptian army, whenever Sir Francis Grenfell left the post.

After more than fifteen months of work, Milner took his first leave back to England. At Wimbledon he had a 'delightful evening' with Stead during which his friend 'talked with all his wonted brilliancy *de omnibus rebus* but especially about Cecil Rhodes & the prospect of maintaining the political union of the English race'.<sup>22</sup> Stead had written to Milner of Rhodes that he was a man of immense power and wealth with 'ideas as wide as the world'. He reminded Stead of 'an Elizabethan statesman born out of time' and the editor prophesied (correctly as

it turned out) that Rhodes, 'if he lives for another ten years, will make or will mar the Empire'.<sup>23</sup> Stead had fallen under Rhodes's spell two years before when the diamond and gold magnate was in London rallying press and government support for a royal charter (granted in October 1889) for what would become the British South Africa Company. Stead introduced Milner to the Cape Colossus, whom the editor championed in his new journal, the *Review of Reviews*.

Milner, however, remained sceptical of what he considered Rhodes's commercial brand of imperialism. A few months before the Charter was granted he had corresponded with the imperialist missionary John Mackenzie, who was worried about the commercial designs of Rhodes on his beloved Bechuanaland. Milner told his friend that he quite agreed with him 'as to the respective spheres of Imperial administration and commercial enterprise. But we must try to enlist on our side all the forces that make or might make for imperial supremacy.' He ranked the 'pushing advance guard of commerce and speculation among these'. While he would not allow them the responsibility of governing, he felt it would be a 'misfortune if we set them against us and threw them into the arms of those who want to substitute the Cape Colony for Great Britain as the supreme power'. Milner believed there was a 'real danger of that unless we can prevent imperial control from appearing to thwart colonial enterprise'.<sup>24</sup> When it became obvious that the Charter would be granted, Milner told Mackenzie that a company would be 'better than letting the whole thing [slip] out of our fingers'.<sup>25</sup> By 1891, though Bechuanaland remained outside his clutches, Rhodes was Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, master of an immense area already being called Rhodesia, and had written a new will, which added Stead as a second executor. This addition to the financier Lord Rothschild was meant to ensure that Rhodes's imperial vision would properly be carried out after his death.

Milner also made good use of the time amidst his London press and political friends to promote his and Baring's view of Britain's role in Egypt. On 15 June 1891 the *Pall Mall Gazette* printed an interview with Milner which forcefully pointed out the advantages to the Egyptian people of the British occupation. He later recorded that the interview, to which the editor, E. T. Cook, devoted the entire front page, 'attracted, I think, some notice & did good at home' and, when reproduced by the papers in Egypt, it caused a 'considerable sensation'. The French, he went on, had been 'considerably annoyed by it', and the anti-English *Bosphore Egyptien* in Cairo ran a series in rebuttal saying the country was instead being ruined.<sup>26</sup> Baring wrote to Milner that he thought the interview 'very good – and not at all indiscreet'. The only criticism he had heard had been from Englishmen who thought Milner 'over-complimentary to the French'. Baring, however, felt that if this was a fault, it was 'one on the right side. It is no use abusing the French and we are more likely to get *English* public opinion with us by an appearance of great moderation.' Baring took Milner's advice to be more aggres-



sive in courting the public, particularly making him cognizant that his Foreign Office reports, which were published, were potentially useful propaganda tools. Baring told Milner that he had 'done your part of the work well' and promised to write more reports. He planned to follow 'Cobden's Corn Law system, i.e. to go on drumming the same thing into their heads over and over'.<sup>27</sup>

On his return to Egypt, Milner called on the Khedive, who, he recorded, 'received me with extreme graciousness & discussed at length the recent ministerial changes and their causes'.<sup>28</sup> Riaz had been replaced by the much more servile Mustafa Fahmi, whom Milner characterized as 'the best of men, a perfect gentleman, and ... cordially in sympathy with our aims', but 'terribly weak and fears offending the Khedive too much to exercise control over him'.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, Milner believed the general situation of affairs 'no doubt enormously improved by the disappearance of Riaz Pasha', but he saw other sources of trouble ahead. With Riaz gone, the Khedive had become a far greater factor in the government of the country than he ever was before. Milner feared that, 'if he seeks to do things contrary to our wishes & to sound policy, it will be, in some ways, far more awkward to control him than to control any Minister'. His good intentions Milner did not doubt, but he believed Tewfik had a 'want of sequence in his ideas' and was 'easily influenced by the last man who speaks to him'.<sup>30</sup>

In Milner's view, even though the British were now for the first time in control of the whole country, with the English judge John Scott practically Minister of Justice and Kitchener Minister of the Interior, there remained 'a number of difficulties before us, wh. render complete success very problematical'.<sup>31</sup> The question of chief interest at Cairo was Kitchener's struggle to get the police into order. 'Of his great energy & industry there can be no doubt', Milner wrote of Kitchener. The question was 'whether he is on the right lines ... He is certainly ruthless in his treatment of other interests. "Public Security" is his one idea, & he would sacrifice everything to it - not a bad spirit, perhaps, in the head of a department, which needs an immense amount of waking up, but only not dangerous if it is kept in check. And he is not easy to keep in check.' Milner appraised Kitchener as a 'strong, self-willed man, *not absolutely straight*', who might 'easily cause a great amount of trouble, not only with the natives, but among the English themselves'.<sup>32</sup>

By October 1891 everyone had returned to Cairo, including the Barings, the Sirdar, Sir Francis Grenfell, 'and quite a number of other worthies'. Milner went to see Baring and 'had a long talk with him'. This confirmed his belief that the present condition of Egypt was 'wonderfully improved', but that the future was clouded at home by Morley and Gladstone's 'renewed & very emphatic declaration in favour of evacuation'.<sup>33</sup> 'Have they forgotten', Milner asked Goschen, 'the constant anxiety & danger that Egypt was in in the years preceding 82?' He commented that 'if you were to load a Metropolitan Train car inside & out, it would

suffice to carry off all the people who stand between Egypt & another smash, & I think you would find that I am one of the passengers, though perhaps the last to be asked to mount'. Rightly or wrongly, he told Goschen, he was 'investing some of the best years of my life in this Egyptian business. It is not an amusing way of spending one's time, but there is this solid satisfaction about it, that really with every desire to be modest, one cannot help feeling that one does a great deal of good'. Nothing else, he went on, 'would render bearable the exhausting round of petty work, the constant remedying of small injustices or hunting out petty frauds, the weary daily fight with obstructiveness born of stupidity, wh. with absence of friends & the total lack of any stimulating society, makes up the trials of life in Egypt.' It was all bearable if the system was to continue, but if was 'all to be knocked over for a whim, an *idée fixe*, to gain an imagined electoral advantage ... one will look back with some bitterness upon the wasted years'.<sup>34</sup>

On 7 January 1892 the Khedive Tewfik, only forty years old, died unexpectedly of pneumonia, leaving the throne to his son Abbas, a student at the Theresianum in Vienna. Milner joined the enormous funeral cortege that took Tewfik to his final resting place. He described the procession as a 'really wonderful spectacle'. The young Khedive arrived in Cairo on 15 January and made his official entrance the next day. For the memorable reception the Abdin Palace square was lined with an honour guard made up half of British and half of Egyptian troops. Sitting with the chief officers of the state, Milner had a 'magnificent view' of the public proceedings at which the Sublime Porte officially acknowledged the succession of the new Khedive.<sup>35</sup> Because of these developments, Milner wrote to Goschen, he fancied the Egyptian question was 'fast coming to the front again in public interest'. Milner had a news cutting agency supplying him with extracts on the subject and the bundles, once small, had become enormous. For example, *The Times* of 8 January declared that Tewfik's death made it all the more important that the British not evacuate Egypt and leave such a young and inexperienced ruler to fall prey to reactionary nationalist movements. Milner told Goschen that the French were 'very depressed by the death of the Khedive: they think providence is playing into our hands. Oddly enough, the English are equally low. It is not only the tragic nature of the incident itself, or the regret we all feel for him personally, but the fear of the unknown.' With the late Khedive the British 'knew where we were, that ... he would never oppose beyond a point, & certainly would never break with us'.<sup>36</sup>

The young Khedive, Milner believed, was a 'boy of good disposition', who made a very good impression when he was over in the summer from school. He had his father's good manners, seemed 'interested in things & anxious to see them right'. To all appearances he was 'straightforward & not vicious', wrote Milner, 'But what can you expect of a lad of 17 with all the evil influences to wh. he will be exposed?' The British had got a firm grip on the administration, but had

never had 'even a footing in the Palace'. Every effort, no doubt, would be made to surround the young man with proper companions, but the available material, Milner believed, was 'very poor, & even the best of it is, I fear, saturated with anti-English prejudice'.<sup>37</sup> Things were worse than Milner feared. Abbas had already been 'saturated' with anti-British ideas by his French teacher at Vienna where he had seen Habsburg power wielded directly. He had his own ideas for asserting himself in Egypt, as the British would learn.<sup>38</sup>

Milner was 'for the moment on the warpath about our position in Egypt. Locally, the fight is over – we are absolute masters since Riaz Pasha's fall.' But the danger at home, he believed, was increasing. He told his friend Henry Birchenough that 'Unless English public opinion can be radically changed about Egypt, you will kick the bucket over yet. Egypt must be saved if she can be saved, from Grub Street, not on the banks of the Nile.' The particular point he was 'keen to make is this, that, so far from our abandonment of Egypt being necessary in order to keep on good terms with France, you have got to stick to Egypt precisely in order to avoid war with France'. This was because the English were not prepared to let France take Egypt.<sup>39</sup> Milner contributed an unsigned article to the press campaign. In addition, two pieces he had written for the *Scotsman* were also published anonymously as *Britain's Work in Egypt*. The diary notes that the pamphlet seemed 'to have had a considerable success over there *within the limited circle wh. they reached*. Milner had shown it, under pledge of secrecy, to a few people. Baring described it as 'excellent'.<sup>40</sup>

With advancement blocked in Cairo, Milner accepted the chairmanship of the Inland Revenue Board and made his greatest Egyptian mark, not in his three years' labour at Cairo, but in the book he completed in the first months after his return to London. *England in Egypt*, published at the end of November 1892, represented an extended argument for the benefits of a continued occupation of the 'Land of Paradox'. Its chapters surveyed, in some detail, the Egyptian scene including domestic and international politics, economics, agriculture, justice, the army and the larger society of the fellaheen, always highlighting the accomplishments of British rule. It was, Milner declared, his 'humble duty to try and explain how the machine worked – or did not work'.<sup>41</sup> However, he found very little to criticize in the British contributions, from irrigation to finance. Particular credit was assigned to Sir Edgar Vincent and to Cromer for winning what Milner called the 'Race Against Bankruptcy'. Vincent, he said, 'would always be remembered as the most gifted and one of the most energetic of the little band of Englishmen, who, under the presiding genius of Baring, rescued the finances, by restoring the prosperity of Egypt'.<sup>42</sup> Milner also praised Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff and his corps of irrigation engineers. Their work, he declared, 'had been the basis of all the material improvement of the past ten years. We at the Finance Office have, so to speak, registered that improvement in our easier budgets and

growing surpluses. But it is the engineers who have created it.'<sup>43</sup> He supported their calls for the construction of a great reservoir to ensure an adequate water supply, an idea under attack because of its expense.

It was time, said Milner, to lift the 'veiled protectorate', under which Cromer and the other British administrators in Egypt were, in theory, just like the Khedive's other officials, 'the servants of an absolute master, as liable as his other servants to be over-ruled or dismissed.'<sup>44</sup> He warned that if the Khedive, who was after all the ruler of the country, could be induced 'to turn a deaf ear to the proposals of the British Agent, the latter is checkmated'.<sup>45</sup> Milner was careful to point out that he was not criticizing British policy. The line adopted, he said, of 'minimizing what we were doing, of avoiding radical solutions and of living from hand to mouth may have certain ultimate advantages'. But there could be no doubt that the course had 'enormously complicated the immediate problem'.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, England had restored, in Milner's view, order, stability and promise for the future in Egypt out of a chaotic jumble of 'international fetters'. What was 'extraordinary, unique and remarkable' and 'worth driving home', was not the work done, 'but the difficulties under which it had been done', which 'might have seemed to make any progress at all impossible'.<sup>47</sup>

*England in Egypt* also called for the overthrow of the 'bloody despotism' of the Khalifa, the Mahdi's successor in the Sudan. However, the main argument Milner offered for re-taking the Sudan was not avenging Gordon, but his anxiety that the territory had a potential stranglehold on the Nile. He found it an 'uncomfortable thought that the regular supply of water ... which is to Egypt not a question of convenience and prosperity but actual life, must always be exposed to some risk, as long as the upper reaches of that river are not under Egyptian control'.<sup>48</sup> He did not fear that the 'savages of the Sudan' would have the engineering skill to 'play tricks' with the Nile, but that some day a 'civilized power' might be in a position to do so. Because of this, Egypt was 'never likely to feel at ease, the Egyptian question can never be regarded as even approximately settled', until order was re-established 'to at least a considerable distance beyond Khartum'.<sup>49</sup> To accomplish this, Milner proposed a patient step-by-step approach, beginning with an expedition to Dongola.

To those 'Superior Persons' who called for the Egyptians to be given democratic government, Milner responded that he attached more importance in the immediate future to the 'improvement of the character and intelligence of the official class', which would take time. This was much more pressing than the development of representative institutions which were he felt, 'for a longer time than anyone can foresee at present, out of the question'. The people, he went on, neither comprehended nor desired 'Popular Government' and 'would come to singular grief if they had it. And nobody, except a few silly theorists, thinks of giving it to them'.<sup>50</sup> The Arabi rebellion which prompted the British occupa-

tion Milner put down to the old bad government which allowed 'smouldering disaffection' to break out into 'destructive flame'. He saw the Egyptian people as easily governed and led and not fanatical by nature, but vulnerable to incitement by their religious teachers, the ulema, who, said Milner, were 'fanatics by profession'.<sup>51</sup> There was no one acquainted with Egypt, he went on, 'who would not tremble' for the reforms which had been put in place 'if it were not for the small body of Europeans in high positions, whose power is out of all proportion to their numbers'.<sup>52</sup>

The remaining problems the British faced, Milner asserted, were made more difficult by the interference of one power in particular – France. A separate chapter chronicled the campaign of obstruction carried out over almost every reform, including the abolition of the *corvée*. Despite the French, however, reforms were progressing. As long as Britain chose to stick to the task, he believed, France could not 'upset the Egyptian coach'. The question was 'whether Great Britain will think it worthwhile ... at the cost, or supposed cost, of the continued irritation of France'. Further, if Britain chose to evacuate Egypt, then she would not be justified in trying to prevent France, 'in case of necessity, from assuming a position deliberately relinquished by ourselves'.<sup>53</sup> For the greater welfare of the people of Egypt and the British Empire Milner pleaded in conclusion for British 'Perseverance'.

*England in Egypt* went through thirteen editions over three decades in print and its initial success transformed Milner from a relatively obscure civil servant into an imperial figure of note. Winston Churchill later wrote of the book that Milner's 'skilful pen displayed what had been overcome, no less than what was accomplished'. The audience, he went on, was 'eager and sympathetic. The subject was enthralling. The story-teller had a wit and style that might have brightened the dullest theme. In these propitious circumstances the book was more than a book. The words rang like a trumpet-call which rallies the soldiers after the parapets are stormed, and summons them to complete the victory'.<sup>54</sup>

Cecil Rhodes, who was traveling along the Nile and reading Milner's book, commented to him: 'It just gives one, without being tiring, correct information on all the questions which occur to a man's mind when he travels in a new country'. He went on that he found 'our foolish agreements with other powers ... most embarrassing but I think if we only steadily resolve to stick in Egypt there will always be found a way and a reason for staying away from a European point of view. I should say there is certainly more chance of trouble coming if we retire, than if we remain'.<sup>55</sup> Rhodes had been busy promoting the idea of extending a telegraph line from South Africa to Cairo, as a first step before a 'Cape to Cairo' rail line. The first leg would be from Salisbury in Rhodesia to Uganda. He told Milner that he was 'glad I came for it makes me more than ever confident as to my telegraph – Egypt will be forced back to Khartoum and nothing can stop

her eventually re-occupying the Soudan. I think too that we cannot get out of Uganda where gradually a settled government will be formed and eat away the Mahdi base. He will become a nut between two crackers.' Rhodes prophesied that, 'by the time I reach Uganda from the south, that the mahdi will not be any great difficulty'.<sup>56</sup>

At the time, the praise Milner valued most came from Cromer, who wrote to him, 'What can I say more than that your book [is] quite excellent, both in form & substance. You have set off all the essential points of the situation & clothed them in language which, I think, will make it impossible for any one to put down the book when he has once taken it up – It seems to me that you have hit a very happy mean between chill official reserve & harmful indiscretion.' Cromer was waiting to see what the 'locals' thought of it, but, he went on 'it is as well that they should occasionally hear the truth. I wish I could think that the Khedive would read it, but I greatly doubt if he ever reads a book of any kind. If I were to pick out the very best part of the book, I should select the French chapter. You have stated the case admirably.' Of course, he continued, the pro-French Cairo *Bosphore* 'and such like will wince, but that is as it should be'.<sup>57</sup> The Egyptians, however, were less enthusiastic. Many were indignant at this open call from a former British administrator to stay in their country indefinitely.

An interesting postscript to *England in Egypt's* impact came early the following year when Milner received news of a brewing crisis, brought on by the nineteen-year-old Khedive Abbas. With Gladstone and the Liberals back in power, Abbas decided to test the limits of his power by bypassing Cromer and appointing a new Prime Minister, Tigrane Pasha, to replace Mustapha Fahmi. Milner's Balliol friend (and Liberal MP) Henry Asquith confided, 'Your young friend the Khedive is putting out his tongue in a very cheeky fashion'.<sup>58</sup> After Cromer sent word that stiff action might need to be taken and requested troops, the Foreign Secretary, Rosebery, asked Milner to his house in Berkeley Square for consultations.<sup>59</sup> Rosebery had taken office with Gladstone on the condition that Egypt would not be evacuated and, in the main, continued Salisbury's policies.<sup>60</sup> Milner seconded Cromer and Rosebery pledged his support. At the same time, Joseph Chamberlain sent Milner a note from Highbury thanking him for a copy of his book and commenting that the crisis 'seems to be very serious'. He hoped Rosebery would be able to deal with the situation, if not, he feared, 'all our labour may be brought to nought'.<sup>61</sup>

From Egypt, the diplomat Arthur Hardinge, whose heavy-handed course as Charge d'Affaires while Cromer was away had helped to bring on the crisis, also reported on events. Hardinge confided to Milner that one of the considerations which influenced the Khedive was 'a passage in your book on Egypt, in which speaking of the advantages of the real over the veiled Protectorate you say that the English Consul General can only advise, that if the Khedive determines

to disregard the advice, there is no real means of coercing him into accepting it. This idea, & the conviction that a weak Liberal Govt wd not support Lord Cromer were at the bottom of his recent coup d'état.<sup>62</sup> Hardinge also confided in Lewis Harcourt, who acted as secretary for his father, Sir William, Milner's chief at the Exchequer, that 'The crisis came sooner than I expected and was brought on I believe mainly through the publication of Milner's book which showed Cromer's hand too plainly.' The matter, quipped Harcourt to Milner, 'will no doubt be brought before the Cabinet but I shall ask that you shall have the option of resignation instead of dismissal and we will arrange here for easy pension terms!'<sup>63</sup> Milner replied, 'Thanks for your Egyptian news - only I draw a different inference. If the story were true, I think I ought to have at least a peerage for precipitating a crisis in which your Cabinet has so greatly distinguished itself & won so much kudos in an unexpected - may I say unwanted direction.'<sup>64</sup> In the end, an ultimatum from Cromer (backed by Rosebery to the point of joint resignations) forced the Khedive to dismiss Fakhri and re-appoint Cromer's choice, Riaz Pasha. Abbas lost the round, but emerged from the affair a popular hero, who, despite promises of cooperation, would continue to test British resolve.

Four years later, Milner was the man on the spot when another nationality tested British resolve, this time in South Africa. In February 1897 he accepted Chamberlain's invitation to go out to Cape Town as High Commissioner and Governor of the Cape Colony. This clever and unexpected move was meant to take advantage of the bi-partisan reputation Milner had gained for 'sweet reasonableness'. At forty-three, he also fitted Chamberlain's desire for a younger, more energetic, man for the job. Probably most important, in the aftermath of the Jameson Raid, Chamberlain sought a safe, non-political, choice. It did not hurt that weighty men from both parties sang Milner's praises. Both men saw the South African problem in terms of British supremacy and imperial power and prestige.<sup>65</sup> Sent out to settle a crisis, Milner instead helped to start a war. Mentally prepared for battle even before he left England for South Africa, Milner declared at a farewell dinner that he considered himself a 'civilian soldier of the empire'. Little did anyone know, least of all it seems Chamberlain, how literally the new proconsul took these words.<sup>66</sup>

## 4 BUILDING BRIDGEHEADS TO WAR

To support his intended policy in South Africa, Milner counted on a network of press, political and social connections without which he could never have succeeded. Among these social links was the supremely well-connected Reginald Brett who returned with him to London from Windsor on 18 February 1897, the day Milner kissed hands with Victoria to mark his appointment as High Commissioner.<sup>1</sup> The future Lord Escher commented to W. T. Stead that Milner had 'a heavy job; and has to start de novo'. In his opinion the South African Committee investigating the Jameson Raid would 'leave few of the old gang on their legs'.<sup>2</sup> In his new journal, the *Review of Reviews*, Stead lauded Milner as an 'Imperialist of the purest water' who could be relied upon to do 'all that can be done to make South Africa, from Table Mountain to Tanganyika, as loyally British as Kent or Middlesex'. But, Stead went on, Milner knew 'far too well the hollowness of an Imperial unity compulsorily thrust upon an unwilling population. He goes to South Africa to supply patience, prudence, and conciliation; to restore confidence, and to prevent war'.<sup>3</sup>

Milner was careful to curry the favour of his many friends in Fleet Street for the new endeavour. For example, he wrote to Sidney Low at the *St James's Gazette* that

If I can 'do anything', as you say I was reported to be able to do, now is the time of trial. Whatever I have attempted hitherto it has been child's play compared with this job. – Preserve your sympathy with me, and, if occasion offers, back me up. I may seem some times to be doing odd things – to those who are not on the spot to see the whole game – and I shall have no time to explain. At such times it will be a relief to feel that there are people in England who believe in one and will not condemn on the first appearance or imperfect information.<sup>4</sup>

Another sympathetic press figure in whom Milner confided was Edmund Garrett, editor of the pro-Rhodes *Cape Times*, who, as it happened, was visiting London in early 1897. The two had first met in Egypt and both had been trained by Stead at the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The men shared a similar imperial vision and in the following years the editor was a frequent visitor to Government House,



while he backed Milner and British supremacy to the hilt in Cape Town's sole morning paper, which also had the largest circulation in South Africa.<sup>5</sup>

Before he departed Milner was subjected to what he called a 'hailstorm' of congratulatory dinners and luncheons. The most impressive of these was a 27 March affair at the Café Monico in London, chaired by Henry Asquith and organized by Milner's friends George Curzon, Alfred Lyttelton and St John Brodrick, who would rise in the following years to be Viceroy of India, Colonial Secretary and War Secretary respectively. The illustrious guest list included notables across the political spectrum such as the Gladstonian Liberal John Morley, the Liberal Imperialists Rosebery and R. B. Haldane, the party leader Sir William Harcourt, his soon-to-be successor Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Liberal Unionists such as Goschen, Joseph Chamberlain and his son Austen and Conservatives such as Salisbury's nephew Arthur Balfour and Lord Lansdowne. Sidney Low, E. T. Cook, now editor of the *Daily News*, E. B. Iwan-Muller, leader writer of the *Daily Telegraph*, J. A. Spender, editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, and the military affairs writer Spencer Wilkinson, represented the press.<sup>6</sup>

Milner's official brief in South Africa was to carry out Chamberlain's firm, yet patient, policy and at the same time, if possible, mend relations between Boer and Briton tangled by the Jameson Raid. This was a tall order. In their meetings Chamberlain instructed Milner that if a struggle came, the Transvaal must be the aggressor so that the Imperial Government could have the sympathy of the Dutch in the Colony. Any war, said Chamberlain, 'unless upon the utmost and clearest provocation', would be unpopular in Britain and involve the despatch of a very large force and cost the Imperial Government millions. Kruger's rule could not go on indefinitely and because of all this, a 'waiting game' policy was called for to which Chamberlain would adhere much more diligently than Milner.<sup>7</sup> Spencer Wilkinson warned Milner that in his opinion 'you are between three very strong men – Chamberlain, Kruger, and Cecil Rhodes. To come out right you'll have to be stronger than any of them.' Further, Chamberlain was a politician and Wilkinson feared he could not be trusted. Milner replied that what he hoped for was to be able to 'be there for a year or two without attracting attention and so have time to study the situation and thoroughly understand it'. Then, as 'the man on the spot', he might be supported.<sup>8</sup>

A brewing crisis with the Transvaal generated by a strongly-worded Chamberlain dispatch led Milner to depart for Cape Town on 14 April 1897, two weeks before he had planned.<sup>9</sup> From his ship Milner urged his friend Lord Selborne, the under-secretary at the Colonial Office, to 'hang on like grim death to the decision to send reinforcements and not let the Government slip out of it on any account'. As to the 'absolute necessity of not playing these high games with no adequate force behind us, I shall never have but one opinion. I desire peace – honestly – and I hope to maintain it'.<sup>10</sup> In the following years Selborne

was one of the under-secretaries in London, along with St John Brodrick and George Wyndham (until he was shifted to Irish duties in 1900), who supported and advised Milner every step of the way towards war and beyond. During the conflict Milner commented to his friend Jim Rendel that the fact was that, besides Chamberlain, the 'Under-Secretaries have largely saved me'. Selborne, Brodrick and Wyndham, said Milner, had all been 'bricks of the first order right away through'.<sup>11</sup>

Chamberlain's tough dispatch, coupled with the appearance of a British squadron off Delagoa Bay, led the Transvaal to repeal the Aliens Immigration Law in question and its Volksraad assembly amended the equally irksome Aliens Expulsion Law. Consequently, war was avoided for the present. This successful passage of the first major crisis prompted Stead to write Milner from London that he had heard from Edmund Garrett 'that you are all that even he could wish, and if you come up to that good man's ideals, you may consider yourself as not far from the kingdom of heaven'.<sup>12</sup> Milner reported to Sir Walter Hely-Hutchison, the Governor of Natal, that he believed the 'extreme tension of the political situation is a little relaxed'. His only anxiety was that people in England 'should consequently be too quick to relax that steady pressure on the Transvaal without which they will never do anything'.<sup>13</sup>

Milner gained another ally for his policy of 'steady pressure', and an important source of information at Johannesburg, in Percy Fitzpatrick, the head of intelligence at H. Eckstein & Co., the Johannesburg Holding Company for Wernher Beit and Company.<sup>14</sup> Fitzpatrick had been working behind the scenes for reform in the Transvaal despite being banned from political activity for three years on account of his role as Secretary of the Johannesburg Reform Committee at the time of the Jameson Raid. The High Commissioner became a political mentor to the younger man, who also dreamed of British supremacy in South Africa. As a representative of the Chamber of Mines (recognized by the South African Republic as the voice of the mining industry), Fitzpatrick played a major role in the various negotiations between the industry and the Transvaal, keeping Milner informed at each step along the way. After Kruger's re-election in February 1898, Fitzpatrick reported to the 'gold bug' Alfred Beit that Milner agreed that the best course would be to continue 'adding items and accumulating evidence' for all the Uitlander grievances because no one could 'foresee what little incident may provide the occasion for presenting the bill' to the Transvaal Government. The two discussed the unlikelihood of meaningful franchise reform and power sharing after which, Milner told Fitzpatrick he believed there was otherwise 'only one possible settlement – war. It has got to come'.<sup>15</sup>

In March Milner made a purposefully intemperate speech at Graaf Reneit which appeared to question the loyalty of the Cape Boers and caused an uproar. This led to a reminder from Chamberlain that they had agreed on a patient policy.

Milner replied with a contrite message; however, he confided at the same time to Selborne that he feared there was a 'positive danger of the C.O. losing sight of the essentials of S. African policy over the technicalities of these wretched Treaties'. The point to remember was that the 'whole political power in the Transvaal' was 'in the hands of the Boer Oligarchy – armed to the teeth. And there was no reform party among that oligarchy.' Any delusions otherwise had been dispelled by the recent election result. 'Two wholly antagonistic systems – a mediaeval race oligarchy, and a modern industrial state, recognizing no difference of status between the various white races – cannot permanently live side by side in what is after all one country. The race oligarchy has got to go, and I see no signs of its removing itself.' British forces would have to do the job.<sup>16</sup>

From London, Conyngham Greene, the British Agent in Pretoria, reported to Milner on the pacific attitude he found at the Colonial Office and on waning interest at home in South Africa. Moberly Bell of *The Times* had told him that the 'British Public cannot attend to more than two things at once, and they now have the Spanish American War and Khartoum, and it is folly to expect them to take an interest in anything else.' Milner agreed with Greene's assessment that Moberly Bell paid the public 'an undeserved compliment when he says it can think of two things'.<sup>17</sup> Milner departed himself on 2 November 1898 for a sojourn in England that offered the opportunity to test the newspaper and public opinion waters and to build support for an active and resolute policy. His friend George Wyndham had written just before Milner's departure that 'We all thank our stars that you are out there. And a great part of the comparative sobriety in the comment of the Home press is due to the fact that both sides trust you from Harmsworth of the *Daily Mail* on the extreme right to Massingham of the *Chronicle* on the extreme left'.<sup>18</sup> Wyndham had the year before been appointed Lord Lansdowne's parliamentary under-secretary at the War Office and its spokesman in the Commons. In the coming months he would also aid Milner by keeping their press friends in line.

To spread his message, Milner spent the next two months commuting between London and the great country houses (and palaces) of England. For example at Lord Cowper's Panshanger he saw his friends Curzon, Balfour, St John Brodrick and Henry and Margot Asquith. Milner also visited Rosebery at Mentmore and Lord Rothschild at Tring. At the last he must have discussed the unsuccessful attempts of the Transvaal to gain international loans. Milner was commanded to dine and sleep at Windsor. The Queen recorded in her journal that 'Sir Alfred Milner, who is at the Cape ... says things are tolerably quiet, & improving, but that the Boers were not likely to be any better'.<sup>19</sup> At Sandringham, Milner had a 'pleasant, sociable talk' with the Prince of Wales, who had been 'anxious' to see him. In London Milner dined at 1 Connaught Place with his Liberal Unionist friend Albert Grey, who had risen considerably in the world

by succeeding his uncle as fourth Earl Grey and by becoming Chairman of the British South Africa Company. Joining the party were Milner's old Balliol friend Philip Gell (who would soon become a Director of the Chartered Company) and Alfred Beit, with whom Milner recorded he had a long and interesting talk. Beit's associate Julius Wernher was also among those whom he consulted.

Beit and Wernher's Argus Group owned several newspapers including the *Star*, the leading English newspaper on the Rand. At *The Times* to see his friends Moberly Bell, George Buckle and Flora Shaw, Milner was able to recruit W. F. Monypenny to edit the *Star*. One of the Argus directors had asked Stead if he knew of 'another Garrett' and continued that the prospective editor 'must have faith in the English speaking race and be able and willing to render substantial aid to Sir Alfred Milner in forwarding the Imperial Policy in South Africa.' The editor's mission would be to 'educate, guide and unite the men who read English on the Rand and who are for the most part today an incoherent and factious crowd. He would have to do in Johannesburg what Garrett is doing at the Cape, and more. He would have to do much of what Sir Alfred Milner is doing there.'<sup>20</sup> From March 1899, Monypenny acted as both editor of the *Star* and South African correspondent for *The Times*. To help the *Star* do battle in the English language press with the pro-Kruger *Standard and Diggers News*, Beit and Wernher also started a new Uitlander paper, the *Transvaal Leader*, and installed an editor, R. J. Pakeman, with 'the right views'. So 'right' that he, along with Monypenny, would be forced to flee the Transvaal to escape arrest six months later.<sup>21</sup>

Other newspapermen Milner saw while in England included Sidney Low, E. T. Cook, the Radical journalist H. W. Massingham, John St Loe Strachey of the *Spectator*, and Spenser Wilkinson. To the last, Milner described a South African situation which could not last. Outside the South African Republic, the Dutch and British were equal. Inside the Transvaal, he said, was 'An oligarchy and the British have no rights'. The British Government would not act unless the Boers violated the convention, but they would not do this. In case of war the 'Dutch in our colonies will go with Boers; so will Orange Free State'. If the Transvaal had the Constitution of the Orange Free State, South Africa could 'get along quietly.'<sup>22</sup> According to Wilkinson, in a very frank conversation, Milner claimed that when he described the South African situation to the Government, he was not believed and thought 'mad'. He asked Wilkinson's advice on whether he should force the Government's hand by bringing matters to a head. This, Milner declared, he could do with a 'mere turn of the wrist'. When Wilkinson advised against forcing things, Milner replied that he had already come to the same conclusion, although he believed there was no way to avert a war, which was inevitable.<sup>23</sup>

Milner's Fleet Street crusade was an undoubted success, with the notable and ironic exception of W. T. Stead. Despite pleas from Milner to desist, since 1897 the editor of the *Review of Reviews* had kept up a drumbeat of criticism aimed at Chamberlain. This culminated in 1899 with the publication of *The Scandal of the South African Committee*. Further, Stead had attended the 1898 Hague Peace Conference called by the Czar and had returned as an apostle of international arbitration. He now suspected that Milner, rather than acting as a brake on Chamberlain's jingo tendencies as he had hoped, might be playing the opposite role. Stead, who later wrote that he had been willing to be led by Milner 'blindfolded so long as he stopped short of war', soon followed his guilty conscience into the pro-Boer camp. His resulting criticism of Milner, who joined Chamberlain as a bogeyman of Empire, ended their long friendship.<sup>24</sup>

After a month in England, Milner reported to his imperial secretary, George Fiddes, that he found it 'most exhausting' to interview 'all the leading politicians and pressmen – without seeming to run after them – and to stamp on rose-coloured illusions about S. Africa'. It was 'delicate and difficult work', but over the last month he had 'seen a great many' and hoped that he had successfully 'sown some seeds'.<sup>25</sup> About the Colonial Secretary, Milner confided to Fiddes, 'Joe may be led, but he can't be driven. I go on pegging mail after mail, month after month, and I think it tells; but if I were once to make him think I am trying to rush him, he would see me to the devil and we might as well all shut up. I put everything in the way most likely to get him to take our view of himself.' When Chamberlain would take their view, Milner went on, depended on the 'amount of external pressure and excitement corresponding to our prodding of him from within.' If only the Uitlanders could 'stand firm on the formula 'no rest without reform' and can stand on it not 6 days, but 6 weeks or six months, we shall do the trick yet my boy. And by the soul of St Jingo they get a fair bucking up from us all one way and another.'<sup>26</sup>

During the return voyage, Milner wrote to Selborne that he had decided not to put his thoughts on the Transvaal to paper as he had 'threatened' at Highbury. His views remained 'absolutely unaltered', but he had come to the conclusion that it was no use to 'try and force them on others at this stage'. If he could 'advance matters by ... [his] own actions', as he hoped to do, then Milner believed he would 'have support when the time comes'. Besides, if he could not get things 'forrader', he knew he would not get support 'whatever I said'. Milner realized that public opinion was 'dormant' at present on South Africa, but did not think it would take much to 'wake it up in a manner that would astonish us all'. In fact, his fear was that the 'waking up should come suddenly, perhaps irrationally, over some "incident," which may turn out to be more or less hollow, instead of gradually in support of a policy, carrying conviction to all but the absolutely biased'.<sup>27</sup>

While Milner had been away the acting High Commissioner, General Sir William Butler, refused to accept an Uitlander petition addressed to the Queen over the death of Thomas Edgar, an Englishman resident in Johannesburg, at the hands of the hated 'Zarps', the local constabulary. Butler, who had served in Egypt in the 1880s and in South Africa in the Zulu War, was a Radical in politics who dismissed the Edgar incident as a drunken brawl. A Transvaal court acquitted the policeman involved of all charges, which had led to an agitation by the South African League, the British dominated Uitlander pressure group that had presented Butler with the Edgar petition.<sup>28</sup> The spread of the League, which had been founded in the Cape after the Jameson Raid and the collapse of the reform movement in the Transvaal, complicated politics in South Africa. During the 1898 elections, under the leadership of J. Douglas Forster and Wilfrid Wybergh, the League became active in the South African Republic providing legal aid to victims of 'Transvaal maladministration' and petitioning the Queen for support.

Had Milner been in charge when the Edgar affair broke he would undoubtedly have followed a different course. He told Selborne that it was a 'shocking story which makes one's blood boil. But we are used here now to seeing British subjects treated with injustice in the Transvaal.' He called the acquittal of the policeman, and the anti-British pronouncements of the judge, 'a farce'.<sup>29</sup> Furious, but feigning nonchalance, Milner wrote to Selborne that his 'amusement at Butler's idiotic proceedings' had overcome his annoyance. He proclaimed himself still in a 'more or less holiday humour and the Gilbertian flavour of a 2½ months' High Commissioner out-Kruger Kruger appeals to me'. Also, as he had to get on, if possible, with Butler somehow, it was probably best not to land in a 'bad temper'.<sup>30</sup> Milner was soon distracted by myriad other troublesome questions, including renewed complaints of mistreatment of the Cape Coloured in the Transvaal, alien immigration to South Africa, and affairs in Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Rhodesia.

First among all of the problems with which Milner grappled in early 1899 came the dynamite monopoly, a central bone of contention between the mine owners and the Transvaal Government. In an attempt to forestall the renewed agitation and at the same time eliminate the dynamite issue, Kruger bypassed London and Cape Town and opened so-called 'Peace Negotiations' directly with the Rand mining magnates, who had in February, through the Chamber of Mines, offered £600,000 to compensate the monopolists, if the Transvaal would cancel the dynamite concession. In the following negotiations, the Chamber of Mines (in consultation with the South African League and other Uitlander groups) linked the dynamite settlement with other reforms, including the franchise. The temporarily united Uitlander front called for a return to conditions as they had been before 1890, when full citizenship could be obtained in five years

and, in addition, a redistribution of Volksraad seats to better represent Johannesburg. Kruger offered a reduction from fourteen to nine years (with renunciation of any previous citizenship at the beginning of the period), but no redistribution.

The offer of 'Peace Negotiations', Milner explained to Chamberlain, showed that the South African Republic was 'sincerely frightened' and prepared to pay a large price to be 'rid' of the South African League's growing power. In the negotiations municipal autonomy for the Rand and educational reform were also put on the table, but, unlike Chamberlain, Milner believed that genuine local self-government was even less likely than a legitimate franchise offer.<sup>31</sup> Milner was in fact in close contact with Fitzpatrick, who was one of the Uitlander negotiators. Consequently, by 22 March he could write to Chamberlain that, unless the South African Republic was prepared to significantly better its offer, it appeared the negotiations between the Uitlanders and the Transvaal Government would break down over the franchise question. Milner told the Colonial Secretary that it was 'greatly to the credit of the Uitlander leaders that they are seeking to bargain, not for themselves alone, but for the whole community'. He praised their 'fair spirit' and reasonable demands and detested the misrepresentations at home in the reproduced articles of the pro-Boer South African press which denounced them as capitalists and political mischief makers. Milner defended the South African League, telling Chamberlain that he had 'yet to learn that the League aims at anything more than the reasonably fair treatment of the non-Boer population in the Transvaal'.<sup>32</sup> As Milner forecast, the two sides could not reach agreement and the 'Great Deal' offered by the Transvaal was turned down on 27 March.

The next day Milner forwarded to London a second Uitlander petition to the Queen, with 21,684 signatures attached. This requested imperial intervention in the Transvaal because of the 'well-nigh intolerable' conditions under which the British subjects suffered. These included the deprivation of all political rights or any voice in the Government of the country, mal-administration, speculation of public monies, scandals in the education of their children and a police force which not only did not protect British citizens, but was 'a source of danger to the peace and safety of the Uitlander population'. The petitioners asked for an inquiry into their complaints and for the British Government in South Africa to be allowed to secure 'speedy reform of the abuses complained of, and to obtain substantial guarantees from the Government of this State for recognition of their rights as British subjects'.<sup>33</sup>

After the Government decided to accept the petition, Chamberlain asked Milner for a further statement on the subject which might be published. In response the High Commissioner sent off the famous, or infamous, 4 May 1899 'Helot' despatch. In this Milner declared that the Edgar incident had 'merely

precipitated a struggle which was certain to come'. Milner denied that the excitement was 'factitious'. This had been laid at the door of the South African League, but in his view they 'were forced into action by Edgar's fellow-workmen'. The popular movement was now in a state similar to 1894 and 1895, before it had been 'perverted and ruined' by the Jameson Raid, 'a conspiracy of which the great body of the Uitlanders were totally innocent'. The political turmoil in the South African Republic, Milner went on, would 'never end till the permanent Uitlander population is admitted to a share in the Government, and while that turmoil lasts there will be no tranquility or adequate progress in Her Majesty's South African dominions'.

The 'true remedy', argued Milner, would be for the British Government to 'strike at the root of all these injuries – the political impotence of the injured'. Fair Uitlander representation would bring about what diplomatic protests could never accomplish. The only effective way of 'protecting our subjects', paradoxically, would be to 'help them to cease to be our subjects'. Milner concluded his argument with his famous declaration that the 'spectacle of thousands of British subjects kept permanently in the position of helots, constantly chafing under undoubted grievances, and calling vainly to Her Majesty's Government for redress, does steadily undermine the influence and reputation of Great Britain and the respect for the British Government within its own dominions.' The case for intervention was 'overwhelming'.<sup>34</sup>

When the dispatch arrived in London Chamberlain minuted on it, 'This is tremendously stiff, and if it is published, it will make either an ultimatum or Sir Alfred Milner's recall necessary'. The Colonial Secretary wished to avoid anything like an ultimatum. A week before, in a memorandum for the Cabinet, he explained that 'If we ignore altogether the prayers of the petitioners, it is certain that British influence in South Africa will be severely shaken'. On the other hand, if an ultimatum was sent he thought it probable that Kruger would give an 'offensive reply, and we shall have then to go to war, or to accept a humiliating check'.<sup>35</sup> The brief reply Milner had on 8 May from Chamberlain led him to write to Hely Hutchinson that although he did not think the Government would issue an ultimatum, he believed they would send a dispatch 'so strong it will practically necessitate their intervention, if Kruger does not grant large reforms'. If he did, Milner had impressed upon the Uitlanders that they 'must take them and work bona fide'. If there was an 'immediate substantial share of political power for the Uitlanders', Milner thought it ought to be accepted with 'a good grace and a firm determination to use it fairly'. He did not fear, as some did, that the Uitlanders might 'turn and rend us' with their political power. Possibly, he admitted, the Transvaal 'may never become part of our S. African Empire, though I think, with statesmanship on our side it must come in time'.<sup>36</sup>



To defuse the looming crisis, on 9 May the Cape Afrikaner Bond leader Jan Hofmeyr proposed talks at Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State, between Milner and Kruger. After a formal invitation was made by President Steyn, a conference was scheduled for the end of the month. This development delayed the release of Chamberlain's despatch in reply to the Uitlander petition. From Cape Town Milner commented to Conyngham Greene on 12 May on the 'queer shift in the game. The funk here on the part of the Afrikaner party during the last week or two has been something terrific. Hence no doubt Steyn's proposal that Kruger and I should meet at Bloemfontein for a general Conference.' Milner saw this as a 'very clever move' which had 'already produced one effect ... mollifying the British Press a bit and relaxing for the moment ... the screw upon the enemy'.<sup>37</sup> From London, George Wyndham sent loyal words of support. Salisbury, he reported, 'may have views about the Peace Conference. Beach may have misgivings about his miserable budget but the Cabinet as a whole will back you solid'. Even if they wished, he went on, 'they dare not reject or modify any advice wh. you tender'. Wyndham reported further that the Imperial South African Association (a Conservative pressure group which he chaired in support of Milner) and the press were 'ready & under complete control. I can switch on an agitation in any direction ... The Destinies are in your hands & we shall wait & be patient, or charge home, just as you decide'.<sup>38</sup>

At Bloemfontein Milner proposed to put the question of the Uitlander grievances in the foreground and insist that they should obtain a 'substantial degree of representation by legislation passed this Session'. The demands would be for a five-year franchise, retrospective, and at least seven members for the Rand in the Volksraad. If Kruger balked at this Milner planned to 'try Municipal Government for the whole Rand as an alternative, with wide powers, including control of police'. If this was rejected as well, Milner did not see any point in moving on to the many other outstanding questions.<sup>39</sup> He confided to Selborne that he would of course 'do my very utmost to get any settlement', but that he was 'not hopeful of the result of the Conference'. He had learned that the 'fighting section of the Boers' was very intractable and found the signs 'all worse during the last few days'. It was, in his view, quite certain that 'If we can't get reforms now by negotiation with so much in our favour, we shall never get them, and we must either be prepared to see Kruger carry out his policy of suppressing his English subjects, or compel him to desist from it. The latter means a greatly increased force and may mean war.' To Milner the question had now got to a stage 'when its military aspect is becoming of supreme importance'.<sup>40</sup>

Concerning the possibility of a conflagration, back in London, Milner's friend Sidney Low commented on the merits of war in an article in the *Nineteenth Century*. There was 'scarcely a nation in the world', said Low, 'certainly not in our high-strung, masterful, Caucasian world – that does not value itself

chiefly for its martial achievements'. A 'righteous and necessary war' was 'no more painful than a surgical operation. Better give the patient some pain and make your own fingers unpleasantly red, than to allow the disease to grow upon him until he becomes an offence to himself and the world and dies in lingering agony.'<sup>41</sup>

The Bloemfontein Conference, held in an oak-panelled chamber in the Railway Central Bureau, opened with an afternoon session on Wednesday 31 May 1899. Milner had insisted that the proceedings be published; therefore, in the sessions both he and Kruger were addressing other audiences as much as each other. John Buchan, who joined Milner's 'Kindergarten' two years later, later famously commented that Milner 'was not very good at envisaging a world wholly different from his own, and his world and Kruger's at no point intersected. There was a gnarled magnificence in the old Transvaal President, but he saw only a snuffy, mendacious savage.' However, most of those who have quoted Buchan have failed to continue, as he did, that 'It was the fashion among his critics to believe that a little geniality on Milner's part ... would have brought the Bloemfontein Conference to a successful conclusion.' Such a view to Buchan seemed 'to do justice neither to Kruger, nor to Milner, men deeply in earnest who were striving for things wholly incompatible, an Old Testament patriarchal regime and a modern democracy'.<sup>42</sup> From London, Chamberlain counselled patience and compromise with the Boers, who he said were used to 'a good deal of haggling'. He telegraphed that it was of the 'utmost importance to put the President of the South African Republic clearly in the wrong'.<sup>43</sup> However, this 5 June message was delivered a day too late. Whatever his duty was at Bloemfontein, Milner did not believe it included striking a bargain with Paul Kruger. When the President refused to agree to the five-year franchise, offering instead seven, the talks went no further.<sup>44</sup>

The failure at Bloemfontein advanced the likelihood of war on all sides. Milner was confirmed in his belief that Kruger would never allow what he considered an adequate measure of reform and was happy to see the back of Bloemfontein as soon as possible. On the other side, Kruger was confirmed in the suspicions he had of Milner from the time of the Graaff Reneit speech. In the Transvaal, the Volksraad applauded Kruger's stance at Bloemfontein, while a mass Uitlander meeting in Johannesburg called Milner's proposals an 'irreducible minimum' and formed an 'Uitlander Council'. Many in the city, fearing that war was just over the horizon, began to evacuate.<sup>45</sup>

Milner's decision to break off the conference was supported by his press friends at home, including Flora Shaw, who declared in *The Times* that the failure had been 'of President Kruger's own making'.<sup>46</sup> At the Cape, Garrett led a deputation to congratulate Milner on his firmness. The High Commissioner told the group that his position had been one of compromise and noted that the counter-

petition Kruger produced there meant that half the Uitlanders appeared to be on his side, invalidating the assertion that the President and his burghers would be swamped by foreign voters. Milner voiced his continued hope that the South African Republic might still see its way to enact needed reform, but noted that if it did not, there were 'other means of achieving the desired result'.<sup>47</sup> To work on public and press opinion, Percy Fitzpatrick had departed for England. He brought with him a manuscript which championed Milner's course in the previous year, and would soon be a best seller, *The Transvaal from Within*. Fitzpatrick left behind numerous suggestions for continuing the Uitlander campaign in the Transvaal, of which Milner was now spoken of openly as the champion.

To ratchet up the pressure, in London on 14 June the Government published a bluebook including Milner's 'Helot' despatch of 4 May which for the first time revealed the spectre of war clearly to the British public.<sup>48</sup> Milner's bellicose words, in particular that the 'case for intervention was overwhelming', brought serious Liberal disaffection. E. T. Cook reported to Milner that many Liberal papers, including the formerly supportive *Chronicle* had 'bolted' now that Milner had 'shown his teeth'. Stead and Morley, he went on, 'were in full cry against you'. Cook told his friend that 'I try to support you – but it is a difficult part for a Liberal when, as far as one can see, the Government itself is giving you most indifferent support'. He asked 'Have Ministers any policy? or are they waiting to see how the cat jumps? In the absence of a strong lead the cat is jumping, I think, very much against extremities.' He doubted if twenty Liberals 'would support it, and I am told there is a considerable Tory cave against what is now called Milnerism'.<sup>49</sup>

While Cook played up as best he could several of Milner's former press supporters, including J. A. Spender, did not. Spender had been Cook's assistant at the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and then had followed him as editor of the *Westminster Gazette*.<sup>50</sup> Milner's error, Spender declared, was that 'Before the policy of demanding the franchise was a fortnight old he burnt his boats by sending that despatch ... intelligible and right if it meant war immediately ... Since war was impossible for three months, I simply don't understand it. It invited agitation, divided opinion, gave time for counter preparations ... But ... the imperial Govmt has had no policy since the raid, for good or ill, it has just begun to try the franchise remedy ... & if it sticks to it, must get more.'<sup>51</sup> Cook admitted to Milner 'I dare say there may be some truth' in some of Spender's criticisms, but it seemed to him 'an occasion on which it was necessary to waive all minor points and go hard and straight. So I have defended everything – the despatch itself and its publication – helots and all.' Cook also confided that some of Milner's Balliol friends were 'much shocked at your incorrect use of helots', maintaining he should have used 'perioeci' instead. 'What pedantry!' said Cook, 'The B. P.

[British Public] has worked itself up finally at "helots." What would it have cared for perioeci?"<sup>52</sup>

Less optimistically, Selborne reported that the publication of the bluebook had 'produced a great effect, but not so great an effect as we had hoped' and that the idea of a war with the South African Republic was still 'very distasteful to most people'. Consequently, the Cabinet were having to go slow. Selborne reassured him, however, that there was 'no idea of receding from the intervention which was commenced by your action at Bloemfontein and our reply to the petition, but we simply cannot force the pace'. The 'worst service we could do to the Empire', said Selborne, 'would be to outrun public opinion' which still needed to be convinced that they could not 'believe a word Kruger says, or that he never has yielded and never will yield till he feels the muzzle of the pistol on his forehead'.<sup>53</sup>

Cook blamed personal rivalries within the Government for preventing a firm stand. He told Milner that members stayed aloof because of their hatred for Chamberlain. With any other Colonial Secretary, 'the country would have rallied much more strongly to you'. As it was, nearly all the Liberals were 'furious with you, and a good lot of Tories' were also against a strong policy. Gell confirmed this opinion, but added 'Any overt act of Boer hostility, & the country would catch fire ... Pending any such opportunity, I assume that details of the franchise will not be the subject of further Diplomatic discussion.' He warned that 'People here are getting off the main line and on to that'.<sup>54</sup> Wyndham, however, wrote that he was ready to support Milner by organizing a press campaign. He reported that the country had 'settled down to a stolid view that we must vindicate our supremacy and that you must guide us as to how to do it'.<sup>55</sup>

In Johannesburg the Uitlander Council escalated its cry for 'equal rights for all white men'. Milner tried to restrain the group from 'adopting a too uncompromising attitude and being thought to be for "War at any price"'. He also found himself a target of widespread press attacks. The 19 July diary notes '*S. A. News*, which devotes columns to abusive extracts about me from the London press, reprints an article from *Punch*, in which I am violently criticized'.<sup>56</sup> After Rendel sent words of encouragement, Milner replied that though the responsibility weighed heavily, the 'howling affects me not a whit'. All this noise was outweighed by the rising of 'Loyal British S. Africa' from its 'long degradation' to stand behind him 'to a man with enthusiasm which has not been known since the days of Majuba'. Milner professed it a 'great thing to be, even for a few brief days and weeks, *the leader of a people*, possessing their unbounded confidence'. He fully realized that England might 'give us away – probably will – not from cowardice, but from simple ignorance of the situation and the easy-going belief that you only have to be very kind and patient and magnanimous and give away your friends to please your enemies, in order to make the latter love you forever'.

He ended with a postscript that 'Joe has struck to me magnificently. If he ever throws me over after all, or, worse still, retreats under a garbled version of my advice to him, I shall know it is only because he could not help it.'<sup>57</sup>

In July Wilkinson wrote a series of articles published in the *Morning Post* which defended Chamberlain and Milner, describing the crisis as a test of the British system and the effectiveness of democracy. Milner told Wilkinson that he had 'felt all along & feel still that our cause is right. But it has been very unskillfully handled.' The Transvaal had 'conceded sufficient *on one question* to weaken public opinion in England to a point at wh. no Govt will fight, but they have done it in their usual perfidious way, leaving themselves plenty of room to slip out of a reform unwillingly adopted'. He foresaw a 'long dragging controversy with no clear cut issue'. Over and over again he had 'tried to raise one, but at the critical moment some weakness at home has always baffled me'. The real danger, Milner believed, lay in the 'general disgust and disheartenment of the British, if having "put our hands to the plow", we drive nothing of a furrow'.<sup>58</sup>

Milner hoped, before this controversy was over, to direct 'pointed attention to the great issue of the increasing military strength of the Boers. They have plenty of money & have added enormously to their munitions of war. If we don't look out we shall be here on sufferance.' Milner complained that 'our military preparations have been of the wrong sort. What we wanted was *quietly* to add to our strength on the spot. What we have done is to *make a show* of arming without any substantial increase of force.'<sup>59</sup> Among the small number of Special Services officers sent to South Africa was Milner's friend Lord Edward Cecil, accompanied by his wife Violet. She later recalled that they arrived the day after 'Black Monday' when 'everyone in South Africa who knew anyone in England had telegraphed home to try and make the easy-going, comfortable, safe (oh, how safe then!) English realise what was going on in South Africa.' This was a response to *The Times* printing Chamberlain's words that the 'crisis might be regarded as at an end' after the Volksraad passed the seven year franchise Milner rejected at Bloemfontein.<sup>60</sup>

In the Commons, Campbell-Bannerman repeated his claim that there was no case for armed intervention in the difference between a seven and five years' franchise. It was a strange idea, he went on, that 'we should go to war in order to hurry our own fellow-citizens into another citizenship'.<sup>61</sup> Several other speakers accused the Government of being too much under the influence of Milner. The 'worst of the business,' said Henry Labouchere, was that Milner had become 'a partisan ... It by no means follows that an able journalist and financier should be an able Governor of a self-governing Colony.' He hoped that Chamberlain would approach Kruger through the Cape premier Schreiner and 'not through Sir A. Milner'.<sup>62</sup> The Irish Nationalist MP John Dillon declared that the tone of Milner's despatches were 'more worthy of a "yellow" journalist in the United

States of America or of an electioneering agent than of a statesman. I never read anything more unfair or sensational ... They consist of clippings from newspapers and partisan reports giving one side of the question.' The editor of the *Cape Times*, he went on, 'calls every day on Sir Alfred Milner, and between them in the study of the latter they concoct articles', which were published and sent to the Colonial Secretary who 'issues them in Blue Books as evidence of the opinion in South Africa.'<sup>63</sup>

In the Lords the same day, in his most heated comments to date, Salisbury proclaimed that the London and Pretoria Conventions had been used 'to reduce the English to the condition almost of a conquered, certainly of a subjugated race'. If it ever happened, the Prime Minister went on, 'that the validity of these Conventions is impeached, I believe they belong from that time entirely to history ... If this country has to make exertions in order to secure the most elementary justice for British subjects, I am quite sure we will not reinstate a state of things which will bring back the old difficulties.'<sup>64</sup> Salisbury has been painted by some as a detached figure led by Chamberlain and Milner into war, in part because he was deeply distracted by the grave illness of his wife. It is true that, like Chamberlain, he would have preferred a peaceful solution; however, Salisbury was a consistent supporter both of pressure being kept on the Transvaal and of the idea of British paramountcy in South Africa. It was his skilful diplomacy that isolated the South African Republic and made war possible. Unlike Gladstone, whom Kruger had faced down after Majuba, Salisbury believed the South African Empire worth fighting for. Kruger was only one of the 'two obstinate bearded patriarchs' engaged each step of the way to a confrontation.<sup>65</sup>

Salisbury's son-in-law Selborne had reported to Milner that he had had it out at Walmer with the Prime Minister and was 'wholly pleased with the result'. Salisbury meant to 'secure full effective (as distinct from pedantic) compliance with your Bloemfontein demands as a minimum' and that the 'real point to be made good to South Africa' was that 'we not the Dutch are boss'. Salisbury added rather testily, however, that he would 'go my own pace – I will not be hurried by anyone, not by all the English in South Africa'. The rest of the Cabinet, Selborne confided, were 'all right. I do not say there are no mugwumps in it. You could name them. But they are out of it.' He talked to Balfour, party leader in the Commons, periodically to 'assure myself that he is sound'.<sup>66</sup>

In August the Cape politician John X. Merriman complained to the Liberal MP James Bryce that 'all the talking and writing goes on – the almost open partisanship of Milner and the ravings of the press which make the task of those who counsel moderation to the Boers increasingly difficult'. If all this, he went on, was 'not design, then it is the stupidest bit of bungling diplomacy ever set agait. For of course "bluff" may go so far that retreat leaves you no choice between wrongdoing and disgrace.' The events of the past few months, Merriman con-

tinued, 'go far to make the names "Empire" and "Loyalty" stink in the nostrils of those who believe that Liberty is the most precious inheritance of Englishmen – so twisted are they to party uses and the service of the lust of acquisition. Certainly Milner has managed to write his name in lasting characters on the memory of the South African people.'<sup>67</sup> The same month, concessions by Kruger moved Chamberlain to inform Lord Salisbury that it now looked like a 'climb down' was 'really complete this time'. He went on that Milner's comments were 'a little alarming & he seems to me unnecessarily suspicious & pedantic in his adherence to form. I think however that he must understand my telegrams & see how important I consider ... that the Boers should not be unduly snubbed at this stage but rather encouraged to put their concepions [*sic*] on record ... matters are now in a more favorable condition.'<sup>68</sup> In reply the Prime Minister sent his congratulations. He also voiced his agreement with Chamberlain's criticism of Milner, commenting 'It looks as if he had been spoiling for the fight with some glee and does not like putting his clothes on again.'<sup>69</sup> After these concessions proved illusory, at Birmingham on 26 August 1899 Chamberlain declared that the sands were 'running down the glass' for a settlement. Mr Kruger, he went on, 'dribbles out reforms like water from a squeezed sponge, and he either accompanies his offers with conditions which he knows to be impossible, or he refuses to allow ... a satisfactory investigation of the nature and character of those reforms'. The Colonial Secretary repeated Salisbury's warning that if the delays continued the British Government would not be limited by previous offers, but would go on to secure conditions which 'once and for all shall establish which is the Paramount Power in South Africa.'<sup>70</sup>

At the same time, Gell reported to Milner that the British public had accepted that the Transvaal question, 'like an inevitable disease, is ripening slowly but irrevocably towards a crisis'. They expected war, but recognized that Kruger might be bluffing. On the whole it seemed to Gell that what was 'most apprehended' was an unsatisfactory compromise. He went on that the newspapers remained 'staunch to their policies, though the *Chronicle* and *Westminster* incline to the line of urging Kruger not to be an obstinate fool. They urge the folly of raising the critical point of "suzerainty", and "independence"'. Gell told Milner that 'You personally can rely upon a strong public backing. You have gained the people's confidence by appearing both moderate and firm – the combination which the B.P. likes. In short, my dear friend – Tussauds have announced a "Portrait Model of Sir Alfred Milner" as their latest addition! Is that not popular fame?'<sup>71</sup>

Popular or not, Milner meant to keep up the pressure. He warned Selborne that the 'strain here is really near breaking-point'. He confessed that he was 'terrified to say this officially because of my fears of seeming to hurry you. But, really, really, oh! Excellent friend and staunch supporter, we have now had nearly 3 months of Raging Crisis and it is not too much to ask that things should now

be brought to a head.' Since the publication of the bluebook and Chamberlain's Birmingham speech, Milner went on, 'people here, who are on our side, made up their minds for war, calmly realizing what it meant. They would welcome war even now ... but what they will not face is months more of drag.' Things had gone beyond using 'mere menace' to get a satisfactory settlement. He knew the Government would 'shrink from the plunge of the military expedition, involving certainly much money, probably some fighting and possibly heavy fighting. My own absolute conviction is that it is worth those millions to settle forever, as you would, the South African question.'<sup>72</sup>

On 2 September Chamberlain suggested to the Prime Minister that a Cabinet be called to consider an ultimatum. He notified Milner of this and also told him that, though he might occasionally differ from him, he was 'in the fullest sense of the word loyal to you as I believe you are to me'. Both had a difficult part to play and the atmosphere in London, said Chamberlain, was much different from that in Cape Town. The ordinary patriotic Englishman, he went on, saw a war as a 'very big affair – the biggest since the Crimea – with no honour to be gained, if we are successful, and with many most unpleasant contingent possibilities'. On the positive side, unlike three months before, Chamberlain now believed a war would be supported and that the majority of the people recognized that what was at stake in the present controversy was 'our supremacy in S. Africa and our existence as a great Power in the world'. If the reply from the Transvaal concerning Chamberlain's demand for a joint inquiry was unsatisfactory, Milner was authorized to go ahead alone. The inquiry report would then be delivered to the Transvaal as one last chance for compliance. Chamberlain told Milner 'we must play this game out "selon les règles" and it seems to me today that we ought to exhaust the franchise proposals and get a clear refusal before, on the principle of the Sibylline books laid down by Lord Salisbury, we ask for more'. This would also allow time for a sufficient force to be gathered in South Africa, for 'If and when we ask for more it means war'.<sup>73</sup>

In early October, Milner was informed that State Secretary Reitz had told Leo Amery, the recently dispatched correspondent of *The Times* at Pretoria, that a Boer ultimatum would be forthcoming in days unless a favourable decision of the Cabinet was received at once and the British halted the landing of troops. Amery, who had arrived expecting to cover a settlement, instead found himself caught in the lead up to war. On 9 October Reitz delivered an ultimatum which made four demands: that all points of difference be settled by arbitration or other peaceful means to be agreed upon; that the British troops on the borders of the Republic be instantly withdrawn; that all troops which had arrived since 1 June be sent back to the coast and removed; and that none of the troops presently at sea should land in any part of South Africa. The British were given until 5 p.m. on Wednesday 11 October to give affirmative answers to all these points. Any



other action would be considered by the Government of the Transvaal as a formal declaration of war. Selborne commented that the ultimatum 'could not have strengthened the C.O. more if Chamberlain had dictated it himself'.<sup>74</sup> Salisbury noted dryly that at least the Boer ultimatum had relieved the British Government of the responsibility of explaining the war to the British public. The reply, which Milner forwarded to Pretoria, was that 'Her Majesty's Government have received with great regret the preemptory demands of the Government of the South African Republic ... the conditions demanded ... are such as Her Majesty's Government deem it impossible to discuss'.<sup>75</sup>

On 11 October Milner's Liberal Imperialist friend R. B. Haldane reported from London that the 'Transvaal Ultimatum is published this morning! Do not think that because of Harcourt's and Morley's speeches it is to be taken that Liberals as a whole have misunderstood your policy. On the contrary, I am satisfied that four-fifths of our people really follow and assent to it.' The only help we can give you, he went on, was to 'show that you have the solid support of the Opposition *here* at all events'.<sup>76</sup> That day Milner wrote to Selborne 'War dates from to-day I suppose ... We have a bad time before us, and the Empire is about to support the greatest strain put upon it since the Mutiny. Who can say what may befall us before that Army Corps arrives? But we are all working in good heart and, having so long foreseen the possibility of the Armageddon, we mean to do our best in it, though it begins rather unfortunately for us. After all, have not the great struggles of England mostly so begun?'<sup>77</sup> Milner was correct that the war would start 'rather unfortunately'. The conflict, as has so often happened, was not the war anyone expected. There would be no great imperial victory ensuring the paramountcy of Britain, only two and half years of bloody destruction and division, in South Africa and at home.

## 5 MILNER AND THE IMPERIAL LADIES

Milner had another important source of support for his policies in an overlooked cadre of female admirers of his imperial vision. Prominent among these was his future wife, Lady Edward Cecil, née Violet Maxse, who arrived in Cape Town with her husband a few months before the outbreak of war. In the three weeks before they relocated north, with Lord Edward engaged in arranging military supplies, Milner saw much of Violet. In their many walks and talks he unburdened himself and such intimacy made a strong impression. An ardent imperialist herself, Violet recorded that she was, 'immensely impressed by him'. Milner seemed to have 'grown bigger on very fine lines. He has kept his gentleness and charm and width of view and to them has added a firmness and a certainty of purpose which seem to me very unusual.' Violet told her brother, the journalist Leo Maxse, that she wished 'Milner had a less heroic fight to make. Three and a half month's crisis – telegrams *all day*, up at seven and generally not in bed until 2, an hour's ride or walk the only change – some days he is in the house altogether.' Nonetheless, she went on, Milner remained 'well, alert and cheerful, absolutely fearless for himself – realizing his strong and his weak points, knowing that he holds British South Africa for the moment absolutely behind him, which has never happened before and will not happen again for many years'.<sup>1</sup>

Violet accompanied her husband as far as Kimberley where she unluckily stepped on a steel pin, which broke off in her foot and needed a surgeon to remove. While she recuperated at Kimberley, Lord Edward went on, first to Bulawayo and then Mafeking to join his commander, Colonel Robert Baden-Powell. It was the end of August before Violet was back in Cape Town where she found her friend Lady Charles Bentinck also staying at Government House. Cecily Bentinck's husband Lord Charles had also joined the forces at Mafeking and the two women would be constant companions over the following months. Milner's young aide-de-camp Lord Belgrave, called Bend'Or, recorded that he escorted Lady Edward on a shopping expedition for bulbs and orchids to send home. The two decided that 'Mr. Chamberlain ought to wear an orchid common to this country'.<sup>2</sup>

Violet gave perhaps the best descriptions of the cast of characters at Government House in 1899. Bend'Or, soon to be the 2nd Duke of Westminster and one of the richest men in England, was 'twenty, very good looking, delightful company and with an amazing capacity for getting out of the scrapes he constantly got into'. Milner, nevertheless, could not have 'existed without him for he gave just that relief from serious trouble which comes from the company of youth, charm and high spirits, though he certainly also provided Major Hanbury-Williams with a few grey hairs'. The Major, Milner's military secretary, and his wife, Violet described as 'an exceptional pair – he was one of the best-looking men I ever saw and one of the most imperturbable'. His wife was 'nice-looking and the kindest and best of women'. Since Milner had no spouse, Mrs Hanbury Williams acted as official hostess. Violet commented that 'She held a very difficult post, having none of the prestige which falls naturally to a Governor's wife, but managing all the same so well that there were few squabbles or enmities'. Lastly, there was Milner's private secretary Ozzy Walrond, 'gifted, erratic, a prodigious worker, and a great ally' of Bend'Or whose 'youthful indiscretions he palliated and concealed'. The servants included the butler Brockwell, the chef Fauconier and his wife Madame Fauconier who was housekeeper.<sup>3</sup>

Another visitor to South Africa, Violet Markham, also noted the hospitality at Government House late that summer. Well-connected in Liberal circles, Markham had come to South Africa for her health and would leave just before the outbreak of war in October. At a dinner one night the conversation turned for a while from the 'tension of current events' as Milner talked of Greece. Markham recorded that he 'drew for us the picture of a temple, not a famous place, but a ruined shrine exquisitely situated in a grove near the sea-shore. Broken shaft and column still gleamed white through the dark foliage and the blue waters of the Aegean rose and fell gently in an unvisited bay.' For a moment, she went on, 'all at the table forgot Kruger and the Uitlanders ... The eternal spell of Hellas held us silent.'<sup>4</sup> The night before Markham departed, she had a conversation with Violet Cecil, who confided that Milner had talked much of her and with great enthusiasm. He had said that 'though they can ill afford to lose one nice person in a place like this he is very glad for the sake of the cause that you are going home because it is so necessary at present to stir up public opinion in England and he thinks you can of great use in that way knowing the facts as you do'.<sup>5</sup>

Markham freely admitted that she left South Africa under Milner's spell and, once back in England, would write two books in support of his policies. She also became an important figure in the imperialist Victoria League, begun in part to aid Milner.<sup>6</sup> Markham's first book, *South Africa Past and Present*, which chronicled Milner's valiant struggle up to the outbreak of the war, was published the next year. In it Markham declared that Milner faced a 'complete deadlock, for fatal results were bound to spring from either an active or a passive policy. To

go back meant disgrace and eventual disruption; to go forward meant inevitable war.' Any man, she went on 'might well have shrunk from the responsibility of choosing between alternatives of such a character'. Milner, however, had decided 'with rare courage to face the difficulty and to grapple with the problem once and for all, instead of effecting some weak and temporary compromise which would but have deferred and rendered yet more costly the final day of reckoning'. Milner's task, she went on, had been a 'thankless and invidious one' but Markham predicted that as the 'clouds of controversy in time roll away, leaving the facts themselves clear, England will recognize how much she owes to the great Statesman who saved her South African empire'.<sup>7</sup>

The looming war brought to an end the entertaining that had continued to go on throughout at Government House. Violet and Lady Bentinck relocated for a short time to the Mount Nelson Hotel. Cecil Rhodes, however, intervened and insisted that the ladies stay at his house Groote Schuur, which would become their residence for many months while he was shut up in Kimberley and their husbands at Mafeking.<sup>8</sup> After she had gone, Milner wrote to Violet 'I *want you* to come back ever so much. The great gods will decide that, & other things. Meanwhile, please realise that you have been a great help indeed at a trying time. You will never quite know how much of a help. But I think whatever happens, I shall hardly ever again be in quite so tight a place as I was when you came to Cape T— & understood'.<sup>9</sup>

Two weeks after the fighting began, Milner's old friend Bertha Synge reported to him about the war excitement at home that 'Our days are spent reading our papers – ever clamouring for more, our nights dreaming of all that is and is to be. In my lifetime, this state of tension is unique.' The war, she reported, 'affects all, rich and poor alike. All have friends and relations in it and it is no exaggeration to say we are all plunged in gloom ... The War Office is besieged – no one goes to the theatre – concert rooms are empty – new books fall flat – nothing is spoken of save the war'.<sup>10</sup> About the general situation, Milner confided to her in reply that 'One can only hang on grimly, and hope for better things. The state of this Colony is awful. It simply reeks with treason.' However, he was 'sustained by my own belief in the soundness of the wholly misunderstood cause in which we are fighting. It is a war of liberation – from the rule of the Mauser'.<sup>11</sup>

A month after the military debacle of 'Black Week' in December 1899, Lords Roberts and Kitchener arrived at Cape Town to take the situation in hand. At a dinner party with them soon after, Milner told Violet Cecil that at least 'we shall now not be shot sitting'. Violet described Roberts as still sad from the death of his son at the Battle of Colenso, but 'alert as ever – he has something which is something more than intense personality – almost genius'.<sup>12</sup> Her main concern was the poor state of the military hospitals, which Roberts promised to improve as soon as possible along lines she suggested. With an eye to the post-war period,

Milner hoped to contribute to military planning, but he would soon learn that neither Roberts nor Kitchener had any more than passing interest in civilian ideas. The High Commissioner would be forced to bide his time in frustrated impotence while the war ground on for two and a half more years.

The war drew more than just British and imperial troops to South Africa. Scores of British ladies soon joined the handful of wives and relations who had come early, like Violet Cecil and Cecily Bentinck. Many did valuable volunteer work, but a considerable number came simply out of curiosity. A visit to Cape Town became a social activity and the war front a tourist destination. Even some of those who took on real work seemed not to realize the seriousness of the situation. One such society lady explained to the shop assistant who was fitting her for a nurse's uniform that she wanted it to 'look effective on a battlefield'. The throng became something of a nuisance, driving up already high prices and filling hotel rooms and other accommodations needed for the soldiers. Milner commented to Bertha Synge that, apart from the war, there was 'the most fearful bother here with lady visitors, their mutual jealousies, feuds, back-bitings and the total unsuitableness of a sort of quasi-Monte Carlo' as a background to the 'grim tragedy going on in the Northern Veldt'. Between the 'stupidity of our Generals and the frivollings of the fashionable females', he often felt 'desperately ashamed of my country'. However, this was counter-weighed for Milner by the 'unassuming heroism and devotion, the wonderful fortitude and patience of the loyal Colonials and the splendid men they are sending us now. They seem to be bigger and harder with each succeeding transport.'<sup>13</sup>

This ladies's auxiliary in Cape Town came to the attention of the Queen, who complained to Chamberlain that something should be done to discourage them.<sup>14</sup> The Colonial Secretary in turn asked Milner to draw up a notice for publication after Victoria's approval. This diplomatically worded statement (with which Roberts also concurred) announced Milner's belief that many, 'whose coming here is prompted by nothing more than a general interest in the war, would elect to stay at home if they knew that their presence was a hindrance rather than a help. For persons traveling merely for health or recreation, and, above all, for ladies so traveling, no place could be less suitable, at the present moment than South Africa.'<sup>15</sup> This notice (and Victoria's displeasure) helped reduce, but did not completely solve, the problem. Milner came in for some abuse when word got out that he had complained of a 'female invasion'. He told Margot Asquith that this was an 'absurd gloss on what he said'. He was not hostile to women, but for a time there was a 'sightseeing crowd, who seemed to regard S. Africa (at this time!!) as a sort of alternative to the Riviera or dear old Cairo'. If he helped to stop this, he went on, he was not sorry 'though I got some knocks over it wh. were hardly deserved'.<sup>16</sup>

By May 1900 the only remaining town under siege by the Boers was Mafeking, which had held out for six months under the command of Baden-Powell and at the same time tied up a large enemy force. Lord Edward Cecil did good service as the effective second-in-command, in charge of overseeing the supplies he had been responsible for gathering the previous year. The newspapers played up the drama of the situation for all it was worth, building their circulations with dire estimates of how many days Baden-Powell's valiant command could possibly last before it faced its final doom. In actuality the force, though under straitened circumstances, was probably in little real danger, and the strength of the siege can be gauged by the fact that the correspondents were able to get out reports for their papers. These included Lady Sarah Wilson, a daughter of the Seventh Duke of Marlborough who, like her nephew Winston Churchill, was captured by the Boers. She was exchanged for a horse thief and, while her husband served on Baden-Powell's staff, Lady Sarah wrote for Harmsworth's *Daily Mail*.<sup>17</sup> Whatever the actual peril had been, the relief of the town on 17 May set off an hysterical national celebration out of which came a new phrase, to 'Maf-fick'. Jim Rendel reported to Milner that London was 'nearly mad with joy' at the news. People were 'shouting, cheering and singing ... for half the night, and the scene at the Mansion House was, they say, quite extraordinary'.<sup>18</sup>

Others were not so joyous. The Cape politician John X. Merriman bemoaned the 'great and permanent change that had passed over the English race' to Professor Goldwin Smith. 'The Mafeking orgies,' he went on, 'were worthy of the most degraded days of the Roman populace. We are not far off panem et circenses.' The effect on women, said Merriman, was 'even more noticeable than on men. The hideous vulgarity of the train of fashionable camp followers in Cape Town and the pernicious influence they exercise on public opinion is incredible.' Merriman also had a low estimation of the power of the Cape Assembly to stem the tide. For the time being, he told Goldwin Smith, the 'guardians of the constitution seem to be Harmsworth and Pearson [the proprietor of the rival *Daily Express*], aided by the epileptic frenzy of Kipling and Swinburne. Those who do not all bow down and worship this arrangement are called disloyal'.<sup>19</sup>

Violet Cecil was reunited with her husband in June, however, Lord Edward soon took up new work in the Transvaal and left her once again alone at Cape Town. Milner sent her a cutting from the *South African News* which excerpted an interview with the artist Mortimer Menpes. He recounted that Milner had said that the ladies in South Africa were giving 'trouble through mere thoughtlessness. They are so daring.' This last quote, said Milner, made him sound like 'dear old Jowett'. He explained that he had not been referring to the 'local ladies' such as herself, but to the visitors, who were 'sky-larking about under the noses of the enemy'. However, Violet was doing the same sort of thing and Milner told

her that he and her friends were 'very anxious at your driving up and down a country which is still the scene of warfare'.<sup>20</sup>

Violet in fact thoroughly enjoyed her adventure in South Africa and the power she had while resident at Groote Schuur as one of the social leaders of Cape Town. She carried on a flirtatious weekly correspondence with St. John Brodrick, sending news and seeking support for Milner and her husband. He in turn shared the inside political and social gossip from home. About her protestations of a dreary existence and longings for England, Brodrick commented that 'Every returning friend brings me fresh evidence of a bustling, buoyant and beloved figure, dominating Cape Town society, pervading South African politics ... routing any chance adventurers or adventuresses embarking on the same track'. He had written in part to try and cheer her up, but had come to the conclusion that she was 'having the loftiest and most antique time of your life; that you have not the least desire to come home'.<sup>21</sup>

A year after his meeting with Kruger at Bloemfontein, Milner confided to Margot Asquith that he had had 'by far the most arduous & terrible twelve months of my life – indeed it is more that a twelvemonth since the almost unbearable strain began wh. has never relaxed & shows no signs of relaxing. Still, there is some alleviation now, though the war still continues, & may continue for a long time, & is increasingly dreadful (with death upon death of our best, & wounds, & sickness & the hideous disorder of everything wh. war always produces)'. People at home, he went on, 'have been, I think, almost as excited as we about the war – indeed more *excited*. We are too deep in it to be hysterical. But what people at home never realised, & perhaps nobody could know as well as I, was how very near we were to a Catastrophe such as we have never yet had in our history. To look that terror in the face day after day for weeks and months, working like a demon all the time & keeping up to the world a ghastly pretense of cheerfulness and confidence – well, it is just agony. "Never Again"!' His hope was that people at home 'may be sick of us & our bothers, & thus per force leave the men on the spot to work the thing out'.<sup>22</sup>

Still among the most important men on the spot was Rhodes, who, though liberated from Kimberley, remained under siege of a different sort from a female adventuress, Princess Catherine Radziwill, of exiled Polish nobility, who attempted to stir up difficulties with the High Commissioner.<sup>23</sup> Milner's friend Philip Gell had reported on the activities of the Princess, who had spent time in London working on Stead. The Princess, said Gell, was 'an active agent in the policy of getting things into a tangle ... and of weaving misunderstandings which may isolate you'. Stead had told Gell that she had tried to make Rhodes believe 'you are animated by jealousy of him'. The theory was that Milner had become 'intoxicated with power' and 'intolerant of any rival influence in South Africa'. The Princess, Gell recounted, claimed that Milner 'had been willfully bent on

war; that ... [he] had abandoned yourself utterly to the War Party, in particular to [Fitz]Patrick, and that ... [he was] determined to crush the Dutch under ... [his] feet'. Rhodes was to be run as a 'counterweight ... appealing to his Dutch sympathies, to his fretfulness re Downing Street muddling and to eliminate once more the Imperial Factor'.<sup>24</sup> Milner replied to Gell that Radziwill was 'a beast' and commented how 'strange' it was that 'sex' so often 'enters into these great matters of State... It is never recorded, therefore history will never be intelligible. Princess R— works on that tremendously. She is to me ... the most repulsive animal imaginable ... But there is no doubt ... that she did have ... a hold over Rhodes. 100 to 1 she has it over Stead ... She is dangerous'.<sup>25</sup>

Consequently, Milner wrote to Rhodes that he was 'going to return a confidence which you once showed me, and for which I have always felt grateful. I refer to your once frankly telling me about the proceedings of a certain lady, who was trying to make mischief between us by telling either party lies as to what the other had said about him.' Milner reported that the 'lady in question has recently returned to South Africa' and, although he 'should be sorry to say a word against her personally', this was 'a matter on which the evidence I have is beyond question'. The game, Milner went on, in which she was 'taking a hand, is just the old game, very dear, no doubt, to the foreign enemies of our race and country, of sowing distrust, in order to set up an ultimate split between you and me'. He believed the object was 'getting you to assist in preserving to the Republics some degree of independence and thus "saving the face" of the Bond, & slapping the face of the Imperial Government & its representative'. Milner declared this a 'crazy scheme, & it is not from any fear of your lending an ear to it, especially after the generous and consistent support you have shown me though all this crisis – & that at a time when my position was much weaker than it is to-day – that I am writing these lines.' He claimed to be 'quite easy about the cabal', but 'not quite so happy, in view of the future & of the infinite importance, for public reasons, of a continued good personal understanding & absolute frankness between you & me, about the lies, innuendoes & suggestions wh. may be poured into your ear in the course of it.' No doubt, he went on, 'you escape much being absent. But, being absent, you may also be bewildered, I will not say misled, by tricks wh., if on the spot, you would see through in a moment'.

Therefore, Milner told Rhodes that 'precisely as you once said to me – if you are told anything about myself, wh. implies either that I distrust your cooperation with me, or that I wish to hamper your own big work or detract from the influence wh. you exercise & always must exercise in the development of S. Africa, *do me the justice & the kindness absolutely to disbelieve it.*' He went on that he did not 'for the life of me see why we should ever clash, for there is work enough for both of us, in all conscience, in the next year or two, in working out



the future of the great British country here, which is going, I trust, not only to federate itself, as a free nation, like Canada and Australia, but to be one of the means of federating the Empire.' The protraction of the war, said Milner, was 'a great nuisance, but a year or two hence it will matter very little whether it lasted a few months more or less. Every day that passes & everything that turns up, convinces me more than ever of the hopelessness of any half-&-half solution, & that it is only as an integral part of the British Empire that S. Africa can have either a really free government or a fusion of races. Anything like a compromise, anything that could leave even a chink of hope for the ultimate realisation of Dutch nationalised aspirations, would mean eternal discord, & might mean a series of civil wars.'<sup>26</sup>

Rhodes replied that he was glad to receive Milner's letter, 'not that the lady you mention would have affected me as to any change of policy as to the republics'. He was glad, he told Milner, because 'during the period at Kimberly I used to receive communications as to your jealousy of myself and your wish to get me out of Africa. I did not believe that you were so small a man and knew there was endless work for both of us here ... but no doubt the endless drip always leaves something. He went on that he 'thought of asking you about it and shewing the letters but having spoken once on the matter I left it alone. Now I understand the lady in question is back and has taken up her quarters in the suburbs. It is certainly a great nuisance, but I pity you more than myself as you are always there and ... must hear of her machinations. It is annoying but almost laughable at the same time it is very wonderful that a lady of her ties in Europe should leave everything in order to intrigue in Africa.'<sup>27</sup> After the two men met and cleared the air over this matter, Milner told his friend Edith Lyttelton that he did not know if Radziwill 'plays these games for pure mischief or under orders.'<sup>28</sup>

Lyttelton was staying at Government House with her husband Alfred who had been sent out to head a commission to investigate the concessions and monopolies which had caused much pre-war controversy. She also recorded a conversation with Dr Leander Starr Jameson regarding Rhodes and Milner in which, after their first meeting in South Africa, the Colossus had returned to Groote Schuur and proclaimed, 'Well, that's the most obstinate and determined man in the world'. Rhodes was completely surprised as Milner had made a rather different impression in London and he had not expected a strong man. This, said Jameson, was a great tribute coming from Rhodes. When their conversation turned to Milner's well-known belief that Rhodes was unscrupulous, Jameson explained that the 'difference between Sir Alfred and Rhodes' was that the former had 'always lived among the most refined and cultivated people' while the latter lived on the veldt and had been forced to 'jump over some very rummy sluits' along the way. Turning to the idea of some in England that Milner was 'wax in the hands of Rhodes', Jameson asserted that 'no one thinks this less than

Rhodes himself'. He had often told Jameson, when speaking of some matter in which he disagreed with Milner, 'Well, it's no use, the Governor doesn't agree, and it's not the slightest use going against him'. When Lyttelton reported this conversation to Milner she found him 'very amused' by Jameson's remarks.<sup>29</sup>

The Lytteltons spent late August and much of September in Cape Town waiting for the war to calm enough for Alfred to go north and start his work in earnest. Edith recorded in her diary that Milner talked to them 'with absolute unreserve about the whole situation, past and present' and shared his desires for the future of the country. On one occasion, Milner managed to 'dodge the ADCs' and walk alone with her on Table Mountain. He talked of subjects ranging from the shortcomings of the Cape parliament to the probability of the Boer farmers's decline if they failed to follow his policy of Anglicization. Violet Cecil joined them in an impromptu picnic, during which, said Edith, Milner was 'like a boy out of school – right away from Government House and its journalists and incessant interviews'. Already a friend, Edith Lyttelton emerged from her South African experience a devoted follower. Even before she returned to England, Edith was sharing Milner's views with her friends and family. She told her sister-in law that she was 'immensely impressed by certain things in him. His ideas on the future are thrillingly interesting, so big and full of vision.'<sup>30</sup>

Once back at home, besides speaking privately and publicly on Milner's behalf, Edith Lyttelton (along with Violet Cecil and Violet Markham) was instrumental in organizing the imperialist Victoria League, which would take the work to a wider audience.<sup>31</sup> Its first practical work was to start a fund for the maintenance of the graves of imperial soldiers in South Africa. Before long, the League was raising money for relief of the women and children in the South African refugee camps. Its stated aims were to 'support and assist any scheme leading to more intimate understanding between ourselves and our fellow subjects in our great Colonies and Dependencies'. The League also endeavoured to 'become a centre for receiving and distributing information regarding the British dominions, and invites the alliances of, and offers help and cooperation to, such bodies of similar nature as already exist'. These included the League of the Empire in England, the Guild of Loyal Women in South Africa, and the Daughters of the Empire in Canada.<sup>32</sup> The first annual report of the Victoria League recognized Edith Lyttelton's 'enthusiasm and energy in the first eighteen months' of its existence.<sup>33</sup>

On 28 November 1900, Roberts declared the war for all practical purposes over and departed Pretoria, leaving Kitchener in command. The annoying guerilla tactics of the estimated 8,000 to 9,000 burghers still in the field were not, at least publicly, considered a serious threat and were to be dealt with by the army and the new South African Constabulary. At Roberts's farewell luncheon at Cape Town the old soldier spoke of the many difficulties Milner faced and

noted the fact that he had 'done everything possible to smooth mine. By his kindness, forbearance, and his courage, he has immensely lightened my burden.' The loyalist crowd on hand gave Milner an ovation which rivalled that for Roberts. His own brief speech, Milner reported to Violet Cecil, who had returned to England with Lord Edward in October, went 'fairly well. But they all roared applause as if I have been Demosthenes ... I thought of A. J. B.[alfour]'s "I have been abused into a reputation much greater than I deserve". Milner was glad to see the 'magnificent ovation' given Roberts, but told Violet that there was nevertheless 'something ill-omened and bizarre and almost repulsive in all this triumphing and congratulations – in the middle of war'.<sup>34</sup>

Milner was uneasy about the 'next stage – Kitchener in supreme command of the Army and me "administering" in my capacity as High Commissioner, the two ex-Republics until a regular government can be established'. It was fortunate, he told Violet, that he admired Kitchener in many ways and consequently was 'prepared to stand a lot and never take offense ... I am determined to get on with him, and I think he likes me and has some respect for me, if he has for anybody'. Milner admitted doubts that he would be able to 'manage this strong, self-willed man "in a hurry" (for he is dying to be off in time to take India) and to turn his enormous power in the right channel'.<sup>35</sup> Kitchener had confessed to Milner that he had no plan to deal with the commandos and was puzzled. A frustrated Milner told Violet, 'I have a plan, but as yet he is unconvinced, or rather not sufficiently convinced ... If once I could get him on right lines, he has the ability to put it all though'.<sup>36</sup>

However, rather than pursue Milner's idea of 'reconstruction under arms', Kitchener's strategy was to crisscross the country with blockhouses, small forts spaced at close intervals along railways, roads and open country. To supplement this grid of fixed emplacements, mobile forces carried out sweeping drives of converging columns to force the enemy into the open. Along the way, the British destroyed crops, livestock and farms. Faced with the alternative of leaving women and children on the bare veldt to fend for themselves as best they could, the army began gathering them into what they called 'refugee camps'. The camps, however, reflected more than humanitarian sentiment. They were part of a military strategy meant to convince more fighters to surrender. In theory the camps represented a safe haven in which the men could both join their families and be protected from the reprisals of their fellows. To add more pressure, rations in the camps at first penalized those who had relatives still out on commando. Tragically for all concerned, this British variation of the failed Spanish 'reconcentrado' policy carried out a few years before in Cuba would have the same disastrous results – the deaths of thousands of men, women and children, both white and black. By the end of the following March there were more than 44,000 Boer men, women and children in twenty seven camps.<sup>37</sup>

The destruction on the land by the British army led to widespread and violent demonstrations, particularly by displaced Boer women, and the Cape Government authorized a 6 December protest meeting at Worcester, an action Milner described to Chamberlain as 'perfectly monstrous'.<sup>38</sup> In Milner's view, these gatherings all helped to 'keep the pot boiling' and they also gave the 'physical force section' an opportunity to 'meet in secret conventicles, under cover of the public general meeting, & plot concerted action'.<sup>39</sup> Lionel Curtis, one of the leaders of the Kindergarten, compared Mrs Botha, who after delaying British troops in Pretoria with false hopes of an early surrender lived in a splendid house, to the Boer women sent to the camps. He questioned 'why should the woman with the bronzed face and the sunbonnet be treated otherwise because she does not wear stays and no thousands to her credit at the bank ... they are the mothers of a little race who have shaken this Empire to its foundations'. After seeing the British ladies at the Mount Nelson Hotel in Cape Town 'with their painted faces and pinched bodies', Curtis could not help thinking that 'for refinement and dignity we had something to learn from the inhabitants of these mean cottages. They have some worth in life beyond striking attitudes'.<sup>40</sup>

Soon after this, the Cape was invaded by Boer forces under Judge Barry Hertzog and General P. H. Kritzinger. An accompanying 'Second Rebellion' forced the re-imposition of martial law which, after a series of embarrassing Boer victories, was extended to almost the whole colony in January 1901. Milner commented to Violet Markham that he had 'been through so many ups & downs in the last 18 months, that I am not dispirited even by this last severe set-back'. It might take a year, but by 1902 he expected that 'we shall be in smoother waters & beginning to build up again'.<sup>41</sup> At the end of December another letter to Markham noted the 'remarkable increase of energy and more sense' in Kitchener's response to the crisis. The Commander-in-Chief was 'absolutely autocratic', but Milner did not mind so long as he ended the war. If there was 'only progress in that direction' he was 'quite willing to lie low and let my administration be a farce, until the country is pacified'. Milner realized that Kitchener wanted to go as soon as he could and therefore vowed to 'possess my soul in patience, till he has finished his rough work in his own strong way and not interfere with him'. His only fear was that Kitchener might 'make promises to people to get them to surrender, which will be embarrassing afterwards to fulfill'.<sup>42</sup>

The war was momentarily put into the background while the nation and empire mourned the death of Victoria on 22 January 1901. Milner told a correspondent that the enemy was closer to Cape Town than ever before, but 'all that for the moment does not matter. The only thought in everybody's mind is – the Queen ... She kept the Empire together in the most critical half-century of its existence. And now we must all remember that Loyalty, though it may be immensely heightened by personal regard, is not an affection, but a Principle.'

Chamberlain, who had been the last Minister to see Victoria before her death, reported to Milner on the effect in London that it was 'not merely that we feel the loss of one whose charm both in private and public life had touched all classes of her subjects', but there was also an underlying feeling that Victoria 'in a special sense symbolized and impersonated the British Empire'. She was also convinced, he went on, of the justice of the South African War and of its ultimate successful end. He shared one anecdote of the Queen that, soon after Black Week, when things seemed their darkest and people at court were discouraged, she declared 'I will tell you one thing. I will have no depression in my house.' His only regret was that Victoria had not lived to see the restoration of peace.<sup>43</sup> Milner replied that he was 'deeply interested' in what Chamberlain had written of the Queen's 'attitude in the last trying months of her life. We all feel here a bitter disappointment that she did not live to see the pacification of S. Africa.'<sup>44</sup>

Two months later abortive peace talks began at Middelburg between Kitchener and Boers. Milner, already on his way north to take up his duties in the New Colonies (as the conquered republics had been dubbed), met Kitchener on 2 March and the two men debated the terms over the following days, while also consulting London. The major sticking point for Milner was extending an amnesty to the Cape and Natal rebels. In his talks with Kitchener, General Botha agreed to disenfranchisement as a penalty, but nothing more severe. Kitchener was receptive to this idea and urged it on Milner, who informed Violet Cecil that 'we don't see eye to eye, as might be expected. He is fearfully sick of the war, sees no possible credit in the continuance of it, and is, I think, rather disposed to go far in making things easy for the enemy.' Milner, on the other hand, felt that 'every concession we make now means more trouble hereafter'. However, with the 'General on the spot desperately anxious to come to terms' and 'people sensibly weakening at home,' Milner found it impossible to insist on all that he personally considered important. He told Violet 'I foresee that I shall be driven to compromise – a thing I loathe. But I hope to save our policy from anything discreditable.' This, he went on, was the price the British would have to pay for 'regrettable incidents and general military incompetence'.<sup>45</sup>

Perhaps to frighten him into agreeing to a compromise, Kitchener had told Milner that 'our soldiers can't be trusted not to surrender on the smallest provocation, and that consequently disaster is not even now impossible if the Boers stick to it'. Knowing the increasing feeling at home of 'disgust at this business and anxiety of Ministers about the cost of it and the difficulty of keeping that national resolution at the sticking point', Milner told Violet that he felt he 'could not afford to have a rupture with K ... with him appealing to the current sentiment at home against the unbending attitude of the High Commissioner'. So, he was forced to bargain and by 'long argumentation – with an occasional "I won't have *that* on any account" ... managed to arrive at something not good but

tolerable, on which we could agree'.<sup>46</sup> In the end the struggle was all for naught as Botha broke off the discussions on 16 March 1901 with no explanation.

After six months the British refugee camp program had not proved effective in encouraging the surrenders of Boer fighters, and in fact some had absconded back to their units. By June 1901 the British had gathered up roughly 60,000 white, and an equal number of black, South Africans at dozens of locations.<sup>47</sup> By September the number would be 110,000. Though the camps were controlled by the military, they were in theory the joint responsibility of Milner, who hoped to use the opportunity to educate the children, in particular to teach them English. This effort was put in the hands of E. B. Sargent, who gathered volunteer women teachers from around the Empire for the task. At Milner's suggestion Bertha Synge began work on a properly patriotic textbook for the children, published as *The Story of the World for the Children of the British Empire*.

At the beginning of the year Milner had given his permission (subject to military approval) for a humanitarian reformer called Emily Hobhouse to visit several camps south of Bloemfontein on behalf of the South African Women and Children Distress Fund, a voluntary committee she had formed to ameliorate the hardships among the internees.<sup>48</sup> As the niece of Lord Hobhouse, she had used her connections to gain the sympathy of Chamberlain for a mission of mercy which, Milner told General Pretymann, the Military Commander at Bloemfontein, was supposed to be non-political. He should have been alerted by Pretymann's response that he hoped so, as he had heard that 'since her arrival refugees ... have suddenly found out they are badly treated'.<sup>49</sup>

Horried by the conditions, and the rates of disease and death she found, Hobhouse wrote a condemnatory report which placed the blame on the army's inefficient administration and shortages of supplies from fuel to soap, all made worse by ignorance, callousness and neglect. She carefully noted that conditions varied widely from camp to camp, some were well run others not.<sup>50</sup> Hobhouse returned to England on the same ship with Milner, hoping for an interview. She was able to speak to him briefly, but he managed to avoid a repetition of their talk six months before in which she had gone at him, in her own words, 'Hammer and tongs for an hour'.<sup>51</sup> They parted amicably enough and Milner could hardly have realized the impact her report would have at home.

Among the multitude with whom the driven Miss Hobhouse shared her findings was Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Unlike Brodrick at the War Office, whom she found unreceptive to her case, the Liberal leader gave her a two-hour interview and listened with 'rapt attention' to her chronicle of South African horrors.<sup>52</sup> The following week, on 14 June, he used the interview, and her report, as ammunition in a speech before a National Reform Union banquet. An outraged Campbell-Bannerman compared the British policy of sweeping women and children into camps with that which the Spaniards had carried out, to their infamy,

in Cuba. He told his audience that the day before he had asked Balfour in the Commons for information on conditions in the camps. In his refusal, said Campbell-Bannerman, Balfour had 'treated us with a short disquisition on the nature of the war. A phrase often used is that "war is war", but when one comes to ask about it one is told that no war is going on, that it is not war. When is a war not a war? When it is carried on by methods of barbarism in South Africa.'<sup>53</sup>

The resulting outcry accelerated reform of the camps which were turned over to civilian control in November 1901. The changes implemented followed the recommendations made by the Committee of Ladies sent out in July under the leadership of Milner's old friend Millicent Fawcett.<sup>54</sup> Though Emily Hobhouse attacked the anti-Boer and Conservative nature of its membership, the Committee's report largely confirmed her accusations. When Hobhouse attempted to renew her own investigations in South Africa, she was stopped at Cape Town on 27 October and, under cover of Martial Law, forced to return under protest to England.<sup>55</sup> John Buchan became Milner's agent in the successful effort to improve conditions. He wrote to a friend that the camps had 'made my hair gray. When we took them over they were terrible – partly owing to the preoccupation of the military with other things, partly to causes inherent in any concentration of people accustomed to live in the sparsely populated veld.'<sup>56</sup> The arrival of doctors and nurses sent out from Britain and the efforts of the Indian Medical Service reduced the death rate dramatically. In October the death rate had been 344 per 1000, by January it had fallen to 160 and six months later to 20, a figure below that in rural areas before the war.<sup>57</sup>

Milner was in England when the controversy over the camps burst. While there he met with Cecil Rhodes and the two discussed Rhodes's plan for a trust to devote his fortune to imperial causes, as well as schemes for buying South African farms and for immigration. Milner wrote to Rhodes that he was 'completely in sympathy with your broad ambitions for the race'. He suggested that part of the legacy be used to support a parliamentary party which would always give their votes for imperial purposes and to the encouragement of immigration, especially of women, to South Africa.<sup>58</sup>

On this last front, which he also had taken up in his discussions with Chamberlain, Milner met with the South African Expansion Committee of the British Women's Emigration Association.<sup>59</sup> One of the organizers and first president of the BWEA, Lady Louisa Knightley, recalled that she had the good fortune to sit next to Milner at a private ladies committee luncheon. She described him as a 'good-looking, gentlemanly-like looking man' who impressed her with his 'wonderful power of listening'.<sup>60</sup> Milner provided a letter of support printed on the front page of the first edition of the committee's journal, the *Imperial Colonist*, which Knightley edited. He also had her organization designated as the Government's preferred agency for female emigration. A plan for the immigration of British

women (meant to save the settlers from Boer wives) was also hatched by Sir John Ardagh, head of Military Intelligence at the War Office and a Women's Immigration Department was set up in June 1902. Ardagh wanted 60,000 women, but only 1,200 had applied a year later. Most were domestic servants and other wage-earning women, not the sort wanted for the scheme.<sup>61</sup>

In London Milner found time to attend the meetings of several women's patriotic organizations including the Victoria League, to which he directed the noted novelist Mrs Humphry Ward after she wrote to him of the 'general desire to start a strong neutral committee – not pro-Boer – to relieve the sufferings of people in the Refugee Camps'. He replied that she should contact Edith Lytellton, who was already involved in a League fund drive, and which Milner said he 'should personally be glad to see ... take the lead in the matter' as an association 'Imperialist in the broadest lines'.<sup>62</sup>

After the usual feverish activity in his final days at home, Milner sailed for South Africa on 10 August 1901. His arrival at Cape Town seventeen days later was marked by enthusiastic crowds along the route to Government House where he met with his replacement as Cape Governor, Hely-Hutchinson. Milner, who remained High Commissioner, as well as governor-in-waiting of the two new Colonies, commented to Violet Cecil (whose bedside he had visited in England while she recuperated from the difficult delivery of her daughter Helen) that his welcome had been 'really extraordinary – frantic. I don't over-estimate such things, but it would be dullness not to notice, and affectation to pretend not to be pleased by them'. Of course, it was Milner's nature to view the demonstration as 'rather ill-omened on entering the arena. Miracles are expected of me, which I cannot possibly perform. The result cannot be equal to the anticipation'.<sup>63</sup> He found an air of depression in Cape Town, despite the good done by the recent visit of the Duke and Duchess of York, the future King George V and Queen Mary.

Milner was depressed himself, in part over his failed attempt to have Kitchener removed. He vented his frustration with the politicians in a letter to Bertha Syngé. He told his friend that he looked 'round vainly for something which can divert the mischievous attention of British politicians from this most critical country. Alas, we seem to become more and more the one football of party.' Milner complained of the injuries caused abroad by the divisive libels of the Opposition, and worse, the concessions forced on the Government to disarm them. This would be true, he went on, even if it 'were a Government all composed of Chamberlains or Herculeses. And these 20 worthy gentlemen are not entirely of that fabric.' Because of this Milner felt that 'one is trying to do the impossible, and one's only comfort is that knowing a successful settlement, under these idiotic conditions, to be impossible, one won't be upset at not achieving it. Only I want to lie on the grass, or punt on the river, and not to spend all my declining years pouring water into sieves'.<sup>64</sup> However, it would be more than three years before Milner was able to lay down his burden.



## 6 THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION: RACE IN SOUTH AFRICA

A month after Milner's arrival, South Africa, like the rest of the Empire, celebrated Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The High Commissioner presided over several days of activities in Cape Town which began 20 June 1897 with a service at St George's Cathedral and included a well-attended school children's event the next day at which Milner was serenaded by a choir of 6,000 white and black children assembled on the lawn of Government House. In his address to the children and their parents, Milner expressed the hope that every white child would soon be attending school and that there might be 'proportionate development in the education of the coloured children'.<sup>1</sup>

Acting as hostess for the occasion, Mrs Hanbury Williams, the wife of Milner's military secretary, shocked local opinion by kissing the cheeks of both a white girl and a black girl who presented her with bouquets of posies. A London friend informed Milner that the British papers had reported nothing of the Jubilee in South Africa except the kisses. Milner replied that he agreed with 'his friends in the press' as the incident 'really was the most important thing that had happened since I came here – at least it has excited the greatest amount of general public interest and controversy. I think she was right. Most white people in South Africa think she was wrong. There you have the great S. African problem posed at once. It is the Native Question.' He went on that the Anglo-Dutch friction was 'bad enough. But it is child's play compared with the antagonism of White and Black. That the White man must rule is clear – but how? That is the point where my views and those of most Englishmen differ radically from those of most colonists. And this, not the Dutch business, is the subject with respect to which I foresee the greatest difficulty.'<sup>2</sup>

In the parlance of Milner's day, the 'Race Question' in South Africa referred to Boer versus Briton. The 'Native Question' referred to black versus white and Milner found in South Africa an entrenched system of segregation into which people of colour had been consigned by both their British and Dutch rulers. The black group included the 'Cape Coloured' class of mixed race, alongside descendants of former slaves, Khoikhoi and Bantu-speaking Africans. In addition

there were thousands of Asians from India and other parts of the Empire who resided in South Africa, particularly Natal.<sup>3</sup> Depending on the state in which they lived, these groups also had varying rights and disabilities. In the Cape non-Europeans enjoyed at least some limited political and property rights.<sup>4</sup> Milner was sympathetic to the problems of British subjects, of whatever colour, but his main objective was to promote British paramountcy, and over time this concern superseded all else, including what would later be called 'human rights'.

Soon after his arrival Milner was directed to take up the case of the Cape Coloured, many of them artisans and small businessmen, who had immigrated to the Transvaal, the laws of which made no distinction between natives and the mixed race population. A number had been arrested under a law which required them to be in the employ of a master and to wear a badge. Although Milner was notified by the Colonial Office that the Cape Coloured could not claim the protection of Article XIV of the London Convention concerning liberty of movement and trade, he nevertheless approached the Kruger Government in July 1897 on this 'small matter'. The pass law was subsequently amended; however, Milner chose not to raise the 'bigger questions of marriage, trading in own name and holding property'. He was also largely unsuccessful in an attempt to adjust the disabilities put on the Indian population.<sup>5</sup>

In August 1897 Milner embarked a tour of the country districts of the Cape, from mission stations in the interior to the coast at Port Elizabeth. In one of his first stops, at King William's Town, he replied to an address by the mayor which referred to local anxiety concerning the Native Question. In an address representative of several made on this tour, Milner remarked that while disorder or rebellion must be punished severely, the natives must also be made to feel that they too had rights to be respected.<sup>6</sup> A week into the tour Milner reported to Margot Asquith on his visit to the Lovedale Mission Station, famous for its school:

Here is a Scotch Mission Station in the very depth of the Kaffir country. You drive all day from the nearest little town through rolling uplands, not unlike some parts of the border, on wh. you see nothing but cattle & sheep & men & women in red blankets (rather picturesque dots on the hillsides under a very blue sky ... & then at sundown you suddenly descend upon a little valley, through wh. runs a brook, that your team splashes through at a canter, & there you are in the heart of what looks like the cleanest & prettiest of English villages, with trees & a green, on wh. boys are playing cricket & a little hall ... where the whole European community have turned out to welcome you, & there is a band & 'God Save the Queen' & tremendous enthusiasm & handshaking with a great crowd of natives looking on outside the circle & waiting, they also, to present you with an address. And then on, for about a mile, still through the valley, & under an avenue of oaks & pines, you come to Lovedale, the Mission Station, where 4 or 500 black boys & girls, all pure barbarians a few years ago, are housed & taught & kept in the most perfect & cheerfully accepted discipline by a

few religious, but very practical Scotch men & women with a splendid looking old Minister at their head.<sup>7</sup>

Six months into his high commissionership, Milner commented on the Native Question to Margot's husband, his Liberal Imperialist friend Henry Asquith. After reading a Reuters abstract of Asquith's 12 October 1897 address at Wormit devoted to South Africa which criticized both Rhodes and native conditions in his domain, Milner told his friend that he agreed with the speech's two principles: that the British should first 'seek to restore good relations between the Dutch and English' and then 'secure for the natives, particularly in Rhodesia, adequate and sufficient protection against oppression & wrong'. However, Milner argued that equal attention should be dedicated to the native cause in the Transvaal, where protection was promised in the Pretoria Convention when the Boers were 'given back the country'. He went on 'What I am so anxious that you & other English statesmen – especially Liberal statesmen – should understand, is that the object no. 2 is the principal obstruction to the attainment of objective no. 1 – is, & always has been'.

Milner declared that he 'should feel quite confident of being able to get over the Dutch-English difficulty, if it were not so horribly complicated by the native question'. In spite of Majuba, in spite of Jameson, he remained firmly of the opinion that, if it were not for his having 'some conscience' about the treatment of blacks, he 'personally could win over the Dutch in the Colony & indeed in all S. African dominions in my term of office, & that I could do so without offending the English. You have only to sacrifice "the nigger" absolutely & the game is easy.' But any attempt to secure fair play to him made the Dutch 'fractious & almost unmanageable. Deep down in the heart of every Dutchman in S. Africa is the ideal of a land-owning aristocracy resting on slave labour (of course the word slave is carefully eschewed, nor do they exactly want slaves, but simply the cheap labour of a black proletariat *without rights of any sort of kind.*)'

In Rhodesia, Milner admitted that the blacks had been 'scandalously used' and he was 'doing my best, in fact there is nothing out here wh. I consider either so important or so difficult – but I have to walk with extreme caution, for nothing is more certain than that if the Imperial Govt. were to be seen taking a strong line against the Company for the protection of the blacks, the whole of Dutch opinion in S. Africa would scurry round to the side of the Company'. And, he went on, 'the bulk – not the whole – of British Colonial opinion would go with it, for the British colonist, though far better than the Dutchman in his attitude to the black, is still essentially selfish with regard to him, & regards the views, not one of the professed negrophilist, but of the average healthy-minded Englishman on this subject as "cant" or a "fad"'. Therefore, the singular situation was that 'you might indeed unite Dutch & English by protecting the black man, but you

would unite them against yourself & your policy of protection.' There, said Milner, was 'the whole *crux* of the S. African position'. Asquith had said and truly that self-government was the 'basis of our colonial policy & the keystone of colonial loyalty'. That principle 'fiercely & unflinchingly' applied would make South Africa as 'loyal as Canada – but what would be the price? The abandonment of the black races, to whom you have promised protection, & the tolerance of a state of things in a self-governed state under the British flag, wh. we should never tolerate for a moment in India, in Egypt, or in any of our Crown Colonies.'

Ranking the states in their treatment of blacks, Milner reported that the best was Natal, 'for here the black population is so enormous, compared with the white, that though they are kept in subjugation, prudence, apart from all other considerations, would necessitate their not being treated too horribly'. Besides, the white men were 'mainly of British race'. The next best, he went on, was 'the somewhat purified Rhodesia of to-day'. Here too it was the fact that the settlers were 'mostly British, & to a great extent, now-a-days, a good type of British, wh. helps'. Then, a 'good step lower down' was the Orange Free State (O.F.S.), 'run on the pure Dutch principle'. But he considered the Dutchmen of the Free State to be 'of a comparatively refined type, & there being *no longer any struggle*, the complete subjugation of the black being a *fait accompli* & he is a useful animal, the kindly natured master is not needlessly brutal to the servant'. Next worst was the Cape Colony where the laws 'here are better, but their administration is bad, because all Cape Govts are forever angling for the Dutch vote, & there is no panacea for obtaining it like disregard of native rights'. By far the worst was the Transvaal. 'Here the black man has no rights whatever & there is neither kindness nor wisdom to restrain the brutality of the ruling oligarchy'.

In contrast with all these were Basutoland and the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 'the preserve of the black man, in wh. our authority, a very light one, is simply exercised to keep the peace'. Here there was 'absolute "protection" of the black man "against oppression & wrong"'. But, Milner continued, the result was constant friction with the Cape Colony trying to get control of Basutoland and Rhodesia of the other. Milner wanted to safeguard them 'from the tender mercies of the Bond & our friend Cecil J. Rhodes'. In doing so, however, Milner was 'weakening my hand in the game of conciliating the Colonists, Dutch & English, & inciting Dutch & English in the colony united in wanting to take over Basutoland'. Even the Dutch, he went on, would like to see Rhodes take the Bechuanaland Protectorate. 'They hate Rhodes for the moment', said Milner, 'but hate an independent native state more & at all times'. As regards Basutoland and the Protectorate, he was '*dead opposed* to any change in the *status quo*'.

Milner let Asquith know all this, 'not to magnify my difficulties, but to help you to understand them. I feel that, if I fail out here, it will be over the Native Question. Nothing else is of the same seriousness'. At the same time, he contin-

ued, 'my course is clear. I have a very strong conviction of what policy I ought to pursue, having regard at once to Colonial rights of self-government & to the plighted faith of Great Britain to the natives'. Within the Cape Colony, as governor he could only use personal influence 'doing all I can to encourage the minority wh. is for fair treatment of the native, & to restrain the majority without overstepping the bounds of my power as a strictly constitutional ruler'. In Rhodesia Milner still had 'a certain control over the administration' and pledged to 'exercise it through the agents of the Company, to introduce, not indeed an ideal system, but one wh. I hope will at least be as humane & progressive as that of Natal'.

As regards the Transvaal, Milner thought it 'very likely the question will solve itself, because the Transvaal oligarchy is bound sooner or later to topple over. But, if it does not, then, *some years hence*, I may see my way to giving some effect to our promises & the Boer pledges to treat the natives fairly.' But, it was much too soon to attempt anything of the kind. The Transvaal Boers were 'still so sore with us, that it is useless for us to make any remonstrance wh. we are not prepared to support by war'. Milner concluded that it was 'a great comfort to me to think, that if these questions ever become the subject of discussion in England, *where the intemperate or ill-informed discussion of the many do infinite harm*, there will be at least one ... who knows what our difficulties are & what I am driving at'.<sup>8</sup>

There would be more than one, as Milner well knew. Asquith shared his long letter with John Morley, Lord Ripon and Sir Arthur Lyall. Morley responded that it was a 'wonderfully clear and concise statement of the well known difficulty of the situation' which would be 'enormously aggravated' for Milner and Chamberlain 'if or when it suits Rhodes to play for the Dutch vote by anti-native proposals'. However, Morley voiced 'great confidence in Chamberlain's humanity. He has real feeling about ill treatment of natives and will do as much as anybody to keep the brutes of colonists in order on these matters.'<sup>9</sup>

About Milner's letter Asquith told Ripon, a former Liberal Colonial Secretary who had been intimately involved in South African affairs, that he had 'never seen the crucial problem of South African administration more clearly or forcibly stated'. Ripon also had no doubt Milner's 'general view of the situation' was correct and that the native question was 'our abiding difficulty there'. He concurred with what Milner said of the Cape and Natal. However, Ripon disagreed about the Transvaal. In his opinion, the British were not 'equally bound to secure the good treatment of the natives there as in our own dominions'. Ripon agreed that the British had a right of remonstrance, but no means of enforcement other than war. But, he noted that this point was 'not of much practical importance' as Milner had stated it would be years before the question would be raised with the South African Republic.<sup>10</sup>

Lyall, a member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India, replied to Asquith that he had no doubt that Milner's 'estimate of the "black" difficulty is so far right that it is one of the most important with which an English Governor has to deal in South Africa'. Lyall reported that had spoken on the subject with Henry Morton Stanley, who had recently returned from South Africa and was in 1897 Liberal Unionist Member for Lambeth. Stanley agreed both with Milner's estimation of the improved treatment of natives in Rhodesia and that if he tried to assert himself as High Commissioner on the issue he would only unite all against him. He had been advised that some colonials were unhappy that Milner had been 'coming forward so much' and making too many speeches. 'So long as he remains King Log', Stanley told Lyall, 'he is popular; when he begins to govern then his popularity decreases in proportion to his interference'. Lyall appraised Stanley as 'not a bad observer' and warned Asquith that if his observations were sound, Milner's situation was 'delicate and difficult; yet if any one can manage it, he is the man'.<sup>11</sup>

Asquith reported to Milner that Morley and Ripon were 'much struck by' his letter and assured his friend that 'in carrying out the general scheme of policy which you indicate, we shall all watch you with great sympathy, with a full disposition to appreciate and make allowance for the fetters upon free action and the checks to rapid progress which the local conditions impose'. The problem was, Asquith went on, a 'very formidable one, and the more so as one does not see any natural force at work in the direction of a better treatment of the natives'. Although he was glad to hear of the 'real change for the better in Rhodesia', Asquith continued to fear that Rhodes 'might play for the Dutch vote in the Cape Colony by anti-native proposals'. He was sure Milner was right in 'setting your face against ... the extension of the area in which the white aristocracy is able to lay down its own laws for the government of the blacks'.<sup>12</sup>

A good part of Milner's late 1897 trip to Rhodesia was taken up in meetings with the leaders of numerous African tribes, listening to their complaints of mistreatment and injustice. Along the way these included the famous pro-British King Khama.<sup>13</sup> At Mafeking, Milner replied to a Native Address that he believed they had seen the last of the disturbances and reassured them the Crown would protect their rights. At Bulawayo Milner paid tribute to Rhodes as the prime mover behind the development of Rhodesia. To those at home who criticized the methods by which white authority had been gained, Milner replied that although he was not prepared to defend all of these, now that authority had been 'firmly established, it would be a disgrace to the white man if the land were not a better land to live in, even for the native races, than it was under their old savage rulers'.<sup>14</sup> The natives who came out to greet him on the ten-day coach and mule-cart journey to Salisbury through a primeval wilderness such as Milner had

never experienced, though quiet and well behaved, he described as 'absolutely the most primitive savages I have ever seen'.<sup>15</sup>

Milner reported to the champion of Bechuanaland, John Mackenzie, that in the material development of Rhodesia the Company had a 'brilliant record', but on the administrative side, especially native government, there was 'still much room for improvement'. The principal agents, Sir William Milton and Sir Arthur Lawley, were 'conscientious and capable men, very anxious to govern the country well, in the spirit of imperial officers, and not merely to run it as a commercial concern'. The worst of the old scandals, Milner believed, were no longer possible. All this led him to 'think that with a vigilant exercise of those great powers of control which the Imperial Govt. possesses ... we may keep the administration, especially in native matters in which control is most needed, up to a high standard, the best English standard, uncontaminated by the lower – Boer – spirit'. Someday, Milner prophesied, Rhodesia would be the most English self-governing colony in South Africa, the one in which 'the problem of native government will be most successfully tackled'. If and when this happened, he believed then Rhodesia should absorb the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Such an English colony 'would turn the scale in the politics of S. Africa'.<sup>16</sup>

On his forty-fourth birthday in 1898, Milner informed his old friend Bertha Synge that he was 'off to Basutoland next week which everybody says is both beautiful and bracing'. Milner thought it would be 'rather amusing to study the wild and wily Basuto on his native mountains' and was cheered that the company was 'going to ride – no more Cape carts or mule-drawn coaches for me – thank you'.<sup>17</sup> Milner's party was met by Sir Godfrey Lagden, the Resident Commissioner, who was in the company of a huge number of mounted Basuto, led by King Lethorodi and seventeen other chiefs. The delegation presented Milner, as the representative of the Great White Queen, with an address and a list of disputes for his judgment. He assured them that, as long as they remained loyal subjects, Victoria would always extend her protection to them. Milner also succeeded in mediating several outstanding questions that threatened the peace. Discussions at Maseru with Lagden led to changes in the Basuto hut tax meant to gain financial independence from the Cape subsidy and to halt unwanted interference.

After two weeks in Basutoland, Milner again reported to Synge that he was writing from a tent 'with a single dip, a rug wrapped round his legs against the cold at 5,400 feet. 'I thought you would like to know', he went on, 'that for once I am happy'. He told his friend that the 'Field of Cloth and Gold did not create such a sensation in the France of Francis I, as my visit has done in this forgotten corner of the world.' He reported that he had held court attended by 10,000 men on horseback and then travelled about for a week with an escort of 100 to 3,000 horsemen and had felt 'like a mediaeval king visiting the country of some

semi-independent vassal'. The atmosphere of the Middle Ages was reinforced by the 'position of the chiefs, their feuds with one another, their absolute dominion within their several clans, the struggle of the Paramount Chief ... with his greater sub-chiefs'. He especially enjoyed riding and found the ponies excellent climbers in the mountainous terrain, telling his friend that on one of them he believed he could 'get down the dome of St. Paul's without slipping'.<sup>18</sup>

In other letters home Milner continued in this unusually cheerful vein. He confided to Lady Frances Horner that he was enjoying himself 'for the first time in this beastly year that I have spent in South Africa'. Unlike Rhodesia, where he had seen the disorderly beginnings of civilization in the railroads and corrugated iron shanties, Basutoland was 'a real Native reserve, where the European hardly comes except in the harmless shape of a High Commissioner or other official, and Nature is still beautiful and the Aborigines still picturesque'. Needless to say, he went on, 'colonial civilizers' were 'anxious to make an end of it. But the end is not yet, I hope, though it seemed very nearly coming, through my reluctant agency some months ago. But the storm blew over for a time'.<sup>19</sup>

Milner also dealt with serious problems in Swaziland, where most of the resident Europeans were British subjects. By Article XII of the London Convention, Swaziland was an independent state; however, a series of agreements had by 1894 put the territory practically in the control of the Transvaal. When the South African Republic moved to try the Paramount King on charges of murder, it appeared the British might intervene and Milner became involved in negotiations over the matter. Chamberlain, however, did not wish to press the relatively unimportant issue of Swazi independence. The most he would do was to suggest in June that Milner warn the Transvaal that if they were victorious in Swaziland, they would not thereby be able to alter the Convention.<sup>20</sup> In these negotiations, Milner had a new, and reportedly more reasonable, State Secretary to deal with, F. W. Reitz, who a decade before had been President of the O.F.S.<sup>21</sup> In September 1898, partly because of Reitz's moderation, a satisfactory settlement was reached. Milner reported to Selborne that he felt sure 'we have done as much for the Swazi's as we could possibly have done without fighting. Indeed ... we have got much better out of the business than I expected'.<sup>22</sup>

Soon after the Boer War broke out a year later, Milner wrote to Percy Fitzpatrick in London that the ultimate goal was a 'self-governing white Community, supported by well-treated and justly-governed black labour from Cape Town to Zambesi. There must be one flag, the union Jack, but under it equality of races and languages.' He did not wish that Dutch should 'altogether die out', but believed that given 'equality all round, English must prevail'. At the end of the day South Africa should be 'one Dominion with a common Government dealing with Customs, Railways and Defence, perhaps also with Native Policy'. To achieve this, Milner prayed for a 'decisive result. A patch up would be awful.'



A 'tremendous and sustained effort on the part of the British people' would be necessary and he felt sure that Fitzpatrick would 'do your share to keep them up to it'.<sup>23</sup>

As already noted, one tool Fitzpatrick used to carry on the fight was his best-selling book *The Transvaal from Within* which Milner had read and urged him to publish.<sup>24</sup> This recounted in heroic terms the struggle of the Uitlanders (and Milner) from just before the Jameson Raid to the Bloemfontein Conference and, with incredibly lucky timing, came off the presses in London just before Kruger's ultimatum.

Back in South Africa, Milner wanted to arm native levies for the defence of the Cape, but the colony's Prime Minister was adamantly opposed. Schreiner's insistence on a military colour line led Milner to complain to Chamberlain that he believed 'would rather see the whole country overrun than see the natives protect themselves against white men'.<sup>25</sup> Schreiner finally allowed four thousand African Field Force levies to be mobilized. These were placed on the borders of eastern Mfengu and Thembu districts which had the effect of calming native unrest, ending the cattle raiding which had been going on against Dutch farms and, most importantly, limiting Boer commando raids of the Transkeian Territories for livestock and grain. Overall British military policy laid down that Africans should not attack the Boers, unless their territories were invaded.<sup>26</sup> There was some fear that this would make the British appear weak and might lead to disloyalty. Milner telegraphed to Lagden, who had the task of trying to restrain the anxious Basuto, 'We are cut off ... Do your best'.<sup>27</sup> Some less depressing news came from Rhodesia which Sir Arthur Lawley, the administrator of Matabeleland, informed Milner was secure and the natives peaceful.<sup>28</sup>

Although it would be called a 'White Man's War', both sides enlisted thousands of non-white auxiliaries, particularly the British whose victory held out the promise of better treatment and extended rights which unfortunately proved empty in the end.<sup>29</sup> A deputation representing 100,000 Cape Coloured citizens gave Milner an address of support which hailed the annexation of the two republics 'because we feel that only under the British flag and British protection can the coloured people obtain justice, equality and freedom'. In his reply, Milner agreed that 'it was not race or colour, but civilization, which was the test of a man's capacity for political rights'.<sup>30</sup> Milner's 6 December 1901 Despatch on the Native Question did not call for an extension of the Cape Native franchise, but alteration, if necessary, of traditional tenure, and tribal government plus planned educational facilities. Milner did not 'mean they should be educated like Europeans, for their requirements and capacities are very different, but that they should be trained to develop their natural aptitudes [and learn] ... habits of regular and skilled labour'. He was against using compulsion to force Natives to work, but approved of the Pass Laws (which should be better administered) and

called for the suppression of the liquor trade. He argued for uniformity in Native policy, but did not wish to lower the status of the Cape Coloured.<sup>31</sup>

During the war the Boers showed little mercy to captured African scouts armed by the British for their own protection. Milner complained to Chamberlain of the startling numbers of blacks, including both scouts and civilians, murdered by the Boers and brought to his attention the case of a Cape village blacksmith called Abraham Esau who was brutally flogged, and then executed, 'merely for being a loyal British subject'.<sup>32</sup> Milner may well have felt a sense of guilt over Esau's death as the local leader had petitioned him, unsuccessfully, for arms with which to defend his village.<sup>33</sup> In the end, Boer anxieties over the increasing depredations of 'Kaffirs' armed by the British were a significant factor in the calculations which led them at last to lay down their arms.

Tragically, to gain a peace settlement the rights of non-whites were sacrificed. Article 8 of what would come to be called the Treaty of Vereeniging stated: 'The question of granting franchise to the natives will not be decided until after the introduction of self government'. Both sides realized what this meant: the Boers would be given a free hand to re-establish their pre-war policies of racial control. In 1901 Chamberlain had asserted that 'We cannot consent to purchase peace by leaving the coloured population in the position in which they stood before the war, with not even the ordinary civil rights which the government of the Cape Colony has long conceded them'.<sup>34</sup> The Middelburg peace proposal of March 1901, which became the outline for the final settlement, had stated that it was 'not the intention of His Majesty's Government to give such franchise before representative Government is granted ... and if then given it will so limited as to secure the just predominance of the white race'. However, it had stipulated that the 'legal position of coloured persons will ... be similar to that which they hold in the Cape Colony'.<sup>35</sup>

A year later, under increasing public pressure to end the war, the British, including Milner and Chamberlain, were no longer willing to fight even for the minimal rights afforded 'civilized' non-whites in the Cape.<sup>36</sup> This point was a luxury Milner could not afford if he was to have any hope of bringing the white races together in the aftermath. He also had in mind the labour problems of the Transvaal and what measures might be needed to address them. However, with the benefit of hindsight Milner considered agreeing to Article 8 the greatest mistake he had ever made. He told Selborne that, had he known 'as well as I know now the extravagance of the prejudice on the part of almost all of the whites – not the Boers only – against any concessions to any coloured man, however civilized, I should never have agreed to so absolute an exclusion, not only of the raw native, but of the whole coloured population from any rights of citizenship, even in municipal affairs'.<sup>37</sup>

Almost a year after the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging, on 18 May 1903, Milner made perhaps his most notable South African address, dubbed the 'Watch Tower Speech', on the subjects of native and coloured rights and immigration. Delivered to the Municipal Congress in Johannesburg, this reflected in part a recently published bluebook on the Native Question and also gave his view of the proposed Municipal Elections Ordinance. Milner took the line of Rhodes: that civilization, not colour, ought to be the measure of fitness for municipal rights. Declaring that he was neither a devotee of Exeter Hall nor an extremist on the other side, Milner appealed to the Congress for moderation and asked for the 'door to be kept open to the native'. At the same time, he acknowledged that feeling in the white community was so strongly against extending the franchise to aliens and coloured persons that he could not justify forcing 'upon the white population a principle repudiated no less by the British inhabitant than by the Dutch'. He asked the gathering, however, 'What was the good of perpetually going on shouting that this is a white man's country? Does it mean that it is a country only inhabited by white men?' That was 'an obvious absurdity' as they were outnumbered five to one. What it did mean, he supposed, 'if any sane meaning can be applied to it', was that 'white men should rule'. With this he agreed wholeheartedly, but argued, 'let us say that plainly ... and let us justify it'.

The only justification to Milner for white supremacy was 'on the ground of superior civilization'. One of the strongest arguments for white rule, he went on, was that it was 'the only possible means of gradually raising the black man, not to our level of civilization – which it is doubtful whether he could ever attain – but up to a much higher level than that which he now occupies'. By this process perhaps one in a thousand could rise to the 'average' white man's level of civilization and should therefore be afforded 'privileges accorded to civilized men'. Milner was careful to point out that these, of course, did not include automatic political rights, which would be determined in the future 'by a legislature elected by the white population of this country alone'. However, for those who had attained a high level of education and culture, the Transvaal had already made some exceptions in its pass system and regulation of natives. The practical importance of this was small, but the principle was very important and 'crops up again in connection with municipal rights'. Was the native, he asked, who had attained a high degree of civilization 'to have no voice whatever in such matters'?

Milner felt even more strongly about the Cape Coloured, among whom there was at least a small section who had 'overcome the enormous disadvantage of their origin', and had attained a 'considerable degree of civilization'. These men had stood most loyally with the British side in the struggle for enfranchisement before the war and during the years of conflict. He would be 'sorry if one of the first fruits of our victory was to place an indelible stigma upon them'. Speaking

for himself, in the realization that many would not agree with him, he declared it would be 'an unhappy day when any large British community in South Africa completely and finally repudiates the doctrine of one of the greatest of South African statesmen – equal rights for every civilized man'.

Turning to Indian immigration rights again it was a question of civilization. Milner argued that restrictions, if made, ought to be done on the 'strong and unassailable grounds of social and economic reasons, and not upon the weak ground of colour'. How could, he asked, 'we hope to be regarded as anything other than blindly hostile to men of colour, if we are going to deny to the most educated and civilized Asiatic who may be already established among us, if we are going to deny – I don't say political rights; again it is not a question of political rights – all the other privileges which civilized men enjoy?' Was it justifiable to 'denounce Asiatics as Asiatics, and to take the view that all of them, whatever their degree of civilization, must be unwelcome here, or, if they come, should be treated as pariahs?' Milner urged his audience to consider the wider aspects to which he referred because he saw that questions 'which were not merely local, and which have wide-reaching consequences which many people do not think of, are too important to be dealt with on purely local and rather narrow grounds'.

Milner concluded by calling himself 'the man on the watch tower', who 'may see further than the man on the veldt, not ... because he is a better man, but because of the mere accident of his topographical position'. He hoped that what he had said would influence 'other discussions in other Assemblies, which may have to deal with these questions' and that the effect would be to 'mitigate what I may call the savagery of the opposition which exists in certain quarters with certain sections of our fellow-creatures. It may be, or may not be, right to give them certain privileges; it must be wrong to refuse them in a way which leaves and enduring sense of injury and oppression'.<sup>38</sup>

Four days after making this speech, Milner met with a delegation of the British Indian Association, led by Mohandas K. Gandhi, which protested against the registration fee they were forced to pay and the restriction of their trade to specified locations. Once again, as with the franchise question, final decisions on these matters were left to the people of the colony, after representative government was established.<sup>39</sup> Leaders of the Cape Coloured called on him as well to put into practice his desire to allow privileges on economic, rather than racial lines. Though he admitted his sympathy, all Milner could do was recommend patience until the shift in sentiment he believed inevitable came about. Later in the year he justified the withdrawal of the colour-blind franchise clause in the Municipal Elections Ordinance on the grounds that the members of the present government were only the 'temporary holders of executive authority', with no mandate to make changes subsequent governments would repudiate.<sup>40</sup>

Issues of race and immigration in South Africa were inextricably bound up with the largest post-war problem Milner faced – the continuing shortage of labour, particularly for the gold mines, the economic ‘overspill’ of which he saw as vital to the general prosperity.<sup>41</sup> This, in turn, would provide jobs for the British settlers he dreamed of retaining and importing. The mine owners complained their operations could not be run profitably without reduced labour costs and wages had already been cut, with disastrous results for recruiting. African workers, who drew one fifth the pay of a European, had enjoyed full employment in other occupations during the war and were loathe to return to unpleasant and dangerous jobs underground. To achieve his ends Milner was open to employing African, Indian, Japanese or Chinese workers and had little patience with those who sought to limit his options. However, the white inhabitants feared that importing Asiatic labour would lead, as had earlier Indian experiments, to permanent settlement and economic competition with Europeans.

Chinese replacements in particular were called a threat to the white work force, despite the fact that the rigid racial and social hierarchy of South Africa did not allow white men to take on manual labour.<sup>42</sup> Milner wrote to Chamberlain that ‘nothing could be a greater boon than to break down the notion that manual labour is beneath the dignity of the Whites’. However, his experiment to break this pattern with 500 navvies brought in from England proved an expensive failure.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, rumours abounded, and would be exploited by Uitlander groups such as the Trade and Labour Council, that white men were not imported because of the fear of unions. On 2 June 1903 Milner received a deputation from another such group, the White Labour League. To all these he argued that the importation of labourers would create jobs for whites.

While visiting England Milner worked diligently to sell the idea of Asiatic labour, starting with an old friend, Alfred Lyttelton, who had succeeded Chamberlain at the Colonial Office. He pressed on despite warnings from Lyttelton and others of the storm of outraged Liberal criticism that would be aroused, some genuine, but much part of the cynical political game. Perhaps no issue showed more clearly Milner’s contempt for Britain’s political system and disregard for the consequences of his actions than the ‘Chinese Slavery’ question. As almost a protégé of Milner, Lyttelton was much less antagonistic than Chamberlain had been to the idea and more willing to be ‘educated’. Milner also met with Lord Lansdowne, who remained Foreign Secretary in Balfour’s regime, and would be responsible for negotiating agreements with whatever Asian government supplied workers. Before he left London Milner appeared before both the Cabinet and Defence Committee considering these questions. He also gained what would prove to be only the temporary support of his Liberal Imperialist friends, which would wither in the face of outraged public opinion and the allure of office after many years in the political wilderness.

Milner was back at Cape Town on 15 December 1903 and, before returning to Johannesburg, pressed members of the Progressive Party to support Chinese labour, an electoral loser in the Cape.<sup>44</sup> These politicians included Jameson, who would form a Ministry two months later in a loyalist victory which pleased Milner immensely.<sup>45</sup> Once back in the Transvaal, Milner continued his efforts. He told Gell, 'as to Asiatic labour I foresee great difficulties to be got over before I can get the thing through both for the Transvaal and Rhodesia.' Nevertheless, he considered this his 'first duty' and meant to go at it 'with all the energy, patience and tenacity which I may possess.' He was not at all confident of success, but would 'leave nothing in my power undone to secure it'.<sup>46</sup>

In his quest Milner received some aid from the November report of the Labour Commission, which revealed a shortfall of 129,000 workers for the mines alone and recommended that this be made up from the Far East. It was also estimated that one white job would be created for every ten workers imported. This, plus management assurances that the Chinese would only be allowed to perform unskilled labour, helped tip public opinion in the Transvaal, and a petition in favour of Chinese labour gained 47,000 signatures, half the adult male population.<sup>47</sup> Undoubtedly there was also coercion applied by management, such as having a petition available for signing when pay packets were distributed. In 1903 the opposition organizations, such as the White League and the African Labour League collapsed, leaving the field to the Labour Importation Association, which not un-coincidentally enjoyed the complete support of the Chamber of Mines.<sup>48</sup>

The dearth of workers had already led to the closure of mines and stoppages in railway construction. Milner complained to Lyttelton on 27 December that the immediate prospects were 'very bad. There is a complete stagnation owing to the labour difficulty.' At the beginning of the month the Chamber of Mines had unanimously approved a resolution in favour of Chinese labour. Subsequently, the Transvaal's nominated Legislative Council debated a motion by Sir George Farrar, the President of both the Chamber of Mines and the Transvaal Progressive Association, to prepare an ordinance allowing importation. This carried twenty-two votes to four, and an ordinance was drafted, subject to the sanction of the imperial government.

Although enabling legislature was introduced in the Transvaal in January 1904, Milner feared it would be too late to save the situation. He confided to Violet Markham, who was supporting him in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, that 'the economic position here is very bad, &, of course, affects the political. But as far as I can see it is all attributable to a single cause, with wh. you are fully acquainted, so I will not dwell upon it.' He sent her news of South African papers, particularly the Bloemfontein *Friend* which was, he said, 'no friend' to him. If 'very gory pictures of the state of things in the Transvaal reach England via Bloemfontein,

you will know what to make of them.’<sup>49</sup> Later that year Markham published her articles in praise of Milner’s reconstruction, land settlement and Chinese labour policies as *The New Era in South Africa*. On 10 February the Transvaal’s Asiatic labour ordinance was passed on to the Colonial Office for its sanction.

This prompted a telegram of protest to Milner in the name of the Transvaal Boers signed by Louis Botha, Jan Smuts and thirteen other notables. From the Cape, John X. Merriman wrote to Smuts that he warmly approved of his action, his only criticism being that it had not been done earlier. He went on, ‘It is incredible that even Milner with all his short-sighted folly could have been in favour of a scheme which will obviously diminish the British population while it will leave the Dutch land-holders untouched’. He considered it an ‘infamous crime’, of the same class as the ‘Asiento treaty’ by which the British had supplied slaves for the Spanish empire in the eighteenth century. Merriman went on that ‘It is curious to notice that the race feeling on the part of the English v. Dutch is more exacerbated than before the war, which is a notable result of “Milner’s great work”. Now we have the arch disturber of the peace [Jameson] as our Prime Minister. There might be some excuse if he were chosen for any special ability but he is as incompetent in political knowledge as he is [in] courage or military leadership.’<sup>50</sup>

At home, both in the press and in the parliamentary debates on the details of ordinance, Milner was predictably denounced for promoting ‘Chinese Slavery’. In addition to the moral evils of slavery, the *Spectator* feared an ‘odious demoralization from the employment of numbers of Chinese without their womenfolk’ and that their compounds would become ‘nests of vice’.<sup>51</sup> In the Commons on 16 February, Herbert Samuel, the Liberal Member for Cleveland, moved an amendment to the Address that it was inexpedient that the King’s sanction should be given to the Labour Importation Ordinance. This was defeated a week later, by 281 to 230 votes. Lyttelton bore the brunt of the attacks and Milner sent thanks ‘for what you have done for us about the Labour question. Evidently the situation at home regarding it was extremely difficult. You were right and I was wrong as to the amount of trouble you were likely to have over it in Parliament. All the more cause we have to be grateful to you for making so strong and successful a fight.’ The only question now was ‘shall we *actually get* the Chinese? If we do, even gradually, up to 50,000, this country will be prosperous in a year or two. If we don’t – !’<sup>52</sup>

The parliamentary struggle, however, was hardly over. Clinton Dawkins reported to Milner ‘Toujours les Chinoiseries! That d—d old C. B. [Campbell-Bannerman] has put down Chinese Labour for a full dress debate’ and the Government, ‘frightened of a Pig-Tail’, were ‘again quaking’. They had some reason, he went on, as the question ‘drives people of all kinds to vote in crazy masses against the government’.<sup>53</sup> The ‘crazy masses’ predictably included the pro-Boer

MP David Lloyd George, but also old friends in Sir Edward Grey and Asquith, who supported C. B.'s censure motion when the Government failed to disallow the labour ordinance.<sup>54</sup> Leo Amery had warned Milner on 26 February that he 'did think you had got Asquith straight on the point, but I am afraid the temptation, with office looming so near and wall paper for 10 Downing Street already selected by Mrs. A. was too much for him.'<sup>55</sup>

In the 21 March debate, Asquith reminded the Commons of Milner's 'Helot' Despatch and asked how, if the Uitlanders could be compared to helots, the 'same eloquent peer would have described the imported Chinese?' He went on, 'would he, would any of us, have shrunk from using the word slave?'<sup>56</sup> Haldane alone amongst the Liberal Imperialist leadership failed to follow the party line and came under heavy criticism for abstaining when the Government majority shrank to only 57 in the division. Milner's relations with Asquith and Grey would never recover from what he saw as their bald political opportunism. He commented to Bertha Syngé, 'What too *awful fools* the Liberals made of themselves about Chinese. I suppose it paid like fun for the time being, but despite my age and cynicism I do not believe that such abject pandering to popular prejudices can pay in the long run.' Fortunately, he went on, 'I don't mind abuse, in the very least – rather like it from certain quarters. If C. B., for instance, were ever to praise anything I did, I shd. Instantly resign, with a profound sense of failure.'<sup>57</sup>

The anti-Chinese fervour extended to the Lords, where Lord Coleridge introduced a motion similar to C. B.'s which would also be defeated after a debate in which the Bishop of Hereford attacked Milner on personal grounds, declaring, among other things, that 'Men of that temper and with that rasping journalistic pen should not represent the Empire in great positions.'<sup>58</sup> Milner's 'birthday twin' Hamilton Baynes, who had become Bishop of Natal, wrote that he deeply resented Hereford's words. Milner replied that his friend should not be anxious and that there was 'an immense amount of cant about the "moral" evils attending Chinese immigration'. The men who knew them best had assured him that the Chinese were not, 'as a race, particularly immoral'. As for the 'slavery' cry, there was 'no more slavery in this than in a hundred forms of service based upon free contract – certainly not as much as in ordinary enlistment in the Army'. It was true that mining was not a 'healthy trade', but it would be carried on under conditions 'as favourable as Science can make them, and in all other respects the Chinese will be well cared for. They can earn as much here in a few years as they can in a lifetime ... And this country absolutely requires some extraneous help to get along.' Without it there would be a 'white exodus, and that of course, means a British exodus'. This, Milner was certain, was the real reason why Chinese labour was so much opposed. It was the pro-Boers and Little Englanders who were 'really at the bottom of the whole business ... leading the bulk of their well-meaning ignorant countrymen by the nose'. Further, to say



that Chinese labour was a substitution for white labour was 'quite simply, a lie, and those who have raised the clamour know that it is a lie'. The exact opposite was the truth. Without a 'substratum of coloured labour, white labour cannot exist here, and when the very rich mines are worked out, the country will return to its primitive barrenness – and to the Boers'. This was the 'true inwardness' of the whole business.<sup>59</sup>

In May 1904 at last the Chinese Government agreed to the scheme and Lansdowne signed an Anglo-Chinese Labour Convention.<sup>60</sup> On 25 May the first ship, containing 600 workers, left Hong Kong and arrived at Durban on 18 June. The Chinese contracted for three years to work as unskilled labour in the mines. This could be extended for a further three years after which repatriation was mandatory. The mineowners paid the cost of transit of the Chinese, and their families if they wished, although the high cost of living made this extremely unusual. They had to live in compounds, but could leave for forty-eight hours with a permit. This was hardly slavery, but the agreement again brought a renewed outcry in the London press. *The Times* responded that the opposition was attempting to create an 'artificial hysteria'. When they had been in office, the Liberals had allowed Chinese labour to be imported to British Guiana and therefore the 'Chinese Slavery' cry was simply so much 'cant' by 'pretending philanthropists'. Never had a more 'unblushing and unscrupulous appeal to ignorance and prejudice' been made.<sup>61</sup>

Meanwhile, despite 'countless hitches', the Chinese continued to arrive, although an outbreak of disease brought renewed calls to bar all Asian immigration and threatened for a time to scuttle the whole scheme. Nevertheless, Milner was able to report to Lyttelton that the 'New Comet' mine had started crushing ore on 28 July, the first to recommence production as a 'direct result of the importation of Chinese labour'. He reassured his chief that reports of desertions which circulated at home were exaggerated and the real number did not exceed three.<sup>62</sup> At the same time Milner confided to F. S. Oliver, an important newspaper and financial supporter of Tariff Reform and imperial causes in London, that the Chinese experiment, 'despite infinite scares to the contrary, is so far most promising. Beri-Beri was a fizzle, and they are splendid workers. They came, of course, just in the nick of time. I was quite right in saying the number of Kaffirs had reached its maximum. For several months now they have been falling off, on balance, and I don't believe we can hope, for years if ever, to see them greatly increase: 25,000 Chinamen, by the end of the year, would just save the situation.'<sup>63</sup> In fact 23,000 were at work in the mines by that time. As Milner forecast Chinese labour in the end helped turn the economic tide in South Africa; however, his actions had handed the opposition a potent issue with which they would hammer Milner and the Unionists in the next General Election and afterwards.

On leaving South Africa a year later, Milner made a series of speeches, the most notable at Johannesburg on 31 March 1905. In this, among other things, Milner again broached the 'Colour Question', telling his audience that he knew he was, in the opinion vast majority, a 'heretic about that, and I am an impenitent heretic'. He continued to believe, as strongly as ever, that 'we got off the right lines when we threw over Mr. Rhodes's principle of "equal rights for every civilized man"'. At the same time, he was prepared to 'rely, for a return' to the 'true path, upon a gradual change in opinion in this country itself' as nothing would be worse than an attempt to force the issue by external pressure. He felt a great contribution had been made by the Report of the Native Affairs Commission and hoped the white rulers of South Africa would learn wisdom and 'discrimination – not to throw all coloured people, from the highest to the lowest, onto one indiscriminate heap'.<sup>64</sup>

Sadly, decisions with which Milner concurred, beginning with the Treaty of Vereeniging, left the status of the non-white population to the 'tender mercies' of the white colonial population, which meant disenfranchisement and the perpetuation of a segregated South Africa. His naïve hopes of eventual enlightenment on the part of the white population would take almost a century, and much bloodshed and suffering, before being realized.

## 7 A KINDERGARTEN TO GOVERN THE COUNTRY: SOUTH AFRICAN RECONSTRUCTION

Only a month after the Boer War began, Selborne commented to Milner about the post-war settlement that it was 'well not to divide the skin of the boar before he is killed, but it may be tentatively permissible to consider what would be the best thing to do with the skin supposing that the spear is driven home'. Selborne asked Milner if he would consider taking on the gigantic 'Augean stable' as Governor of the Transvaal in the interim Crown Colony stage of reconstruction being considered. This would mean giving up the Cape governorship, but remaining High Commissioner.<sup>1</sup> Milner responded that would be 'happy enough myself to try and clean the Augean stable at Pretoria'. He added that the 'question of treating this as anything else than a war of conquest is settled by the invasion and annexation of our territory, and by the deliberate intention of the Republics ... to turn us out of Africa'. It was evident to Milner that 'we must absolutely smash them politically, or our own expulsion from this part of the Continent ... can only be a matter of time'. Once the British prevailed, he told Selborne that 'autocratic government' in the republics was 'for a time inevitable until the mess is cleared up'.<sup>2</sup>

A year later, on this first semi-official trip north, Milner was accompanied by a new aide, Lionel Curtis, who would become a leader of the so-called 'Kindergarten' of acolytes that made names for themselves working with Milner in South Africa.<sup>3</sup> Kitchener had for some time referred to Milner's staff as his children or his crèche, but Curtis credited one of Milner's critics in South Africa with its first application. 'The name Kindergarten', Curtis later wrote, 'was given us in derision by Sir William Marriott, who was busy making trouble for Milner in Johannesburg'.<sup>4</sup> Curtis was the second of the Kindergarten recruits. The first, J. F. (Peter) Perry had arrived a few months before as Assistant Imperial Secretary with special responsibility for the native territories. Following Cromer's advice, Milner had told Percy Fitzpatrick a few months before that 'I shall not be here for very long, but when I go I mean to leave behind me young men with plenty

of work in them'. Brains and character were more important to him than experience. He realized that there would be a 'regular rumpus and a lot of talk about boys and Oxford and jobs and all that; and people will want men of experience and position', but, said Milner, 'first-class men of experience' were 'not to be got'.<sup>5</sup> Curtis fit the mould perfectly. A product of New College, he had served in the bicycle corps of the City Imperial Volunteers in the first year of the war. At home he had been private secretary to Lord Welby, Chairman of the London County Council. Charles Stewart, the Clerk of the Council, recommended him to Milner as 'level headed ... very energetic and ... able with his pen. I think you would find him very useful'.<sup>6</sup> These words would prove prophetic.

The havoc caused by the continuing Boer commando raids meant that it would be 1901 before Milner could permanently relocate to Johannesburg, which, even though Pretoria remained the capital, would be the base of Milner's Transvaal Government. Lionel Curtis became Town Clerk of Johannesburg.<sup>7</sup> He also located a residence called Sunnyside, then on the outskirts of town, for the High Commissioner. Milner described the former Eckstein mansion as a 'villa, which might be the residence of a prosperous London tradesman at Hendon or Chislehurst ... well away from the mines and places of business, and looking over a magnificent rolling country north towards Pretoria.' He planned to stay there until the war was over, which, he feared was 'not yet' and indeed 'never going to come to a definite end. It will just gradually die out, as the resources of the enemy become more and more exhausted, and we shall have to gradually to restart business, and may see the mines in full swing again, before the last commandoes have dispersed'.<sup>8</sup> That year the Kindergarten gained another member when Patrick Duncan, who had been Milner's trusted secretary at the Inland Revenue, came out from England at his request to fill the important post of Treasurer of the Transvaal.

Milner saw Johannesburg as the real centre of the Transvaal and, for convenience sake, the Post Office, Mining, Native Affairs and Railway Administrations had headquarters there, much to the displeasure of those who wanted everything run from Pretoria. Chamberlain, who favoured the old capital, told Milner his opinion was based on 'long experience with Crown Colonies'. Milner's comment on this was that 'To try and cram the administration of the Transvaal into a Crown Colony mould would in my opinion be a capital error ... I feel so strongly on this subject, that, if such a course is to be insisted on, the execution of it must be left to other hands than mine.' A telephone was installed between the two cities which immeasurably aided communications and which Milner called 'a great boon'.<sup>9</sup>

During a 1901 trip to England Milner continued to recruit young men. Three notables were added: Geoffrey Robinson (later Dawson) from the Colonial Office; John Buchan, from the staff of the *Spectator*; and Hugh Wyndham

(later Lord Leconfield), a young cousin of Milner's friend and supporter George Wyndham, all came out as assistant private secretaries.<sup>10</sup> Milner had been so impressed with Robinson's temporary work for him in London vetting candidates for South African employment that he had gotten Chamberlain's permission to offer the Fellow of All Souls a position.<sup>11</sup> Buchan, another product of Oxford, had been recommended by Leo Amery, who was unable to leave his own work at *The Times* to join Milner in South Africa. Buchan had only met Milner once before, but was well aware of his career, noting that Milner had 'gone to South Africa with the goodwill of all parties; had there become the most controversial figure in the Empire, applauded by many as a strong man in a crisis, bitterly criticized by others as bearing the chief responsibility of the war'. He at first saw Milner as 'Plato's philosopher-turned-king, a scholar who in his middle forties had made history'. However, the young man was soon disabused of this view as he found 'very few signs of the scholar except in the fastidious rationalism of his thought'. Milner, said Buchan, had deliberately 'put away his scholarship on a high shelf' in order to devote his limited stock of vitality to the job at hand.<sup>12</sup>

Two pressing questions with which Milner grappled in planning reconstruction were resettlement and self-government. In September Milner wrote to his Liberal Imperialist ally Asquith about these 'two points on wh. I want to sound a warning note'. It was obvious to Milner that 'we must have ultimately have self-govt here. Big white communities at the antipodes cannot be autocratically governed from London.' But there was a 'rather dangerous insistence in many quarters ... on the importance of self-government coming *very soon*'. The best people here, he told Asquith, were 'of a different mind. They say, & rightly, "Complete self-govt means parties. Parties, if we are compelled to form them at once, will inevitably be formed on purely racial lines. Once in these ruts, we may never get out of them, & you will have created all over S. Africa the deplorable state of things at present existing ... only in the Cape Colony. Give British & Dutch time to settle down together & to work together for a few years in the recuperation of the country on non-political lines, & to agree, or *differ*, on other than purely racial issues. Then the party split may mean no more than it does in healthy homogeneous communities."

Point number two, resettlement, was to Milner 'even a more delicate one'. There was, he believed, 'a great danger, if we are to think *solely* of bringing back the Afrikaners, whether prisoners of war, or refugees, on to the land, without mixing with them *at once, & from the start*, a British element'. This would be 'easy to do, if we steadily avail ourselves of our opportunities. We will, of course, be howled at by the people who don't want this country to settle down in peace under the British flag ... they will screech about "extermination of the Dutch" & all the rest of it.' He called this 'Nonsense. I no more want to exterminate the Dutch than I want to exterminate the British. But neither do I want the country

all Dutch & the towns all British, & the racial division aggravated by an economic one.' The bulk of the country people would be Dutch and the bulk of the town people British in any case, but Milner wanted to increase number of British farmers, though he realized that finding 'a good class of settler – not "tommies" but men with farming experience and a little capital' would 'take money, a lot of it'.<sup>13</sup>

Milner based his arguments on the Land Settlement Commission's report, which underlined that all the blood and treasure expended on the war could well be 'absolutely wasted' if a significant British population was not put on the land as a safeguard against a recurrence of 'division and disorder'.<sup>14</sup> This, the report argued, could be done, but it recommended that to attract top-notch, experienced settlers quality land must be acquired, which, as Milner had noted, would cost. Further, in the arid conditions of South Africa, any scheme to improve and enlarge the agricultural base would need a bold plan for irrigation. For this, Milner called on his Egyptian experience, bringing in his old friend William Willcocks, who had recently been at work designing the Assouan Dam. Willcocks issued an optimistic report on the prospects for agricultural irrigation in South Africa, but also pointed out the even more pressing need, in his opinion, for water for the Rand mining industry, which, as the source of finance for everything else, would need to be put on a sound footing first.<sup>15</sup> Only 531 applications had been received from soldiers so far and in December 1901 a Transvaal Land Board was created to buy farms. Milner blamed the lack of a government plan of assistance for this and forecast that with such aide 10,000 could be recruited in the first year. Milner's fervent hope, which turned out to be wildly unrealistic, was that within five years of the restoration of order more than 100,000 British settlers could be introduced, enough to turn the political balance of power.<sup>16</sup>

On 21 June 1902, three weeks after signing the Treaty of Vereeniging, Milner took the oath as Governor of the Transvaal in the old Raadzaal at Pretoria and, two days later at Bloemfontein, he was installed as Governor of the Orange River Colony.<sup>17</sup> With the war over, Milner wanted to keep as many soldiers as possible in place as permanent settlers. This scheme, however, would be plagued by several problems. Most of the men had no farming experience and, despite a considerable expenditure, adequate arable land was never made available. Most also did not have the £300 of capital Milner wished each to bring to the bargain. He lamented that, because of the bad economy, thousands of potential agriculturalists amongst the soldiers, and others as well, were leaving. To stem this outward tide, he exhorted Chamberlain, 'our aim should be to get on as fast as possible with all recuperative work'. This would both keep up the prestige of the British Government and 'help to keep in this country the thousands of splendid and willing British settlers who are anxious to find employment here'. Just now,

Milner went on, 'we have our pick of the Empire ... the great thing is to restart the machine in time to catch them'.<sup>18</sup>

One large part of the South African 'machine', the rail system, was in desperate need of repair and expansion after two and a half years of war. Extending the system to the rural areas, while at the same time rebuilding and amalgamating the network, would be parts both of Milner's reconstruction strategy and of his interrelated plan to federate South Africa.<sup>19</sup> He later told the Inter-Colonial Council, 'We talk of closer South African union. We all desire it. But perhaps we do not consider how greatly it is of necessity impeded by purely physical difficulties, by the immense distances which separate the principal centres, and which, unless bridged by a more rational system of communications, prevent that easy and constant intercourse, that interweaving of interests, and, more important still, that free interchange of ideas, which are so important in the growth of national life and national sentiment.'<sup>20</sup>

Sir Percy Girouard, who had been Director of Military Railways, stayed on as the Commissioner of the renamed Central South African Railways. The railway question also brought Milner into conflict with Kitchener, who understandably refused to transfer control out of military hands until the surrenders were completed and his troops evacuated. Added to this, the War Office attempted to saddle the administration with a charge of £1.5 million for work it claimed the army had carried out on the system. In the end this amount would be reduced by two thirds. Kitchener also demanded monopoly prices for the thousands of horses, draft animals and wagons under army control without which the civilian repatriation could not take place.

As if all this was not bad enough, a prolonged drought in the second half of 1902 lasted until heavy rains came late in December. Disease killed most of the cattle, forcing importation of replacement stock from Argentina and Texas. Milner reported home that 'we began working with the country absolutely denuded of everything'. Moreover, it was the dead of winter and there was no grass for the large numbers of military animals in the 'most wretched condition'. Hundreds died, many thousands were useless. Bringing up supplies was hampered by the tremendous strain on the railway, due to the necessity of 'taking down an Army of between 100,000 and 200,000 men, and bringing up thousands of refugees'.<sup>21</sup>

Despite these problems, and a chronic shortage of labour, within nine months of the war's end the whole burgher population, along with the Africans also in the refugee camps, a quarter of a million in all, had been brought back to what remained of their homes to begin rebuilding. Returning the tens of thousands more prisoners of war, dispersed from Bermuda to Sri Lanka, who chose to be repatriated from their internment, would take somewhat longer. To support the destitute Boer population, and to finance the reconstruction, in addition to the

funds set out in the peace agreement, Milner received permission from Chamberlain to institute a ten per cent tax on mining industry profits, a measure not accepted happily by Percy Fitzpatrick and the Chamber of Mines. At Milner's insistence, rather than wait for adjustment of claims, compensation began to be paid at once from the £3 million set out in Article 10 of the peace, augmented by a similar amount in loans. Before Milner departed South Africa £16.5 million would be spent to transform the wasteland created by the war.

While in the camps, 40,000 Boer children had begun receiving an education in English and this process would be carried on in the New Colonies under E. B. Sargent, and then Fabian Ware after the end of 1902.<sup>22</sup> More than 400 British teachers were brought over for the effort and as previously noted Milner's old friend, the writer Bertha Synge, produced a properly patriotic textbook in *The Story of the World for the Children of the British Empire*. To counter the free elementary education and undenominational religious instruction offered in the Government schools, the Dutch Reformed Church soon started a rival system and the Predikants preached a boycott of the Government schools. There was also trouble brewing amongst the Uitlanders, many of whom were no more happy to have bureaucratic imperial rule than they had been with Kruger. In late 1902 a newly created Transvaal Political Association began an agitation for full participation in government.<sup>23</sup>

When possible local notables were added to the non-elected Executive Councils instituted after the peace settlement. The Boer leadership, however, for the most part stayed aloof and played a waiting game. In addition, just after the end of the war three of the generals, Louis Botha, Jan Smuts and Koos de la Rey, travelled to Europe in an attempt to move Chamberlain to reopen the peace negotiations and to raise funds. This effort failed on all counts. Besides finding the Colonial Secretary unmovable, their 'Appeal to the Civilized World' raised only £105,000, one fifth from a single American donor. A despondent Smuts blamed their failure with Chamberlain on Milner's influence. Botha attempted to cheer his friend, telling him that 'if Lord Milner does not take care he will become the most hated man in the world.'<sup>24</sup> About the Kindergarten, Smuts wrote sarcastically to Emily Hobhouse, who made a return tour of South Africa after the war, 'it is such a comfort to have a little 'Kindergarten' show of dolls – all your own, moving at your sweet will, not asking inconvenient questions, not making factious opposition ... That is the way we are ruled here by the "finest flowers of Varsity scholarship".'<sup>25</sup>

To man the senior posts in the administration, Milner prevailed upon Sir Arthur Lawley (later Lord Wenlock) to take up the lieutenant-governorship of the Transvaal. To do so he resigned the governorship of Western Australia and arrived at the end of August. Sir Richard Solomon became Attorney General and head of the Law Department of the Transvaal. He set to work with, in



Milner's words, 'stupendous energy' and in less than a year had 'repealed, revised or repaired' the immense mass of statutes, while at the same time reorganizing his own office and the Magisterial Service.<sup>26</sup> To deal with the crisis on the farms and to modernize methods, F. B. Smith was sent out by the Colonial Office to head the new Transvaal Department of Agriculture, the efforts of which would prove one the true success stories of the reconstruction period. W. E. Davidson replaced the often-tactless George Fiddes (who returned to London and was retained by Chamberlain) as Colonial Secretary for the Transvaal. Sir Harry Wilson was appointed Davidson's counterpart in the Orange River Colony. Two months after Lawley arrived, Milner reported to Violet Cecil, 'We are still living in the most awful Augean stable here. But on the other hand the amount of work got through since June is enormous. Lawley is throwing himself into it with great energy.' He had known he was taking on a big job, but Lawley was nevertheless 'rather astonished to find what he is in for ... There isn't a man in the place, who is any good at all, that hasn't six times too much to do.'<sup>27</sup>

All the above gave yeoman service; however, the best remembered of Milner's aides and co-workers, in large part because of the legend they helped to create themselves, were the members of the Kindergarten, most of whom would stay on in South Africa after Milner was gone.<sup>28</sup> The remaining core members were added in the reconstruction period. These included Lionel Hitchens, a New College friend of Curtis who had served in the Egyptian Ministry of Finance. Hitchens became Johannesburg Town Treasurer before being promoted to Colonial Treasurer of the Transvaal. Another member, Richard Feetham, replaced Curtis as Town Clerk when Milner transferred him to Pretoria as Assistant Colonial Secretary (to Duncan's Colonial Secretary) the following year. John Dove, also of New College, became Feetham's assistant.

With the war over, Chamberlain decided to visit South Africa, as the first leg of grand plan he had hatched to tour the self-governing possessions – as a 'missionary of empire' whose vocation it was to bring about imperial union.<sup>29</sup> He instructed Milner that he wanted to see things for himself and to 'make the acquaintance of representative men of both parties and both races.'<sup>30</sup> Milner notified the Governors of the Cape and Natal, Hely-Hutchinson and Hime, that the Colonial Secretary meant the trip to be a 'business tour and not for show.'<sup>31</sup> However, the tour was equal parts of both. Wherever he travelled after his arrival, with his wife, at Durban on 26 December 1902, the Colonial Secretary received delegations and addresses. In a series of speeches Chamberlain preached unity and reconciliation under the British flag and the duty of sharing the burden, as well as the benefits, of membership in the British Empire. Milner, who had been ill at the end of the year, first joined Chamberlain at Charlestown on the Transvaal border on 3 January 1903 and accompanied him to Pretoria.

At a Pretoria banquet given by Sir Arthur Lawley, the Colonial Secretary was faced with forthright appeals for 'Crown Colony Government with a little less crown and a little more colony'. In a measured response, Chamberlain asked for patience. He told the gathering that self-government would be given as soon as possible and, in the meantime, declared, 'You have confidence in Lord Milner. So have we.'<sup>32</sup> On the morning of 8 January, Smuts led a deputation of one hundred leading Boers to present an address of welcome that sought to reopen questions including a complete amnesty, the return of exiled leaders in Europe, the use of Dutch in education, taxation and native policy. Joe responded in the Raadzaal, with Milner and Lawley looking on, that the Treaty of Vereeniging should be considered as the 'charter of the Boer nation'. The Boers, he went on, had 'every right to call on us ... to fulfill this in the spirit and the letter'. But it was 'a little too early to go behind, or further than the terms thus concluded'. He declared that he hoped 'with consideration on both sides, with strict observance of agreements on both sides, with a readiness to give as well as to take, before many years are over ... we shall be one free people under one flag.'<sup>33</sup>

At Johannesburg, the Chamberlains stayed at Sunnyside with Milner and this allowed time for lengthy discussions. When these turned to Milner's wish to quit South Africa, Chamberlain argued that it was the High Commissioner's imperial duty to stay for the foreseeable future and that to leave would be 'almost an act of cowardice'.<sup>34</sup> He prevailed on Milner to agree to a compromise in which he would take a leave that year and then 'return for *one* year'. He did not exclude the possibility of remaining longer, 'should it appear on public grounds absolutely necessary'.<sup>35</sup> Other subjects raised included the South African Constabulary, the railway system, the South African garrison, the creation of a forestry department, the taxation of dynamite, the immigration of women and the Possession of Arms Act. Milner reluctantly agreed that three Boer leaders who had been exiled in Europe, Fischer, Wolmarans and Wessels, should be allowed to return. In a step towards responsible government, elective municipalities in towns were authorized.

The Chamberlains also toured Mafeking, Kimberley and Bloemfontein, where Milner joined the party on 4 February 1903. At a public dinner three days later, Milner announced the amalgamation of the railways of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony and the creation of a new Inter-Colonial Council delegated to manage the new rail system, the Constabulary and other matters common to the two colonies including the distribution of the proceeds of the £35 million investment loan Chamberlain helped to finalize. Milner hoped the new Council would 'open a wider political horizon, [and] create a South African habit of mind, as distinct from a Colonial one'.<sup>36</sup> To oversee the day-to-day affairs of the body, another New College addition to the Kindergarten, Robert Brand, was appointed secretary to the Council at the suggestion of Peter Perry.

He would stay in place until the creation of the Union Government. In April Geoffrey Robinson, who had been working as an extra secretary for the past year, took the ill Walrond's place as Milner's principal private secretary.

In his farewell address at the Cape Town Drill Hall on 24 February, Chamberlain once again praised the 'firm and sympathetic policy' of Lord Milner which, he was sure, if continued would make the New Colonies 'amongst the most prosperous and most contented of the dominions of the crown'. He went on that there were people, who did not know him, who talked of the High Commissioner 'as if he were a hard man, inclined always to arbitrary and even tyrannical methods. There can be no greater travesty of the truth than that.' If these people had only 'seen his patient and personal attention to every grievance that was brought to his knowledge, his devotion to the details of every branch of administration – his constant endeavor to find new methods of benefiting every class of the population – his earnest desire to help the needs of those who are in trouble, to restore those who have suffered in the war to their old prosperity' they would 'be ashamed of their suspicions'. Chamberlain looked forward to the growth of a 'new nation here in South Africa, as loyal in the true sense of the word, as Imperial in the best sense of the word, as any of the possessions of the British Crown'.<sup>37</sup>

Before he departed, Chamberlain discussed with Milner his scheme of preferential tariffs to link the Empire and he proposed that the Transvaal and O.R.C. offer preference to British goods, as had the representatives of the Cape and Natal at the London Colonial Conference the previous summer. Consequently, at the March Bloemfontein Inter-Colonial Conference Milner pressed the idea, citing the Canadian concession championed by Chamberlain as an example. After a 'rather stormy' debate the conference approved a tariff for all the colonies and protectorates which granted a twenty five per cent imperial preference to Britain and any parts of the Empire which would reciprocate. The members also affirmed the principle of an administrative union for South Africa with the hope that 'the day may not be far distant, when it might be possible to summon a conference to consider ... the union under one central federal administration of the whole of the colonies and territories under British rule'.<sup>38</sup>

Afterwards, Milner confided to the Colonial Secretary that he was 'rather alarmed at the apparent complete indifference at home at the proposed adoption by South Africa of preference on British goods'. Unless the Cape colonists had 'reason to think that the Mother Country really cares about it', Milner did not believe the tariff would pass in the Cape parliament. Any reciprocal advantage, he went on, 'however small, or even the hope of it someday, would encourage the sentiment here, which is very strong, but will not live permanently on nothing'. There were at present no South African exports taxed by Britain, so reciprocity was impossible, but Milner believed it would be 'quite sufficient if something,

however slight, was done for Canada. This would recognize the principle of reciprocity and South Africa might hope to benefit from that some day.<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately for both men's dreams of preference as a first step towards imperial federation, while Chamberlain was in South Africa the Cabinet approved a Budget which erased the small tax on wheat put in place to finance the war and therefore dashed the opportunity for Canadian reciprocity. In the fall of 1903 Chamberlain resigned from the Government to carry out his Tariff Reform campaign. Milner resisted the pleas of Balfour and the King to take the Colonial Office, citing his pledge to Chamberlain to stay in place. As it fell out, Milner's friend Alfred Lyttelton accepted the post in Balfour's wounded administration.

For the time being the Unionist Government survived the Free Trade/Tariff Reform controversy, but the looming Liberal threat led both Milner and Lyttelton to turn their thoughts in 1904 to insuring that both a system and a successor that would survive should be in place in South Africa before the end.<sup>40</sup> 'I take it you are safe until early in next year,' Milner wrote to Lyttelton. 'I think we *ought*, to utilise the interval to establish a system here, which should last for two or three years and which, while widely different from that, which any Radical Government would be forced, probably contrary to their own better judgment, to establish, would still be sufficiently popular and a sufficient step towards their professional ideal, to justify them in not at once upsetting it.' It was quite certain that Milner 'should not live six weeks with a Radical Government, even if they did not recall me at once, as in their own interests they had better do'. Therefore he wanted to 'clear *in time for you to appoint my successor*. I cannot imagine anything more important than that. And from the purely personal point of view I want to clear, at latest, in the Spring of 1905.'<sup>41</sup>

Concerning 'constitutional developments,' another letter to Lyttelton laid out the difficulties Milner saw in 'responsible' government. First, there had been little advance in the political situation in the New Colonies. Elective Municipalities and Local Boards had been established in the towns and Boards for the rural districts were under consideration, but Milner feared 'every extension of local self-government only brings us nearer the much more difficult and dangerous problem of self-government for each colony as a whole'. In his view a colony enjoying 'responsible' government, by which he meant a system 'under which the people of a colony choose the Legislature and the Legislature appoints the Government', was, 'to all effects and purposes independent'. At this point, the political union existing between the colony and the mother country rested 'virtually on affection alone'. Under such conditions, even if formal separation were for a time deferred, the 'nominal allegiance of the Colony to the Crown would be a source of weakness, rather than of strength, to rest of the Empire'. The position would be 'almost worse if in a Colony with responsible government the citizens were divided into two parties, one deeply attached to the imperial connection,

the other bitterly hostile to it. In that case, the Colony would not only be a weakness to the Empire, but would be constantly exposed to the danger of civil war.' For these reasons, it had always appeared to Milner that British policy should be to defer responsible government in the New Colonies until a sizable number of Boers had learned to 'acquiesce – it must needs be many years before they rejoice – in membership in the British Empire, or until the British element in the population had been so strengthened as to make separation impracticable'.

However, while recognizing the arguments against granting responsible government, Milner told Lyttelton he was also more aware every day of the 'extreme undesirability of deferring it too long'. This was especially true in the Transvaal, where there was 'no white population more impatient of control, or more lacking in the political experience and training, which self-government is best calculated to teach'. The British there, he went on, had many good qualities and were 'among the most vigorous and promising of the communities of European origin', but they were 'politically inexperienced and thoughtless to a degree'. To grant responsible government would in Milner's opinion constitute a dangerous experiment as long as there was a chance that the Legislature, which 'must control the destinies of the country, would consist very largely, or even mainly, of men hostile to Great Britain and to the Imperial connection'. The dilemma was that a speedy introduction of self-government likely meant a Boer Ministry, while deferring it would 'cause a large section of the British to throw themselves into the arms of the Boers and might thus result, when complete self-government was at length established, in the advent to power of an anti-British administration, all the more formidable because largely composed of British people'.<sup>42</sup>

Once the Transvaal census figures were available later in May, Milner reported that they seemed to indicate that 'on any fair basis of representation the Boers would have small majority'. To counteract this Milner suggested a 'half-way house' Assembly including appointed official members. If these were one quarter or even one fifth of the new House, Milner thought the Government could command a majority 'on any vital question'. On the other hand, if the Assembly was wholly elected what would transpire would not be, in his words, 'wholesome'. If this 'halfway house' system could be made to last three or four years he hoped that by then a continued revival of industry would have turned the balance in the British favour and true responsible government could be installed with less risk. In the Orange River Colony, Milner feared at least one third official members would be needed to stem the Boer tide and considered this another reason to try such an experiment first in the Transvaal.<sup>43</sup> These proposals for modified representative government were met with disapproval in both New Colonies, causing a controversy that would last many months and culminate in the drawing up for the Transvaal what has been dubbed the Lyttelton Constitution.

As his successor, Milner suggested to Lyttelton that Selborne would be 'absolutely the fittest man' and he held out a faint hope for the possibility even though Selborne was not receptive to the idea. Lyttelton himself was the other Milner would choose, but he had told him this was 'out of the question' as the Radicals would recall him, which Milner disputed.<sup>44</sup> Fearing his job would fall into the 'wrong hands' Milner told Balfour that the 'thing really is very critical. A good man here for the next 3 or 4 years might mean the pacification of S. A. and its removal from the first rank of Imperial problems.' On the other hand, with a 'weak hand at the helm, you may find S. A. a fearful drag, & a danger, for another quarter of a century'. He hoped that 'If you win the next election, you can spare even a very good man' and that the 'day is coming when at least two of the great outside posts – e.g. India and South Africa – will come to be regarded as interchangeable with high office at home'. That would be an appreciable assistance in 'drawing closer the ties, wh. unite different parts of the Empire – the great problem always confronting us wh. seems so fearfully difficult to solve in a practical way'. He had 'seen the New Colonies through the immediate economic crisis' and would 'have my plan for constitutional change ready by the end of the year'. Plenty of problems remained, but in Milner's estimation the moment was opportune for making a change. In any case, he went on, 'I *could not last much longer*, it is far easier to go a few months sooner, leaving my work in good hands'. And he feared 'the risk of being followed by somebody who will unravel the whole web'.<sup>45</sup> As it fell out, appointing a successor would prove difficult and take months to accomplish.

In January 1905, both Boer and British partisans presented their views on the political situation to Milner before undertaking a series of mass meetings on the Rand. The British had split into two parties, the Uitlander Responsible Government Association and the Transvaal Progressive Association. Milner commented to Lyttelton, 'I hope you observe, how everybody here is combining to prove, how totally unfit this Colony as yet is for responsible or indeed for representative government, and what a pandemonium we are going to have, when there is a general election'. The problems included political inexperience, divided parties, and the town versus country split, with, 'of course, a few British cranks and renegades turning the balance in favour of the enemy'. This was now becoming so evident that 'a great many of the honest British Jackasses, who were all screaming for "self-government" nine months ago' were now getting 'thoroughly frightened and wishing things could go on as they are for a few years longer'.<sup>46</sup>

Political reunion of the Boers had been given a boost the previous month by the Dingaan's Day (16 December) funeral of Paul Kruger, who had died in Switzerland and whose remains Milner permitted to be returned to the Transvaal in return for Boer promises of a peaceful burial, which were kept. Thousands of mourners lined the route taken by the train carrying the Presi-

dent from Cape Town. Sir Richard Solomon represented the administration at the solemn funeral.<sup>47</sup> In an interview with Milner the day after, Botha and the other Boer leaders made it plain that they would never accept his 'half-way house' scheme (which he sent to Lyttelton in a January dispatch) and would hold out for full responsible government. The Transvaal Boers, led by Botha, officially inaugurated a new party, *Het Volk* (The People), which planned to boycott the proposed government.<sup>48</sup> In the Orange River Colony an organization on the same lines, called *Oranje Unie* (The Orange Union), was formed by Steyn and Hertzog. The Transvaal Progressive Association supported Milner's scheme, but any hope left for Milner's policy was dashed when *Het Volk* succeeded in making a political deal with the *Uitlander Responsible Government Association*.<sup>49</sup> This division amongst the British parties made it apparent before Milner departed from South Africa that his plan, meant to buy the three or four years before responsible government, was doomed.

All was not completely bleak, however, as industry was on the rebound. The controversial Chinese labour importation experiment, he told Lyttelton, was a 'complete and proved success', all the better in Milner's eyes, because it was quite evident that the Chinese were not, and were 'not going to be, cheaper, but rather dearer, than Kaffirs', and that therefore there was 'not the slightest chance of their being used to supplant Kaffirs, but only to supplement the great insufficiency of native labour, which is the dominant factor of the situation'. He told his friend, 'You and I, old man, can shake hands over this, that we have between us saved this country from a first-class financial smash, which would have not been without its effects, even in England ... the big machine is beginning to move, and a new spirit of hope and enterprise is permeating our commercial and industrial world.'<sup>50</sup>

In January 1905, Lyttelton wrote for permission to announce Milner's retirement that March, adding 'your succession is proving a terrible difficulty'.<sup>51</sup> The dilemma finally was solved when Selborne relented and took the job. Balfour, who had tried in vain to persuade Milner to stay in place, sent the good news and told Milner that it was, nevertheless, 'impossible for me not to lament the great loss which South Africa and the Empire will sustain by your withdrawing from the stage where you have won "name and fame"'. Selborne, Balfour went on, would be a 'dreadful loss to the Government and Party here; but he will be a great gain to South Africa. He goes reluctantly, and out of a sheer sense of public duty'.<sup>52</sup>

An overjoyed Milner replied that it was the 'greatest possible relief to me to hear that Selborne was my successor' as he was one of the two men in England 'absolutely fitted' for the job. Milner confided that his health alone would have forced him to retire soon and as it was he would need 'something more than an ordinary holiday, if I am ever to be of any use again'. However, in the 'last 15

months we have completely pulled this country out of the financial mire – It was a big thing indeed. The political problems remain, & will remain, for years.’<sup>53</sup> A few weeks later, Milner persuaded Geoffrey Robinson to take the editorship of the Johannesburg *Star*. He reported to Lyttelton during the rush at the end that he had ‘stolen’ one of his Colonial Office men, Robinson, to save the newspaper from being another hostile voice in South Africa. ‘So when I saw the chance of a thoroughly able and loyal gentleman being put into that very important position, I did all I could to bring the thing off. I am very, very, penitent in a way, though I know it is the right thing. If you and the C. O curse me, my Selborne will bless me.’<sup>54</sup>

Milner sent his friend Selborne, who set out for South Africa on 29 April 1905, a long private letter of advice which clearly shows his mind at the end of eight years of struggle. People thought, he told his successor, that the war had decided that South Africa would remain ‘for good and all part of the British Empire’, but he never took that view. It was certain to him that ‘unless we had asserted ourselves – with war as an almost certain result – we should have lost S. Africa. But success in the war did not mean that we should necessarily keep her. It only made that result possible – at most probable.’ To make it certain would still require ‘years of strong, patient policy, the principal danger in this, as in all our Imperial problems, being, of course, at home.’ Without the ‘tomfoolery’ of home politics, Milner believed ‘we should be safe’.

The Boers, Milner predicted, were clever enough to give Selborne a good reception in the New Colonies and the Cape and, as Selborne was clever enough not to be taken in by it all, this gave him a ‘great initial advantage’. The change of governors also enabled the Boers ‘not only to pretend to be less hostile, but actually to adopt a somewhat less aggressive policy. For it had become a point of honour with them to oppose me and all my works.’ This would allow Selborne to put through easily a number of things that would have otherwise taken great energy. Milner warned Selborne that he could always rely on the political Boers ‘to be perfectly charming in their duplicity, – with an air of manly frankness which must ... take in anybody ... and will leave no stone unturned, to make you see through their spectacles’. In Milner’s estimation, the Afrikaner party was ‘not what you should call a “party”, but something much more formidable ... an all-pervading political force throughout South Africa – the same everywhere in spirit, aim and method, and working together instinctively on the same lines and for the same ends, with or without formal organization’.

Their ideal was a separate Afrikaner nation and State, including men of other nations who were ready to be ‘Afrikanerized’. Milner saw this doctrine as originating in the urban and middle class Boers, and then being ‘pumped into’ the rural areas. The country Boers, he believed, would not be irreconcilable, except for the efforts of the parsons, doctors, attorneys and journalists. If left alone, Mil-



ner believed a competent British administrator could make good headway in the countryside. He had seen the experiment in a small way succeed time and time again, only to be upset by Afrikaner propaganda which stirred up suspicion and distrust of the British. The means adopted, Milner went on, were 'sometimes truly startling' and involved not only 'monstrous lying,' to which he had become accustomed, but the 'vigorous squelching of schemes of material development, by which the very men, who seek to mar them, would be themselves directly benefited'. The fatal defect of the policies they sabotaged was that they came from the British. And the joke was, that, 'all the time, the men, who are at the bottom of the mischief are pretending to you and me that they deplore it'. This was 'only one instance of the duplicity in which all Afrikaner policy was involved. They were "British Citizens," and fully prepared to take every advantage of that position, yet they are working against everything British.'

There was also the problem of the divisions between the colonies, with the others 'madly jealous' of the Transvaal and having 'the most ridiculous fear, sedulously fostered of course by the Afrikaner politicians, of the Rand and its money-bags'. The principal cause of differences between the colonies were questions of 'commerce and business ... railways, rates, through routes, new construction ... or of tariffs and such like'. These divided the British commercial and industrial sectors of the colonies, but did not divide the Dutch 'from one another in at all an equal degree'.

The most important sector, which would need Selborne's 'special protection', was the work of the agricultural departments, which were 'closely allied' with land settlement. It was natural enough that the Boers were hostile to the latter, and their organ in the O.R.C., the *Friend*, had announced 'their intention of squelching it as soon as they get responsible government'. Milner admitted his disappointment that few British settlers had been successfully put on the land, but told Selborne that, nevertheless, he felt the effort had justified his 'extreme keenness about it'. It had proven much more difficult than anyone had imagined to recruit the 'right class' of settler, to find suitable land, and then to 'tide them over the inevitable disasters and disappointments of the first few years'. Even the few hundred hardy survivors, he went on, had an 'importance wholly out of proportion to their numbers. The man, who thinks we intended to outnumber the Boers on the land is an ass. But a greater ass is he who thinks it is no use attempting to leaven, because you can't outnumber them.' He exhorted Selborne to protect the newly planted British and to make sure that the money earmarked for land settlement, which had never been sufficient in the first place, was not diverted to other uses.<sup>55</sup>

During the final few weeks in South Africa, Milner undertook a rail tour of his domain, delivering a series of farewell speeches, while at the same time receiving addresses of praise from friend and foe alike. This was welcome after 'years

of malice & abuse', but Robinson reported that Milner was not deceived by the Afrikaners, writing to his father: 'H. E. says, to go away for good is the next most popular thing to dying'.<sup>56</sup> In his speeches, Milner reviewed and defended his work in South Africa and at the same time revealed his imperial vision. The first came at Germiston on 15 March. A week later at Pretoria Milner told his audience, now that the 'supreme crisis' had passed, he felt free, 'as a civilian soldier of the State', to give way to new leadership before his failing health led him to become a nuisance and detriment to South Africa's reconstruction.

The great feature of the work, Milner believed, which would 'stand out in history', was the 'colossal amount which has been done in the time'. He listed the accomplishments as: 'the profound peace which reigns throughout a country so lately the scene of a devastating struggle; the Statute Book no longer an unintelligible jumble ... the steady, incorruptible administration of justice under a Supreme Court which has no superior in any British Colony; the return of our principal industry to its old prosperity; the new life which is being infused into agriculture ... the planting of forests, the municipal institutions, as liberal as any in the world, which have been created throughout the whole of the Colony; the free schools containing twice as many children as in any previous period; the new provisions for higher technical training; the ensuring of an adequate water supply for your greatest center of population; the careful ... study ... now being devoted to ... irrigation'. To this chronicle, Milner added the developments in railways, telegraphs and telephones, the new hospitals and prisons which had been built, along with the replacement of the previously disgraceful lunatic asylum. The shockingly bad road system had been improved and twenty-two permanent bridges had been built or replaced.<sup>57</sup>

The most celebrated, and lengthy, of Milner's farewell addresses came at Johannesburg on 31 March 1905. At the Drill Hall, Milner spoke, 'quite mercilessly' and 'without adornment or relief', for an hour and twenty minutes of politics and of the Empire, in South Africa and in a broader sense. 'I shall live in the memories of the people here', he told his audience, 'if I live at all, in connection with the great struggle to keep this country within the limits of the British Empire.' This was what he cared most about because it was 'over all and embracing all'. He prayed that those with whom he had worked in the 'great struggle' might attach some weight to his words and remain 'faithful, faithful above all in the period of reaction, to the great ideal of Imperial Unity'. To the question 'Shall we ever live to see its fulfillment?', Milner answered, 'Whether we do or not, whether we succeed or fail, I shall always be steadfast in that faith, though I should prefer to work quietly and in the background, in the formation of opinion rather than in the exercise of power'. The question of the future of the Empire was, as he saw it, 'a race, a close race between the many influences manifestly making for disruption, and the growth of a great, but as yet very imperfectly

realized conception'. The very words 'Empire' and 'Imperial', Milner went on, were 'perhaps in some respects unfortunate'. They seemed to suggest 'domination, ascendancy, the rule of a superior State over vassal States: but as they were the only words available we must just make the best of them, and try to raise them in the scale of language by giving them a new significance'.

Milner explained that 'When we who call ourselves Imperialists talk of the British Empire, we think of a group of states, all independent in their own local concerns, but all united for the defence of their common interests and the development of a common civilization; united not in an alliance – for alliances can be made and unmade, and are never more than nominally lasting – but in a permanent organic union'. However, he admitted that the 'union of the dominions of our sovereign, as they exist today' were only the 'raw material'. The ideal was still distant, 'but we deny that it is either visionary or unattainable. And we see how such a consummation would solve, and, indeed, can alone solve, the most difficult and the most persistent problems of South Africa; how it could unite its white races as nothing else can.' The Dutch could 'never own a perfect allegiance merely to Great Britain'. The British could never 'without moral injury, accept allegiance to any body politic which excluded their motherland'. But both could, 'without loss of integrity, without any sacrifice of their several traditions, unite in loyal devotion to an Empire-State, in which Great Britain and South Africa would be partners, and could work cordially together for the good of South Africa as a member of the greater whole. And so, you see, the true imperialist is also the best South African.'<sup>58</sup>

Milner's reconstruction efforts furthered economic recovery, and must be given credit for laying an industrial and agricultural foundation for the future. Under Selborne's more conciliatory leadership, the Kindergarten he left behind was able to exert some influence on the course of affairs, all the more so after Milner's departure allowed Boer tempers to cool. Unfortunately for Milner, hatred of him united the Boers, while he was unable to rally the disparate British elements as a counterpoint. When Union came, it would be on Boer terms. Milner's schemes to ensure British supremacy by increasing immigration and land settlement and building a sizable military establishment, a 'South African Aldershot', all foundered. The plan to import British men and women was a particularly dismal failure, with only hundreds left on the land at the end. To add insult to injury, from Milner's point of view, within a year the new Liberal Government would set aside the Lyttelton constitution and grant self-government to the Transvaal.

Selborne brought with him as a private secretary the final member of the Kindergarten, Dougal Malcolm, another New College man who had assisted Milner as a temporary secretary while he had been in England in 1903. Philip Kerr, the next-to-last member and also a New College product, had arrived to assist Brand

only a week before Milner departed. Led by Curtis, Kerr and Robinson, within a year of Milner's departure, the group began secretly to work on a scheme for the immediate consolidation of British South Africa, not a popular idea at the time amongst either the Boer or British leadership. Though they realized such a union would likely be dominated at first by the Boers, their conviction was that the resulting political stability and economic prosperity would draw British immigrants in sufficient numbers eventually to win political supremacy, the theory of 'overspill' reborn.

Curtis was delegated the task of carrying out an investigation in South Africa, meant as a prototype for a future effort including the rest of the self-governing Empire. The immediate results were to be used to draft a pro-unification statement, dubbed the Selborne Memorandum after the High Commissioner gave his hearty approval, and then a constitution. Curtis and Robinson both revealed their ideas in letters to Milner back in England, noting that the effort should not become public because of worries about their seeming 'dictation'. Through Milner they also sought the financial aid of the Rhodes Trust for the venture. Though he had his doubts, Milner notified Robinson that the Trust would supply one thousand pounds to fund Curtis's 'preparatory' work for a year.<sup>59</sup> He agreed that the effort should be kept secret so as 'not to excite local prejudice against them'.<sup>60</sup>

In February 1907 the Liberal Government considered the completed Selborne Memorandum, which had been forwarded to London the previous month. Titled 'A Review of the Present Mutual Relations of the British South African Colonies', the memorandum argued that no part of South Africa could be truly self-governing until unification. Further, that this would also be the only ultimate way to fairly settle the other outstanding questions of the day, such as native and labour policy. The Colonial Under-secretary, Winston Churchill, commented to his Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman about Selborne's 'Federation Despatch & Memo' that after consideration 'indeed you have to come to a very distinct opinion that it is a document that will do harm'.<sup>61</sup> Whether this was true or not, it would become the basis, within a surprisingly few years, for the Union of South Africa.

On the way home from South Africa, while on the Red Sea, Milner replied to his friend Dawkins, who had appealed for him to assume a leadership role. Now that he had escaped his South African 'dungeon' Milner had no intention, until he had had a long holiday, even to consider politics and he never intended again to be 'an active participant in the fray'. He was, he told Dawkins, 'an anachronism' and 'too increasingly, as the years go by, out of touch with the political attitude of the bulk of my countrymen, to be a successful politician in the ordinary sense'. As an outsider, Milner believed, he might have some use. He refused to 'make myself miserable any more, or to embarrass any ministry or party, by holding

office on the terms, on which under the conditions of our day it can alone be held. Every man can afford to hold some unpopular ideas. But I have amassed *all the most unpopular* ... a whole posse of them, and I mean to allow myself the luxury of holding them, perhaps even occasionally of expressing them.'<sup>62</sup> Milner would hold true to these words in the following years.

## 8 CONSTRUCTIVE IMPERIALISM

On his return to England in 1905, Milner joined in two major, and to his mind interrelated, political and imperial struggles both amplified by the threatening international climate of the post-Boer War era. The first was the fiscal battle royal between Joseph Chamberlain's social imperialist Tariff Reform movement and the deeply entrenched Free Trade orthodoxy, an article of economic faith to many in both parties, but a particular Liberal shibboleth.<sup>1</sup> Milner had been one of the first to be initiated into the mysteries of Chamberlain's scheme to link up the Empire by imperial preference two years before in South Africa. The second crusade was the campaign for national service and preparedness led by Lord Roberts.<sup>2</sup> This was at loggerheads with England's long standing voluntary tradition, its prejudice against large standing armies, and its reliance on the navy with its hallowed place in the British psyche.

Balfour cut considerable ground from under the movement for national service with a Commons declaration in May 1905 that invasion (with France the likely foe) was 'not an eventuality which we need seriously consider'. At the same time, Chamberlain seemed to be retreating from any bold social reform policy to counter the inroads made by the opposition.<sup>3</sup> Milner's former South African compatriot Fabian Ware, who had returned to England and become editor of the conservative *Morning Post*, wrote to him, 'we want you to come and lead us to put this country straight. "We" is a large majority of the people who only want leading to do one of the biggest things this country has seen.' The 'inevitable question' from both the supporters of Tariff Reform and universal service who knew Ware had served him was "'Tell me about Lord Milner, is he the man we want?'" All these people, Ware reported, had 'backed Joe for all they were worth now they are holding back their money feeling uneasy owing to the obvious mistakes they see he has made in details'. They had no confidence in Balfour since his invasion speech, the disastrous effect of which, Ware went on, their mutual friend the military journalist Spencer Wilkinson 'did more than anybody to counteract'.

Ware believed that the country was getting impatient and if the man in whom it placed its confidence 'attaches himself to either party and plays the party game,

compromising on vital matters and sacrificing big principles to party exigencies the people will not follow him for long.' But, he asked, why need a man in the House of Lords do this? 'Could he not by taking a more or less independent national tone (the sort of thing this paper is trying to do in its way) make the party gather round him. *I am convinced the country would respond.* But the man who is to put things right – and if he doesn't come soon this country is done for – must start alone. The old parties do not correspond to the lines of thought in the country and are played out.' Ware told Milner that he wanted 'to devote my life to getting this country straight, and I want you to tell us how to do it – nobody else can'.<sup>4</sup> Milner largely agreed with Ware, reporting to Lionel Curtis in South Africa, that he was 'rather gloomy'. There was in his estimation 'a sort of blight on men of both parties, & indeed on public life generally. We are flogging dead horses, mumbling the formulae of the past. I can see no realisation of the facts of the present: there are certainly no big ideas – indeed I don't see ideas of any kind – with regard to the future. Not among politicians I mean. There are occasional spasms of vitality in the Press & outside, wh. the party organisations on both sides seek to suppress.'<sup>5</sup>

Tariff Reform dominated the January 1906 General Election in which the Liberals swept to victory, united and energized by the reaction as well against Balfour's 1902 Education Act (which aroused Nonconformist indignation), and 'Chinese Slavery'.<sup>6</sup> A recent addition to the Unionist press battalions, J. L. Garvin, editor of the *Outlook*, commented on the Liberal propaganda, 'To the vision of peak-cowled inquisitors and twopenny loaves was soon added another—that of the Chinamen in chains'.<sup>7</sup> On 13 January, Balfour was among the first defeated in the landslide. It would be left to supporters in the House of Lords, including Milner, to guarantee Balfour's declaration at Nottingham on 15 January, after the election was obviously lost, that the 'great Unionists Party should still control, whether in power or in opposition, the destinies of this great Empire'.<sup>8</sup> A City seat was soon found for Balfour, who, despite the debacle, remained party leader while the so-called Valentine Compact put the onus of 'proving' the necessity of a general tariff and corn tax onto Chamberlain and his supporters, who held the majority amongst what remained of the Unionists in the Commons.

Chamberlain's stroke on 11 July 1906, three days after his seventieth birthday, left the Tariff Reform cause without a leader. Leo Amery, who had organized the 'Compatriots', a group of staunch defenders of Tariff Reform and Empire, hoped to rouse Milner to action in Joe's place. At a 28 September lunch, he 'hammered away at the necessity of his coming out into the open, and of attaching himself definitely to one party'. Amery recorded that Milner conceded the necessity, but was 'evidently very unwilling, and still thinks that he can be to some extent outside the party machine and not too absolutely identified, though he realizes that the Unionist party is the only one to which he could expound his views with any

chance of their adoption'.<sup>9</sup> Amery did move Milner to agree to make two imperial speeches at year's end.

At Manchester on 14 December 1906, Milner told his audience that he had 'come to break a lance in favour of that school of thought which holds that the maintenance and consolidation of what we call the British Empire should be the first and the highest of all political objects for every subject of the Crown'. He confessed that recently 'an expert electioneer' had told him that Imperialism as a political cry was 'as dead as Queen Anne', but to some, such as himself, it was 'not a cry, but a creed'. Milner was told that the conflicting appeal for social reform at home had taken the place of empire, but asked, 'where is the antagonism between it and imperialism?' To his mind the two were 'inseparable ideals, absolutely interdependent and complementary to one another'. Without 'soundness at the core', how was Britain to sustain the 'vast fabric' of the Empire. To remain a great power, Britain needed to link social improvement and national strength, otherwise they were 'building their house upon the sand'. The only way, in Milner's estimation, to keep up with Russia, the USA and Germany was to link the Empire. 'These islands by themselves cannot always remain a Power of the very first rank. But Greater Britain may remain such a Power, humanly speaking, for ever, and by so remaining will ensure the safety and the prosperity of all the states composing it.' This union would not 'come of itself' and would require 'far-sighted statesmanship' to overcome the natural and formidable forces which made for disintegration.

Constructive statesmanship, Milner believed, could promote cooperation. Those who thought it 'even dangerous to make the attempt' would confine Britain to non-political efforts such as the cultivation of friendly sentiments and better postal and telegraphic communications. These were all important and, Milner believed, desirable in regard to all nations. The 'vital difference' was that, within the Empire, Milner aimed at something closer and more intimate. Imperialists were not content 'that our relations with the other states of the Empire, or their relations with one another, should gradually slide into the position which would satisfy us if they were friendly foreign nations'. Their peoples were 'not foreigners to us, or to one another, but fellow-citizens; and such we want to remain. One throne, one flag, one citizenship.' These were existing links of 'inestimable value. No friendship, no alliance even, with foreign countries, however strong, can give you anything to compare with them.'

Too many opportunities of 'strengthening old links or forging new ones' had already been lost and Milner feared a 'calamity' of the gradual drifting apart of the scattered states of the Empire. He saw a 'very important chance immediately ahead of us' in the Colonial Conference of Prime Ministers scheduled for the next spring in London. Among these men were colonial imperialists who considered preferential trade as 'the most important practical step towards closer



union'. It was in fact Great Britain that blocked the way, as Canada and South Africa had already granted preference to the Mother Country. Milner hoped it was possible that the Government would take up a 'less rigid attitude' to this question. Churchill had declared that the election had 'banged, bolted, and barred' the door to a preferential system, but Milner denied that anything had been decided about the feelings of the British people, and 'apart from the particular proposal of a tax on corn, they have never even considered it'.

To Milner, it made a 'world of difference, whether we appear to the Colonies as rejecting the brotherly principle of preferential trade altogether, or simply as having rejected a particular form of tariff'. If Britain continued to ignore this opportunity to become closer to the colonial 'family', other countries would step into the breach, as the US was already doing with Canada. The danger to the cause of imperial unity was not so much that men were hostile to the idea, but that it was apt to 'appear something academic, distant, unreal, the very reverse of what in truth it is, a matter of direct personal importance to the humblest citizen'. Empire and Imperialism, Milner went on, were 'words which lend themselves to much misuse ... Our object is not domination or aggrandisement. It is consolidation and security. We envy and antagonise no other nation. But we wish the kindred peoples under the British flag to remain one united family for ever.' The approaching conference was, in Milner's estimation, 'one of those great, rarely occurring, opportunities' which should be utilized to the full.<sup>10</sup>

Three days later, at Wolverhampton, Milner spoke again to a Unionist audience, this time at the behest of Amery, who had tried and lost at East Wolverhampton in January and meant to stand again.<sup>11</sup> Milner declared himself 'a free lance, a sort of political Ishmaelite, who has found hospitality in the Unionist camp'. It was certain that he could not have found it in any other as, though he was 'good friends with many Liberals', he was 'simply anathema to a large section of the party in power'. He disagreed with this dominant section over their 'suspicion – perhaps it would be too much to say dislike – of the Empire' which they connected with 'war, and the necessity of maintaining an army and navy, and the training of our youth to use arms, which, as some of them have recently informed us, develops "the animal instincts"'. Indeed, to those like Lord Courtney, who thought that 'the devil was the arch-Imperialist', he could only suppose they saw him as 'a child of the devil'.

Besides being an 'imperialist of the deepest dye', among Milner's other 'eccentric opinions' was that he actually believed in universal military training and had been an 'accomplice of Lord Roberts in his attempt to persuade his countrymen not to rely entirely on paying a small portion of their number to fight for the rest, but to establish our national security on a broader basis ... more compatible with self-respect'. He agreed with the recent declarations of Haldane, the Liberal War Secretary, and Rosebery concerning the need for a 'nation in arms' and the

duty of every man to defend his country. But Milner went one step further than they did. 'I cannot for the life of me see, if this really is the duty of every man and a duty of supreme importance to the State, why the performance of that duty should be left quite optional, when the discharge of so many minor public duties is not left so.' To Milner, either 'this great second line of defence, this national reservoir of men, is a vital public necessity or it is not'. He denied the claim of his critics that he wanted to implement the German military system. As conditions in the two countries were radically different, Britain needed to make her own model, on her own national lines. His recommendation was to 'simplify, consolidate, but do not destroy. But, above all, have one period of military training for men of all classes, on the threshold of manhood, which should be regarded as part of the education of the citizen.' Such a 'nation in arms' system would be a great school of patriotism, 'not a training wholly or mainly of the body'. It would also develop moral qualities in the individual 'of the highest value to him all his life, of value to him as a worker and of value to him as a citizen'.

Moving on with his 'list of heresies', Milner admitted that he was also a Tariff Reformer, 'and one of a somewhat pronounced type'. He had become detached from Cobdenite doctrine some time before out of his practical experience in finance, and was not surprised that some of his friends, whose experiences were different, 'still cling to the old faith which we once held in common'. He declined to quarrel with them and only wished they would not 'quarrel with me, or be so very positive', as the fiscal issue was 'one of the most complicated intellectual problems'. To Milner the Cobdenite conception of cheapness as the 'sole and final test' was an 'anarchic principle' and, if it was clear that a home industry was being crushed by unfair competition, he did not see why it was 'so wicked to protect it'. He explained, very briefly, that he believed that duties on imported goods (except raw materials) were 'a sound as they are almost a universal way of raising revenue. But if you are to have tariff at all it should, to start with, be a moderate all around one. Exemptions should be, not the rule, but the exception.' A moderate all-round tariff would have a certain protective tendency, but that was, in Milner's estimation, 'a different matter'. What he was really interested in was its 'general tendency to benefit all producer-consumers at the expense of consumers who were not also producers'. This would also have a tendency to 'encourage the investment of capital at home instead of abroad, and to increase the output and keep up the spirits of home industry'.

The present tariff, Milner went on, was based on 'quite opposite principles' and confined to a few articles, such as tobacco and spirits, on which were placed heavy duties. The result was a 'most fantastic and unequal distribution of the burden, a distribution which is all in favour of the well-to-do'. A much lighter duty, spread over a much larger number of articles would, in Milner's view, 'be much fairer between rich and poor'. Such a system would also have the benefit

of allowing a commercial union with the other parts of the Empire and raise an enormous revenue, above what the proposed graduated income tax would bring. It would also be less 'expensive, inquisitorial, and vexatious. Realised wealth is not the inexhaustible milch cow that some people think.'

Milner confessed that, unlike the Free Traders, he was 'not large-minded enough to be interested in the total wealth of the world – even if I was sure, which I am not, that universal, unregulated competition was going to produce the greatest total'. His ideal was to 'see the greatest number of people living healthy and independent lives by means of productive work in our own country'. In this he came to the root of all his unfashionable opinions. Milner declared 'I am not an individualist and I am not a cosmopolitan. The conception which haunts me is the conception of the people of these islands as a great family, bound by indissoluble ties to kindred families in other parts of the world, and, within its own borders, striving for all that makes productive power, for social harmony, and, as a result of these and as the necessary complement and shield of these, for its strength as a nation among the nations of the earth.'<sup>12</sup>

These addresses, which were published by the *National Review* as *Imperial Unity: Two Speeches*, gave heart to Milner's supporters and led the party leadership to question whether he was making a play for power as Amery and others wished. Balfour was not unaware that his negative and reactive style of opposition had come under considerable criticism from those, like Milner, who wanted a more positive and constructive policy. Prominent among these was the pro-Tariff Reform publicist Richard Jebb who the previous year had published *Studies in Colonial Nationalism*, which Alfred Lyttelton praised for its insight into imperial feeling in Canada and Australia. Jebb, whose articles were regularly seen in the *Morning Post*, commented to one of his colonial allies that Milner 'has made two splendid speeches, which many of us take as definitely marking him for Joe's successor ... They have appealed very forcibly to those of us who want a leader with "a creed not a cry"'. Milner, he went on, had 'exactly defined my own views, about the Empire, and tariff reform (as the fiscal basis of social reform) and "national service", but always in much better language than I have ever evolved for myself'. His 'manifest loathing' for party politics was itself, to Jebb, 'paradoxically, one of the characteristics which will put a party behind him whether he likes it or not, although I fear it would wreck his leadership after the battle was won'. Milner's only chance to escape now was 'to sulk, à la Rosebery, for which he is too much of a conscientious man.'<sup>13</sup>

Another Tariff Reform stalwart, the businessman and barrister F. S. Oliver, who had made a fortune at Debenham and Freebody, commented to Amery that Milner's Wolverhampton speech was admirable and 'If he will only keep on at it we shall have a leader to follow'. However, Oliver had 'a kind of doubt' about Milner because of his apparent hatred of speech-making, and his literary rather

than oratorical order and style. Milner, he told Amery, seemed to be 'half conscious of this, but his struggle to get it right has rather the effect of a translation'. Oliver went on, 'Don't please misunderstand my meaning which is this – stick to him and make him speak and keep on speaking till he gets the balance of the game'.<sup>14</sup> Amery followed this advice, but their champion was reluctant. Nothing, Milner told him, would induce him to become a party leader or to take office. He was not 'fitted for it by nature' and his health 'would not stand the racket of fussing about, nor would his means allow him those conveniences which would make that sort of life more tolerable'. Nevertheless, Amery urged Milner to get into correspondence with the colonial prime ministers about the upcoming conference and to prepare, 'at leisure', another speech on social reform.<sup>15</sup>

Whatever Milner might have told Amery and others about refusing to lead a campaign, the newspaper reports of his speeches were sufficient to make the Unionist leadership understandably nervous. Of the 157 Unionist MPs, 109 were Tariff Reformers and even though Balfour had been forced to recognize fiscal reform as the 'first constructive reform of the party' his equivocations and seeming sympathy for the eleven Unionist Free Traders in the Commons led to considerable criticism from figures such as Leo Maxse at the *National Review*.<sup>16</sup> Worried that Milner might be attempting to take up Chamberlain's mantle, Balfour's secretary J. S. Sandars reported to the Unionist leader about Milner's intentions that there were those 'to wit Maxse et al – who would use him as a tool to dismember the party'. Milner would have 'nothing to do with them. For he does not believe on the one hand that the Empire can be saved till the present Govt is turned out "neck & crop" & on the other hand that under any other leadership than yours can their eventual eviction be effected.' Sandars reassured Balfour that Milner was 'devoted to you, and he thinks you like him. You have all the qualities requisite for carrying out the policy to which he is prepared to devote his life.' What Balfour needed in Milner's estimation was a lieutenant 'to do the swashbuckling' and he suggested that Andrew Bonar Law, a former Glasgow ironmonger born in Canada who had only been an MP since 1900, might do if he was loyal. Sandars went on that Milner had 'absolutely cut himself off from office or matrimony', but added that though Milner desired neither, 'there is no such thing as the eternal negative'.<sup>17</sup>

Sandars was right to be cautious as in January 1907 Milner did consider taking up the Presidency of the Tariff Reform League, as Amery dreamed, in place of Lord Ridley. Accepting the position might, Milner wrote to Amery, 'under certain conditions ... actually further my views'. He was convinced that his true role was to 'help to shape opinion & not to do the hack-work of Opposition or of office'. But, he might do 'definite jobs', and he thought this one might be one done better, 'at this stage, by one who was not of the regular band of political protagonists'. Milner's view was 'that T.R. by itself is not enough. On the other

hand ... If I had the direction of the T.R. campaign for a year or two, I might broaden it, in a way wh. would not only make T.R. a sounder plank in itself, but inevitably, in the long run, lead to other things ... Between us, I think we might make a great difference to the movement.' Meanwhile, the 'all round fighting leader might have been found. We should have something to give him worth fighting for, & he would have to do the rest.'<sup>18</sup>

The old leader, Joseph Chamberlain, remained an invalid at Highbury, his mind clear, but his body paralyzed. The responsibility of passing on his father's 'smothered words', as Garvin put it, to the faithful fell to Austen Chamberlain, who also blocked Milner's path. Austen commented to Amery that while he fully appreciated the 'value of Milner's active cooperation' with the League and the 'weight of his name', he thought that in 'matters of organization, and in popular touch and sympathy, in "instinct" if you like, he is inferior to Ridley ... I think him a statesman of high order but I do not think he is an organizer.'<sup>19</sup> After many months of effort, in the end the plan to bring together Milner, Amery, and others including the imperial geographer Halford Mackinder, into what Milner called a 'Private Secretariat' to lead the Tariff Reform movement failed when the £20,000 needed to finance the scheme was not forthcoming. Milner wrote to Amery that it was 'a blow to me to think that your and Mackinder's services cannot be wholly [*sic*] concentrated on these public affairs wh. are the most important & the most neglected'. However, he admitted to a 'certain sense of relief. I don't feel absolutely certain that my strength would have been equal to the direction of so great an enterprise.'<sup>20</sup>

In April 1907 the premiers of the self-governing colonies gathered in London for the long-awaited Colonial Conference.<sup>21</sup> In that month's *National Review* Milner asserted that the gathering must represent more than simply another 'display of friendly feeling' as had been seen in three previous meetings spanning twenty years. Before it broke up the conference needed to take concrete steps towards imperial unity and 'create some permanent machinery for carrying on its work in the long intervals between its brief and widely separated sessions'. One problem to be faced was how to 'ensure the maximum of co-operation between the several States in affairs of common interest with the Empire'. Another was the 'difficulty of keeping the Government of the United Kingdom in touch with the Governments of the other states ... when it is dealing with those external affairs which directly affect one or more of the Colonies'. What was needed was 'permanent representation of the Colonies at the Centre of the Empire', preferably with men of Cabinet rank, 'as would enable a body ... similar to that of the Conference to assemble at any time, if occasion required it'. Its functions would be only deliberative, but even the 'potential existence' of such a deliberative body would, in Milner's estimation, 'go far to keep our policy on really imperial lines'.

Milner defined what those 'who called ourselves Imperialists' had in mind when they spoke of imperial consolidation. It was, 'nothing less than this: that the several States of the Empire, however independent in their local affairs, however dissimilar in some of their institutions, should yet constitute, for certain purposes, one body politic; that, in their relations to the rest of the world, they should appear, and be, a single Power, speaking with one voice, acting and ranking as one great unity in the society of states'. He disagreed with those who thought this ideal no longer attainable and that the most that could be hoped for was an alliance, as if the colonies were already completely separate and foreign states. The fact that the states of the Empire were already subject to one sovereign and their peoples citizens of the whole was 'inconsistent with political separateness'. Since the Empire fit no existing model, 'novel institutions' must be found to deal with what Milner called the British 'family of states'. Within this grouping he foresaw the development of a 'twofold patriotism' with subjects loyal to both their own locality and the British Empire, as a 'wider fatherland'. The essence of the idea was 'coordination not subordination' an idea already 'potent in many quarters' and 'latent almost everywhere'. Milner believed that it only needed to be appealed to 'in the right way to become one of the great political forces of the world'.

But, unfortunately, there was a 'darker side' to the question which had to be faced. So far it was an idea merely and little progress had been made towards developing the institutions to nurture this 'new patriotism'. The new idea of a 'full partnership union', pushed forward by figures like Sam Hughes in Canada, found itself confronted by a system which made, and was intended to make, for separation. The outcome was therefore uncertain. What was certain was that, with the old machinery, the new idea could not be realized. 'Either we must devise some practical form of union, or separation will in fact ensue, however little we may desire it.' A real imperial system, Milner argued, needed a genuine imperial court of appeal; an Imperial Trade Council with colonial members; regular representation of the colonies at home by political, and not merely commercial, agents; preference to ships bearing the British flag in all British ports and waters; and, a light import duty on all foreign goods entering British territory, 'to form the nucleus of a common fund for common purposes'.

Milner knew these were ambitious aims, but found evidence in the agenda of the approaching conference that, at least in one quarter, the colonies, there was a strong desire to address them. He found it very unfortunate that proposals by Australia and New Zealand for organized and permanent consultation, as well as defence and tariff preference, had 'met with no better reception in the mother country'. Concerning preference, he went on, the price to be paid would be only a 'bagatelle' in return for the rewards. Once more the 'dear food bogey' was being raised by the Liberal Free Traders and Milner had little patience with 'the

disastrous accident of party warfare' which had caused the price to 'so absurdly exaggerated'. The rejection of these proposals would be a severe blow to imperial unity unless its opponents had some better scheme for securing the same end.<sup>22</sup>

Campbell-Bannerman opened the conference on 15 April. Thereafter, the Colonial Secretary, Lord Elgin, presided. The main subjects to be discussed were the constitution of future conferences, preferential trade, defence, naturalization and emigration.<sup>23</sup> Alfred Deakin of Australia and Wilfrid Laurier of Canada led the two contending colonial factions. Deakin and others present like Dr Leander Starr Jameson of the Cape Colony, wanted a permanent secretariat to be created and a closer and more equal relationship with Britain and the other colonies. Milner had sent Deakin his pessimistic appraisal of the chances of success for their shared goals in the face of the hostility of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Liberal Government. He invited Deakin to dine with the Compatriots Club, which Milner described as made up of the 'most active and forward of the younger "Imperialists" the people who believe in a frank partnership with of the several States of the Empire'. The object was an exchange of views and the establishment of personal relations which would further cooperation. For his own part, Milner went on, 'I feel acutely the want of touch. So many things go wrong for lack of it.' For want of any 'proper means of regular communication & cooperation we are all helpless, & the worn-out-old machine creaks along. We get the same old muddles every time ... & finally the whole thing will go to pieces, when nobody really wants it to, for need of forethought and timely statesmanship.'<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the opposition of the Campbell-Bannerman Government, at the conference sessions Deakin also faced Laurier, who stood for the status quo and had in fact not even wanted to attend the meeting. As a French Canadian, he shared with Louis Botha, the Boer premier of the Transvaal, an outsider's perspective. Appeals to Anglo-Saxon racial unity obviously would have little effect on either man. Milner commented to Amery on the 'quite bad' word he was getting from South Africa and of the gap between Botha's declarations and the actions of the Boer Government. But he supposed, nevertheless, the British public would 'lick his boots and go into paroxysms of delight over him. We do so love humbug.'<sup>25</sup>

After seeing Deakin and Jameson at a Compatriots Club dinner the second night, Amery reported to Milner that 'barring his talkativeness', Deakin was 'perfectly splendid'. As for Laurier, he went on, 'Jameson's remarks about him cannot be conveyed to you without shocking my secretary too deeply. His mildest expression is that the damned music-master is likely to spoil the whole show.' Nevertheless, Laurier was apparently amenable to flattery, which Jameson and Deakin laid on 'with a lavish trowel, and pointed out that he ought to be president of the conference unless CB were present'. Amery went on, however, that Laurier would 'want not only flattery, but more forcible pressure as well, espe-

cially from the Canadian end'. Botha, Amery reported, was 'on the whole very good but ... already picking up tricks from the music-master' and it would be very difficult for Jameson 'to keep him steady'. The others were 'all very sound; in fact the danger is that there will be the English members of the Conference against the two foreigners [Laurier and Botha] and the pro-foreign Ministry [The Campbell-Bannerman Government]'.<sup>26</sup>

Amery was correct in his analysis of the split, which was clearly shown in the debates of 17 and 18 April on the 'constitution of the Conference'. Laurier, content with the present relations and relative status between Canada the 'Mother Country', saw no need for the additional continuity a permanent and separate secretariat would afford between the meetings. Milner attended a parliamentary luncheon for the colonial premiers on 24 April and was kept informed on conference doings by his press friends, including Amery and H. A. Gwynne at the *Standard*.<sup>27</sup> Two days after the luncheon, he wrote to Gwynne 'I understand Laurier's difficulties, & I think, with a decent government at home, he might not have done badly. But "evil communications" at the C.O. appear to have been too much for him'.<sup>28</sup> In the end Laurier grudgingly accepted a compromise with Deakin that a secretariat might be set up, but within the Colonial Office. Milner's faint hope that the Government might prove more flexible on the preference question were also dashed, when, as in the past, colonial proposals were rejected. Any breakthrough on Deakin's other proposal, for an imperial court of appeal, was also blocked by Laurier and the Colonial Office. The conferees did agree to change the name to the 'Imperial Conference' and 'dominion' was recognized as a more appropriate term than colony. However, the renamed conference would continue as a purely consultative body, without what Milner considered an adequate connecting link.

Added to the failure of the Colonial Conference to make any real imperial progress, Milner was also frustrated with what he felt was the inadequate and narrow Unionist party domestic programme based on attacking socialism and the Labour party. He alerted Amery, who had urged him to speak out, that he was 'meditating a bold move, which is to cut myself quite adrift from "anti-socialism"'. It meant 'going into the wilderness', but he had come to the conclusion that 'Unionism along its present lines' was hopeless and that the 'only chance – anyway a poor one – is to have a new policy, root & branch, & trust to luck & the future to reform, after some years of confusion, the dejecta membra of our present party, with perhaps a strong contingent of the saner workmen, on a broader basis than that of Conservative Mandarinism & middle-class timidity, lethargy & narrow-mindedness'.<sup>29</sup> To this end, Milner embarked on a series of speeches that offered his own overarching 'constructive policy' combining Tariff Reform, the Empire and Social Reform in response to Radical Government proposals such as old age pensions.<sup>30</sup>



In the first speech, at a Tunbridge Wells Tariff Reform League meeting on 24 October, Milner told his audience that he was anxious not to 'approach the subject in any party spirit or in any spirit of acrimonious controversy'. The question was a difficult and complicated one and he could see the side of the Free Traders, though he did 'not altogether admit the correctness of that designation'. He proposed to look at the question from a 'strictly practical point of view, but at the same time a very broad one' to bring home the place of Tariff Reform in a 'sound national policy'. For it seemed to Milner that it was impossible to construct such a policy without 'a revision of our fiscal arrangements'. Such a sound national policy in his view had two objects: to strengthen both the 'Empire and the health, the well-being, the contentedness of the mass of the people, resting as they always must on steady, properly organised, and fairly remunerated labour'.

To Milner the two were inseparable. There could be 'no adequate prosperity for the forty or fifty million people in these islands without the Empire and all that it provides; there can be no enduring Empire without a healthy, thriving, manly people at the centre'. Overcrowded towns, irregular employment and sweated industries were as detestable to 'true Imperialism' as they were to the Tariff Reformer, whose aim was to improve the condition of the people at home 'concurrently with strengthening the foundations of the Empire'. Milner did not claim that Tariff Reform alone would do all this, but did argue that 'it fits in better alike with a policy of social reform at home and with a policy directed to the consolidation of the Empire than our existing system does'.

Milner saw Tariff Reform as a movement of 'emancipation, a twofold struggle for freedom – in the sphere of economic theory, for freedom of thought, in the sphere of fiscal policy, for freedom of action'. The last, Milner believed, was needed quickly to take advantage of opportunities which otherwise might be lost. This year had already been 'disastrously marked' by the 'emphatic and deliberate rejection on the part of our Government of the great principle of Preferential Trade within the Empire' of which all the other self-governing states were in favour. What was risked was 'a position of permanent and assured advantage in some of the greatest and most growing markets in the world'.

Imperial preference would be 'a constant and potent influence tending to induce the people of those countries to buy what they require outside their borders from us rather than our rivals'. They had, in his words, 'a family feeling, which makes them wish to keep the business within the family'. But, business was business. They were 'willing to give us first chance. But if we will give nothing in return ... it is only a question of time and the chance will be given to others.' This process had already begun in commercial treaties between Canada and France and in the new Australian protective tariff, though Australia continued to adhere to the principle of preference. To Milner it was not only a question of trade, but a 'question of the future of our people'. By encouraging the develop-

ment of the British dominions 'we direct emigration to them in preference to foreign lands. We keep our people under the flag instead of scattering them all over the world. We multiply not only our best customers but our fellow citizens, our only sure and constant friends.'<sup>31</sup>

Before delivering the second speech of the series, at Guildford on 29 October, Milner wrote to Gwynne at the *Standard* that 'I *may* be especially interesting at Guildford, for I mean not to be long & to be *very frank* ... I am uneasy at the course the party, without guidance, is taking. No doubt the general rally against socialism is very good business from one point of view. But it is full of danger. If we are going to attack socialism on the old industrialist lines, wh. are really closely akin to Cobdenism & Free Trade, we may get 50 *very imminent* Liberals to join us, but we shall lose 500,000 working class voters. We *must keep* broadly democratic, or at any rate *I must*. For not only is that my real view & personal conviction but I am sure it is the only road to victory.' Milner proposed 'A Democratic Imperialism', but went on that 'many of our present people are frightened grocers. They don't care about the Empire, & they are trembling in their shoes lest their assistants, & working class customers should be going to rob the till.' The problem for the practical statesman was 'How not to lose the frightened grocers & yet to make an effective appeal to the working class on democratic imperial lines'. He promised to 'do my best, but if I have to choose the grocer will go to the wall'.<sup>32</sup>

Speaking to the Guildford Liberal Unionist Association, Milner declared himself 'not a very good specimen of a party man', while at the same time defending the Unionist leader Balfour from his critics. Nevertheless, Balfour's purely negative and defensive policy was not enough. What seemed to be called for on all sides at present was for the Unionist party to have a constructive policy. By this Milner meant offering a 'definite set of principles, a clear attitude to the questions which most agitate the public mind, a sympathetic grasp of popular needs, and a readiness to indicate the extent to which, and the lines on which, you think it possible and desirable to satisfy them'. It would not be enough, as some suggested, simply to shout 'Down with Socialism'. Milner was waiting to 'denounce socialism till I see what form it takes'. It had been in fact the Unionist party that had made the country more socialistic over the years with measures such as the Factory Acts and free education. If the party now turned its back on ameliorating social evils it would be 'unfaithful to its own best traditions from the days of "Sybil" and "Coningsby" to the present time.' The true antidote to the 'revolutionary socialism' that so many feared was to use practical social reform to remove the problems that created it.

Milner's constructive policy embraced many Radicals and Labour objects such as old age pensions, the multiplication of small-landholders and landowners, the resuscitation of agriculture, better housing in the cities, town planning,

sanitary conditions of labour, the extinction of sweating, the physical training of the people, continuation school, 'these and all other measures necessary to preserve the stamina of the race and develop its intelligence and productive powers'. It was not these objects which the Unionists should deprecate, but the way in which they had been preached by 'stirring up class hatred or trying to rob Peter to pay Paul'. A better way needed to be found for paying the bill than by 'merely giving another turn to the income-tax screw, or just adding so much per cent to the estate duty'. It was a 'thoroughly vicious principle' to divide the nation, as many of the Radicals and Labour men wanted to divide it, into 'two sections – a majority which only calls the tune, and a minority which only pays the piper'.

However, Milner's chief quarrel with the Radicals was on account of their anti-patriotism. He did not question their 'sincerity and conviction – anti-patriotic, opposed to national as distinct from cosmopolitan ideals'. They were not zealous for national defence; they had no faith in the Empire; they loved to show their impartiality by taking sides against their own country; they objected to their children being taught respect for the flag. But, Milner concluded, 'we Unionists are not cosmopolitans, but Britons ... It is our business to look after ourselves and our dependencies, and the great kindred communities who own allegiance to the British flag. We want to draw closer to them, to stand together; and we believe that the strength and the unity of the British Empire are of vital and practical importance to every citizen. In all our propaganda, and in all our policy, let us continue to give that great principle a foremost place.'<sup>33</sup>

Before Milner's appearance at Rugby, the Unionists held their annual party conference, in Chamberlain's Birmingham, during which Balfour seemed to accept Tariff Reform, at least to the point of retaliation to protect British industry, and the idea of imperial preference.<sup>34</sup> At Rugby, Milner noted that he had been 'opposed to any compromise' because he saw clearly that 'dropping Tariff Reform would knock the bottom out of a policy which ... is the only effective defence of the union and of many other things which are dear to us – I mean a policy of constructive imperialism, and of steady, consistent, unhasting, and unrelenting Social Reform'. The Unionist party had also escaped another danger which in Milner's mind was 'quite as great as allowing the Tariff question to be pushed on one side', and that was the danger of being 'frightened by the scare, which the noisy spreading of certain subversive doctrines has lately caused into a purely negative and defensive attitude; of ceasing to be, as it has been, a popular and progressive party, and becoming merely an embodiment of upper and middle class prejudices and alarms'.

Milner was reassured by the Birmingham meeting's affirmation 'in the most emphatic manner the essentially progressive and democratic character of Unionism'. Why, he asked, 'should we not have Unionist Labour members as well as Radical Labour members'? He thought the working classes of the country were misrepresented. He did not believe they were the 'unpatriotic, anti-national, down-

with-the-army, up-with-the foreigner, take-it-lying-down class of Little Englanders they are constantly represented to be.' The greatest danger he saw for the party and the nation was that the 'ideals of national strength and Imperial consolidation on the one hand, and of democratic progress and domestic reform on the other, should be dis-severed, and that the people should come to regard as antagonistic objects which are essentially related and complementary to one another'. The Unionists, as upholders of the Union with Ireland, the Empire and the fundamental institutions of the State, 'must not only be, but must be seen and known to be, the strenuous and constant assailants of those two great related curses to our social system – irregular employment and unhealthy conditions of life – and of all the various causes which lead to them'. Among these he listed the defective training of children, first physically and then in the failure to equip them with any 'particular and definite' form of skill; the irregular way in which new centers of population were allowed to spring up, 'creating fresh slums as fast as we pull down the old rookeries'; the depopulation of the countryside which brought paupers into the already overcrowded towns; and the undermining of British industry by unfair foreign competition.

Turning finally to old age pensions, Milner told his audience that this was, in his opinion, not a reform of the same nature as the others he listed and not one about which he felt the 'greatest enthusiasm' because he would rather attack the causes which led to the irregularity of employment and underpayment which prevented people from providing for their own old age themselves, than 'merely remedying the evils which rise from it'. But, Milner recognized that under present conditions a sufficient case had been made out and no party was going to oppose their introduction. The 'great difficulties' he foresaw came in the manner in which the money was to be provided. The Radicals would, first, starve the Army and Navy and then turn to taxation of the wealthy. Milner was not against making the rich pay 'to the full extent of their capacity', but he was not prepared to see them 'made to pay exclusively. Let all pay according to their means.' It was a 'thoroughly vicious idea' and a 'bad, anti-national policy' that money should be 'taken out of the pocket of one man, however rich, in order to be put into the pocket of another, however poor'. He hoped the Unionist party would take a firm stand against it and would turn to tariffs on foreign imports, because in that way 'all will contribute'.<sup>35</sup>

At year's end Milner reported to Amery, 'I have done enough speaking to satisfy even you, and if I have achieved no positive good, I hope I have at least prevented some mischief'. The Unionist party, with *The Times* he was 'sorry to say at the head were all "rushing violently down a steep place" into the bogey of a purely Conservative narrow middle-class & negative policy. I think I have helped to spoil that rotten game & kept the constructive and Imperial ideas to the front'.<sup>36</sup> Milner would continue his struggle in the next year with a speaking tour of Canada, considered the most vital link in any scheme of imperial cooperation.

## 9 THE MOST VITAL LINK: CANADA AND THE EMPIRE

Of all the dominions, Milner paid by far the most attention to Canada. This is not surprising considering the key position the dominion held in most schemes put forward for imperial federation.<sup>1</sup> Canada's grant of preference to British goods in the 1890s, under Wilfrid Laurier's Liberal Government, gave hope to a generation of imperialists that this might be the first step towards greater unity. However, in the 1897 and 1902 London Colonial Conferences held while Joseph Chamberlain was Secretary of State for the Colonies, Laurier proved less than cooperative and no substantial progress was made otherwise. Then in 1903 Balfour's failure to keep his pledge to maintain the small preference given Canadian grain during the Boer War led Chamberlain to leave the Cabinet and to announce his ill-fated Tariff Reform campaign.

Not long after Milner's return from South Africa, Amery and others began suggesting he visit the dominion, both in the interest of imperial union and as a remedy for the deep depression Milner felt (and continuously expressed privately and publicly) over Liberal policy towards South Africa. Violet Markham exhorted Amery somehow to divert Milner. '*Commit him up to his neck in something* – I don't care what. For I think his frame of mind critical and if he persists he will be, not as we hope a great man with a great future but a great man with a past – the most tragic of spectacles.'<sup>2</sup> As did Amery, Markham had high hopes that 'contact with a big fresh vigorous country' would have a 'stimulating effect on his whole outlook'.<sup>3</sup> Plans for a 1907 trip had to be abandoned but the next fall (briefed by Amery on Canadian trade matters with information from the economist W. A. S. Hewins's tariff commission) Milner extended his own, independent, imperial campaign to Canada.

Cognizant that his tour might be seen as meddling in purely Canadian affairs, Milner notified his old friend Lord Grey, the Governor General at Ottawa, that he thought he could 'manage to avoid any appearance of interfering in local politics, even with an election pending'. He asked Grey to wire him single word 'defer' if he thought otherwise.<sup>4</sup> Grey advised the King that he regretted Milner 'should arrive at a time when the whole country will be boiling in the cauldron

of fierce partisan warfare – but it is better that he should come now than not at all – there is no difference of Political Principle between the contending parties; simply a battle between the ins and the outs.<sup>5</sup> Milner reached Quebec on 19 September, the day the proclamation dissolving parliament was announced. The next day he confided to Colonel George Denison, a founder of the British Empire League in Toronto, that his ‘first object’ in coming to Canada was to ‘obtain a more intimate acquaintance of the country’. He was ‘keenly alive’ to the danger of being drawn into speaking too much and of giving the impression of having come ‘to lecture the people of Canada ... I have come to learn and not to preach.’<sup>6</sup> In fact the trip would be equal parts of both.

Milner spent the first three of his seven weeks in the dominion traveling cross-country by rail to Vancouver, where he gave his first major speech, to an enthusiastic crowd of 600 at the Canadian Club, on 9 October. Their country, he told his audience, loomed ‘ever larger in the thought and interest of all those who care about the British Empire’. It was, he believed, destined to take a ‘very important place, perhaps in time even the first place, in the world-wide group of sister nations, which we designate by that term’. Milner’s own ambition was to be regarded as a man, who, though ‘he may live almost entirely in the old country, does not belong to it exclusively, but belongs to the whole Empire’. His tour so far had left a dominant impression not only of the ‘vastness and the immense possibilities of the Dominion, but also the differences ... which exist between different parts of it’. Because of this many had feared that it would be impossible for the Canadians to develop a ‘common national life’, but that had been disproved by the growth of ‘a Canadian spirit, a Canadian patriotism’. Milner did not agree with those who thought this growth of Canadian feeling would be a danger to imperial unity. To the contrary, in the future the more they cared for their country, the more ambitious they were for her, the more proud they were, the more Milner believed Canadians would appreciate the position of world-wide influence and power which was open as a member of the British Empire.

Canada would be ‘greater, far greater, as a member, perhaps in time the leading member of that group of powerful though pacific nations, then she ever could be in isolation’. And in this new future Canada, and the other ‘younger nations’ of the Empire, would rightly claim a ‘greater voice in controlling the policy of the whole Empire’. It was high time, Milner went on, ‘that those who guide the destiny of the Empire should learn to look at international problems, not only from the point of view of the United Kingdom ... but from the Empire at large’. Milner closed by leaving two matters for the consideration of his audience. First, the ‘necessity of national strength not only for purposes of war, but for purposes of peace and national development’. Second, the evidence which Canada’s own history afforded, that there was ‘no incompatibility between local and national

patriotism', as there was, in his opinion, 'no incompatibility between Canadian national patriotism and the wider patriotism of the Empire'.<sup>7</sup>

A week later, in Winnipeg, Milner spoke again of imperial unity, turning from external protection to internal development. He protested against the misconception of imperialists as interested in only 'national power, armies and navies, and of cutting a big figure in the world', telling his audience, 'Give me that political organism, be it big or large, which affords to its members the best opportunity of self-development, of a healthy and many-sided human existence'. Milner preached that the 'close association of the several peoples under the British Crown, their leading a common national life, tends to promote these things, and that there would be distinct and immense loss, if the tie were broken, alike to the various communities as a whole and to all the individuals who compose them'. He admitted that there was 'still a great deal to do ... in the Old Country as here, in creating a sound attitude of mind on Imperial Unity', but very few 'take the trouble to think out what they themselves can do to turn it to practical account'. Men were 'waiting for a sign, for some great scheme of an imperial constitution' which, as it seemed to him, could only result from, and not precede, the 'practice of co-operation in the numerous matters, in which it might be practiced now without new institutions'. Opportunities were missed every day, which would not be missed, if there was a 'more general and vivid sense of what is incumbent on those who sincerely aim at being citizens of Greater Britain'.

All his life Milner had tried, in his own imperfect way, to live up to that ideal, and had found it a 'constant source of strength and inspiration'. But it was 'only if a similar spirit prevails in all parts of the Empire, that the great heritage of our common citizenship and our world wide dominion can either be preserved, or so developed as to yield all the benefits which it is capable of yielding to every one of its inheritors'. It was no use 'a few of us, even a large number of us, working away for the common cause on the other side of the Atlantic, unless others were working for it over here, working for it as Canadians ... watching for every opportunity which may further it, on their guard against every step which may imperil it'. It was only by a 'long pull and a strong pull, and a pull altogether, that we can place our great common heritage, the British Empire, above the danger of external attack or internal disruption'.<sup>8</sup>

At his next stop, Toronto, Milner stayed with an old Balliol friend Arthur Glazebrook, who had settled in Canada and become a successful banker and broker. On 27 October, the day after the close of the hotly contested Canadian general election that confirmed Laurier and the Liberals in power, Milner spoke at the Toronto Canadian Club. He told his audience that the impression he had gained was that there was a widespread desire 'not only to maintain the union which at present happily exists between Canada and the other self-governing states under the British Crown, but to see that union grow closer, to foster more

intimate commercial and social intercourse, a better mutual understanding, and greater mutual helpfulness'. Underlying this desire was the conception, perhaps not clearly grasped, but becoming stronger in his estimation, of the Empire as 'an organic whole', of individual nations, independent in their local affairs, but having 'certain great objects and ideals in common, and capable, by virtue of these, of developing a common policy and a common life'.

The question was how to realize this general desire and Milner admitted opinions diverged widely. His own view was that the only way for people 'already friendly and related', to develop greater intimacy and interdependence was to 'do things together; great things, if possible, in any case things that are of some moment, and worth doing'. He did not agree with those who said that no progress could be made until an Imperial Parliament or Council was created. In his view this would come, sooner or later, as 'the natural end of a particular process of constitutional development'. In the meantime, they must use the present imperfect instruments at their disposal. Trade and defence were two areas in which immediate cooperation could move forward. Milner believed that Tariff Reform would be carried in England, 'at no distant date', and this would certainly further things.

In defence matters, Milner wanted a 'real imperial partnership', not simply a colonial contribution. Along these lines, he told his audience that the Liberal Secretary for War R. B. Haldane's idea of a general staff of the Empire would be of great value. Milner went further to propose a 'systematic interchange' of both military men and civil servants between Britain and the self-governing states as was already being done in other professions. Every tie, commercial, social, educational or political, which caused men 'to pass and repass from one part of the Empire to another', was of real importance in 'welding us together and making us realize the meaning and value of common citizenship'. For those who could not travel, he called for cheaper telegraphic rates so that written communications could at least be facilitated and more news could circulate from Britain and the rest of the Empire. All this would be in harmony with what he called the 'root idea of Imperialists, namely to develop the common life of the Empire.' Milner closed by confessing to his audience that he was 'anxious to give full and yet unexaggerated expression to my sense of the high privilege of British citizenship', but found it difficult to express his deep feelings about the Empire in short addresses. To Milner there was 'nothing so odious as cant', and this was a subject on which it was 'particularly easy to seem to be canting'. Not that he was afraid of falling into 'a strain of boastfulness'. The last thing the Empire inspired was 'a desire to boast – to wave a flag, or to shout "Rule Britannia". When I think of it, I am much more inclined to go into a corner by myself and pray.'<sup>9</sup>

This sentiment, Glazebrook reported to Richard Jebb, 'fairly lifted the house, which I think did honour both to Milner and to the audience which appreci-



ated the sober seriousness with which Milner regards the problem which has to be worked out'. He went on that Milner made a 'very good impression on everybody here who met him and he liked all our people ... [who] were very much impressed with Milner and I think perhaps we may do some work'. He was 'anxious that they should all meet Milner together ... and that we were to look to him ultimately for guidance'. Milner, Glazebrook went on, 'seemed to have left behind him in England all the slightest pessimistic vein, which would not have been popular or useful in this country, but at the same time he did not hesitate to say certain things of a more or less critical description. These were all perfectly well received.' The Vancouver and Winnipeg speeches were 'certainly very good, and reports drifting into us from the West that he made as good a personal impression there as he did here'.<sup>10</sup>

While in Toronto, Milner gave his blessing to a small 'Club' formed by Glazebrook and Ernest du Vernet, a prominent lawyer. This was to be devoted to developing imperial feeling in Canada and strengthening the links between the dominions and Britain. The members included the journalist John Willison, soon to be appointed *The Times* Canadian correspondent, and two University of Toronto historians, Keith Feiling and Edward Kylie.<sup>11</sup> The day after his Toronto speech, Milner wrote to Glazebrook that he had been 'thinking a lot about your club. The men are good stuff I am sure. I am equally sure that the more private and informal you keep it, the more you avoid the character of a "league" in any sort of organization, the better it will be.' The group wanted to develop ideas and to inspire one another. As it was the 'new leaven' which mattered most, Milner advised Glazebrook to keep it 'to the young men', while staying in touch with the older ones, 'but not exactly bringing them in, except as "guides, philosophers and friends" for special occasions'. Every member should 'feel it his principal business to influence as many people as possible who are not of it' and who 'do not know they are being influenced'. Their work and mission 'lies outside among those – & the more numerous the better – whom you can severally reach in a natural way. Propaganda was most successful when it was not known to be propaganda'. Milner asked Glazebrook to notify him if he could be useful in seeing anyone of importance from Canada planning to visit England and that he would reciprocate for anyone visiting the dominion so that they could be properly looked after and not be allowed to 'drift'.<sup>12</sup>

A month later, Glazebrook reported to Thomas Drummond, whom he canvassed concerning a possible Montreal chapter of the 'club', that the 'method of procedure so far' for the Toronto group's eight members had been to choose a certain number of subjects, and for 'each of us to undertake to work up one of them'. Apart from educational activities, they were arranging correspondents in England, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Newfoundland and the West Indies, the 'idea being to exchange carefully considered information' and to get

pamphlets and such that were of value. After speaking with Milner, Glazebrook was sure that there were 'various people in England' who would be 'extremely glad of information' about Canadian affairs which did not come from 'official sources', and that if the club idea could be extended to Montreal, Winnipeg and British Columbia, it might become a 'movement of very considerable importance'.<sup>13</sup> As part of its propaganda, Glazebrook arranged to have Milner's Canadian speeches printed and he kept Milner apprised of developments. Within a year this 'Club' became the nucleus of the Round Table group in Canada.

The last stop on Milner's 1908 tour was Montreal. There he gave several speeches, the first on 1 November to the Board of Trade, a semi-official organization of businessmen led by Sir George Drummond, the President of the Bank of Montreal and a senator in the parliament of Canada. Milner told his audience that preferential trade between the different parts of the Empire had always appeared to him 'one of the happiest and most fertile ideas ever introduced into the sphere of national economies'. It was not practical to treat the Empire as an economic whole without any internal barriers, but it was 'both bad business and bad politics that the different communities within the Empire should deal with one another in any respect as if they were foreign countries'. To Milner preference was a 'working compromise'. Even if England were to remain, as he did not believe it would, a country of unrestricted free imports, he would still adhere to the principle and desire to see the stream of capital and emigration directed from the United Kingdom to other parts of the British Empire rather than foreign countries.

To make his point clear Milner defined the principle of preference as 'in the interests of the Empire as a whole we are bound to desire the greatest development, in economic as in other respects, of every part of it'. It followed that every part was 'a distinct and independent economic unit ... free, to shape its fiscal policy according to its own special requirements, with a view to the fullest development of its own wealth and productive power'. But, subject to this, it was 'desirable to encourage the maximum of intercourse ... between the different states and to foster trade within the Empire to the greatest extent'. Nothing could contribute more to this than the mutual adoption of the rule that, 'other things being equal, the people of any state in the Empire should obtain what they need to obtain, outside their own borders, from other portions of the Empire, rather than from foreign countries ... to their own kith and kin rather than foreigners'. All would gain in such a policy which would 'tend to give stability to trade' and 'give their several exports a position of vantage and security in certain markets, and would mitigate the risks and uncertainties of unrestricted international competition'.

Besides this economic side, the case for reciprocal concession was also 'immensely strengthened' when the political effect was considered. Stated in

broad terms this was Milner's case: By buying its wheat when practical from Canada, rather than Argentina, the United Kingdom would be helping to build up the prosperity of the dominion. By buying china or earthenware from the United Kingdom, rather than Germany or Belgium, Canada would be giving employment to British rather than foreign hands. By obtaining sugar from the West Indies rather than Europe, Canada could make all the difference to the economic prospects of the West Indies. Milner went on that it was admitted, even by Lloyd George, lately promoted to Chancellor of the Exchequer, that Canadian preference already granted to the United Kingdom was of benefit, and this, if it was continued, was going to be 'one of the most powerful weapons in the hands of the tariff reformers' and would 'contribute materially to the victory' which he anticipated on the fiscal question.

The policy of preference, Milner went on, was sometimes represented as an 'exchange of sacrifices'. It was, in his opinion 'nothing of the kind', and the word sacrifice was 'quite out of place in connection with it'. The idea simply was that, 'while Canada should make for herself everything she can make at a reasonable cost, she should buy what she cannot so make from the rest of the Empire rather than outside it, provided that the rest of the Empire is capable, again at a reasonable cost, of supplying it'. He admitted that 'friction would occasionally rise, though with good management it ought to arise very seldom'. He did not want British preference to harm Canada in any way, but he wanted the matter considered from the point of view of Canada, of Canadian industry as a whole, and not merely from that of a particular trade.

Milner concluded by addressing those who complained about the slow progress of and want of sympathy for the idea of mutual preference in the United Kingdom. That impression, though natural, he called erroneous. To those who knew the enormous difficulties faced, the progress seemed not slow but fast, and he did not think this was from any want of sympathy. The majority of British people, he believed, had 'a very strong feeling of attachment to the younger countries of the Empire, a very strong desire that the bonds between all the members of the imperial family may be maintained and strengthened'. The bulk were 'Unionists at heart ... not in any party sense, but in the sense of desiring to keep the Empire together'. There was no doubt a Little Englander, Cosmopolitan and Separatist section to which the 'operation of the party system' often gave a much greater influence than they were entitled to 'either by their numbers or their character', but he thought this section 'entirely out of accord with the general national sentiment'. Lastly, Milner told his audience that preference alone was not going to solve the problem of Imperial unity, but the reason for 'putting up a big fight' was that it was 'something making in the right direction', desirable on economic and wider grounds which could be 'accomplished now'. The great danger of the whole Imperial movement was that it might lose itself in aspirations. He sympa-

thized with the 'great and splendid ideal' of out and out federation, but he was convinced of the need to tackle practical problems as they arose.<sup>14</sup>

Two days later Milner made his final address, to the Canadian Club of Montreal. He told his audience that his point of view was that of a 'citizen of the Empire', who, no doubt, recognized a 'special duty to that portion of it in which he happens to reside – in my own case England – as ... he has a special duty to his own parish and his own country – but whose highest allegiance is not to England, or to the United Kingdom, but to the great whole, which embraces all the dominions of the Crown. That is his country.' This, Milner held, was the 'only right view' of the mutual relations of the self-governing states of the Empire, of which the United Kingdom was itself one. They were 'equal sharers in a common heritage. That is true Imperialism.'

No true imperialist either expected or desired to see the dominions occupying any subordinate position. To the contrary, as far as they shared in the responsibilities of Empire, they should also share in its direction. The ultimate idea was a union in which the several states, 'each entirely independent in its separate affairs, should all co-operate for common purposes on the basis of absolute unqualified equality of status.' Milner repeated that he did not fear, as some did, that the growth of Canadian patriotism would be a danger to the unity of the Empire. He took the opposite view. The last thing Milner would dream of would be to 'run Imperial patriotism against Canadian'. He wanted 'the one to rest upon the other'.<sup>15</sup>

While in Canada, Milner also had a 'very frank and interesting' talk with Henri Bourassa, the leader of the 'young French-Canadian movement', who carried out his own speaking tour opposing Milner's ideas.<sup>16</sup> He wrote to Bourassa that he appreciated his frankness and that, even though their points of view might be very different, he believed there was 'room for a large measure of agreement'. And in any case, 'nothing but good can result from a free interchange of opinions'.<sup>17</sup> Speaking at Montreal a month after Milner departed, Bourassa declared that the old provincialism was dying and that French Canadians would cooperate, but that it 'must be remembered that the Dominion was based on a federal system, just as the Empire was based on self-government, and that by making the provinces great they would be making the whole Dominion great'.<sup>18</sup>

At the other end of the political spectrum, Milner saw Sam Hughes, an ardent imperialist who, unlike Bourassa, had been a strong supporter of Britain in the Boer War.<sup>19</sup> The Conservative Hughes wrote to him that 'Your visit everywhere in Canada has done much good. You have reached the hearts of the *people*. Were you to draw conclusions from those whom you meet – "as men who hold the nation in the hollow of their hands" – you might go away somewhat *disheartened* over your plans and mine for Full Partnership – free and yet firm - union of Britain and the Colonies. But need I say to you that those who mould events

are rarely ever the “big wigs” – They are the lads along the sideline and the back street who finally bring success to a movement.’ While it was ‘all right enough to give the big wigs academic addresses, their souls – in all ages and in all lands – *as a rule*, are measured by their own *self* interest’. Hughes was not surprised to see in the papers that Sir George Drummond was ‘quite content to remain as we are – Developing an anti-British ultimate sentiment – paving the way in the near future of a Canadian Nation ruled and guided by Quebec and other anti-British sentiment and purpose. But the hour is nearly here for a show of firmness. First, however, it would be well for the Mother Land to get into harness – as she is fast doing.’

Only one policy commended itself to Hughes, ‘*Full Partnership* leaving to each its purely local affairs but giving to the great *Imperial* authority the control of Foreign Policy, Army, Navy, Imperial Tariff only, &c’. He went on that the preferential tariff idea ‘alone offers no *sentiment*, no *inspiration* beyond the sordid one of *self-interest* - for selfish men, for business breeds selfishness. The other includes preft [*sic*] tariffs – and lends itself to the permanence of the world’s peace – the maintenance of civil and religious liberty; the upbuilding and ennobling of mankind not only in Greater Britain, but by reflection and imitation – the whole world over.’ He asked Milner to remember him to ‘dear old Amery’ and added ‘Everyone in Canada who has met you whom I have seen is delighted with you and wishes for your return soon ... success to the Cause.’<sup>20</sup>

Hughes wrote to Amery in the same vein, reporting that the impression left everywhere by Milner was ‘*splendid*. His quiet manner has deeply impressed all classes here, and indeed it would not surprise me to see it a *fashion* among public men – “The Milner Mannerism” – if those adopting the form had only been imbued with the *spirit* and that dogged iron will and calm deliberate sound judgment of the man all will be well.’ Of course, Hughes went on, it was ‘not what should he *say*, but what he *should not say* that troubled him, and adverse critics as well’. But Milner had confounded them all and already the Toronto newspapers were running articles on ‘right lines’. Unfortunately in Hughes’s eyes, Milner met the ‘business – and consequently the absolutely *selfish* people’ who looked on trade as the most important question. Too many, as well, that Milner met looked to the Laurier Government for favour and gave only hesitating support to anything not having Laurier’s endorsement.<sup>21</sup>

Milner reported to Grey from Montreal on 5 November, the day he departed for England, that it had been an ‘awful rush here, very different from the comparative peace of Ottawa’, and the next time he came to Canada he meant to stipulate ‘no speeches’. He liked the Montreal people very much and told Grey there are ‘several men here - and women - who seem to me a much higher stamp than I have, with some exceptions, found in Canada’. Milner was ‘immensely struck’ by Lady Drummond and the other Drummonds had been ‘simply invaluable to

me here' and at the same time, 'so very judgematic' concerning the likelihood of furthering imperial unity. He was sorry he did not have more time to spend with Grey, and also that he missed the Conservative leader Robert Borden and W. S. Fielding, the Minister of Finance in the Laurier Government, who it would have been useful to see.<sup>22</sup> It was the Liberal Fielding who had drawn up the Canadian tariff twelve years before that had given preference to Britain, and which continued to breathe life into imperialist hopes.

In January 1909 Grey sent Milner a collection of articles from dominion newspapers, telling him 'You will note your contribution to the crystalisation of Imperial sentiment in Canada is gratefully acknowledged; but the suggestion of the "Observer" the "Times" and the "Daily Mail", that Imperial sentiment is weakening in Canada, is violently resented, and a hint to this effect to Garvin, Maxse, Northcliffe, &c. might be useful'.<sup>23</sup> Milner commented to Glazebrook that he agreed with Grey and that some of the articles were 'absurd, & very tactless' and that the Canadian newspapers had, in some instances, 'taken offence and retorted'. This he felt was a pity, but that sort of thing simply could not be helped 'while newspapers were newspapers' and Canadians were, 'like their fellow Britishers elsewhere, so thin-skinned'. Injudicious friends in and out of the press were a problem, but, nevertheless, more British statesmen must visit the dominion, as Milner was told fifty times on his tour. All in all he did not believe much damage had been done, and if there had been, it was 'not in human prescience to prevent it'.<sup>24</sup>

The tour of Canada inspired Northcliffe's *Daily Mail* to declare that 'Lord Milner's speeches in Canada were a public education' which revived the Imperial cause and that the 'whole Unionist party' felt Milner would be 'the brain carrier of Imperial policy for the next twenty years'. It prophesied that Milner 'could not be less than second even in the next Unionist Government'. In any thereafter he would 'probably be first, and this because Mr. Chamberlain's mantle has unmistakably fallen on him'. As Colonial Secretary in the next Government, with the 'special support' he now had in the most important dominion, Milner 'must hold a place no less commanding in the next Unionist cabinet than Mr. Chamberlain held in the last'.<sup>25</sup> Joseph Chamberlain commented to Colonel Denison that Milner had 'done good service both to Canada and the motherland in his tour ... which I have taken much interest in following'.<sup>26</sup>

One of the problems Milner identified in Canada had to do with imperial communications, particularly news from Britain. He commented on this to Geoffrey Robinson, still in Johannesburg as editor of the *Star* and in addition South African correspondent of *The Times*. A London Imperial Press Conference was planned for June 1909 which Milner hoped might improve things across the board. He told Robinson that he wished he 'were coming ... I shudder to think how S. Africa may be represented.' Meanwhile, Milner hoped Amery

had been able to get Robinson 'some of the information you wanted in order to launch your idea of an Imperial Press Service. My experience in Canada entirely confirms your view. It's shocking what "wash" is telegraphed to the outlying parts of the Empire as "Home News"'. He thought Northcliffe (who had followed Milner to Canada and seen conditions firsthand) 'ought to be sympathetic. He has certainly improved the "Times" service from Canada. But, of course, the news homeward is no longer so bad. It is the news outward, wh. is deplorable. I wish the matter could be properly put forward at the Conference. If I meet the delegates, as I believe it is intended that I should do, I will certainly refer to it.'<sup>27</sup> Robinson did attend the affair and amongst the results was a lowering of cable rates and the creation of an Empire Press Union to serve as a London clearing-house for news.

In 1909 Milner became embroiled in the controversy over Lloyd George's 'People's Budget' and the resulting two-year struggle between the Liberal Commons and Conservative Lords. In the middle of this political battle, in May 1910, Edward VII died. About this 'awful blow', Milner reported to John Willison in Canada that he had been at the Privy Council pledging allegiance to the new sovereign and could not help wondering whether the reign of George V would see 'consolidation of this vast empire, or its disruption'. Many considered the reciprocity talks going on between Canada and the United States to be the period's most dangerous threat to the imperial dream. Milner confided to Willison that British imperialists were 'feeling very anxious just now about Canada'. The worst of it was that they did not see, beyond keeping up the fight for Tariff Reform, 'what we can do over here to help you in stemming the tide' which seemed to be 'running strongly for continentalism & against imperial union'. Since it would be a mistake in his opinion for the British to make appeals, it remained for 'Canadians and Canadians alone', to keep the country 'on lines making for the imperial ideal'.<sup>28</sup>

Milner feared that 'a blank resistance to negotiations with the US would be unpopular & might divide parties on pro-imperial and anti-imperial lines'. He had no objection to lowering barriers between Canada and the US unless this meant abandoning preference. Clinging to this idea as 'a basic principle' was the only course and he believed this was the Conservative Leader's Robert Borden's position. He realized the difficulty of 'adhering to this, while we do nothing on our side', but went on, that now that the principle of preference finally had 'caught on' in Britain, Canada 'ought not to leave us in the lurch' and ought to be 'very slow to abandon a policy, wh. she has herself originated'. To Milner it was 'indisputable that we could have carried Tariff reform before now, & we could carry it tomorrow, without the food taxes. But we won't drop them because they give us the only real chance of asserting the principle of preference.' He pledged that before long 'we shall carry Tariff Reform, food taxes and all', unless Canada

'breaks away from her own policy' and 'leaves us alone to fight round the standard wh. she herself has set up.' Milner suggested Willison employ an appeal not to 'give away' their fellow imperialists in other parts of the Empire who have followed Canada's lead.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the best efforts of Willison and his brethren a comprehensive trade agreement was reached between the dominion and the United States. This news was widely received in England as the death knell of any scheme of imperial federation. However, a glimmer of hope survived in that, rather than taking the form of a treaty, the agreement had to be implemented by concurrent legislation in both countries. So began in January 1911 a political battle in Canada in which the Conservatives, led by Robert Borden, attacked the Laurier Government for undermining the imperial connection and moving towards commercial and eventual political union with the United States.<sup>30</sup> That spring Milner wrote to his imperialist confederate Colonel Denison, 'I cannot quite make out from the newspaper reports what is really going on in Canada. Evidently there is very great resistance to the reciprocity proposals, but will it be strong enough to break down party allegiance? I fear not.'

However, Milner was inclined to think that, if Laurier dissolved, he would be beaten. The question was, would he dissolve? On the whole, Milner believed 'our best chance seems to lie in the uncertain result of the political manoeuvres on the American side'. It was quite evident that the Americans had as 'good reason to desire reciprocity as the Canadians have to fear it', but that did not mean that the Taft administration in the United States would carry it. 'National interest is one thing; party considerations are another.' For Milner, the 'best thing about what is on the whole a bad business is the great impulse which the controversy seems to have given to Canadian national feeling. I am not the least bit afraid of that feeling from the point of view of the Empire, and I think it is an invaluable safeguard against "continentalism", the one real danger.' Every thoughtful Canadian, Milner went on, must see that Canada 'has a much greater future as a member of the British Empire, than she would have split up into a half a dozen states in the American Union'.<sup>31</sup>

At the same time, Borden feared that any part taken by British imperialists in the struggle would only aid Laurier. He sent Milner thanks for his concern over the fight, but warned that 'interference or dictation by Unionist statesmen in the great question which is now before the Canadian parliament might be resented ... and would probably do more harm than good'. The Government proposals, Borden went on, were 'exceedingly mischievous and dangerous and they come at a period of commercialism when the lure of the dollar is strongest ... in so far as Canada is essential to the Empire, the battle of the Empire will be fought in this country within the next eighteen months'.<sup>32</sup> Soon after this, Milner confided to Sir Charles Tupper in Canada that he was 'getting more hopeful' about the fight



which was being put up by Borden against the reciprocity proposals. If it were not for the strength of party discipline, he thought the scheme would 'certainly be rejected'. Even as it was, he hoped the 'rising national spirit of Canada' would kill it, and 'keep her own best interests, as well as to the empire'.<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, a month later Milner told Glazebrook that the 'greatest danger at present threatening real imperialism' was the possible defection of Canada. The more he looked at it the more he disliked reciprocity and Milner was glad that Borden was making 'such a fine stand'. Even if he was beaten now, it was 'bound to make him a bigger man'. As for Laurier, Milner was glad he had at last 'so completely shown his hand'. He had always known that Laurier was against them, but had at least thought him a 'genuine independence man'. This was not good from their point of view, but still an 'intelligent and in a way honourable ideal'. Milner felt much less antipathy to the independence movement in Canada than he did 'continental union'. A distinct, self-respecting Canadian nationalism was 'much less incompatible with imperialism, than the policy of flinging Canada into the ominous southern hotch-pot of the United States, to be all chopped up together into one trust-ridden, cosmopolitan mash'.<sup>34</sup>

In September 1911, two months after the defeat of Milner and the die-hards in the Lords over the Parliament Bill, the downcast Unionists were cheered by the electoral victory in Canada of Borden and the Conservatives, who gained power in an 'unholy alliance' with Bourassa and the Nationalists. Milner sent the new premier congratulations on 'so brilliant a result', which, he went on, 'may well turn out to have been a decisive event in the history of the British empire'. At the very least it was the 'best thing ... that has happened in imperial politics for a long time compensating for many set-backs and disappointments'.<sup>35</sup> Borden replied that many causes had contributed to the result, but it might 'fairly be said that it was chiefly due to the determination of the Canadian people to maintain unimpaired the control of their own destiny as an autonomous nation within the British Empire'.<sup>36</sup> These words should have served as a warning to Milner, as Borden would prove a cautious and moderate 'theoretical imperialist' who rejected the plans of the Round Table as 'impracticable and any advantage too remote and indirect'.<sup>37</sup> But this was all to come.

Milner returned to Canada for a 1912 tour of smaller scale than his first campaign. Besides Quebec and Ontario, the itinerary included the Maritime Provinces he had missed before. He was also more circumspect in his declarations as other British figures he followed had come under criticism for their heavy-handed advice. Milner noted this in a speech before the Canadian Club of Halifax, while calling, nevertheless, for an interchange of ideas and men amongst the Empire in addition to material commerce. Milner also marked another change since his visit four years before. 'Time was when it was our principal business to try and make people realize ... that there was such a thing as an imperial

problem, and to point out that the several independent states under the British crown were strangely lacking in cohesion, in organization for common action, and consequently in that strength and security which cohesion and organization alone can give.' Now all that was changed. It was no longer necessary to waken interest in the subject. Imperial sentiment was active and growing. The problem was to 'direct that force into profitable channels' and the 'best way to do it'.

Milner wanted to take this process out of the party political sphere, and to do this suggested that a new body was needed, 'distinct from all existing organs of Government and representative of all parts of the Empire, to which the management of Imperial affairs should be entrusted'. In the interim period of danger, common action would take agreements between the existing party Governments. He claimed to have 'rejoiced greatly, as I believe the majority of people in Great Britain rejoiced, at Mr. Borden's declaration that Canada did not mean to be an adjunct even of the Mother Country'. On this point Milner did not think there was any difference between the Canadian parties, for this seemed to him what Laurier had said when he declared during the Boer War, 'If you want our help, call us to your councils'. Milner concluded with a warning that any British Government which failed to respond to such an advance, 'would soon find itself out of office. If the two hearts of the two peoples beat in unison, woe to the statesman, no not to the statesman, but to the misguided politician, who ventured to stand in the way.'<sup>38</sup>

On this trip Milner again saw Borden, but also had discussions with Wilfrid Laurier and Henri Bourassa. With the last Milner talked particularly frankly about the intertwined issues of imperial representation and Canada's naval contribution, which in addition to reciprocity had been an issue that had unseated Laurier the previous year. Borden and Bourassa had both attacked Laurier's navy plan; however, they parted ways in 1912 when Borden agreed to a \$35 million Canadian contribution to build three Dreadnoughts for the British fleet. To this the Nationalists responded with the slogan 'No Contribution Without Representation'. By this, Bourassa explained to Milner, they meant without 'full partnership in the government of the Empire, including India, the Crown Colonies and foreign affairs'. He admitted that the people of Canada had 'some duty to perform towards the maintenance of the imperial fabric', but believed that the 'most efficacious way to accomplish that duty' was by 'organizing the defence of Canada and rendering safe from attack that part of the Empire for which we are responsible, and over which we have political control'. Bourassa failed to see any 'abnormal and immediate' peril which would change his position. About representation the Nationalist leader confessed to Milner that did not believe the problems could be worked out satisfactorily and that he in fact feared they might lead instead to 'breaking imperial bonds'. Bourassa saw independence as the more logical outcome of national development, but dreaded the

danger of 'moral absorption' by the United States. Against the threat of 'Yankee civilization', he believed Canada needed the 'beneficent influence of British ideas and traditions'. If now, or even in the years to come, he had to choose between 'full-fledged Imperial Federation and complete independence', he would choose federation. But Bourassa did not think that the majority of Canadians agreed.<sup>39</sup>

In his reply, Milner agreed that Canada needed representation. He told Bourassa that if there was 'ever to be a union for common purposes', he wanted 'Canadians, and French-Canadians, to make their influence felt in the shaping of our common policy'. The policy of the Empire would be a better policy, 'broader, simpler, more pacific as well as more effective', if it was the result of deliberations of men from all parts of the Empire, rather than as it was at present, decided by British statesmen mainly preoccupied with British considerations. The last thing Milner personally wanted was to 'push Canada into a premature decision for or against "full partnership union" with Great Britain and the Empire'. Milner favoured a policy of experiment. Rather than take on immediately the burden of 'full participation', he suggested making a beginning 'in both directions' in the naval sphere. In his view, even a rudimentary participation in imperial defence involved participation in the control of imperial policy. Bourassa might very well think this the 'wrong road' for a first step but Milner argued that it would not lead to the 'complications' Bourassa forecast, 'but rather will enable you to avoid them'. At any rate, Milner saw no possible harm in an experiment. His faith in the Empire, which he was careful to note was not synonymous with 'Anglo-saxondom', was so great, his 'belief in its possibilities of development and in its mission in the world' was so deeply rooted in him, that he could not think that Canada 'would wish, if once she realized what the empire stood for in India, in Africa, in relations with the Great Powers, to be excluded from participation in its work and its burdens'.<sup>40</sup>

Bourassa was unmoved, in response repeating his assertion that Canada, and all the other self-governing colonies as well, should make their imperial contribution in their own territories. Milner's experiment would be 'putting the cart before the horse'. In his view the 'cart and horse should go together'. No wider contribution to the imperial navy should be made 'without the question of representation being decided upon'. Bourassa did not believe any experiment could be abandoned as easily as Milner envisioned. 'If Great Britain and her various daughter countries' once entered the path 'indicated to them by the new school of Imperialism' of which Milner was one of the 'very few thoughtful and clear-sighted leaders' whose views Bourassa 'had occasion to ascertain', they would 'never retrace their steps and come back to their former position'. Any such experiment would end either 'in full partnership or complete rupture; and, in the latter case, not in amicable separation, but, as in a family quarrel, bitterest of all'. This was Bourassa's main reason for opposition and why he insisted in having

'all aspects of the question put frankly and clearly before the people of the various parts of the empire'.<sup>41</sup>

Before he returned to England Milner gave an interview at St John, New Brunswick which welcomed Canada's contribution to a national navy. He concluded, 'Our idea of Canada is not as a tributary nation, but as an ally and an associate, and this applies to all Colonies capable of self-government'.<sup>42</sup> Despite the best efforts of Milner and his Canadian allies, Borden's Naval Aide Bill was defeated six months later in the Liberal-dominated Canadian Senate, leaving Canada's naval policy in 'total disarray'.<sup>43</sup> The Prime Minister attributed the defeat, which dashed his proposal for a \$35 million contribution to the Royal Navy, to Laurier's 'wounded vanity ... his intense antipathy to any true cooperation in the common defence of the Empire'.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately for those who hoped for further progress, European events would lead a little more than a year later to a cataclysm that would before it had run its course, spell the end of many dreams, including Milner's.

## 10 PRESIDENT OF AN INTELLECTUAL REPUBLIC: THE ROUND TABLE

While Milner battled against the People's Budget, the Kindergarten had been busy hatching what would come to be called the Round Table movement, meant to take their successful South African work for imperial unity to a wider sphere.<sup>1</sup> To this group Milner acted both as a father figure and elder statesman. John Dove, who became Lionel Curtis's travelling assistant and helped to establish Round Table branches in Sydney and Melbourne, later recalled that Milner was

entirely in agreement with the other members of the Round Table group that some form of organic union was necessary as the only means of securing the political ideals of the race – real nationality and self-government for those capable of exercising it ... But he was by no means equally convinced that the moment for pressing for it had arrived. Nor was he in complete agreement with the particular theories or the details of the particular policies advocated by some of the younger men. He confined himself to giving his general support to the object of achieving organic union of the Empire in some form, some day: and to contribute, besides financial assistance, criticism and advice upon the proposals that were put forward ... Milner wished to give the young men their head, confronting them with a vital problem, and eager to see what they would make of it ... The role played by Milner, in fact, in the discussions of the Round Table, and in the direction of its policy, so far as he did direct it, was that of President of an intellectual Republic.<sup>2</sup>

The real day-to-day directors of this republic were Lionel Curtis and Philip Kerr (later Lord Lothian), who both returned to England in 1909 as part of the delegation which brought the South African Union Bill to the imperial parliament.<sup>3</sup> Earlier in the year, Curtis had reported to Amery about the Kindergarten's union efforts, that the group was 'like Mary Magdalen of whom it was said "She hath done what she could"'. What they had been able to do was 'rather showy but I don't think that will go so far or last so long as what you people have been doing at home & one rejoices to think that our hands will probably be free soon to join forces with you ... We have acted as an advance party of sappers sent out to build a vital section of the road over which the main force will have to travel later on.' Coming home as part of the South African delegation would allow him to find

out 'what you people are doing & in what way we can best help'. The group's idea was to 'devote ourselves to getting a move on from the colonies in sympathy with yours'.<sup>4</sup>

To this end Curtis planned to travel to Canada, Australia and New Zealand 'as a sort of prospector' for men to who could be 'trusted to back up'. He aimed to stress quality over quantity and to start a paper for all the self-governing colonies like the *State*, the pro-Union journal which Kerr had edited in South Africa. He also suggested Kerr to run the central office. A first step in drawing up a common policy and plan was to 'state the imperial problem'. Using a similar method they had been able to influence the delegates to the Union Convention. Curtis explained that by 'patient discussion of a policy in all its details ... we all ended by agreeing with one another', although the end product had turned out to be different than they had expected. He was 'afraid to say how many times I rewrote the Selborne memoranda to the Govt. of South Africa!' But in his view, 'a gospel like this' was 'extraordinarily necessary' for success.<sup>5</sup>

Amery shared Curtis's preliminary plan with Milner, who felt there was a 'great deal' to the scheme and particularly that a 'first rate' magazine would be of 'greatest use'. Concerning staff, Milner thought that 'one man everywhere, *giving his whole time* to the direction, coordination, etc. of efforts on our lines would be invaluable'. Kerr, he went on, '*might*' have the ability to direct the London end, but he was unsure since Kerr had only arrived in South Africa just before Milner departed in 1905. There was also the problem of funding as the men and the magazine would need support.<sup>6</sup>

To address all these problems, the Round Table movement's first substantive meeting took place in September 1909 at the Lord Anglesey's country seat Plas Newydd, overlooking the Menai Straits.<sup>7</sup> Milner noted the 'purely male party', met to discuss Curtis's scheme. Those assembled at dinner, besides their wealthy host and patron, were Curtis, Kerr, F. S. Oliver, Robert Brand, William Marris, George Craik, Alfred Holland, and Lords Lovat, Howick and Wolmer. Jameson, who was expected, turned up late. Craik was another New College product who had participated in some South African Kindergarten activities, as had Marris. Holland had been a secretary to Jameson in the Cape. Howick and Wolmer were the heirs of Lords Grey and Selborne.

Milner joined Lovat and Oliver on the Finance Committee. The last reported to Amery, who was ill and could not attend, that fund raising was going on apace. Lovat, Oliver told Amery, was 'by descent a pirate & Jameson by temperament so that it is little wonder to me they came running in with great bags of golden sovereigns'. The idealism of Curtis and Kerr rather amused the more worldly Oliver and he reported they had 'taken to the buccaneering business only from a solemn sense of duty', but were 'very nearly as good as the professionals. So that we roll in money.' He predicted £30,000 soon would be promised. At the meet-

ing Milner, Oliver went on, 'took hold of the thing with his claws & his beak & kept us hard to business'.<sup>8</sup> Milner recorded only that the discussions 'got a good deal settled'.<sup>9</sup>

At Plas Newydd the group drew up a plan to organize small Round Table branches in Britain, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. Choosing the membership nucleus and overseeing the movement's activities both by correspondence and traveling representation was left to the central governing group in London, dubbed the 'Moot'.<sup>10</sup> Curtis, Kerr and Marris soon left for Canada, long acknowledged as the linchpin state for any workable scheme of union.<sup>11</sup> All energies, Oliver reported to Amery, were now to be turned to '*enquiry*' with no journalism or announcement of plans until 'our doves return to the ark with their beaks full of olive branches of true knowledge'. Oliver also suggested that on this tour the over-zealous Curtis needed to be restrained from public speaking as the time was not yet ripe for such activity.<sup>12</sup> Out of this first trip to Canada eventually came what was called the 'original green memorandum', more formally the *Memorandum on Canada and the British Commonwealth*. This was also dubbed the 'egg' because it initiated the system later used throughout the Empire of writing memoranda on imperial union to be circulated for comments. Such a loop of feedback had produced good results in South Africa. It would be less successful in the more disparate and wider Empire. But it is not likely any scheme would have proved better for the ambitious task.

Milner prepared the way in Canada with a letter to Arthur Glazebrook, who soon overcame his reticence and allowed his Toronto club to be folded into the movement while he became resident director of the dominion's Round Table crusade. Milner confided to Glazebrook about Curtis that he fancied his friend was 'rather uneasy about him. I don't think you need be'. Milner admitted that Curtis was 'a bit of a visionary and an idealist, & he has great schemes. But I think is thoroughly impressed with the necessity of caution.' He had given Curtis 'a sufficiently lurid picture of the pitfalls, among wh. he will be treading'. Despite 'all his great ambitions, wh. are not in the least *personal*', Milner found him an 'essentially modest man' whose 'pedantic manner quite belies him'. Curtis, he went on, was 'anxious to learn, exceedingly ready to take advice, & not in the least resenting a friendly hint or contradiction'. Finally, he was a man of 'energy & power of work almost amounting to genius' so worth helping.<sup>13</sup> This Glazebrook did and subsequently reported to Milner the progress Curtis and his more 'level-headed' companions Kerr and Marris achieved on their tour.<sup>14</sup> The travellers themselves reported to Milner their disappointment that most in the dominion failed to share their fears of looming imperial disintegration.

While Curtis led further forays abroad meant to gain a 'Dominion perspective', it was agreed that a London office should be opened with Kerr as secretary. It was only natural that Kerr would also be put in charge of the *Round Table*

quarterly, as he had previously edited the *State* dedicated to the Union of South Africa. In January 1910 meetings at his lodgings and at the Rhodes Trust offices further plans were made for the campaign and the journal.<sup>15</sup> Milner attended a moot on 20 April 1910 meant to work out a practical programme to be reflected in the *Round Table* quarterly, offices for which were found at 175 Piccadilly.

An introductory article, titled 'The Round Table', explained that enquiry in the United Kingdom and the self-governing dominions had shown that a number of people 'would appreciate a well-informed and well-balanced periodical review of imperial politics'. This was meant to be a tonic to daily newspapers, run for profit, which were forced to devote most of their content to affairs of local interest and to 'treat imperial and foreign affairs from a local point of view'. Most leader writers were 'too engrossed in the whirl of local politics to appraise truly from this news the slow movements of the world forces which play upon the Empire'. Their overseas news service was also 'meagre' but no improvement would overcome the 'scrappy and spasmodic' cable news available, coupled with the 'ignorant and disproportionate' editorial comment upon it. There was a real need for some 'regular and comprehensive survey of the affairs of the Empire to display events in their true relation, and to show their effect on the organism as a whole'.

No weekly or even monthly could be at once a balanced review and a 'live' organ for the whole Empire. What was wanted was a quarterly review, 'severely detached from the domestic party issues of the day, and written anonymously, with the sole aim of exchanging information and ideas about the imperial problem among people interested in all parts of the British Dominions'. The anonymity was designed to allow people of eminence to express frankly their views on subjects on which they had 'special knowledge'. No attempt would be made to gain a large circulation among the general public. The journal was meant only for people 'genuinely interested in the problem of imperial organization'.

Each number would contain a survey of the internal and external relations of the Empire during the previous three months, 'written from the standpoint of a citizen of the Empire specially concerned with no one part of it, a number of articles written on Great Britain, the Dominions and the chief dependencies ... and three or four first-rate articles on special aspects of the imperial problem'. The review aimed both to 'present the interests of the Empire as a unit' and 'reflect public opinion in every part'. It would differ from all others in being 'in touch with the opinions not of the British Isles, or one of the Dominions alone, but of all parts of the Empire, for it has been founded and will be maintained by the joint efforts of people who live in all the more important British Dominions, as a medium through which they can exchange information and ideas, and can follow the fortunes and the progress of the Empire as a whole'.<sup>16</sup>



One of the *Round Table's* declared objects was to 'encourage a sound system of emigration from the Mother Country to His Majesty's Dominions' and to supply reliable information as to the prospects open to young men with capital who desired to take up agriculture in the British Colonies. Therefore, the first *Round Table* experiment off the presses was a special issue, *South Africa as a Field for Settlers*, dated 25 July 1910. This guidebook contained several memoranda on the subject by the Settler's Emigration Society, listing the pros and cons as impartially as possible, for men with £1,000 capital interested in becoming agricultural settlers. The Executive Committee of the Society included Lovat, Anglesey, Howick and Amery, with Kerr as Hon. Secretary. The Committee in South Africa listed several Kindergarten members: Hugh Wyndham, Patrick Duncan, Richard Feetham, Fred Perry and Geoffrey Robinson.

The first regular issue of *The Round Table* was dated 15 November 1910. Its leading article, on the Anglo-German rivalry, warned of Germany's power and ambitions. Other essays considered 'India and the English', the British constitutional crisis and the conference meant to settle it, and South African and Canadian affairs. New Zealand and Australia would have to wait for the next issue, which also dealt with the Anglo-Japanese alliance and the immigration question so vital to the dominions.<sup>17</sup> If any journal reflected Milner's point of view it was the *Round Table*, although from the beginning differences were apparent. For one example, the first issue finds much more appealing than did Milner, at the time at least, of a federal solution to the constitutional crisis of 1910 including Ireland in a scheme of 'Home Rule All Around'.<sup>18</sup>

The death of Edward VII on 6 May 1910 and the inexperience of George V had inspired J. L. Garvin to suggest a 'Truce of God' including all-party political talks. The first meeting of the resulting Constitutional Conference, of more than twenty over the following months, took place on 17 June in Asquith's room at the Commons. After three months the Conference appeared stalemated and doomed to failure. In a last minute attempt to save the situation that October, Garvin promoted a plan by Lloyd George for a larger settlement entailing a new programme of 'federalism' including Ireland and the entire Empire and a coalition Government. There was even a mention of compulsory service. F. S. Oliver, writing as 'Pacifcus' in *The Times*, also pushed forward this 'Home Rule All Around' solution. Chamberlain and Balfour, however, rejected the coalition idea on 1 November.<sup>19</sup>

Many in the Round Table movement besides Oliver were attracted to the idea of 'Home Rule All Around', but at the time Milner largely agreed with Balfour. He told the Unionist leader that 'speaking as an Imperial Unionist of the most advanced type I certainly do not hold, that the grant of any measure of "Home Rule" to Ireland' can be made a basis for a wider federation of the Empire'. The problems were entirely different. "Ireland like Canada" might, at

first sight, seem a step in that direction. But I myself believe it would be a step in the other – i.e. towards the dissolution of the whole. “Ireland like Ontario” on the other hand ... may or may not be a good thing, but it clearly affords no jumping off ground for Imperial Federation.’ The question before them, as Milner understood the matter, was one ‘affecting the Constitution of the U.K. alone ... the constitutional relations of the U.K. with Canada, Australia, &c are not directly involved in this matter at all & it merely adds to the existing confusion to imagine that they are. So far I think we are in entire agreement.’

Where Milner perhaps differed from Balfour was in ‘the conviction that we are “in for” constitutional reconstruction of the U.K., whether we like it or not’. Rather than passing of some ‘wholly ill-considered scheme’, Milner did not in the least mind fighting a losing battle, if it was the right thing to do. But he conceded that taking a ‘less militant course’ with some constitutional change to turn the revolutionary current into ‘safe channels or at least the safest possible’ might be an improvement. Anything seemed better than the Gladstonian plan of dealing with Ireland alone and giving it an exceptional position in the United Kingdom. Avoiding this was the great merit of Federalism, a word Milner hated, preferring ‘all around devolution’. This he would be glad to see, ‘if this – with an unquestionably supreme authority – were to be found practicable’. But, if it were not, Milner told Balfour, he would fight for the status quo with a ‘good deal more heat, and a great deal more hope of victory, than I feel today’.<sup>20</sup> However, developments over the next few years would lead Milner to call the breakdown of the conference the ‘greatest political disaster of recent times’.<sup>21</sup>

After the failure of the Constitutional Conference a dispirited Amery confided to Milner, ‘we are absolutely paralysed’. He challenged Milner: ‘What are you going to do about it? You are the one and only man who can give us life and coherence’. What was wanted, Amery went on, was a ‘Graaff Reinets speech, or rather a campaign, to do for England what Graaff Reinets did for South Africa’. If Milner would only act, he would not have to ‘do it alone: there are plenty of workers even among the politicians ... and lots of young men outside ... The moment you speak with real intention everybody will know it & sit up’.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately for Amery’s wishes, though Milner would involve himself in the following election campaign, he once again refused to assume the leadership role.

The polling began on 3 December and the first figures were promising. However, it soon became apparent that the polling would not alter the balance of political power. The final numbers in the ‘No Change’ election again reflected failure for the Unionists, who ended tied with the Liberals at 272 seats.<sup>23</sup> The Irish held the balance with 84 MPs to maintain Asquith in office in return for Home Rule. To pass this the Lords would have first to be squared. Many Unionists, infuriated by a second loss in one year, and fully realizing what was in store, also became convinced that the result was somehow unfair and that drastic

measures to resist the Government were justified.<sup>24</sup> Milner confided to Rudyard Kipling his 'fear, among other fears, that the Lords will now compromise – like "Gentlemen", out of some vague idea of saving the country, playing the game, pleasing the King or some other Devil's excuse for selling the pass.'<sup>25</sup> His worst fears would come to pass the next year as the Conservative Lords passed the Parliament Bill despite the best efforts of the die-hards that Milner joined at Selborne's urging.

With the election season past, and the political status quo unchanged, Milner turned his attention again to the Round Table. A 19 January 1911 'Moot' considered the form of the organic union the group desired and a sub-committee was appointed to draft an imperial constitution. The 'Moot' agreed that the prospective imperial parliament, which it was suggested should move around the Empire, should be given only those powers 'which it was essential it should exercise in order to insure the safety of the Empire'. A later convention would be called to consider what other powers the imperial government might 'conveniently exercise', for example postal services and cable communications. Fair imperial taxation, given the unfortunate American example of 1776, was of particular concern. Taxation by national wealth, it was decided, rather than population, seemed the best standard. On the other hand, for distributing representation, population was seen as key. Expenditure should be according to contribution with no dominion getting more than its fair share. Asiatic immigration was another vexed issue on which guarantees would need to be given to the dominions.<sup>26</sup>

Despite considerable effort on the part of the Round Table membership, the April 1911 Imperial Conference ended, as Milner predicted, with the same minimal results as its predecessors. For the last time 'Sir Won'tfrid' Laurier was present to undercut any hope for closer union or the creation of a standing organization with real influence. However, one often-overlooked product of the conference, which in later years would have a direct effect on Milner, was the appointment a Royal Commission to look into the whole question of developing the resources of the dominions 'in the interests of each and the Commonwealth as a whole'.<sup>27</sup> The subjects under its wide-reaching investigation included natural resources, trade and emigration. Interrupted by the Great War, the Commission would not issue its report until 1917. At the time, Milner found it very interesting to see, 'even at this recent doubly-damned "imperial conference" ... the consciousness of this overshadowing idea of national unity, the unwilling respect wh. they all felt they had to pay to it, compelled all the members of the conference, while rejecting every practical proposal, to be more than ultra polite in words to the very thing they were doing their very best to strangle, & to pretend as hard as ever they could they were really themselves *Imperialists at heart*'.<sup>28</sup>

Milner told Glazebrook that the one thing he felt 'quite sure of & that is that the Round Table & the activities wh. have sprung up around it', was 'worth all the help we can give'. Even though none of the young men 'may have got hold of quite the right end of the stick' and none of them 'may accomplish the particular object they are driving at', between them all they had without doubt 'given an immense impetus to thought, & to thought on fruitful lines'. Their ideas would 'produce something, & something of great value, though none of us may be able to foresee its exact shape'. Milner grew more and more convinced that 'imperialism in the broad sense of the word wh. is common to us all, is the only big & live political conception at present influencing all sections of the race'. It had immense difficulties to overcome, but it was a 'real and growing force all the same'.<sup>29</sup> Glazebrook reported that he was working to raise money for the Round Table programme and to improve the journal's circulation. He had given a letter for Milner to a young man called Vincent Massey (many years later the first Canadian Governor General of the dominion) who had been working with the Round Table and was coming to Balliol for a two-year history course. Glazebrook thought it important to get recruits early and told Milner, 'I know what a power you have over young men. I should like to feel that he could become definitely and by knowledge a Milnerite.'<sup>30</sup>

The following summer Robert Borden visited Britain and was widely feted. Andrew Bonar Law, who by this time had replaced Balfour as Unionist leader, hosted a banquet at the Carlton Hotel for the Canadian premier, who had cancelled Laurier's Reciprocity Treaty with the United States. Borden agreed to issue a statement of the 'necessity of a British Tariff Reform programme, including food duties, to Anglo-Canadian cooperation'.<sup>31</sup> The Canadian met with the Committee on Imperial Defence and, in an about face from the Laurier years, pledged cooperation. Churchill, who had been shifted to the Admiralty, even suggested a Canadian seat on the CID. Milner attended several Round Table functions with Borden, among them an August weekend at Cliveden, the country home on the Thames between London and Oxford of Waldorf and Nancy Astor, who had for the previous year been closely associated with the group. Defeated in the first 1910 election, Waldorf rebounded to win Plymouth for the Conservatives in the second. Waldorf's influence was enhanced when his father, the transplanted American millionaire William Waldorf Astor, bought Garvin's *Observer* from Northcliffe and left its direction to his son. In the following years Round Table moots were often held in the great library at Cliveden or the Astor's London house at 4 St James's Square.<sup>32</sup>

Milner had written to Bertha Syngé from Cliveden the month before 'how I should like to shut up Parliament for three years & turn the Kinder-garten & some well-selected women (to spare your blushes I won't mention names) on to getting our Government machinery into order. As a by-product they might

and indeed would, start the organization of the Empire.<sup>33</sup> Milner ensured one success for the Kindergarten by helping Curtis gain a powerful pulpit for his ideas as Beit Lecturer in Colonial History at Oxford. From this time at Oxford he gained the nickname 'the Prophet'. H. E. Egerton, the rather more subdued Beit Chair, later recalled that during Curtis's tenure he felt 'rather like a country rector with the Prophet Isaiah as his curate'.<sup>34</sup>

Another, and even more influential, position fell to the brotherhood in the summer of 1912 with the elevation of Geoffrey Robinson, whom Northcliffe had been grooming for more than a year, to the editorship of *The Times*. About the 'great announcement', Milner wrote to the new editor that there was, 'No need to tell you what I think. I have been praying hard for this consummation for months past, &, while I realise all the difficulties of your position, I have the greatest confidence that you will make it a huge success'. On the whole, he went on, 'I don't know that there is a finer chance in the whole sphere of public affairs'.<sup>35</sup> Besides Robinson, another voice at *The Times*, Edward Grigg, who had followed Amery as imperial affairs writer, also joined the Round Table 'Moot' discussions and before long would co-edit the journal with Kerr.

In 1912, with the Lords now only able to delay the inevitable for two years, Asquith's Home Rule Bill began making its way inexorably through Parliament and in this period the other issues which had dominated Milner's interest, imperial union, national service and Tariff Reform were all overwhelmed by the Irish crisis, and more particularly Ulster's impending separation from the United Kingdom.<sup>36</sup> To support the Ulster leader Sir Edward Carson in the struggle, Milner and Amery built a British Covenant organization that mirrored Carson's own effort in Ireland. Before it was closed down in July 1914, the British Covenant was signed by almost two million supporters who declared themselves 'earnestly and sincerely convinced that the claim of the Government to carry the Home Rule Bill into law, without reference to the people, is contrary to the spirit of our Constitution, and an intolerable denial of political justice to the Loyalists of Ireland'. They solemnly vowed that 'if that Bill is so passed I shall hold myself justified in taking any steps that may be effective to prevent it being put into operation, and more particularly to prevent the armed forces of the Crown being used to deprive the people of Ulster of their rights as citizens of the United Kingdom'.<sup>37</sup>

Milner used his press connections to drum up support for the British Covenant, the publicity campaign for which was rolled out in the newspapers of 3 March 1914. Robinson hoped that Milner had found *The Times* 'adequately docile!' In his opinion it was 'vital to have a dozen good names at least to add tomorrow – mugwumps, merchants & the middle classes for choice'.<sup>38</sup> From the *Observer* Garvin wrote to Milner, 'I heartily agree and will help in every way. My only caveat would be that if we don't get an immense list of signatories now the

final effect on opinion will not be good. We *must* get a great roll.' He went on that 'As soon as your arrangements for general signing are ready I will give every prominence to them'. About general politics and the 'whole drift of our "Imperial Movement" – if it is still one,' he was 'not happy nor for long have been.'<sup>39</sup>

The Ulster crisis represents a clear example of the different paths taken by the Round Table members sometimes represented as mere extensions of Milner's imperial will. Curtis, Kerr, Grigg and Oliver all declined to sign the British Covenant and continued to work for a federal solution. Oliver explained to Milner on 2 March 1914 that he was holding off on joining until he heard 'Squiff's promised plan on Monday next.'<sup>40</sup> Milner replied, 'I absolutely agree. "Pacificus" ought not to sign now. If he signs later, it will come with all the more force. Names are rolling in by thousands. I think it will go, though Squiff's speech on Monday *may*, & conceivably ought to check it. Anyway I am for collecting all the names we can as fast as we can, but not taking the next step - demonstrations - till it is pretty certain that the Govt mean to go on.'<sup>41</sup>

In that month's *Round Table*, Grigg called for an Irish settlement in 'which self-government would be made an integral part of a general scheme of decentralization of the United Kingdom'. Whether this was called devolution, federalism, or Home Rule All Around did not matter. The only 'essential condition' would be 'that it would command a general assent'. Such a settlement, Grigg went on, had been accepted in advance by Carson, had been put forward as an idea by Asquith, and mentioned favorably by Austen Chamberlain and other Unionist leaders. The 'necessity of obtaining it by conference' had been pointed out by the *Westminster Gazette*, a 'representative Ministerial organ'. Even among a 'great number of those who are signing the English Covenant it is regarded as an essential sequel to the defeat of the present Bill'. To those who claimed nothing could be done in the present crisis situation, Grigg pointed to Canada and South Africa, where constitutions were drawn up in times of similar difficulties. He appealed to the 'good sense' of the nation to do the same.<sup>42</sup>

Struck by Grigg's article, Lord Roberts, who had accepted the Presidency of the British Covenant movement, wrote to Milner on 2 April, 'I cannot help thinking that the time has come when a great effort should be made to try and get the Home Rule Bill in its present form dropped – on the understanding that some form of federation would at once be taken up'. Grigg's idea was that 'if four men – unconnected with the Ministry – two Liberals like Loreburn and Bryce, and two Covenanters like say you and me could come to terms, an appeal might be made to the country with some chance of success – slight perhaps but still with some chance'. Roberts asked Milner, 'Will you consider this and tell me ... what you think about it?' All he desired was 'to get the matter put before the public ... by a few men whose opinions would be likely to carry weight'.<sup>43</sup> Milner, however, did not share the faith of Grigg or Roberts in conferences or the

prime minister and meant to keep up the pressure. He warned Grigg, 'Asquith of course is "waiting & seeing" & will diddle you as he does other people. That is the danger of this mire.'<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile, the British Covenant agitation resonated to the wider Empire. Funds were raised for the support of Ulster from Canada to New Zealand.<sup>45</sup> In a letter to former Prime Minister Deakin of Australia Richard Jebb, one of Milner's allies in the fight for closer imperial union over the previous years, reported that 'Perhaps the most hopeful fact at present' was 'the British Covenant, for which Milner had "taken off his coat"'.<sup>46</sup> With regard to the 'definite steps to be taken by the Covenanters', Milner informed Jebb that they were, 'of course, until the Bill is actually passed, still on the ground of strictly Constitutional agitation. As things have shaped [up] I think the protest meetings are, for the moment, the most important thing. A complete exposure of the recent proceedings of the Government will, in itself, diminish the possibility of their using force against Ulster hereafter, and may at the same time be made the basis of a strong popular demonstration against such a policy.'<sup>47</sup>

Soon after this Milner confided to an old comrade from the South African years, F. J. Henley, that 'As you can see from the papers, we are still in the thick of the fight here, and nobody knows how it will end. The South of Ireland Unionists are very sick at the thought of being left without the support of Ulster, if that province is cut out of Home Rule.' Personally, Milner felt that 'cutting out Ulster is certain to kill the whole thing, and though I would much prefer a General Election if we could get it – for I think the Government would be soundly beaten – I think that even the exclusion of Ulster, if it is all we can get for the moment, is fatal to their policy, and will necessarily involve a reconsideration of the whole matter and the adoption of a more rational plan.'<sup>48</sup>

The Ulster struggle was interrupted for Milner briefly by the death on 2 July of Joseph Chamberlain, pugnacious to the end, but trapped since 1906 in a body that no longer functioned. Leo Amery recorded that Chamberlain's last strangled words to him in a visit in late June had been 'Amery ... if I ... were the ... House of Lords ... I would ... fight'.<sup>49</sup> Milner attended the Memorial Service at St Margaret's, Westminster. That day in the Lords, before the debate on the Home Rule Amending Bill, Milner praised his 'incomparable chief' at the Colonial Office as a great leader of men, who was 'successful in winning, not only the admiration and respect, but the affection of those who were brought most closely in contact with him'. Chamberlain 'went thoroughly into every aspect of the case' and 'finally laid down ... firmly and deliberately the policy which he wished followed, always on clear and simple lines'. Having done this, he 'left those who had to work it out a large and wise latitude'. They could always feel that he would 'stand behind them and defend them against all attacks, even to his own detriment, from whatever quarter they might come ... The confidence

which they felt in him gave them greater confidence in themselves, and thus he got the best work out of them of which they were capable.<sup>50</sup>

A few weeks later Asquith prevailed on the King to call a Buckingham Palace conference on the Irish crisis. On 21 July eight delegates, two each from both parties and Irish factions met for the first time in a final attempt to negotiate a settlement. Three days later, as Milner hoped, the conference failed, the ostensible sticking point being the status of County Tyrone. But the question of whether civil war would have broken out in England and Ireland was never put to the test, as developments on the continent, put in motion a month earlier by the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, at Sarajevo in Bosnia, by a Slav nationalist, intervened.



## 11 THE EMPIRE AT WAR

In the first days of the Great War, one ray of light, from Milner's point of view, was the hope that the cataclysm might at least speed imperial union.<sup>1</sup> He commiserated with a sympathetic correspondent in New Zealand, to whom he recommended the *Round Table*, that he thought in theory 'the majority of thinking men agree with us, but as soon as we begin to try and put our principles into practice, the greatest confusion arises, and in the end nothing or very little is done. Such at least has been the experience of past years. Whether the tremendous crisis through which the Empire is at this moment passing will result in compelling us to take practical steps towards an effective Imperial union is another question. I hope it may. If it did, I think all the loss and suffering would have been a price worth paying.'<sup>2</sup> Real steps toward the sort of cooperation Milner envisioned would not occur until the fall of the Asquith Government, but before the end of 1914, New Zealand and Australia would be vying with Britain's ally Japan for control of the German possessions in the Pacific. The first soldier in British service to fire a round in the Great War, on 12 August 1914, in fact was not in Europe or the Pacific, but Regimental Sergeant-Major Alhaji Grunshi of the West Africa Frontier Force in Togoland, whose seizure from Germany would be the first Anglo-French victory of the war.<sup>3</sup>

In Europe, the advance of the German Army to the outskirts of Paris became the most important development. Milner recorded in his 14 September diary 'London is ringing with rejoicing at the victory of the Allies in the great battle on the Marne last week'. To his Boer War compatriot F. J. Henley in South Africa, Milner confided that the British Army must have lost at least 40,000 killed, wounded, and missing 'a tremendous proportion out of 150,000 men or thereabouts – in a single month. There is no doubt whatever that our people *have fought magnificently*, under the leadership of men who are, I think, without exception our South African warriors. What would have happened to us if we had not had the experience of the South African War, or the men which that war brought to the front, God only knows.' Of his two former military secretaries in South Africa Milner reported that Hanbury Williams was now a Major General representing the British Army on the Headquarters staff of the Russian Army

and that William Lambton was on the Headquarters staff of the BEF. Milner was sorry to hear of the accidental shooting death of 'poor De la rey, I always regarded him as the finest of the Boer leaders, both as a soldier and a gentleman. What a shocking accident!'<sup>4</sup> Milner would not have been so generous had he known that, before he was killed in what was officially deemed a case of mistaken identity when his car ran through a police check point, De la Rey was plotting to keep South Africa from joining the imperial war effort. Louis Botha, the South African premier, would have to put down a significant Boer rebellion at the same time his forces conquered German South-West Africa.<sup>5</sup>

There was some talk that the Round Table should suspend its activities for the duration of the war. From Toronto, Arthur Glazebrook confided to Milner that there had been 'a little discussion to and fro' among the members in England as to whether they should consider dropping Round Table work 'in view of the possibility of a very long war'. In his opinion, if it was possible 'to keep it going I think it should be done'. He believed the journal's circulation would be stimulated and interest would 'certainly greatly increase'. Some men were going off to war, but others were taking their places. The Round Table organization, he argued, was 'clearly growing and will be an invaluable focus for discussion of imperial matters' even if no immediate progress was made on the constitutional question.<sup>6</sup> In the end Milner supported Glazebrook and Curtis, who argued that the war would make the public mind more receptive to their ideas and that they must be ready. Curtis proposed to use the *Round Table*, 'literally the only organ' which was 'common to the Empire as a whole', to support the imperial war effort. He believed that the journal had been a definite success and had already helped bring a change in public men. He also told the Moot that although the 'egg', the report on the imperial problem, had grown into a 'formidable' document, he still thought it would be 'ready for launching in the course of a few months'. The *Round Table* would be useful as an 'educational tool in preparation for the ultimate production' and once the report was published the journal would be a 'hammer whereby the nail could persistently be driven in'.<sup>7</sup>

Three months in, the too rosy newspaper and government versions of the war led Milner to consider it essential to 'look facts in the face'. In a memorandum for his circle he pointed out that the facts were that Germany was 'still pressing us very hard in France, and it is not yet certain ... that she herself is pressed very hard by Russia'. On the seas Britain had knocked out the enemy's commerce 'but at a very considerable cost'. As for Germany's colonies, which were expected to 'drop like ripe fruit into our laps', nothing of the sort had happened. Germany had lost Togoland, the smallest of her African possessions, but 'alike in the Cameroons, in East Africa, and in South West Africa she has had very much the best of the fighting' while 'we are reduced on all these points to a somewhat risky defensive'. In South Africa there was also a 'very serious rebellion and the issue hangs in the

balance'.<sup>8</sup> Many of his confidantes agreed with this assessment. About the rebellion which was finally put down in South Africa, his former secretary passed along that Milner's settlers were of 'great use in supporting authority during the rebellion on this side of the Free State. These districts were kept quiet and free from rebels by patrols of Loyals, mostly English.'<sup>9</sup>

In the first two years of the war, save for a brief sortie at Selborne's request into the food supply issue, Milner stayed outside of the official effort and therefore had the time to monitor and advise the Round Table movement at home and abroad. He was particularly in touch with Canada, through Glazebrook, who like himself was too old for military service. By the beginning of 1915 twelve new Canadian groups had been organized. Glazebrook reported on the Round Table propaganda effort that his chief lieutenant Edward Kylie and 'all our tribe are working hard at various jobs', including giving lectures in many small places in Ontario. There was 'no doubt that their lectures are very welcome and are doing a lot of good'. Glazebrook did not understand why the Dominion Government had not done 'more in that direction'.<sup>10</sup> Despite Round Table speakers trying to explain what the war meant, in his opinion the general public still hardly realized that a war was going on. It was a 'terrible thing to say, but the new birth appears to need a baptism of blood'.<sup>11</sup> Canada would gain this, finally sending 400,000 troops overseas, with losses by the end comparable to those of the United States.

Milner and Glazebrook were both intensely interested in what course the USA would follow, and Glazebrook sent many reports on this front. In February 1915 he wrote Milner that the British poet Alfred Noyes, who had moved to the USA and was writing for the *New York Evening Post*, spoke to the Toronto Round Table group. Noyes emphasized in the 'strongest way possible American good will for the Allied cause'. He also put forward two points Glazebrook thought important, one with regard to the futility of using the Belgian neutrality question and the other that the Americans were a commercial people and that was 'where their main focus lay'. He thought Noyes frank and sensible when 'he took the ground that there was no use in considering what an ideal community would do in this instance, but that one must take the United States as it is, a flatulent mass of heterogeneous elements, and make the best of it'.<sup>12</sup>

Using the war as an excuse, the Asquith Government cancelled the Imperial Conference scheduled for 1915 which at least one premier, Fisher of Australia, wanted to go ahead with despite the dangers of travel. That March, speaking at the Royal Colonial Institute on the Australian contribution, Milner warned against taking for granted that the dominions, who had played up so splendidly in the war, would 'endorse a peace, which they will have had no share in making, and have never been consulted about'. Referring to the loss of the thirteen American colonies, he reminded his audience that on a 'previous and most disastrous

occasion it was not the war itself which disrupted the Empire but the aftermath of the war'. Consequently, statesmen must think of an exchange of views with the dominions over any peace. 'For we must never forget that, in dealing with the terms of peace, the British negotiators will be acting not only as representatives of the people of these islands but as trustees for all the peoples of the Empire.'<sup>13</sup> Delighted by Milner's speech, Glazebrook wrote to him that he felt the call for a conference was 'tremendously important' and added that 'various people' had advised 'us to rub it in to the Government here how important it is'.<sup>14</sup>

Amery, who had enlisted and been sent out to the Balkans as an Army intelligence officer, wrote to Milner that he was also 'very glad' Milner raised the question of consulting the dominions. He also shared what he knew of the military situation, including the worrying Dardanelles campaign, the heavy casualties sustained by the Canadians in France and by the Australians at Lemnos.<sup>15</sup> Milner took up the cudgel again in a 15 July 1915 speech to the United Empire Club. He told the members that he hoped an 'Imperial Cabinet' might be established. 'We should have', he went on, 'a single British State embodying all the scattered portions of our race throughout the world ... free and independent in their local concerns, but standing as one State among the nations'.<sup>16</sup>

That summer there was also a short-lived controversy over British munitions orders that seemed to give preference to the United States over Canada. Milner became involved in sorting out this question and in smoothing ruffled Canadian feathers. He wrote to Glazebrook that he hoped the 'irritation caused by the supposed preference – which really was only supposed – of people over here for American sources of supply' had been gotten over. In his view the problems had arisen out of the general government 'muddle'. The process now had become more businesslike since Lloyd George took over the newly created Ministry of Munitions in the 1915 Coalition Government.<sup>17</sup> To sort out purchasing in Canada, the Welshman sent out Robert Brand and another Kindergarten and Round Table member Lionel Hitchens, who set up an Imperial Munitions Board in Ottawa under Sir Joseph Flavelle. Brand returned to London to act as liaison. Glazebrook reported to Milner that Brand and Hitchens had done 'extremely well', and he thought it 'a credit also to the Canadian public that they have risen so well to the idea of financing munitions for war. Think what the public was in 1908 and what it is now.' Glazebrook complimented Brand's article, 'The British Empire's Financial Task', in the latest *Round Table*, but added that privately he could not help wondering if the last two numbers had not had a 'certain lack of robustness'. Some friends had remarked on this as well, but Glazebrook admitted that perhaps he was too 'over-sensitive to the fear of our getting too "high-up"'.<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, the war news continued bad. Milner noted the, 'Tremendous attacks being made on the Russian position in Poland', which he expected, cor-

rectly, would 'take Warsaw this time'.<sup>19</sup> Milner told his friend Sir Henry Wilson, at General Headquarters in France, that his strategy in the West would be to 'send as many men as possible to France and dig them in as hard as I could and then just let the Germans come on'. The enemy would '*have* to breach that line or else they would still be in queer street, however great their successes in the East'. Milner did not think that '*even they*, if they made one titanic effort in the West, and failed, which have much power of aggression left in them'.<sup>20</sup> Lord Fisher, who had left the Admiralty in the re-shuffle two months before, visited Milner to speak of the submarine danger to the food supply, which the Government played down, much to his and Milner's displeasure. Nevertheless, the situation was such that the public, Amery reported to Percy Fitzpatrick in South Africa, was 'getting fidgety'. He predicted a 'great storm' before long and an 'irresistible demand for someone to lead'. In Amery's view there were only two men who had 'anything like the gift of leadership the time demands': Carson and Milner, who had 'infinitely greater knowledge and experience of just the very problem we are confronted with'. About Milner he went on that it was 'just possible that when things look black enough and the public are sufficiently frightened, they may remember that he still exists, but at the present he is absolutely forgotten'.<sup>21</sup>

To combat an enemy propaganda campaign in the Canadian hinterlands that claimed German finance was superior to British, Glazebrook reported to Milner that his group had started a 'sort of press bureau'. For this Kylie was at the present writing an article on Borden's visit to England, during which he had been called to meet with the British Cabinet. A dividend of this campaign, Glazebrook went on, was that 'we shall have the means of reaching an entirely new stratum of Canadian thought. The deadness of the smaller places, even in respect of the war', was 'absolutely terrible', and it was tremendously important that they should be put 'in the right direction' if possible before peace brought with it a 'consideration of new imperial arrangements'. How much they could do on this front remained uncertain, but he thought it worth 'a good effort'.<sup>22</sup> Milner called the press bureau a 'most excellent idea' and added that Glazebrook 'could not be doing more useful work'. He liked Glazebrook's *Round Table* article about the Canadian financial situation, admitting that there was 'nothing the Germans have organized better, or we worse, than the supply of intelligence, views, impressions, to the press of neutral, & in some instances – as you see in Canada – even of British countries'. There was 'no way of meeting this except by organized counter-effort such as you are making'.<sup>23</sup> Anxious about immigration to Canada after the war, Glazebrook also thought that 'some great effort ought to be made to deal in an especially sympathetic way with immigration from Great Britain'.<sup>24</sup> Milner agreed that this was 'immensely important' and thought the lines on which Glazebrook was proceeding were right ones. The problem would be coordination, which Milner promised to aid as much as possible.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time, Curtis continued to circulate drafts of his 'egg' on the imperial problem to the Round Table membership. The many disagreements over this, added to the stress of the war, led Milner to comment to Curtis that he feared there was a 'serious danger of a split in our small nucleus of men, whose continued co-operation is very important to the success of any attempt to organise the Empire'. As he thought he held a middle position between the diverging views, Milner believed he might possibly be able to do something to prevent a split. 'You say, and I agree with you, that if things so very different in their character as our domestic social arrangements and the defence of the Empire against foreign aggression had been kept separate and dealt with by different authorities, much trouble would have been avoided ... that in determining your political allegiance hitherto you have been torn in two directions, the people with whom you agreed with in Imperial affairs being in the main on the opposite side to those with whom you agreed in domestic affairs.' This was also Milner's case, but when Curtis went on to attribute 'our failure in Imperial politics to the fact that they are necessarily, under the present system, in the hands of men who are chosen mainly for reasons of domestic politics', he began to differ. That was '*only partly* the reason, and therefore the mere separation of the two functions will only be a *partial* remedy. Even if there were to be a complete separation, unless the methods of selecting responsible rulers in either case is amended, you will continue to get the wrong men, and matters will not be greatly improved by your getting two sets of men of the wrong quality instead of one.'

To Milner, the root mischief was that, 'while we talk of democracy and government by the people, there is no such thing. We are just as often, and I think oftener, governed by small minorities, than we are in accordance with general public feeling, and the despotism of the machine is in no way better – and I think in many ways it is worse – than the despotism of the Kaiser.' However, the steady deterioration in the character of our public men, which had been going on now for something like a generation, was 'not due only to the fact that they have too much to do, though their failure in almost every branch of activity is *largely* due to it'. In Milner's opinion, the 'Archangel Gabriel would fail under the present system of expecting him to deal at one and the same time with intricate social and economic questions of local importance, and also with questions of defence and policy of world-wide range'. The system must be altered. The functions must be separated. But the mere separation 'will not provide you with archangels, or even with fairly decent humans, in the respective spheres.' He went on 'We are putting all our money on *Democracy*. Well, Democracy is going to fail, & the British Empire with it, unless we can emancipate ourselves to some extent from machine made canon ridden politics, & give men of independence & character more of a chance, or to put it better, encourage the development of

independent character instead of encouraging nothing except sophistry & skilful manipulation.'

The practical upshot of all this was that '*a great deal more thought has to be given to the method of appointing our Supreme Imperial authority* - with a view of producing something more like a Council of Statesmen cooperating for a common end & less like a crowd of competing cheap-jacks always trying to trip one another up & devoting all their energies to deluding the people, whom they flatter, but never truly serve, into the belief that it is a matter of vital importance to be governed by Tweedle Dum & not by Tweedle Dee - or vice versa.' The problem was not insoluble. 'It is not as if we had not got the men. The very men, who make such a lamentable mess of our affairs to-day, are often men of great original capacity & quite average good character. They were not trash to begin with. They have become trash by 20, 30, or more years absorption in an ignoble sauce.' In Milner's opinion, something was 'radically wrong about the method, by wh. Democracy in this country tries, & fails, to get its vital interests attended to, & its genuine desires pursued. Separation of functions *is important, & will go some way to improve* matters. But by itself it will not go far enough. Our Imperial Constitution has got to be something better than a copy - a reproduction on a bigger scale - of the Augean Stable at Westminster.'<sup>26</sup>

Many Round Tablers did not think, as did Curtis, that the time was ripe to disclose their plans. Others disagreed with his conclusions. Nevertheless, in 1916 Curtis's long-gestating 'egg' finally hatched two books published under his name to avoid committing the Round Table. In the first volume, *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, Curtis argued that in August 1914 the dominions were 'suddenly and unexpectedly involved in a war by events of which not only they but their governments knew nothing' and that the 'incapacity of the present system to inform and unify public opinion on foreign affairs in the dominions as well as in the United Kingdom is its signal defect'. By invading Belgium, the Germans had brought the Commonwealth together as no British Government could have by raising an issue 'so clear that no one ... could doubt for a moment where the path of duty lay'. Nevertheless, the people of the dominions had been committed to war by those of the United Kingdom and unless changes were made the dominions again would find themselves 'committed to peace by ministers whom they do not control', even though their vital interests were at stake.<sup>27</sup> The crux of the problem and the 'object of the present query' was 'simply to discover the most moderate measure of change which is necessary to effect the object of allowing the Dominions to control foreign affairs.'<sup>28</sup> Curtis called for an Imperial Convention, not simply another conference like the many that had failed before, to work out the problems he foresaw. He also suggested remedies: including delegating the responsibilities of the respective imperial and colonial parliaments and concerning matters of revenue and taxation.

Curtis's financial suggestions in particular stirred an uproar in Montreal which it fell to Glazebrook to calm. Before its publication, Glazebrook had reported to Milner that he was in correspondence with several Canadian groups reading and commenting on *The Problem of the Commonwealth*.<sup>29</sup> Milner replied that he was 'very anxious to hear what the Canadian Round Table had to say about *The Problem of the Commonwealth*. On the whole he thought Curtis might as well be allowed to 'open the ball in his own way. Of course, there will be an outcry and very likely the first effect will be to rally the very formidable forces which are opposed to any general Imperial Union. But sooner or later, the outcry will have to be faced.' Milner considered it a 'very strong statement, certainly of fundamental principles. It will at any rate crystallize a controversy which cannot for ever be left in its present vague and indefinite state.' Personally, he was 'very far from subscribing to Curtis's scheme'. He doubted whether the 'Imperial Parliament, as he conceives it, is the best or the only way of making the Dominions full partners in the management of the Empire'. But Milner was convinced that 'nothing less than full partnership is the only ultimate possibility'. And he wanted to get that 'clearly enunciated anyway'.<sup>30</sup>

About the war, Milner claimed not to be 'despondent', though, from the first he had 'never been an optimist or cherished any illusions as to the probable end', which was still far off. He did not see 'my way to "crushing" Germany. But neither can she crush us.' The great German effort to dominate the world was going to fail and 'only one thing will have defeated it – the stolid blundering, insuperable "No, You Don't" of this "decadent" old nation'. He was, however, 'terribly anxious about France. The strain on her is terrific.' Milner also had 'no confidence in the Russian "steam-roller"'. But there always remained the British Empire. 'What real impression has Germany made upon that?'<sup>31</sup>

Outside the Round Table, Milner's absolute frustration with the old parties led to his involvement with the British Worker's National League (BWNL), an organization designed to foster 'patriotic labour' and led by a former socialist, Victor Fisher.<sup>32</sup> The first public meeting of the League was held at the Queen's Hall in London on 10 May 1916. The featured speaker was William Morris Hughes, the vociferously outspoken Labour Prime Minister of Australia. Milner was impressed with the diminutive Hughes, whom he had met several times over the preceding months while Hughes toured the country castigating the Coalition war effort.<sup>33</sup> At the Queen's Hall, Hughes stressed the need for all to be ready to serve the Commonwealth, and as he had done many times before, beat the drum for a vigorous prosecution of the war. At the same time BWNL propaganda called for a broad national policy and argued that the 'ultimate internationalism cannot be the pious resolutions of little sects of visionaries; it can only be realised by the complete vindication of national rights, and bonds of agreement between independent and mutually respecting nations'. And the



most solid basis of such an international understanding was the 'integrity of the British Empire'.<sup>34</sup>

The next month Glazebrook sent Milner a draft of a Round Table call for an imperial constitutional convention in England as soon as the war was over. He told Milner that he thought 'we may get an extensive signing of the memorandum and a really big movement in Canada towards imperial union'.<sup>35</sup> Glazebrook told Milner that there was 'undoubtedly a process going on by which interest in the Round Table doctrine is being much more widely spread' and he hoped that 'something serious may come out of it'. He was impressed by the latest edition of the journal and again 'rather grieved', as at the beginning of the war, to think that it might have to be suspended.<sup>36</sup> In Glazebrook's opinion, the enterprise had 'come to a very delicate phase ... If we overorganize and make ourselves heard too loudly, we shall do harm, and yet we must in some way get a wider circle of people thinking about the whole problem'.<sup>37</sup>

At the end of July 1916, while the battle of the Somme raged across the channel, Milner gave a forty-five minute talk to the Empire Parliamentary Association delegates in a Committee room at the Commons.<sup>38</sup> He urged on the visitors the necessity of the creation of some sort of Imperial Cabinet to represent the views of the whole Commonwealth. The lack of such a body, he argued, had led to the loss of the thirteen American colonies and he told the delegates that 'if similar conditions are not to lead to similar results, we must try to supply that link, for the lack of which the first British Empire went to pieces'.<sup>39</sup> Less than five months later Milner would be a position to foster just such an organization.

In the meantime Milner continued his efforts with Victor Fisher and the British Workers National League. On 25 August the first issue of the league's weekly journal, the *British Citizen and Empire Worker*, came off the presses. Before long the one penny paper, which attacked the pacifism of the Independent Labour Party and Edmund Morel's Union of Democratic Control, claimed a circulation of 30,000. Fisher wrote a weekly editorial about which he regularly consulted Milner. The first issue summarized the programme of the BWNL, 'open to all British Citizens' and working for:

A Standard Living Wage for Industrial and Agricultural Workers;  
The Revival and Development of National Agriculture;  
Adequate Pensions for all Our Disabled Soldiers and Sailors;  
Victory in the War to be followed by the Expropriation of Enemy Economic and Industrial Interests Within the Empire;  
National or Municipal Control of National Monopolies and Vital Industries;  
The Full Exploitation of the Natural Resources of the Empire in the Interests of the Whole People.

In his editorial, Fisher outlined the league's 'respectable' brand of socialism, while noting that 'The British Commonwealth still remains the highest and fin-

est embodiment of social life which men had yet developed ... the main business of our public life and of our public activities ... must be ... To unite by every possible link the scattered states of the British Commonwealth.<sup>40</sup>

Glazebrook had told Milner that he was 'grinding my teeth in rage at the fact that your powers are not more directly at the service of the nation.' Still, he could not help feeling that if Milner were 'in harness we could not in the same way have your leadership in the job we are trying to do.'<sup>41</sup> In December 1916 this situation came to pass as Milner accepted Lloyd George's invitation to join the five member War Cabinet which would take over the supreme direction of the war effort. For the next two years, Milner's time would be devoted directly to the life and death struggle for the survival of Britain and the Empire.

## 12 IMPERIAL WAR CABINET

On 9 December 1916 Milner joined Bonar Law, George Curzon, and the Labour party representative Arthur Henderson for the first official meeting of Lloyd George's new War Cabinet of five.<sup>1</sup> The *British Citizen and Empire Worker* welcomed the new Government, noting that chief among Lloyd George's 'General Staff' was Lord Milner 'who brings to the Government an experience in administration ... a freedom from class bias ... and an undemonstrative but ardent desire for social reform and industrial reorganization which make him after Mr. Lloyd George, the outstanding figure.'<sup>2</sup> From Canada, Glazebrook confessed his delight at Milner's new role and that he had 'an internal conviction that most of the real work will fall to you.'<sup>3</sup>

To serve the new Government, the old War Committee staff was reborn as the War Cabinet Secretariat, as before under Sir Maurice Hankey.<sup>4</sup> As Milner insisted, Amery was chosen as one of the Secretariat's two political secretaries. He and his colleague, Sir Mark Sykes MP, had the status of parliamentary under-secretaries. They were at the disposal of the War Cabinet, but also free to submit ideas. Amery, whom Hankey soon described as a 'scheming little devil' that Milner had 'foisted on me', soon raised the ire of Walter Long, at the Colonial Office, with a plan to circumvent the normal channels of communications with the dominions.<sup>5</sup>

A separate secretariat was created for the Prime Minister, housed in huts in the gardens of 10 Downing Street, and dubbed the 'Garden Suburb'.<sup>6</sup> This was headed by W. G. S. Adams, the Gladstone Professor of Political Theory and Institutions at Oxford, who had been doing wartime work at the Ministry of Munitions. The original membership included also Waldorf Astor and Philip Kerr.<sup>7</sup> It was not long before the Secretariat's sinister connections with Milner were exposed in Liberal press jeremiads, beginning a long-lived myth of 'Milnerite penetration' behind the scenes belied by the reality of the situation. In the *Nation* H. W. Massingham warned: 'These gentlemen stand in no sense for a Civil Service Cabinet. There are rather in the class of traveling empirics in Empire, who came in with Lord Milner, and whose spiritual home is fixed somewhere between Balliol and Heidelberg.' Reactionary Imperialism had thus

'seized the whole body of Liberal and democratic doctrine'. The governing ideas were not those of Lloyd George, but of Milner. In this new bureaucracy the premier had created 'a Monster' which threatened to 'master England, unless England decided in time to master it'.<sup>8</sup>

Milner and Kerr proposed to a sympathetic Lloyd George that the new Government should extend an invitation to the colonial premiers, and, for the first time, also to representatives from India in recognition of its great contributions to the war, 'inviting them to come to the War Cabinet as soon as possible' to discuss 'questions of great urgency'.<sup>9</sup> The Welshman's pro-Boer activities have resulted in his being seen as a Little Englander, but in actuality his views were closer to the Liberal Imperialists and Kerr helped him draft his statements on the subject.<sup>10</sup> In the Commons on 19 December Lloyd George announced the Government's intention to consult with the dominions 'as to the progress and course of the war, as to the steps that ought to be taken to secure victory, and as to the best methods of garnering in the fruits of our efforts as well as their own'.<sup>11</sup> A month later, in an interview with the Australian journalist Keith Murdoch, the Prime Minister declared that, though the people of the dominions knew he was 'not a Jingo ... Yet I regard this Council as marking a new epoch in the history of the empire.' He asserted India's right to be included and went on that he was certain that the 'people of the empire will have found a unity in the war such as never existed before it – a unity of not only in history, but of purpose. What practical change in imperial organization that will mean I will not venture to predict'.<sup>12</sup> Despite this reticence, Milner was pleased with the Murdoch interview and confided to his secretary Thornton about Lloyd George, 'Speaking through that megaphone our friend P. K. [Kerr] has a great chance of making himself heard around the Empire'.<sup>13</sup>

In a letter to Premier Hughes in Australia Amery, who helped to draft the imperial invitation, gave a good description of the operation of the new War Cabinet system. Unlike previously, he told Hughes, the Cabinet now had a definite agenda; there were no speeches, but only short, business-like discussions. Minutes were taken, including the actual decisions made, and circulated the same day. The secretariat assumed that the decisions held good and set about informing the departments assigned to carry them out. He admitted there was a little 'touchiness' among Ministers not in the Cabinet that their status had been lowered. Lloyd George and Milner were in Amery's estimation the dominating figures. The Welshman, he told Hughes, was 'wonderfully quick and active, and his eloquence and imaginative gifts will appeal to our Allies'. But it was 'invaluable having Milner, with his steadiness and strength of mind alongside of him'.<sup>14</sup>

About the imperial gathering, which Hughes would be unable to attend because of a political crisis at home, Amery explained that the 'main idea which decided the Cabinet to make it a meeting of the War Cabinet and not of the

Conference in the ordinary sense, was to lay emphasis on the full equality of status between the Dominion Prime Ministers and the Ministers here, and the right of the Dominion Ministers to have the fullest say, and to have it in good time, on the question of the terms of Peace we can possibly accept when the time arrives'. Later on, Amery continued, there would no doubt be a formal imperial conference to consider how some form of imperial government might come into being. Meanwhile, he confided that affairs in London were being run by a small 'Committee of Public Safety' which would be temporarily enlarged to include men 'to represent the public confidence of rest of the Empire'.<sup>15</sup> Hopes were high for imperial progress on Milnerite lines. Fitzpatrick wrote to Amery that from his South African vantage point, 'truly it looks as if Milner and the Milner men are going to run the Empire on this basis'.<sup>16</sup> They would all soon be disabused if this notion.

Glazebrook reported several developments in Canada. First, that due to Vincent Massey's work the Round Table council had become an effective body, but that some members were impatient that after six years work more progress had not been made. Consequently, Glazebrook enclosed the finished memorandum calling for a constitutional conference after the war which would become part of the Round Table's constitution and thereby, he believed, dissipate the 'remains of whatever mystery there might be' about the group without 'anything in the way of violent advertisement'. He also disclosed that it had been decided 'that a great effort should be made to extend the group system in Canada on a scale heretofore not contemplated'. The problem with creating a mass organization was that it would have to deal with a 'progressively less educated set of people' whose propaganda would require an 'attenuation of intellectual quality and an increase of what we call punch'. The new 'gospel' of the Round Table would need to be 'interpreted in such a way that it will take hold on almost any man'. Glazebrook's own idea was that it would be desirable that winter to form a new society 'for the purpose of definite propaganda', but that it was difficult at this point to know what would be necessary then.<sup>17</sup> Milner replied that he had read the Round Table news with the 'greatest satisfaction' and that he liked the memorandum which he hoped would gain many signatures.<sup>18</sup>

On 6 March 1917 Milner briefed Geoffrey Robinson (who would soon change his name to Dawson) on the visit of the dominion premiers and a week later gave a dinner at Brooks's for Smuts, just arrived from South Africa to represent his country in place of Botha, who, like Hughes of Australia, was in the midst of a political crisis at home and could not attend.<sup>19</sup> Also present at the affair were Sir Joseph Ward, leader of the minority party in the New Zealand ministry, the majority leader W. F. Massey, Hankey, Kerr and Amery. The last recorded that it was 'Great fun to see Lord M. and Smuts hobnobbing like the best of old friends'. After dinner the party discussed the Imperial Constitutional

problem. Smuts was cautious while Massey was 'all for tackling the Constitution and convinced that New Zealand would be bitterly disappointed if some progress were not made'. In Amery's opinion, though no minds were changed in the discussion, there was a 'good ventilation of ideas'.<sup>20</sup> On 15 March, Milner, with Long, Austen Chamberlain (who held the India Office), and Curzon, considered 'the programme for the Imperial War Cabinet'.<sup>21</sup>

The first session of the Imperial War Cabinet (IWC), made up of the War Cabinet and the dominion representatives, took place on 20 March.<sup>22</sup> Sir Robert Borden, Massey, Ward and Smuts represented their dominions. Chamberlain, along with the Maharajah of Bikanir and Sir S. P. Sinha, spoke for India. Bikaner was a major figure in the princely states and Sinha was a lawyer and former president of the Indian National Congress who was the first Indian to serve on the Viceroy's Council.<sup>23</sup> The IWC met again two days later to discuss peace terms. Smuts argued for moderation, while Milner was in favour of defining the relative priority of aims. Since it appeared the war would last beyond 1917, plans were drawn for the Empire to continue the battle in 1918. In return for men and material needed for the war effort, the dominions expected territorial gains at the expense of the enemy. The territorial settlement was left to a subcommittee of the Imperial War Cabinet under Curzon and for which Amery acted as chair, keeping Milner informed of its activities.

Economic and non-territorial matters fell to another Peace Terms subcommittee chaired by Milner which considered issues such as the continued control of imperial resources, renewals of treaties, indemnities in rolling stock, fleets and natural resources - realizing that this last matter could not be separated completely from the territorial settlement.<sup>24</sup> Its report supported the League of Nations as an idea and recommended no change in policy on Freedom of the Seas. A much more substantial vision of the first of these would be at the heart of the '14 Points' war aims proposal drawn up by Woodrow Wilson, President of the new American 'Associate' in the conflict. The subcommittee's recommendations also supported several other general aims such as disarmament and a peace treaty in which the signatories committed themselves to settling serious disputes in future by conferences.<sup>25</sup> Curzon's committee meanwhile underlined the determination of the dominions to keep the colonies captured from the enemy.

Despite Milner's hopes that the war would lead to an immediate breakthrough in imperial organization, the dominions remained hesitant. On 16 April the Imperial War Cabinet passed unanimously a compromise resolution on the subject of imperial federation. This Resolution IX pledged to preserve in the dominions 'all existing powers of self-government and complete control of domestic affairs' and gave 'full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth'. It both excluded the idea of formal federation and the idea of separation and has been seen as the epitaph of the

Round Table's proposal for imperial federation.<sup>26</sup> At the time, however, Milner disagreed. He reported to Glazebrook about the IWC and the 'outside confabulations' going on with Kerr and Brand. What it all seemed to point to was that there should be a 'special Conference directly after the termination of the war to discuss the constitutional relations of the different parts of the Empire'. Such a conference would be rather different in composition and scope than past Imperial Conferences. In Milner's view it ought to contain representatives of all political parties in the different dominions, a fairly large body working, in the first instance, through committees, and to result in a definite agreement to be submitted to the several Parliaments. This would not go so far as Curtis's proposals, but 'set up some sort of halfway house, by which the dominions would have some permanent representation in an Imperial Cabinet dealing with Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Communications, and to undertake to provide in their own way for a certain definite proportion of the cost of the navy and the consular service'. It would be a 'lopsided sort of arrangement', but Milner believed it might 'carry us on for a bit'. Nothing could be 'more lopsided' than the present temporary Imperial War Cabinet, which, nevertheless, had served a useful purpose.<sup>27</sup>

The 24 April Imperial War Cabinet took up the subject of imperial preference. Lloyd George supported a summary of the case by Milner and declared that the war had 'revealed fundamental facts which it was necessary to recognize'. Massey backed imperial preference while Borden stated that Canada had no interest apart from preference on food and that her main concern was with improved transportation. Drafting a Resolution, in which it was stipulated there would be no commitment to taxes on food, was then left to a committee chaired by Milner.<sup>28</sup> In the end a compromise passed on 26 April in which preference was agreed as a 'principle' not a 'system'. Nevertheless, to Amery, thus ended 'the 12 years' fight on Imperial Preference'.<sup>29</sup> The next day Milner was at the Guild Hall for the presentation of the Freedom of the City to Lloyd George. In his speech the Welshman announced that the principle of Imperial Preference had just been agreed on for 'that great Commonwealth of nations which is known as the British Empire'.<sup>30</sup>

On 2 May the Imperial War Cabinet had its final meeting before the return home of all the representatives except Smuts who from this point on played a central role in planning Imperial defence, regularly attending the War Cabinet. This last session passed a proposal for annual meetings, which Milner suggested should be accompanied by a Conference. While the Radical press hoped that Smuts's addition to the Government would strengthen Lloyd George's democratic instincts against 'Milnerism', Milner himself thought Smuts would bring 'sanity and knowledge to bear on some of Lloyd George's vagaries'. Milner later recalled that he 'never differed from Smuts on any question of policy which had arisen in the Cabinet'.<sup>31</sup>

That summer a downcast Glazebrook confided in Milner that the poor war situation and Canada's political battle over conscription all had had a bad effect. Up to a certain point the Round Table had done work of great value, 'but for it there would have been no core of reasoned opinion on imperial subjects in this country'. However, while the conscription fight was going on it was paralyzed, and if the pending election brought back Laurier, as he feared it might, 'we shall certainly have to battle against a reaction that will be very difficult to meet'. Glazebrook had some hope that the returning veterans might tip the balance but admitted it was 'very hard sometimes to retain one's faith in the possibilities of democracy', and, what was worse than that, it seemed as if 'our race as it spreads out into distant parts of the world attenuates in character'. He knew that Milner had troubles of his own, but from Canada it seemed as 'if the character of the whole community were standing the test extraordinarily well'. He was not so sure he could say 'the same thing here'.<sup>32</sup>

Milner attempted to buck up Glazebrook about Canada, asserting that as far as he could 'see from here', there was no danger of Laurier coming to power and a 'definite majority' was for the vigorous prosecution of the war. According to the latest reports, conscription would be enforced and the 'French would have, no doubt very sulkily, to submit'. Milner expected that in the French districts it would probably be carried out very ineffectively, still, this was better than having the law 'openly defied'. Milner also reported that the Canadian Army had 'proved a very great success' and that 'discipline have improved out of all knowledge'. He wondered if this was 'generally known on your side'. If not, he thought it ought to be. Milner was 'much struck' by the 'great sound-mindedness about the Empire' he found in the 100 Canadian officers he had hosted at his country home, Sturry Court, near Canterbury. About the war, Milner feared they were 'still no where near the end'. The greatest danger was the possible fall out from Russia's collapse. However, he told Glazebrook that 'if we can only keep our pecker up and all hang together, we ought now, with the help of America, be able to bring it to a good finish'.<sup>33</sup>

Milner also reassured Sir John Willison in Canada that 'This country, despite Labour and other troubles, will certainly stick it out and cannot be beaten'. However, the collapse of Russia had upset all calculations. Milner went on that 'More and more the Empire has to carry the main burden of the war. I hope that America will presently share that burden to a large extent, but at the moment Great Britain is more than ever the central pillar of the alliance.' About the possibility of the return of Laurier, Milner commented, 'I am afraid of these old men still aoid of power, and can never forget how much harm Gladstone, when he had reached that stage, did to his country'.<sup>34</sup> Laurier, in response to the Canadian Round Table's manifesto in support of further imperial organization, declared that the dominion was being ruled in 1917 'by a junta sitting at London known



as the "Round Table" with branches throughout Canada receiving their ideas from London and 'insidiously forcing them on their respective parties'.<sup>35</sup>

On 21 March 1918, the German Army, reinforced by hundreds of thousands of troops freed by the withdrawal of Russia, launched an unprecedented assault in the West meant to end the war before the massing United States Army became the decisive factor. To be more closely in touch with the battlefield situation, Milner was shifted to the War Office. Though he left the War Cabinet, Milner stayed at the center of events as one of the triumvirate, with Lloyd George and the new Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir Henry Wilson, in the 'X' Committee created that spring to make the critical war decisions and for which Amery took minutes.<sup>36</sup> Glazebrook wrote to Milner that it was 'splendid that you shall have direct charge over the most vital thing for the moment, and yet one dreads your withdrawal ... from the War Cabinet itself'. The truth was that he wished Milner would become dictator. Round Table activities, he reported, had 'come to a necessary halt' as there was nothing profitably to be done in the present crisis. Unfortunately, Glazebrook had to admit the group was unpopular. It had been admirable in its 'first stage as a more or less esoteric movement appealing to a rather picked lot of men' but nearly all of them had gone to the war and those who took their places were of 'inferior material'. After the publication of Curtis's 'dogmatic' book, the last part of which was 'like a red rag to a bull to the average Canadian', the appeal made to the general public had averted the collapse that threatened. He hoped the effect would pass and that 'we may yet do some useful work', but it would have to be 'cautiously done and not yet'.<sup>37</sup>

During the military crisis it was lucky, in Milner's view, that the dominion premiers had once again gathered for a previously scheduled Imperial War Cabinet. He told Lloyd George that it was 'rather fortunate that you have all the Dominion people here at this critical time. It will give you a chance of telling them what they really are up against and finding out, whether they are prepared for all that is involved in "seeing it through." We must be prepared for Italy and France both being beaten to their knees. In that case the German-Austro-Turko-Bulgar bloc will be master of all Europe and Northern and Central Asia up to the point, at which Japan steps in to bar the way, if she does step in and has not been choked off by the more than disastrous diplomacy of the Allies.' In any case, to Milner it was 'clear that, unless the only remaining free peoples of the world, America, this country, and the dominions, are knit together in the closest conceivable alliance and prepared for the maximum sacrifice, the Central Bloc, under the hegemony of Germany, will control not only Europe and most of Asia but the whole world. To suppose that Germany, with such a prospect in view, will desist now, whatever her losses and hardships, seems quite out of the question'.<sup>38</sup>

If all these things took place then, in Milner's estimation, the 'whole aspect of the war changes. These islands become *an exposed outpost* of the allied positions encircling the world – a very disadvantageous position for the brain-centre of such a combination.' The change would need a complete readjustment of Britain's shipping programme as success might well depend on supplies from India and the dominions, which would have to play a much bigger part than they had already undertaken. The fight would now be for Southern Asia and above all for Africa, for which he believed the 'Palestine bridgehead' of immense importance. All this was 'assuming the worst and looking far ahead. Perhaps I should not say "far". At any rate it is not too far in speaking to people, who you may not have altogether again for a year – by which time all these forecasts may have become realities.' Last year they had discussed terms of peace. This year 'seriously to consider the necessities of the New War', would be more to the purpose.<sup>39</sup>

At the first 1918 meeting of the IWC Lloyd George surveyed the course of the war and impressed on the delegates the gravity of the situation on the western front, while pointing to the successes against the U-boats and the victory in Palestine which he thought pointed towards Turkey leaving the war.<sup>40</sup> In the following days the premiers were equally frank. Borden bitterly criticized the British High Command for a lack of foresight and preparation and for carrying out attacks which made gains 'not worth the candle [and] ... not worth the loss'. W. F. Massey added that at Passchendaele his New Zealanders were 'asked to do the impossible' and were 'simply shot down like rabbits'. Milner commented of the statements by Borden and Massey that 'the former very interesting & important. It made a great impression.' Hankey recorded the 'very strong anti-western front bias' displayed by Lloyd George, Smuts and Milner, who feared it ran the risk of 'shattering the US armies as we have already shattered our own'.<sup>41</sup> At the next day's session Smuts laid the blame for the present troubles on the military chiefs, Robertson and Jellicoe, and justified the Government's doubts about the launching of the Passchendaele offensive in 1917.<sup>42</sup> As a result a separate Committee of Prime Ministers was set up to look into the Flanders offensive which became, in Hughes's words, an 'inner War Cabinet' charged with dealing with things too urgent or secret for the larger body.<sup>43</sup>

Milner continued to question the Allies' ability to win on the western front where, he told the 31 July meeting of the dominion prime ministers, he would like to see France and the US providing the bulk of the forces, leaving a margin for the British to operate in the rest of the world. In this Milner was supported by Lloyd George and Smuts. Hughes, in the minority but as it turned out correct, questioned whether Milner had taken into consideration the waning morale of the German army and that the power with the most forces on the western front at war's end would probably have the greatest influence on the terms of peace.<sup>44</sup> Over the weeks that followed the Allied counterattack caught the overextended

and exhausted enemy off guard and the last German hopes for military victory collapsed; soon to be joined by their whole position on the western front.

The Imperial War Cabinet held its last scheduled session on 2 August. Its discussions on imperial relations had re-affirmed the principle of imperial preference, made arrangements for continuity by appointing alternates to attend between the annual meetings, and, finally, arranged for direct communications between the prime ministers, bypassing the Colonial Office. Before the premiers could depart, however, the hopeful battlefield development prompted Balfour to call the men back into session on 13 August to consider war aims. It was generally agreed that no colonies would be returned to Germany, but Borden, whose Canadian dominion had made no conquests, warned that this might cause problems with his neighbour to the South. Lord Reading, the Ambassador in Washington, was present and declared that America would never stand for annexations while Wilson was President. Hughes answered: 'All I have to say is ... If you want to shift us, come and do it : here we are – J'y suis, j'y reste.'<sup>45</sup> This would be the Australian attitude at the Peace Conference.<sup>46</sup>

Whether the Allies were really taking control on the battlefield as the British commander Haig believed or not, Lloyd George set the tone for the 1918 Election campaign with a major address at Manchester on 12 September. Rather than go back to the old party system, Bonar Law and the Unionists agreed to continue in the Liberal-led Coalition as the best alternative to contain Bolshevik-inspired radicalism.<sup>47</sup> Milner favoured this strategy, writing to the Prime Minister on 6 September about the post-war period, 'Who believes we can ever go back to the old starvation wages in certain industries? Why go back to the old dog fight between Free Trade and Tariff Reform?' The real dividing line was between those who believed in 'development on national lines and those to whom one country is as good as another and who are revolutionaries, so keen about developing class warfare that they have no energy left for other things. Tariff Reform means to develop the maximum productive capacity of this country and the Empire.'<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately for this sentiment, Glazebrook reported from Canada that the strain of the war had in his opinion made 'not more possible but less possible any scheme of organic union for the British Empire'. The sense of Canadian nationalism had 'grown very fast', and while he did not think separatist feeling was 'as yet at all important it exists'. Because of the growing influence of Woodrow Wilson, he also feared a 'very disquieting drift towards a subtle sort of Americanising' and he looked 'with horror' on the kind of assimilation which might occur between Canada and the US.<sup>49</sup>

On 3 November Milner recorded 'a wonderful turn of events' as Austria-Hungary agreed to terms while its 'dissolution is meanwhile in rapid progress'. Things were moving so rapidly that all plans were fluid. The next day, for the final meeting of the Supreme War Council in Paris, the Allied gathering finally framed

the armistice terms to be offered Germany. The uncompromising demands, including a Foch-inspired military frontier along the Rhine, Milner described as 'in my opinion absurd'. On 5 November, he recorded, 'The news from the front continued good & a total defeat of the German armies in the west is now within the region of possibilities'.<sup>50</sup>

Four days later, with peace now apparently just over the horizon, Milner, along with Balfour and the Prime Minister, spoke at the Lord Mayor's Banquet. Milner lauded the army and the Empire, recalling his visit to France in late March 'when the outlook was at its blackest' and his meeting with Haig and his generals. 'I can never forget the impression made upon me by the attitude of those men, fully realizing the gravity of the situation, facing it with the coolest courage, and with absolutely unshakable confidence in the staunchness of their troops.' About the 'Imperial ideal', he went on, it was an 'uplifting thought now' and a 'grand omen for the future, that in that achievement every part of the Empire has borne an equal share'. From the great dominions and India, to the smallest colonies of scattered British in foreign lands, all were 'worthy participants in the struggle'. The glory of this effort, the greatest the Empire had ever made, was that it was an 'unselfish effort in the cause of right and humanity'.<sup>51</sup> The same day the Kaiser abdicated and a republic was declared in Berlin.

At 7 a.m. on 11 November 1918, Milner received a despatch from the War Office announcing the signature of the Armistice by the German delegates two hours earlier. At 11 a.m. the guns fell silent. The next day Milner attended the great service at St Paul's. The King gave him a declaration for all the forces:

I desire to express at once through you to all ranks of the Army of the British Empire, Home, Dominion, Colonial and Indian troops, my heartfelt pride and gratitude at the brilliant success which has crowned more than four years of effort and endurance ...

... Men of the British Race who have shared these successes felt in their veins the call of the blood, and joined eagerly with the Mother Country in the fight against tyranny and wrong. Equally those of the ancient historic peoples of India and Africa, who have learned to trust the flag of England, hastened to discharge their debt of loyalty to the Crown.

I desire to thank every officer, soldier, and woman of our Army, for services nobly rendered, for sacrifices cheerfully given; and I pray God, who has been pleased to grant a victorious end to this great Crusade for Justice and Right, will prosper and bless our efforts in the immediate future, to secure for generations to come the hard-won blessings of Freedom and Peace.<sup>52</sup>

The war had ended, but assuring the 'Blessings of Freedom and Peace' would prove a daunting task for the British Empire Delegation that gathered for the Paris Peace Conference.

## 13 AN IMPERIAL PEACE

On 27 December 1918 Milner attended a London reception for President Wilson, who broke with US tradition and came to Europe to represent his country at the Peace Conference scheduled to open in Paris the next month. The event went off very well despite the fact that while preparing to depart for Europe Wilson had described Milner as 'a Prussian', Lloyd George as a 'man without principles', Clemenceau of France as 'an old man, too old to comprehend new ideas', and Premier Orlando of Italy as a 'damned reactionary'.<sup>1</sup> The President's 'No Annexations' slogan was also in direct conflict with the desires of all the British Empire delegation save Canada. Lionized by the public wherever he travelled, Wilson would have less success with the leaders with whom he had to negotiate, particularly Clemenceau and Lloyd George, who took full advantage of the President's paramount desire – to create a League of Nations, which at Wilson's insistence would become the first subject on the Conference agenda and integral to the German treaty.

Before making peace, however, there was political business to attend to at home as the Prime Minister reshuffled his Cabinet after his victory in the December 'Coupon' Election. Milner told Amery that he had been offered the Colonial Office and that 'they were making a great fuss about inducing him to stay in the Government'. The kind or shape of the proposed arrangement remained 'entirely vague', though Milner believed they were coming nearer to the idea, for home affairs, of a smaller inner reconstruction cabinet, along lines recommended by Amery and Hankey. Amery hoped this would be paired with a separate panel, dominated by Milner, for the Imperial sphere. The whole future of imperial development, he told Milner, would depend on the next two or three years and there was no one else who could be trusted 'not to handle the thing wrongly'. There was the projected Conference to discuss the future constitution of the Empire, as well as an immense lot of work to do in the development of the Crown Colonies. If these affairs could be kept separate from the domestic, Amery believed Milner would not share in the 'general odium into which the Government might very soon fall'. He also believed Milner would have Parlia-

ment behind him, although both men believed support from the Exchequer, especially if Austen Chamberlain went there, would be more problematical.<sup>2</sup>

As it happened, Chamberlain did receive the Exchequer and though Milner would have preferred to head the proposed dominions department, this innovation did not come to pass and he accepted the unreformed Colonial Office on two conditions: a voice in the Paris Peace process and that Amery become his parliamentary under-secretary. He waited until he had the last in writing, telling Amery that he was 'not prepared to take any verbal assurances from these rogues'.<sup>3</sup> About the peace conference, Milner told Amery that the 'really serious feature' was that the Premier did not seem to realize the difference between 'having him and someone like Bonar Law or Balfour' at Paris.<sup>4</sup>

The papers, in Britain and the Empire, generally applauded the Colonial Office appointments, while there was much more criticism of the other choices. Amery found Milner 'very much amused at the thought that he should be the one popular person in the Government'.<sup>5</sup> The 13 January 1919 *Wellington, New Zealand Evening Post*, for example, called the appointment of Milner and Amery to the Colonial office 'a happy one' and continued 'though Lord Milner does not wear his heart on his sleeve, and is therefore reputed to be unsympathetic, there is probably no member of the present cabinet who has more consistently served the highest imperial ideals, or who is more entirely in sympathy with the desire of Dominions for a full and permanent share in the Imperial partnership'. In Amery, the paper went on, Milner would have 'the help of a coadjutor of the same scholarly type, imbued with the same imperial spirit and the same historical imagination, and equally anxious to promote without Jingoist flag-waving the development of the Empire as an association of free Commonwealths. Not since Joseph Chamberlain has the Colonial Office been manned in a way better calculated to serve the ends of a vigorous and sane imperialism.'

The Colonial Office Milner inherited took up the north-east wing of the block of Italianate-styled offices Palmerston had built between King Charles Street and Downing Street. Milner now occupied the 'vast' rooms he had turned down sixteen years before when Joseph Chamberlain left the Balfour Government. However, the power granted to the dominions during the war of direct communications with each other and the British Government made Milner's Colonial Office more focused on the Dependent Empire. At any rate, Milner came to his new duties a profoundly tired man and exhaustion, coupled with illness, confined him to bed for a fortnight that January.

With his chief ill, Amery had to start the new job alone, but Milner sent words of advice and warning. He told Amery that in one way it was an advantage that he start without him 'for it will be all the more reason for you seeing the whole range of work in order to be able to coach me in it'. The Permanent under-secretary at the Colonial Office was Sir George Fiddes, Milner's former

South African Imperial Secretary, who retained his crusty disposition and was jealous of any threat to his powers and prerogatives. It had been Fiddes's practice, Milner advised Amery, to put the parliamentary under-secretary 'in a corner, with certain definite bones to gnaw to keep him quiet'. That would be impossible, however, in Amery's case since his chief was in the Lords and he must be able 'to put up an all-round defence of the office in the Commons'. But, while Milner was all for Amery's 'getting to *know* everything', he would not attempt to '*put anything right*, until we have both had time to feel our feet'. Though it was certain that 'we must in time give it a "new orientation"', Milner wanted to be careful 'not to give the "new broom" impression on starting'.<sup>6</sup> Despite Milner's words of caution, within weeks Amery was hatching plans to overhaul the Colonial Civil Service, particularly the Office of Crown Agents for the Colonies.

While Milner recuperated, the Paris Peace Conference opened officially on 18 January 1919.<sup>7</sup> Twenty-nine nations invited by the French sent delegates, but the real power to refashion the post-war world would reside with the 'Big Five' – Great Britain, France, the USA, Italy and Japan. Lloyd George and Balfour led a British Empire delegation including the premiers of Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, as well as Indian representatives. With Milner's encouragement, Hankey got Lloyd George to agree to the creation of an integrated secretariat for the delegation, as a further step in imperial cooperation.<sup>8</sup> Hankey reported to Milner that he had arranged to be assisted by recruits from the personal staffs of the dominion prime ministers. He had pled overwork to gain the men, but told Lloyd George privately 'its real significance, which he fully appreciated and approves though neither he nor I want to make a flourish of trumpets about it at the present'. Hankey already had Mr Christie of the Canadian staff, Hughes had promised an Australian, and Botha and Smuts committed Captain Lane of their delegation. His permanent assistant was Captain Abraham, from the Indian contingent, so Milner could 'see that my staff for the British Empire Delegation is completely imperial'. From this 'simple and unostentatious beginning', Hankey looked forward 'with complete confidence to the establishment of a real Imperial Cabinet Office, in which there will always be, even between the sessions of the Imperial War Cabinet ... a Minister from each dominion with a permanent staff from each Dominion'.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately for the dreams of Hankey, Milner, and others, the dominion premiers, with one eye squarely on their own political positions, would never be comfortable with the idea of leaving an independent 'big man' in London.

Lionel Curtis had returned from a tour of India and was part of the British Empire delegation's League of Nations section, under Lord Robert Cecil. He reported from Paris to Milner that the idea was that experts should be in charge of each subject, like Lord Robert, 'with a policy in his head, a certain amount of drive & all the prestige of an ex-minister'. This enabled him to 'get things done

in the direction he wants'. With Milner on the sidelines, however, Curtis found the Colonial Office section leaderless, without a policy, and in conflict with the Foreign Office.<sup>10</sup> Curtis's letter confirmed Amery's fears that the Colonial Office was represented by no one except Charles Strachey, who was 'quite clever but ... a little bit cranky, and in any case quite incapable of impressing a general policy upon our delegation'. Milner suggested that Amery should go over, but he did not feel he had the 'necessary weight to get things straightened out'. As soon as he was well enough, Amery pressed Milner to take charge, calm down the Canadians (irritated at present that their bacon imports had been stopped because of a US oversupply) 'and see things right as regards the Dominion premiers as well'. In spite of the 'apparent substantial concessions' regarding their position, 'they feel that in fact they are really left out and that one or two people are really running the whole show and telling them nothing'. Once Milner had 'put them on right lines', Amery suggested he could alternate with him in Paris.<sup>11</sup>

As it fell out, Milner was well enough by February to heed a summons to Paris by Lloyd George to second Balfour as a plenipotentiary while the Welshman attended to domestic affairs. For the next five months Milner shuttled back and forth attending as needed to tangled Peace Conference and Colonial Office matters. Milner's secretary, Thornton, bluntly reported to Amery that Lloyd George wanted Milner to 'clean up the mess for him' and that their chief was staying at Henry Wilson's flat as he could not stand the racket at the delegation's hotel.<sup>12</sup> In particular Milner saw to the territorial settlement outside Europe, dealing with the Empire delegates, various foreign secretaries, and Clemenceau, whom Lloyd George hoped Milner could appease on the Syrian and other questions.<sup>13</sup> Despite their friendship, the two did not always get on. Clemenceau complained of Milner that 'if he does not agree with you, he closes his eyes like a lizard and you can do nothing with him'.<sup>14</sup>

Milner reported to Amery on the 'kettle of fish' he found himself in at Paris. All their 'proper business' at the Colonial Office was now 'thrown in the shade' by his new duties as second to Balfour. It was 'needless to dwell on the immense burden it is to have to try and find one's way through the maze of 101 questions in wh. the Conference has involved itself without so far settling anything'. Milner did talk to Borden and Sir George Foster, the Canadian Trade Minister, and hoped in the next days to gather the dominion ministers together for an 'all round informal talk' on questions of overall relations, the separation of the dominions from colonial business, the future of the Imperial War Cabinet, and other matters such as the territorial settlement.<sup>15</sup>

Parceling out the German imperial spoils into League of Nations 'Mandates' (theoretically to prepare the native peoples for independence) led to endless squabbling, first over the legitimacy of the mandate system itself, and then on the actual division.<sup>16</sup> Milner saw the mandates scheme in part as a way to allay



US suspicions of British imperialism, 'not as a mere cloak for annexation but as a bond of Union ... between the United States and ourselves'.<sup>17</sup> However, the US sought no territory and, despite the hopes of Britain and France, accepted no mandates. Wilson, who would have preferred to defer the colonial settlement until after the creation of the League of Nations, was forced to compromise with the British Empire delegation partly because the dominions were already in possession of the territory they desired. Only Canada had no such aspirations. Elsewhere in the delegation, under whatever name, Smuts and Botha insisted that German South West Africa be ceded to South Africa, New Zealand wanted German Samoa, and Hughes of Australia spoke for public opinion back home in demanding New Guinea and other German islands.<sup>18</sup> Hughes, who at first demanded direct annexations, was a particular thorn in the side of Wilson whose League and principles he belittled at every opportunity. In return Wilson dubbed the diminutive Australian a 'pestiferous varmint'.<sup>19</sup>

On 20 February, with Balfour in the chair, the British Empire delegation met to consider two mandates issues. First, what was to constitute a mandate? And second, on which terms would mandates be granted? Balfour suggested that Milner draw up a draft plan in consultation with Hughes, Botha and W. F. Massey, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, 'giving the necessary details respecting the territories in which they were interested' for the consideration of the Inter-Allied commission which would make the final determinations. During the session, Sir Joseph Cook of Australia, hoping to keep the Japanese from fortifying their share of the spoils, argued for prohibiting additional armed forces in the mandates. Milner agreed to seek this by 'any agreement possible'.<sup>20</sup>

Milner produced a memorandum for the consideration of the delegation that designated three mandate types that, with slight alteration, would be accepted by the Inter-Allied Mandates commission. Class A was set aside for communities that had 'reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations' could be 'provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory power until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities to be the principle consideration in the selection of a mandatory power.' In this category fell the Turkish Empire, the disposition of which would take the longest to settle. Class B mandates included peoples at such a stage that the mandatory power 'must be responsible for the administration of the territory subject to conditions which will guarantee freedom of conscience or religion.' This, in Milner's opinion, was the most complicated and contentious category including areas such as German East Africa, the Cameroons and Togoland.<sup>21</sup>

The final C Mandate type contained the areas of most interest to the imperial delegates. These were territories which 'owing to the sparseness of the population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilization, or

the geographical contiguity to the mandatory state, or other circumstances can best be administered under the laws of the mandatory state as an integral part thereof subject to safeguards of the interests of indigenous populations'. Milner suggested that German Southwest Africa be a C mandate under South Africa. Germany's Pacific possessions, divided north and south of the Equator, were also in the C class. To the South, Milner consigned Samoa to New Zealand, Nauru to the group of West Pacific islands under the British High Commissioner at Fiji, and the rest to Australia.<sup>22</sup>

In the Pacific, Milner also had to reconcile dominion ambitions with those of the Japanese ally. Admittedly a 'pro-Jap', Milner found after reviewing the agreement made with Japan in 1917 for the acquisition of the Shantung lease and Pacific islands north of the equator nothing 'unreasonable' or 'embarrassing to us'.<sup>23</sup> Despite disquiet in the US, New Zealand and Australia the settlement roughly left the Japanese in possession north of the equator. All the mandates were to be under the 'supervision' of the League of Nations, but practically speaking under one of the mandatory states, or some native ruler guided by the same. Milner duly noted that, in some cases, the first problem would be to 'get hold' of the state, something the League could not do.<sup>24</sup>

With Milner in Paris, Amery carried the load at the Colonial Office, sitting in for his chief at the Cabinet and on various committees. That February Amery was particularly concerned about the fate of a hoped for Emigration Bill along the lines of the 1917 Dominions Royal Commission report, as well as Crown Colony problems in Africa.<sup>25</sup> He reported to Milner that Bonar Law had written out an appropriate sentence on emigration for the King's speech, but it had been excised, and now the Bill seemed 'entirely in the air'. In Amery's opinion, Milner's influence was needed to get a measure through the Cabinet. He also briefed his chief on the export of palm kernels from West Africa and the intertwined liquor and revenue questions. In Amery's opinion, 'we have got to overhaul the whole revenue system of the Crown Colonies at any rate', especially in West Africa where the post-war ban on the liquor trade would 'confront them with serious deficits'.<sup>26</sup>

A still bigger question was the reconstruction of East Africa. So far Amery had given in 'grudgingly' to a 'demand for white settlement and then to wage a more or less successful rearguard against the white settler's demand for native labour'. This had got the settlers 'more or less permanently up against the government and clamouring for a degree of self-government for which they are not yet fit, while our protection to the natives is of a purely negative character' and also 'a purely negative one towards Indian immigration'. What was needed was a comprehensive policy. Amery would settle 'as many whites as you can. Deliberately settle the native as an agriculturist ... to create alongside of the white settler a working native community in which there is always a certain surplus of labour

available'. In other, newly opened, parts of the country the British should settle Indian ex-servicemen or Indian labourers who had 'worked for a certain period of time with white farmers, on the land'. Having white and black and brown working 'all together (though not necessarily in the same areas)', Amery argued, 'ought to make East Africa a great country and a source of immense wealth in a very few years'.<sup>27</sup>

At the end of February, Amery was still unable to report any progress on the Emigration Bill. He told Milner that 'L. G. shies like anything at the word' and wanted a 'sweeter smelling title for it'. Auckland Geddes, the National Service Minister, had told Amery that Britain must 'have off several millions' for economic reasons and had brought this up in the Cabinet, but the Welshman had 'run off the rails at the first siding' leading to the 'fluffiest' discussion Amery had ever heard, even in the Cabinet. During the course of this the 'fat men of finance and industry', led by the shipping magnate Lord Inverforth at the Ministry of Munitions, the Post-Master General, Albert Illingworth, and Sir Albert Stanley at the Board of Trade, 'all assured the Prime Minister there would be so much employment in the next few years there would be an acute shortage of labour'. Amery, speaking for the first time at any Cabinet, supported Geddes and added that, regardless of who was right in the labour debate, there would still be hundreds of thousands who meant to emigrate and it would be better to do it 'systematically and successfully than to have a general mess'.<sup>28</sup> A week later Amery told Milner that unless he got Lloyd George's 'blessing' for the renamed Oversea Settlement Bill, Bonar Law would refuse to make any decision on its introduction.<sup>29</sup> In the end all Amery's effort was for naught as no bill would be put forward. However, in March 1919 the Cabinet approved the creation of the Oversea Settlement Committee that would initiate a scheme to settle ex-servicemen and their families in the dominions. Amery and Milner kept at the subject, an effort that would end in the 1922 Empire Settlement Act.<sup>30</sup>

Ensuring the principle and practice of Imperial Preference in the post-war years was another area of concern for Milner and Amery who with good reason feared a renaissance of Free Trade orthodoxy as part of an alarming general slide back to the pre-war status quo across the board. Amery exhorted Milner to use his influence on the dominion prime ministers, Chamberlain and Bonar Law. He saw a real danger that preference would be 'whittled away by private bargains' between individual dominions or the United Kingdom and foreign countries. Such agreements were already being negotiated between Australia and France. This seemed to Amery 'altogether wrong in principle'. The 'very essence' of preference should be that goods 'of Empire origin should be more favourably treated than those of foreign countries, irrespective of any bargain which may be made'. In his view preference would, 'even on existing duties', be 'most valuable'. All the African colonies, for example, would benefit on tobacco, South Africa

and Australia on wine, and every colony which produced jam or preserved fruits or condensed milk would benefit from the sugar duty, and if the motor car tax was kept on Canada would also get something. In Amery's view, the 'range of taxation might be increased with great advantage for both revenue and preference without violating the Government's pledges'.<sup>31</sup> Influenced by Bonar Law and Milner, Chamberlain's 1919 Budget was notable for a first concession to imperial preference.

Back in London in March, Milner began to 'pick up the threads' at the Colonial Office. He reported to Glazebrook in Canada that there was plenty to do but the job would not be so as heavy as the War Office. He meant at any rate to continue to put the burden largely on Amery. Milner went on that he was glad to be back and had not liked the work in Paris or the 'outlook there, or the attitude of anybody concerned in the peace negotiations'.<sup>32</sup> Two weeks later he wrote in a similar vein to the Governor General at Ottawa, the Duke of Devonshire. Milner confided that he had been in Paris 'amid the indescribable chaos which is known as the "Peace Conference"'. Although there was a lot of excellent work being done there by the British Empire delegation it really was the 'modern Tower of Babel'. Between the 'irreconcilable appetites and policies of the various new nations and the lack of any single guiding principle in the deliberations of the "big five"', Milner did not see a 'world settlement emerging, or a "League of Nations" that will be more than a scrap of paper'. Canada's Prime Minister, Milner reported, was getting 'restive' but doing good work at the conference. In his opinion Borden was the only one of the dominion prime ministers who, without ceasing to be a good Canadian, was 'capable of taking the wider view' and whose judgment and influence were 'really useful in Imperial and International questions'. Borden was not 'showy', but was a 'man of weight' and 'perfectly straight'.<sup>33</sup>

This letter to the Governor General initiated a correspondence representative of that which Milner's duties as Colonial Secretary demanded across the imperial board. Before he left the Colonial Office in February 1921, Milner sent Devonshire many hundreds of missives, copied for the information of the sitting Canadian Prime Minister. The topics ranged from the myriad subjects broached during the peace settlement to Canadian domestic affairs, particularly the labour unrest endemic in the period made all the more threatening by the ongoing civil war in Russia. Milner also sent regular and frank assessments of the European and world situations. In March 1919 the Colonial Secretary saw the prospects as perhaps 'even blacker than a year ago' during the German offensive.

After Communists seized power in Hungary, Milner feared that a punitive peace would send Germany down the same road. He confided to Robert Brand, who was in Paris as an aide to Lord Robert Cecil and had been working with John Maynard Keynes of the Treasury delegation to set an indemnity amount,

that any settlement which deprived Germany of the majority of her available assets would be 'economically foolish as well as most dangerous politically'. Milner dismissed as hopeless the Allied attempt 'to make Germany reimburse the losses of the past'. In his view, 'the less we ask of Germany the more likely we are to get *something*'.<sup>34</sup> This was in line with the findings of Milner's Peace Terms Committee of the previous April which echoed the Board of Trade position that 'anything like complete reparation for the losses imposed by the war was manifestly impossible' and that to impose a large tribute would be 'undesirable as being likely to lead to many difficulties and to retard the gradual re-establishment of a pacific spirit throughout the world'.<sup>35</sup>

Much of Milner's work at Paris had to do with a renewed 'scramble for Africa'.<sup>36</sup> The French demanded Togoland and Cameroon (both conquered during the war), as well as a free hand in Morocco. Milner worked with his French counterpart, Henri Simon, to hammer out the details (most of which had already been decided during the war) and France received Togoland and most of Cameroon, except a small strip next to British Nigeria. The British gained most of East Africa, where fighting had continued throughout the war, to link up the colonies north and south. Milner was in the end sympathetic to the claims of Belgium, telling Amery that he was disposed to be generous to the smaller ally in ceding some territory from German East Africa.<sup>37</sup>

The reverse was true concerning the Italians, who were in Milner's view particularly demanding and, aiming to reverse the 1896 humiliation at the hands of the Abyssinians at Adowa, expected parts of Somalia, among other things. Milner questioned whether Lloyd George realized the seriousness of granting all they asked. In his opinion ceding Jubaland would cause an outcry from the British in East Africa. Milner also was upset that the British were giving up more than the French. British Somaliland, which Lloyd George appeared willing to cede, Milner called one of the 'nodal points' the loss of which would weaken Britain's strategic position. He warned that the Italians were trying to control the approaches to Abyssinia (the future Ethiopia) with the goal of absorbing it. 'One has only got to look at the map to see how serious the setting up of an Italian Empire, half as big as British India, in the North-Eastern corner of Africa, would be.' The present Italian strips were not important, 'but the establishment of a huge Italian block flanking our main route to India and bringing Italy into close relations with both Arabia and the Sudan would be a very different matter'.<sup>38</sup>

Even supposing the British were prepared to regard the establishment of Italian authority over Abyssinia with indifference, Milner warned Lloyd George, 'we have certain vital interests in that country which we *must* safeguard. I refer especially to the headwaters of the Blue Nile'. The very farthest distance the British could safely go with the Italians was to offer them the Eastern portion of British Somaliland, about 30,000 square miles, which adjoined Italian Soma-

liland. In Milner's opinion, it was necessary to exclude any imperial rival from 'that great sphere of British influence extending from the centre of East Africa, through the Sudan, Egypt, Arabia and the Persian Gulf to India, which is the real British "Empire" apart from the Dominions'.<sup>39</sup> Milner 'declined to budge' on Somaliland and in the end his small concessions to Italy included a favourable re-alignment of the Libyan-Egyptian frontier and the transfer of the Juba Valley from East Africa.<sup>40</sup> Italy had little choice but to accept what Britain and France offered and withdrew temporarily from the Conference, not over the imperial settlement, but over land promised along the Adriatic Coast in what would become the state of Yugoslavia.

The Italians would also be peripherally involved in perhaps the most tangled territorial negotiations at Paris – the partition of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>41</sup> During the war, Italy had been promised territory in south-west Asia Minor, independence had been promised to the Arabs by the 'MacMahon letter' to King Hussain, the Sykes-Picot agreement had divided much of the Ottoman spoils between Britain and France, the 1917 Balfour Declaration (which Milner had helped to draft) had promised Palestine as a 'national home' for the 'Jewish people', and the Greeks expected the area around Smyrna. In addition, there was a feeling that those Armenians who had survived the massacres of the previous years should be granted a homeland. Milner told George Lloyd, a Unionist MP destined in future to be Governor of Bombay and Egyptian High Commissioner, that he was 'strongly in favour of reasonable clemency to the Turks'. However, their domination of the Arabs was over and he would also like to do everything possible to save what remained of the Armenians. Beyond this, unlike those who proposed a 'bag and baggage' policy of excluding the Turks from Europe, he would allow their domain to extend as far as Adrianople. Milner viewed the Turks as 'potential friends' who as such would strengthen Britain's position in South Asia and Egypt. In this sense, he was 'Pro-Turkish', but admitted to Lloyd that this meant 'swimming against the current, which continues to run in the opposite direction'.<sup>42</sup>

The Syrian question, on which Milner spent much of his time, was also left undecided in 1919 with the French in control of Beirut and the coast and with the Emir Faisal with Damascus and the interior. Milner also spent time mediating between the French, the Arabs and the Zionists, whose cause he supported, over Palestine, the British mandate for which incorporated the terms of the Balfour Declaration. The following spring, at the San Remo Conference, the Ottoman mandates were finally allocated. The French traded Palestine and Mosul to the British for a free hand with Faisal, who had little choice but to abandon Syria and to accept the throne of the British mandate Iraq, as Mesopotamia was renamed. When no state would accept a mandate, four months later the peace signed with the Turks at Sèvres left the Armenians at their mercy.

Having the Empire delegation at the Peace Conference, working closely with the British, gave an illusory appearance of unity. In March Milner acknowledged what he considered a natural, but temporary, centripetal tendency as an inevitable reaction to the wartime spirit. However, he continued to believe, 'Of the reality of the sentiment of the Empire there can be no question.'<sup>43</sup> In *The Times* of 11 April Milner called attention to the 'almost boundless possibilities of growth' stemming from the dominions' transformation into nations that, while intensely conscious of their own nationhood, were desirous of staying in the Empire. 'If that desire was fulfilled', he went on, 'the world would see for the first time a permanent association of a number of great powers under a single head'. It would be, and in fact was, a 'League of Nations', whether or not part of a larger league and it possessed a 'moral unity' which a greater league, if it came into existence, had still to acquire.

However, this unity was soon under attack when Louis Botha extracted from Lloyd George the right of his dominion not to ratify Britain's promise to guarantee France from future attack, seeming to leave open the possibility of dominion neutrality in a future European war. Ironically on Empire Day 1919, Milner complained to Lloyd George that such an arrangement was 'incompatible with the existence of the British Empire as a political unit'.<sup>44</sup> The other dominions in the end did ratify the French treaty, which stated in Article IV, as Milner pointed out for the information of Borden, that the treaty 'shall impose no obligation upon any of the Dominions of the British Empire unless and until it is approved by the Parliament of the Dominion concerned'.<sup>45</sup>

Back in Paris, Milner was very disturbed by the terms handed to the German delegation that May. To preserve the security of the British Empire he agreed with taking Germany's imperial possessions and limiting her military capacity. He was opposed, however, both to the reparations bill to be presented (underpinned by Article 231 which assigned war guilt to Germany) and to the territory and populations lost to fulfill principles of 'self-determination' which Milner thought foolhardy, as he did the idea that the League of Nations could maintain the peace of the world. However, his arguments against excessive penalties fell on deaf ears, beginning with Lloyd George and Milner realized the limitations of his position.<sup>46</sup> Faced with a French invasion, Germany had little choice but to accept the punitive terms.

The day before the German peace was signed Milner was made chair of a Mandates Commission which continued the work towards a final settlement in the following months.<sup>47</sup> In the commission's first meeting, on the morning the Versailles Treaty was signed, the Japanese were already raising questions about 'forced labour' and troops in their mandates while the French questioned the 'commercial equality' clause.<sup>48</sup> Despite his objections, Milner was present at Versailles on 28 June 1919, the fifth anniversary of the Sarajevo murders, to sign the

German treaty. He found the ceremony 'all strangely unimpressive'.<sup>49</sup> To mark the occasion, Milner forwarded to Devonshire and his imperial brethren a royal proclamation for publication which declared that

The signing of the Treaty of Peace will be received with deep thankfulness throughout the British Empire. This formal act brings to its concluding stages the terrible war which has devastated Europe and distracted the world. It manifests the victory of the ideals of freedom and liberty for which we have made untold sacrifices. I share my people's joy and thanksgiving and earnestly pray that the coming years of peace may bring to them ever increasing happiness and prosperity.<sup>50</sup>

Happiness and prosperity, however, would continue to prove elusive for all parties. Though the German treaty had been signed, the 'concluding' stage now reached did not mean an immediate end of the British blockade. This remained in place, pending German ratification and a settlement of reparations. Consequently, starvation conditions continued on the continent. Many in the dominions were eager to renew trade with Germany and Milner was forced to explain the policy in his correspondence with Borden and others.

President Wilson returned home to begin an epic, and in the end losing, battle with the US Senate over ratification of the Versailles Treaty. Milner had championed the right of the dominions likewise to sanction the document and he oversaw the complicated process from the Colonial Office. This, in his view, demonstrated their 'equality of status with the United Kingdom as partners in the "British Empire"'. In a 9 July speech Milner reiterated that the 'only possibility of a continuance of the British Empire' was on the basis of 'absolute out-and-out equal partnership'. This, he admitted, was easy to say. Working it out in practice, 'without bringing the severance of relations between us and the Dominions' would be one of the 'most complicated tasks which statesmanship has ever had to face'. He was not afraid of it, yet had to admit that the difficulties were such 'that our best efforts may end in failure. At any rate there is no other choice.' Along these lines, Milner acknowledged that it was necessary and inevitable that in future the dominions should have direct and independent representation at international conferences, which he insisted would 'do nothing to impair, and in fact may ultimately do a good deal to strengthen the internal bonds within the Empire'.<sup>51</sup>

In the 30 July Lords debate on the imperial preference clauses of the Finance Bill, Milner responded to the attacks of those who had since the end of the war reverted to their Free Trade faith. Milner attached 'immense importance' to the next twenty to thirty years for both the dominions and the Dependent Empire and declared himself a 'firm believer' in tariff preference. However, he did not regard this as anything more than a 'single application of a principle of far greater and wider import'. He understood the principle of preference to be



that 'while we have no hostility to any nation ... there is a special interest to us in the development of these great States of our own race and blood and traditions and ideas, upon which ... we alone can rely in the great struggles of the world'. Milner recalled his declaration years earlier, when the first dreadnought was given by a dominion, 'Has Argentina given you a battleship?' He also used the example of emigration, declaring that if people did go, let them go to the Empire rather than foreign countries. There was no hostility implied in that, 'only a preference to our own kith and kin'. This really was the 'root idea of this policy of Imperial Preference' which Milner did not admit involved 'any departure from Free trade, or rather free exchange'. He did not believe that preference, 'in the form in which it has been accorded by the Government', was any departure from free exchange, but if it was, Milner contended that it was a departure 'justified by these high considerations of national policy which I have attempted ... to put before your Lordships'.<sup>52</sup>

Before a group of Oxford summer students at the Sheldonian Theatre two days later Milner returned to the theme of imperial equality. He told his audience that it had been forty five years since, as an undergraduate, he had been 'first stirred by a new vision of the Empire' as a 'world-encircling group of related nations some of them even in time destined to outgrow the mother country, united on a basis of equality and partnership, and united at least mainly by moral and spiritual bonds'. All his life, Milner went on, this 'higher conception of the British Empire and of its only real future has had to struggle against misunderstanding, against neglect, against submersion in the excitement of local and party controversies over matters often of infinitely less real importance'. Even though the auspices looked encouraging, Milner was not without anxiety for the immediate future and he expected a temporary set-back in the field of imperial politics in this 'season of general reaction, the ebb-tide from the high moral and spiritual level, the self sacrifice ... the ungrudging patriotism ... during the supreme trial of the last four years'. Nevertheless, in his view immense strides had been made towards imperial unity in the Imperial War Cabinet and the Empire Delegation at Paris. What was to be determined was the shape of the instrument of future cooperation.

Milner disagreed with those who believed separate League of Nations membership by Great Britain and the dominions threatened further cooperation and unity. Membership in the 'British Commonwealth' (a phrase he used as synonymous with the British Empire) already bestowed the benefits which the new League hoped in time to extend to the world. The Commonwealth, since it had more to lose than any other state in another Armageddon, could have 'no higher interest than to try and convert the pax Britannica into a pax mundi'. Only time would tell whether the newly created League was going to 'strike root in somewhat stony soil'. If, he went on, in 'stretching out after a pax mundi, which we

may never attain, we were to let slip from our grasp the *pax Britannica*, which is our long assured and well-tested possession to-day, we should be sacrificing the substance for the shadow'.

Though the League in his estimation would need time to develop, it had one advantage over the Commonwealth in possessing in its Covenant a regular constitution which the Empire lacked. The old bonds of Empire were obsolete and no new one had yet been created. A conference for this purpose was promised in the next year and Milner hoped 'constructive statesmanship', perhaps using the League Covenant as a guide, could create a new framework. 'For it is surely a most strange anomaly that the self-governing States of the British Empire, in joining the League, should have bound themselves by formal ties to a number of foreign nations, when they have never hitherto been willing to enter into similar obligations to one another.'<sup>53</sup>

On 19 September 1919 Australia became the final dominion to ratify the Versailles Treaty. Now that all had assented, Milner wrote to Lloyd George, 'the whole Empire can come in by a single act, which is rather a triumph.'<sup>54</sup> In an interview published that month Milner proclaimed the inclusion of dominion ministers among the signatories of the Versailles Treaty as 'equal plenipotentiaries of the King' already illustrated a 'new constitution of the Empire'. The United Kingdom and the dominion were 'partner nations; yet not indeed of equal power, but for good and all of equal status'. The preservation and strengthening of this 'free union' was the 'paramount duty of British statesmanship.'<sup>55</sup>

With the European peace well on the way to being settled Lloyd George's Government could now turn more attention to three particularly troublesome post-war nationalist movements – in Ireland, India and Egypt – which surpassed in organization and sophistication anything the Empire had ever faced. Milner was only peripherally involved in the first two questions, but agreed to take on the chief responsibility for looking into the severe problems which had arisen in Egypt, officially designated a Protectorate in 1914, but remaining under the supervision of Curzon's Foreign Office. During the war Milner had prophesied that, while Protectorate status might temporarily simplify diplomatic and international questions, 'the internal questions – constitutional and administrative – are going to take their place and are likely to prove even more troublesome.'<sup>56</sup> At Cairo he would learn the true wisdom of his words.

## 14 EGYPT AGAIN: THE MILNER MISSION AND AFTER

It was only natural that Milner, who had begun his imperial career at Cairo and had visited the country regularly since, would lead an investigative mission to Egypt.<sup>1</sup> This step had been under discussion since April 1919, but was delayed time and again by intervening domestic and imperial crises. According to its original terms of reference, the Milner Mission was 'to enquire into the cause of the late disorders in Egypt, and to report on the existing situation ... and the form of the Constitution which, under the Protectorate, will be best calculated to promote its peace and prosperity, the progressive development of self-governing institutions, and the protection of foreign interests.'<sup>2</sup> Milner reported to the King's secretary Stamfordham on 19 November, 'My fate seems to be sealed. I am to leave for Egypt on Friday week – & I expect I shall be away between 2 & 3 months'. Unfortunately, he would not be there to welcome back the Prince of Wales from his 'triumphant progress' through the US and Canada. Amery, he went on, would act for him at the Colonial Office in this and other matters while he was away.<sup>3</sup>

Before he departed, Milner was at the House of Lords to hear Curzon speak on his mission. In answer to a question, the Foreign Secretary declared that Egypt's 'geographical position at the gate of Palestine, at the doorway of Africa, and on the high-road to India, made it impossible that the British Empire, with any regard to its own security, should wash its hands of responsibility'. Not only British, but universal interests 'would best be secured by leaving Egypt under the aegis of a great civilized Power'. He defended the Protectorate and told the Lords that it would be Milner's task to 'devise the details of a Constitution' in which British assistance and guidance would be needed. The Mission was not going out with a 'Constitution in its pocket' and intended to consult all parties. It was not authorized to impose a system on Egypt. The 'fundamental principle' of the inquiry was the 'progressive development of Egyptian self-governing institutions under British protection'.<sup>4</sup> On the way to Cairo, Milner shared his concerns with Curzon, writing him that ever since Cromer's departure a 'witch's cauldron had

been brewing' and the present trouble had been 'bound to come owing to an agglomeration of disturbing influences some of very long standing'.<sup>5</sup>

Three 'official' members accompanied Milner: Sir Cecil Hurst, a Foreign Office international law expert; Sir Rennell Rodd, who had recently retired as Italian Ambassador and had been at the Residency under Cromer; and General Sir John Maxwell. The last had long service in Egypt, was well-liked there and, Milner hoped, could lessen mistrust of the mission. Two 'unofficial' choices were also included: Brigadier Sir Owen Thomas MP, as the representative of the Commons and Labour; and, Curzon's choice, the Asquithian journalist J. A. Spender, editor of the *Westminster Gazette*.<sup>6</sup> Milner's original view, which he shared with his colleagues, was that the mission should consider 'how much authority we ought to exercise in Egypt, what we should try to do and what we had better leave alone'. He hoped that some rapprochement could be reached with the Egyptian moderates to balance British interests with some increase in autonomy. It seemed possible, he argued, that 'what we mean by "Protectorate" is not really incompatible with what they mean by "Independence"'.<sup>7</sup>

Much of the present problem, in Milner's estimation, came from the post-Cromer (and particularly post-1914) multiplication in the numbers of British officials – to the frustration and disappointment of aspiring Egyptians. He hoped that an administrative reorganization, and a general lowering in profile of the British presence, might go far towards solving the situation. Milner, who would soon discover that any solution on such lines would be too little too late, arrived at Cairo on 7 December to find a boycott had been organized against the mission by the Wafd or 'Delegation' party which claimed to represent the people of Egypt in the fight for independence. For the past year this popular movement had been led by an experienced Egyptian lawyer and politician Said Zaghlul, who, two days after the Armistice was signed with Germany, called on Milner's old friend Sir Reginald Wingate (since Kitchener's death in 1916 the Egyptian High Commissioner) to request an Egyptian delegation be allowed to travel to London or Paris for Home Rule talks on the lines of Wilsonian 'self-determination'.<sup>8</sup>

Two days after Zaghlul, the Egyptian Prime Minister, Rushdi Pasha, made a request for a delegation of his own to London, with some nationalist members. In both cases the British Government, against Wingate's advice, refused permission. As a result the Rushdi government resigned and a violent agitation broke out which led to the deportation of Zaghlul and others to Malta. To curb the following explosion of disorder, the British replaced Wingate with Field Marshal Lord Allenby whose tough reputation and nickname, 'the Bull', seemed to mark him out as just the man to take the situation in hand.<sup>9</sup> Allenby, however, almost immediately came round to the view that repression would not work and only concessions could quell the uprising. A reluctant Curzon was soon forced

to grant both Zaghlul's release and passports for an Egyptian delegation to Paris. When Milner arrived, Allenby, who correctly saw the mission as a challenge to his authority and judgment, briefed the visitors and then decamped to the Sudan.

Rushdi commented that the British 'would be unable to find three cats with which to converse', but before he left Allenby assured Milner that the unrest would die down and people would soon come to see his commission.<sup>10</sup> Others were less optimistic, including Milner's former South African private secretary, Ozzy Walrond, who had gone from the Arab Bureau during the War to an Intelligence Service post in Cairo. Walrond assessed the situation as 'pretty black' with the moderates either thoroughly frightened by, or under the thumb of, the extremists, and predicted that no Egyptian, however friendly, would have much to do with the mission. Those that did would be 'marked men.' Walrond also reported that the new ministry was made up of 'men of straw', who carried no weight whatever in the country. Milner recorded that he 'discounted all this pretty heavily'.<sup>11</sup> He should not have. Few Egyptians, even surreptitiously in the dead of night, would cross the Nationalist picket lines outside the mission headquarters at the Semiramis Hotel.

Three days after he arrived Milner reported to Curzon that 'complete independence' had caught on and that the Egyptians had 'committed themselves, for the most part *contra coeure*, and are now looking for a way out which will not involve too great personal humiliation'. He thought there was a lot to be said as a solution the idea which seemed to be catching on of 'something like a formal alliance' which would 'secure to us all the powers of control which we may deem absolutely necessary'.<sup>12</sup> Milner did manage to discuss the 'alliance' idea with at least one Egyptian politician, Adli Pasha, from whom he also sought to find a way to persuade people to come before the commission. However, Milner's hopes that a dialogue could be opened would not long endure as, for the next three months, while the violence ebbed and flowed, the mission was boycotted by almost all Egyptians, the most important being Zaghlul, who refused to return from Paris.

In the face of this, any idea of carrying out the mission as originally conceived was soon put aside. Milner reported to Thornton on 18 December that 'things are in the very devil of a mess, & a great deal worse than we have been allowed to know in England'. He did not anticipate any further violent outbreaks on a huge scale, and felt that if they did occur, Allenby could deal with them. What was more menacing was that the Egyptians were playing a 'much cleverer game & bullying those of their own people, who don't want to join the chorus of screeches for "complete independence" ... no more thoroughly mismanaged business than this has been is to be found even in the large repertory of British bumbles'.<sup>13</sup> The same day Milner complained to Curzon, 'how are we to frame or

even suggest any form of constitution for this tumultuous and leaderless mob is indeed a problem. Any country less capable of “self-determination” than the Egypt of today would be difficult to imagine.’ No Egyptian dared to acknowledge the Protectorate, though they knew ‘perfectly well they can’t get rid of us’. In Milner’s estimation, it was ‘wounded *amour propre*’ which was ‘largely responsible for the hostility to everything British’.<sup>14</sup>

Milner admitted to Lloyd George that the country was in a much worse state than he had imagined. Things had been ‘going bad since Cromer, though not so rapidly as in quite recent days’. Order had been almost completely restored among the fellaheen, but he was ‘bound to admit that ... the whole of the middle and upper classes – the landowners, the “intelligenza”, the officials, the religious leaders – are all out to give us all the trouble they can’. The agitation for ‘complete independence’ had swept the country and it was evident that, till there was some change in the temper of the people, Egypt would ‘continue to be a thorn in our side and will exercise a disturbing influence in our position in the whole of the Near east and to some extent also in India’. This was a serious danger which, ‘by hook or by crook we must try to overcome’. As a first step Milner was ‘trying hard to explain to all and sundry’ that it was not Britain’s ‘wish or interest to subjugate Egypt’. It was clear, he told Lloyd George, that for the moderates to successfully resist the extremists, they must be able to ‘hold out some attractive prospect of “self-government” to the people – beautiful phrase this, but the Orientals live on phrases and camouflage ... even more than we do’. The difficulty in Milner’s estimation, was to find a way of making Egypt’s relation to Great Britain ‘appear a more independent and dignified one than it ever really can be without abandoning the degree of control which, in view of native incompetence and corruption we are constrained to keep’.<sup>15</sup>

Consequently, as he had already promised the leaders of the Egyptian ‘moderate’ nationalists, Rushdi and Adli, and with Allenby’s reluctant approval, Milner on 29 December issued a declaration that: ‘The Mission had been sent out by the British Government, with the approval of Parliament, to reconcile the aspirations of the Egyptian people with the special interests which Great Britain has in Egypt and with the maintenance of the legitimate rights of all foreigners in the country’.<sup>16</sup> Curzon did not object to this, writing Milner ‘whether we put them on the saddle in front of us, or whether they cling on behind’, as long as the ‘firm seat in the saddle shall be ours’.<sup>17</sup> The *Egyptian Mail* called the redrawing of the original terms an ‘Olive Branch’, but Milner recorded that the ‘native press keeps up its old parrot cries, though there are here and there some slight signs of improvement’. A week later, Milner’s appeal was answered in the papers by the publication of the ‘Manifesto of the Six Khedival Princes’ in support of the Nationalist demand for complete independence.<sup>18</sup>

Milner reported to Violet Cecil on 23 January 1920, 'The more I see of Egypt the more convinced I am that, quite apart from our muddles, there are troublous times ahead'. A weak sultan and ministry, an enormously wealthy pasha class 'with no morality and nothing to do with their money except spend it on gambling and intrigue', and a rapidly growing poor population made the task even more difficult and complex than Cromer had faced. The added complications of Islamic fanatics, Zionists and Bolshevism led Milner to declare, 'What a kettle of fish!' His mission, Milner believed, had done good, but new difficulties sprang up on every side. The 'present fever' was abating but he saw no cure for the 'more enduring maladies' unless a 'real statesman' could be found to give best years of his life to the effort. Allenby was a good man, but not suited to the job.<sup>19</sup>

Though he seemed to be calling for a new Cromer to emerge, it had become apparent to Milner that things had irrevocably changed since that era, and that a new system was needed to replace the Protectorate, although still with adequate provision made for the retention of British troops to, first of all, protect the Suez Canal. The original mission report also recommended a guarantee of British suzerainty over the Sudan and a certain amount of control of Egyptian foreign policy staying in British hands.<sup>20</sup> The British were caught in a dilemma. Further repression, Milner admitted to Curzon, would only 'supply fuel for fresh agitation and so we go round in the old vicious circle'.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, could any significant Egyptian political faction be persuaded to collaborate with his compromise solution? This was a question that would not be settled until Milner returned home.

On 26 January Milner reported to Curzon the end of his hopes for reaching even an informal settlement, much less a new constitution, until 'the Egyptians come to their senses'. He went on that the best remedy for the present state of affairs was to be found in 'something like a formal agreement call it a Treaty, Convention or what you will, between Great Britain and Egypt'.<sup>22</sup> A week later he confided to Violet Cecil that it was 'clear we will not reach *settlement* while we are in Egypt, tho' we may pave the way for one'. In his opinion, the whole Near East was 'one question' and much depended on the outcome of the ongoing Turkish negotiations, which Milner hoped would reach a non-punitive settlement in the best interests of imperial security.<sup>23</sup> About the situation in Egypt, Milner reported to Amery that 'even the extreme nationalists are beginning to get sick of the present chaos & uncertainty' and there might be 'something like a negotiation' with an Egyptian deputation including Zaghlul, in London after his return. 'We should only encourage this if we know that the big men were coming in a reasonable frame of mind'. Meanwhile, the mission was busy 'drawing up a scheme of what could and could not be given them'.<sup>24</sup>

On 22 February the mounting violence prompted Allenby to take strong action, making any further talks completely impossible. At the same time, Milner recorded that Allenby, seemed 'neither to know nor to care about the future sta-

tus of Egypt'. He worried only about upholding the protectorate and was 'frankly looking forward to getting rid of the mission'. A final meeting took place on 2 March 1920, when a first draft report of the 'General Conclusions' was formally signed. Before Milner departed, he saw Adli Pasha again to discuss continuing the talks, unofficially, in London.<sup>25</sup>

Back in England a month later, Milner's Egyptian work continued. In May he sent the mission's revised 'General Conclusions' to Curzon, but delayed preparing a final report until he could consult Adli Pasha and Zaghlul whom he reckoned, even though they were not in the present Egyptian Government, the most important Egyptian political figures.<sup>26</sup> Milner had told Sir Valentine Chirol, who was supporting him in *The Times*, that he thought both men were 'very anxious to come to terms' and this proved correct as they feared that Allenby, the Egyptian Sultan and other enemies would reach an agreement without them.<sup>27</sup> *The Times* was not the only paper to back Milner's efforts for an Egyptian settlement.<sup>28</sup> The normally hostile *Manchester Guardian* commented that there was 'no longer any doubt – that the Egyptian people must be consulted in the decision of its own fate ... no such doubt is in the mind of the Milner Commission. It looks to a "friendly accord" as the basis of future relations between England and Egypt'. This would not be a treaty such as that 'dictated' to the Sudan in 1899, but 'an agreement freely accepted by the Egyptian people'. This change in outlook was 'itself a political revolution'.<sup>29</sup>

In June Milner and the two Egyptian leaders, along with Sir Cecil Hurst, opened two months of Colonial Office talks centered on the degree of actual independence Egypt could expect to enjoy, the first subject being international relations. Milner began by following the line that Egypt's foreign policy must be left in Britain's control, with Adli and Zaghlul arguing this was inconsistent with independence. The same split was apparent in discussions of finance, the courts and police.

Many in the British Government, including Edwin Montagu at the India Office, questioned the wisdom of Milner's unofficial negotiations, fearing the ramifications in their own spheres, if boycotts were rewarded with such concessions. However, Milner argued that continued conversations meant that the boycott in Cairo had failed. The Cairo mission had announced its willingness to talk to all without 'restrictions or prejudices' but the nationalist agitation scared everyone off and after six weeks those declining to talk in Cairo asked if negotiations might continue in London. Milner could not say if anything would come of them, but whatever might occur it would not be a 'result of the boycott but of the boycott being a dead failure'. He told Montagu that he did not see a parallel between Egypt and India. The latter was 'undoubtedly within the British Empire' and its inhabitants subjects of the king, but in Egypt there had always been a native sovereign, administration, and legislature of some sort. Britain had rejected annexation when the



protectorate was declared four years before. In future Milner would base Egyptian relations on a treaty, but in reality the system would not be very different from the one already in place, and he was now talking with Zaghlul to see if an agreement was possible.<sup>30</sup> Pressure for a settlement was applied to both sides by Allenby, who appeared near to striking a separate bargain with the Egyptian Sultan, and, on 5 July Milner offered to concede Egyptian representation abroad in return for British financial and judicial stewardship.<sup>31</sup>

The resulting Zaghlul–Milner Agreement of 18 August 1920 was a pragmatic compromise, the product at least in part of Milner's experience of four years service in war and post-war Government. This 'Agreement' was in reality only a statement of intent meant to be the basis of further negotiations, while both sides recommended its terms to their respective governments. Milner was convinced that, despite their hesitation, Zaghlul and Adli would support the proposals. He confided to Chirol that even if the former was 'too timid to back his own convictions', Adli, Rushdi, and the Wafd leaders, would 'join forces to support the scheme and use all their influence to obtain the assent of the National Assembly'.<sup>32</sup>

The agreement recommended converting Egypt by treaty from a British Protectorate into an independent sovereign state, ruled by a constitutional monarch, a representative assembly, and an Egyptian Ministry responsible to that assembly. The Executive would be Egyptian, assisted in an advisory or subordinate capacity by such British officials as the Egyptian Government might decide to employ or retain. The two British officials, financial and judicial, upon whom it was proposed to insist, would be merely advisers. Taxation would be in the hands of the Egyptian Government, provided they did not discriminate against foreigners, and they would be able to conclude commercial and other treaties. There was to be a British High Commissioner who would be accorded an exceptional position and entitled to precedence over other representatives and with the right to intervene in cases where foreigners were likely to be unfavourably affected by Egyptian legislation. Otherwise, the Egyptian Government would be able to pass such legislation and to take such administrative action as it pleased.

As Milner finally had conceded, there would be an Egyptian Foreign Office, with an Egyptian Foreign Minister at Cairo, and Egyptian diplomatic representatives in London and other capitals. However, as part of the treaty of alliance which was part of the bargain, Egypt was 'not to adopt in foreign countries an attitude which is inconsistent with the alliance or will create difficulties for Great Britain, and not to enter into any agreement with a foreign power which is prejudicial to British interests'. In times of war Egypt was to render such military assistance to Great Britain as was within her means.

The police and army would be, with an important exception, Egyptian forces and the maintenance of law and order an exclusively Egyptian responsibility. The numbers and location of the British military presence remaining in Egypt were

to be determined by imperial as distinct from local considerations. These forces would be limited to three to five thousand men near the Suez Canal 'for the protection of imperial communications' and to help Egypt defend 'the integrity of her territory'. Milner wanted to avoid the appearance of a garrison and informed Churchill at the War Office of his desires.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, Churchill and others in the Cabinet had first learned details of the agreement from leaks to the press, including a supportive account in *The Times* of 23 August. The next day's *Morning Post*, however, called the agreement 'a sheer surrender'.

As it fell out, Churchill, for a variety of reasons proved perhaps the most comprehensively hostile, and effective, critic of Milner's proposals, which he attacked on several fronts. First, he denounced the agreement for being concluded before seeking the approval of the Government which put ministers such as himself in an awkward position for future talks. As Minister for War and Air, he doubted the feasibility of the military arrangements and condemned the fact that Milner had not consulted the experts. He also questioned whether independence was to be real or merely designed to cover a dependent relationship. And finally, and probably most tellingly, Churchill played to the fears of ministers already alarmed at the emergent nationalisms in Ireland and India, where there was little doubt immediate independence also would be demanded if the Egyptian agreement was accepted.<sup>34</sup> Despite Milner's efforts to sway him, Edwin Montagu agreed with Churchill that negotiations with extremists such as Zaghlul only raised the hopes of men like Gandhi and De Valera and that the method of the Milner proposals had 'enormously increased our Indian difficulties'.<sup>35</sup> Going even further, Montagu told H. A. L. Fisher that 'the British Empire is dead. Milner has killed it by his Egyptian arrangement'.<sup>36</sup>

However, much more important than any objections of Churchill or Montagu were the attitudes of Lloyd George and Bonar Law. Curzon reported to Milner on 18 August that the Prime Minister was 'a good deal startled' to hear his 'general ideas'. Two days later Milner found Bonar Law 'very uneasy' and braced for a Government refusal. In the Cabinet discussions, Bonar Law declared that it would take all the Welshman's 'skill to get us out of this mess'. Arthur Hardinge, representing Curzon at the meeting, 'thought the proposals would not be acceptable in Egypt and would be mischievous in the sense that they would form the basis for further demands'.<sup>37</sup>

Milner conceded to Curzon, who warned that the Cabinet was likely to 'shy rather badly', that the weak points lay in allowing diplomatic representation abroad and in withdrawing British troops from the principal towns, but argued that a 'seductive offer' was needed to carry the day and maintain Britain's use of the country as a military base vital to the 'chain of Empire'. That was, he went on, 'the only reason we ever went there. We could not let Egypt fall into other hands'. New developments such as the wireless and the airplane had made its position as

the 'Clapham Junction' of the Middle East even more important to guard Britain's communications. Keeping a force there would also assure 'her own permanent place in our imperial system', while other safeguards, including the advisers and High Commissioner, the many other British people who would remain, and the retention of the Sudan, would 'supply all and more than all that we need for a policy of influence as distinct from a policy of Domination'.<sup>38</sup>

Nevertheless, in an 11 October memo for the Cabinet, Curzon expressed worries concerning the 'shadowy' power of the High Commissioner under the Zaghlul-Milner Agreement. The original mission recommendations had the High Commissioner in charge of Egyptian foreign affairs, but this was amended 'in deference to opposition of Zaghloul Pasha'. Already, Curzon went on, an attempt was being made by the Nationalist Party in Egypt still further to emphasize the subordination of the financial and judicial advisors. Curzon commented that 'Lord Milner's own defence of his proposals will, I think, be that they are in the nature of a gamble in which we stake a great deal on the chance that the Egyptians will be willing to work his proposed constitution with loyalty, while if they fail we shall be in a position to go back'.<sup>39</sup> To those who thought he must be losing his grip due to old age, Milner explained in his own memo for the Cabinet that 'even in my hey-day I should have regarded the proposed concessions to Egyptian nationalism as just and politic and as calculated to strengthen and not to weaken our Imperial position'. Maintaining the present policy, as an alternative to a more flexible one, would require a 'very heavy price' not merely in an Army of occupation. More serious to Milner would be the 'prospect of the difficulties the Egyptian Intelligentsia will create for us both in Egypt itself and throughout the world'. He admitted that his proposals were a 'step backwards, but to a more secure position than that which we now occupy'.<sup>40</sup>

In the Lords debate of 4 November 1920 Milner apologized for the delay in producing a final report until he had been able to consult Adli and Zaghlul, and answered those who questioned if it was proper for the Colonial Secretary to be speaking with figures not even presently in the Egyptian Government. Milner could not say if these further conversations would lead to a final agreement but they had clarified his conception of Egyptian nationalism and made him more hopeful. 'My belief is that a course of action is possible which will enable us to ensure all that we need in Egypt without involving ourselves in permanent hostility with the Egyptian nation.' Milner realized the 'enormous difficulties which stand in the way of good understanding in this matter between ourselves and the Egyptian patriots who want to see their country have a place in the sun and a recognized nationality and position of its own, but I do not personally believe they are insuperable'. Milner concluded, 'My piece may be hissed off the stage, but I am sure noble Lords will not wish to hiss it until they have heard it'.<sup>41</sup>

The final report of the Milner Mission, dated 9 December 1920, recommended that the Government enter 'without undue delay negotiations with the Egyptian Government for a treaty on the lines which we have ventured to recommend. It would, in our opinion, be a great misfortune if the present opportunity were lost'.<sup>42</sup> Despite all arguments, in the short term the Cabinet tabled Milner's proposals, but events would force their acceptance in the main a year after he had left the Government.

Egypt dominated Milner's 1920 agenda, but he also had many other Colonial Office and still remaining Peace Conference matters on his plate. Concerning the pending official disposition of the former German colonies, in June he wrote to Borden in Canada that he hoped to get the mandates settled at a Brussels preliminary meeting with a 'view to signature' at the planned Spa Conference.<sup>43</sup> The same month Glazebrook wrote once again about 'our young men' in light of a pending visit of Amery to the dominion. With the Round Table still in public disrepute, Glazebrook proposed a substitute 'League of Nations Society' devoted to studying the 'responsibilities associated with the League ... in particular the situation by which all that is best in international ideals is on the whole being represented by Great Britain'. The 'obvious corollaries' of this were the duty of Canadians to become acquainted with foreign affairs and the 'advantages of public opinion of their realizing what the society of nations means, and what an enormous proportion of the international virtue of the world is contained in the British Empire'. A number of men were willing to come in when 'not faced by the original Round Table dilemma' and Glazebrook would be 'disposed to encourage the society in extending its activities to matters of large public interest in Canada'. The great effects of the Round Table were 'very apparent in the development' of a number of men in Canada who were 'at least interested in public affairs, but so far they have not been very effective'. Out of the new effort Glazebrook hoped there might come men 'better instructed both in international and national public affairs, who might in the next few years play an important part'.<sup>44</sup>

Six months later, Milner reported on developments in England. Edward Grigg, he confided to Glazebrook, in addition to his *Round Table* duties, was to take over as secretary to the Rhodes Trust. Grigg, he went on, was 'full of energy and recent experience of all the dominions' and held 'admirably sound views'. He was not so 'brilliant' as Curtis, but much more practical and less 'viewy'. Milner believed he would breathe new life into both ventures which he had always held 'could be made to dovetail into one another to a considerable extent'. A recent 'really live meeting' of the English Round Table 'Moot', the first in several years, drew up a 'pretty good plan of work for the immediate future'. He hoped that this would result 'not only in the magazine becoming once more readable and influential', but that the whole movement would 'wake up again and proceed on practical lines'. Milner's advice

to them was to concentrate on the planned meeting the next year of the 'Imperial Cabinet'. This was going to be in his estimation very important. Even though the men involved would not talk 'constitution', they would have to tackle 'a lot of questions of immediate urgency and manage somehow to agree ... what to do about them'. Milner knew well that when such gatherings took place, the 'overworked men, each full of his own special troubles' often didn't know 'what to be at' since they had not had time to think about it beforehand. He advised the 'Moot' to 'do the thinking for them, and also to coach the process somewhat in advance'.<sup>45</sup>

The prime ministers involved the next year would not include Robert Borden, who in July 1920 was forced by illness to pass the political reins to his Conservative colleague Arthur Meighen. Milner conveyed to Borden his deep regret that 'considerations of health have compelled you to relinquish office ... You have placed not only Canada but the whole Empire under the greatest obligation by your devoted efforts in the common cause during the last six eventful years.' Personally, Milner would 'always cherish the memory of our official associations'. He trusted that a period of rest would 'completely restore your health and that under less onerous conditions you will continue to give Canada and the Empire the benefit of your wisdom and ripe experience'.<sup>46</sup>

Before Milner left the Colonial Office he was deeply involved in the planning of the 1921 Imperial Conference. There was some sentiment for the meeting to be held in Ottawa, but in the end London prevailed as the site. Milner discussed this turn of events with Devonshire, telling the Governor General that Ottawa would be designated for the separate special constitutional conference agreed upon under Resolution IX at the 1917 Imperial War Conference.<sup>47</sup> On 8 October he wrote to Lloyd George, 'we have been drifting rather and we and the Dominions are all at sixes and sevens about "Imperial Cabinet", "Imperial Conference", etc. etc etc. Everybody feels that something is wanted, yet nobody quite knows what.' However, in Milner's 'humble opinion' the matter was really simple. 'We do not ... want a "Constitutional" or other "Conference", viz. a big pow-wow to discuss the "constitutional relations" of the Mother Country and the Dominions.' That might have to come some day, but it was too soon. Nobody at present had the leisure or disposition for it and in his opinion it would only 'end in smoke'.

To Milner what was wanted was to keep up the relations 'so profitably established during the war between the Governments, not to evolve a new imperial constitution but to discuss and settle on the basis of our existing institutions, the various practical and urgent problems, which affect the Dominions as well as the Mother Country, and to ensure harmony and cooperation between them'. Milner wanted very soon to have a meeting of what was once called the Imperial War Cabinet, or some body very much like it. The essential thing was to get the prime ministers together 'under your Presidency. More business can be done like that in a week than in months and years of telegrams flying back and forth'.<sup>48</sup> In the end

an Imperial Conference was finally scheduled for June 1921. The agenda, which Milner sent to Devonshire for his Government, listed discussions of several topics considered 'subjects of first importance'. Among these the question of the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, set to expire in July 1921, was the most urgent. The others included were imperial naval policy, a common imperial policy in foreign affairs and an agenda and meeting place for a constitutional conference.<sup>49</sup>

Milner, however, would not be on hand. He had for some time wanted to lay down his burden and at the end of 1920 Lloyd George at last agreed. Now that the cat was out of the bag about his February 1921 retirement, Milner told his soon to be wife Violet Cecil that he was even busier than usual wrapping up his affairs.<sup>50</sup> These included sending a letter of support to Smuts who had just won an election campaign after Botha's untimely death. Milner pledged to the South African premier to 'continue to do what lies in my power to promote imperial relations do on the lines which ... we both think the right ones'. For his part Smuts told a correspondent that Milner had 'found salvation at the last'.<sup>51</sup> Milner notified his friend Sir Francis Drummond Chaplin, since 1914 the Administrator of Southern Rhodesia, that he was 'sorry to sever my official relations with you and with South Africa ... But with the return to pre-war conditions – the huge unwieldy Cabinet, the inevitable subordination of imperial interests to our urgent domestic needs and problems, the new trend of policy at home and abroad, with which I am in little sympathy. I have for some time been a "fish out of water", and the personal sacrifice ... seemed no longer to be compensated by anything that I was able to achieve. So I shall be happy to find myself once more master of my own time and for good and all out of harness'.<sup>52</sup>

The only real regret that Milner felt on leaving office, he told Amery, was 'leaving you rather alone, among people who have very little real sympathy with the things which we both care about'.<sup>53</sup> Amery had hoped to get the Colonial Office, but with Churchill's arrival accepted appointment as Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, which Milner thought best under the circumstances.<sup>54</sup> A week after his departure, Curzon confided that he deeply deplored Milner's absence from the Cabinet and that his successor Churchill was 'already spreading his wings over the entire universe'.<sup>55</sup> As a reward for his many years of service to the state, Milner received one of the highest honours Crown and country could bestow, the Garter.

Milner told his old friend Percy Matheson that he gave 'up much of my work with great regret, but without a moment's doubt, that I am better out of official harness at my age and under present conditions'. He was going to take a long rest and believed he 'may be *of some use* for a number of years yet, if I give myself a reasonable chance in the matter of health, and recover a reasonable degree of freedom of action'.<sup>56</sup> Milner would use his newfound freedom over the few years that remained to him to continue his support of imperial causes until the end.

## 15 CONCLUSION: A WIDER PATRIOTISM

Retiring from Government service did not mean the end of Milner's imperial activities. As the last of the original trustees still in place, he was now able to devote more time to the Rhodes Trust, the only non-official position he had not resigned when he joined the War Cabinet five years before. Amery later commented about Milner's work at the Trust that if the 'vision was Rhodes,' it was Milner who over some twenty years laid securely the foundations of a system whose power in shaping the outlook and spiritual kinship of an ever-growing body of men throughout the English-speaking world it would be difficult to exaggerate.<sup>1</sup>

In June 1921 Geoffrey Dawson (who had left *The Times* after a falling out with Northcliffe and lately had been editor of the *Round Table*) was appointed Secretary of the Trust. He wrote to Milner, 'I am really most grateful & delighted to settle down to the Rhodes Trust as a definite piece of work & to try to make a success of it ... There is a good deal to be done.'<sup>2</sup> Dawson remained Secretary for more than a year, until Northcliffe's premature death allowed him to return (with Milner's blessing and guidance) to the editor's chair at *The Times* under the new Astor ownership.<sup>3</sup> That summer Milner arranged a final contribution of £2500 from the Rhodes Trust to keep the *Round Table* afloat. Reflecting the new post-war reality, since the March 1919 issue the journal was no longer subtitled 'A Quarterly Review of the Politics of the Empire', but instead of the 'Commonwealth'. Milner continued as a father-figure, but by this time the movement had lost much of its vigour, diminished by a lack of new leadership, by the war (which had only stimulated dominion nationalism), and the new emphasis on international cooperation embodied by the League of Nations.<sup>4</sup> Curtis, who founded the Institute of International Affairs in London, Kerr and Brand all followed the last path, much to Milner's regret. In his view they 'dropped the substance for the shadow'.<sup>5</sup>

While in Oxford for the annual Rhodes Scholar's dinner Milner was able to talk with several of the dominion leaders in England for the Prime Minister's Conference he had helped to plan before he left the Colonial Office. This was declared to be a 'business meeting' only which would not take up constitutional

questions. Milner did not take an official part, but did speak out, emphasizing that the lead for 'any readjustment of constitutional relations' must come from the Empire.<sup>6</sup> In a 24 June 1921 interview in *The Times* on the subject, Milner admitted that it was 'not easy to get six independent governments at different ends of the world, however desirous of being friendly and mutually helpful, to keep in line with one another on international questions which effect them all'. The basic principle was clear enough that 'increasingly of late years ... Dominion statesmen have claimed a right to have a voice in determining the foreign policy of Great Britain'. In Milner's opinion, no one could dispute the 'justice of that claim'. The only difficulty was to find out how it could be done – a 'purely practical difficulty'. This meeting was not going to propose a 'new system of imperial government which may effect the independence of the several states', as had been suggested in some quarters. To accomplish this, a different, larger gathering would be necessary, including all the competing parties. Such an effort, argued Milner, would be a 'long business – indeed it ought to be a long business. The attempt to hurry it or prematurely to lay down the lines of future development would be a mistake.' A workable system, Milner went on, 'may take years to evolve or may never be evolved except in practice'. Outside this he hoped that future meetings of the present sort would be held, perhaps next time at Ottawa.

In part because her doctors recommended it, Milner and Violet Cecil, whom he had married days after he left the Colonial Office, travelled widely. In April 1922 Milner reported to his old friend W. G. Craven from France, where they visited the retired Clemenceau at his seaside retreat, that they had been to Palestine and seen Petra.<sup>7</sup> Though the scenery in the Holy Land was beautiful, Milner left Palestine 'thoroughly fed up' with the 'Jewish Question' about which he was pressed by all parties. He recorded in his diary, 'I have no doubt that the chief cause of all the fuss is the tactlessness with which some of the Zionists have boosted their cause and which has frightened the Arabs: But the latter are crying out before they are hurt and their ceaseless denunciation of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate are really not denunciations of what either the Declaration or the Mandate really contain but of what the Zionists and the Arabs themselves have chosen to read into them.'<sup>8</sup> Milner would continue this line in the Lords debates on the subject in the following years and be a tireless defender of the policies he had helped to put in place.

Six months later the Unionists finally threw over Lloyd George, ostensibly over an honours scandal and the aggressive course he proposed in support of Greece against the Turks in the Chanak Crisis at which the dominions balked. Austen Chamberlain's stubborn loyalty to the Welshman meant that it would be, not he, but a temporarily rejuvenated Bonar Law who formed a short-lived Government. Though he stayed out of the new administration, Milner supported it and remained interested in developments, particularly in the, to his



mind, intertwined imperial and economic spheres. In January 1923 he contributed four Sunday articles on the subject to the *Observer* which were published in June, with other material, as *Questions of the Hour*.

This final book was a response to what Milner considered the wrong-headed course of the country in the troubled economic times.<sup>9</sup> He had wanted to call the book *The Great Reaction* and much of it was about what he considered the foolhardy path being followed away from the unity and positive achievements of the war years back to failed pre-war methods and solutions. In the preface, Milner declared himself, 'Separated from one political party by my advanced views on social questions, still more widely separated from others by my faith in the Empire and my attachment to national rather than cosmopolitan ideals, I often seem to be plowing a "lonely furrow"'. But, he went on, 'at a time when all party distinctions are in the melting pot, perhaps even this eccentric bundle of opinions may gain a hearing and contribute something to the evolution of a new political creed'.<sup>10</sup>

*Questions of the Hour* reflected Milner's revolt against the prevalent pessimism and his weariness of jeremiads which alleged Britain's 'poverty as a nation – the huge destruction of wealth caused by the war, the immense burden of debt, the danger of national bankruptcy, and the necessity of drawing in our horns in every direction'. He was not convinced 'we are as poor as think ourselves, or that, if we are, the road to recovery is to be found in a timorous avoidance of all new opportunities of enrichment'. Not contraction, but expansion should be the watchword; 'not merely economy but the development of new sources of wealth'.<sup>11</sup> The revival would only come 'when we get out of the doldrums about our poverty, and think less about mere saving and more about reproductive expenditure', for which there were, 'both in this country and the Empire, so many opportunities and such crying need'. To take advantage of the prospects, both in the home market and in the 'latent wealth of the Empire of which Great Britain is the centre', needed 'imagination and courage' not shown in recent years. But, in Milner's opinion, 'we seem to be awakening to the supreme importance of Imperial development to the economic salvation of Great Britain'. He pointed to the Empire Settlement Act of the previous year as a sign of that awakening.<sup>12</sup>

Milner regretted that all the 'good resolutions we formed during the war about the better social order that was to rise after the end of it – the improved relations between class and class, the establishment of a genuine partnership in industry between capitalists and workmen', had come to nothing. Although he thought an unmixed Labour government some years off, Milner professed not to share the 'fears which the prospect of a Labour Ministry inspires in so many breasts'. Even if one came in the next few years, Milner doubted whether it would be able to effect 'any great or sudden changes in our social and economic system' and would most likely fall back on a policy 'not far removed from that of the

more advanced section of the old Liberal Party.' Retrenchment, Free Trade, the abolition of the House of Lords and 'any remaining vestiges of class privilege' would once again 'occupy a prominent place on the political stage'. To a social reformer like himself this prospect was not very alluring, but it was a very different prospect from the 'red ruin and the breaking up of the laws' which many envisioned.

Also unfortunately from Milner's perspective, Labour had inherited from the Liberal party an 'indifference, not to say hostility, to the Empire'. This was an 'evil tradition', of which the Labour party must rid itself if it was ever to become a 'great National party, careful of all that makes for the strength and honor of the State'. It had always seemed to Milner 'very strange that the idea of a "Commonwealth of British Nations", a group of free peoples, of the same origin, the same language, the same type of civilization, forming a great confederacy for the defence their common interests, the foremost of which – Peace and the Freedom of the Seas – are also the interests of the whole civilized world, has not appealed more strongly to British Democrats'. The Labour party was enthusiastic for the League of Nations. Why had the League of British Nations 'found no corner in its heart?' This anti-national bias had in the past been confined to what Milner called 'superior persons' not the average working man who was proud of his country and his fellow Britons. The 'frantic efforts' at present being made to eradicate working-class patriotism and 'plant "class-consciousness" in its place' were in his estimation 'doomed to failure'.<sup>13</sup>

Against the will-o'-the-wisp forces of internationalism by which he feared Labour might be led astray, Milner offered patriotism, pride in Britain 'which must make us loathe the spectacle of the degrading conditions in which so many of its people are condemned to live', as one of the strongest forces to build up a better social order. He foresaw the slow and sure development of a 'new and higher conception of the economic solidarity of the nation', which viewed it 'not as a mere multitude of competing individuals, but as a genuine household, organized to provide a fitting place and a decent livelihood for all its members'. In the last century Britain had peacefully transformed her political institutions and so to Milner it was 'not unreasonable to hope that in this country, where there is already so much practical Socialism, the work of social organization still before us will be accomplished in a similar spirit and by similar methods', and that in this respect Great Britain would set an example for the world.<sup>14</sup>

Glazebrook wrote to Milner from Toronto that he had read his book with great interest, particularly the last chapter, 'The Imperial Estate', which he thought 'extraordinarily important'. He supposed that under present conditions, however, it would be immensely difficult to undertake any 'big constructive programme of the kind you outline' and yet clearly it was a 'first class business proposition'.<sup>15</sup> St Loe Strachey sent apologies from the *Spectator* for his tardi-

ness in reviewing Milner's book and tried to enlist him as the voice of the 'other side' in a *Spectator* debate on the Tariff/Free Trade question. The editor asked Milner to write something on 'using Government action to stimulate balance and stabilize trade'. He would not say that, as a Free Trader, he was 'converted to your view;' but certainly 'very much attracted by what you have written on the subject', and should like to see it discussed in the *Spectator*. Strachey did not want to tie Milner to a certain subject, 'But if you could write upon how Government might develop trade without trading directly, I think you would find my readers sympathetic, and so useful'. He went on, 'Curiously enough, though you will have forgotten it, I remember some thirty years ago sitting up in the smoking-room of the Reform Club talking to you on this very subject, and I must admit that I have certainly come a good deal nearer to you than I was then'.<sup>16</sup>

By this time Stanley Baldwin had succeeded the fatally ill Bonar Law, and, influenced by Leo Amery, had come to the conclusion that tariffs were necessary, in the interests of the country and for party unity. He announced his conversion to cheers at the Unionist Conference at Plymouth on 25 October 1923. However, rather than give Amery and others time to mount a propaganda campaign, the Prime Minister calculated that it would be best to hold a snap election that December on the protection issue. This turned out to be a grave error. The Beaverbrook and Rothermere syndicated papers refused to support Baldwin's non-imperial tariff policy and few MPs were enthusiastic about fighting what became an unpopular contest at Christmastime. There was also confusion over exactly what tariff message to deliver in the campaign. Many instead turned to the old anti-socialist message.<sup>17</sup> Milner confided to Bertha Syngé, who believed Baldwin would carry the day, that he hoped she was right. 'With thinking people I cannot doubt that Baldwin's way of approaching serious national questions – whatever one may think of his policy – must make a better impression than the opposite method. But the personal popularity of L.G. – with his crowd - & that beastly "syndicated press" are a heavy handicap. I am not without hope, though far from confident, that the Govt. will win'.<sup>18</sup>

Before the election Baldwin persuaded Milner to chair a government Tariff Advisory Commission to 'advise H. M. Government in connection with the preparation of the proposed duties on manufactured goods'.<sup>19</sup> Their deliberations, however, would be cut short by the tangled election result, parceled out between Unionists, Labour and the Liberals, the last further divided between the Lloyd George and Asquithian factions. No party won a majority. However, at least Milner's fear that the Welshman might rise like a phoenix did not come to pass. It was Labour that solidified its position as the official opposition and second largest party with an impressive 191 seats. Consequently, Baldwin's refusal to make a deal with the Asquithian Liberals to remain in power meant the installation in January 1924 of the first Labour Government under Ramsay

MacDonald. Milner's old friend Haldane joined as Lord Chancellor and the new Government followed for the most part the Liberal line Milner had foreseen in *Questions of the Hour*. Far from despondent about the future of the Unionists, Milner wrote to Leo Maxse, 'The Party has a winning cause, *if it will only stick to it*, and a good leader.'<sup>20</sup>

On New Year's Day 1924 Milner reported to his old friend Sir Henry Birchenough, 'My Tariff Committee never got through more than a portion – perhaps 1/3 of its work. Nobody felt disposed to go on devoting an enormous amount of time to something for the new Government to put into the w. p. b. All we have done is to leave a short record – not a *report* – of what we had done and hoped to do, which I shall send to Baldwin. He may or he may not publish it. I hope he will as it will give people some sort of notion of what we were driving at and dissipate any foolish imaginations.'<sup>21</sup> Baldwin sent Milner thanks for the Tariff Reform Advisory Committee report. He went on that it would be valuable, but did not say what would be done with it.<sup>22</sup>

Later that month Milner sent thanks of his own to Sir John Willison for his book of collected imperial and international speeches, *Partners in Peace: The Dominions, the Empire and the Republic*. Milner told his Canadian friend that he was sympathetic with the views in his addresses and was particularly struck by Willison's declaration in a 1910 speech given in Toronto that during the reign of George V 'we may complete the Imperial structure by a common Parliament at Westminster in which will sit representatives of Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, and through which the Mother Country may draw fresh strength from over the sea, and we of the younger communities ripen in prudence and wisdom, and increase in moral and political power through intimate contact with world affairs, and a common responsibility for the welfare and dignity of a mighty Imperial Commonwealth.'<sup>23</sup> Milner asked Willison if he still cherished this hope, continuing, 'It has always been mine, but I own that of late years we seem to have been moving away from it. The idea seems to be too big and general for these half-educated democracies, and of the small minority who are capable of devotion to big ideas – large enough, *if united*, to effect something – many are now bitten with a vague internationalism and have lost interest in the Empire.' Milner went on, 'My own views are unchanged, and I don't despair of the future. But on the brink of seventy, I am forced to realize that these things will not come about in my day.'<sup>24</sup>

In late summer Milner and Violet began making preparations for a visit to South Africa, which neither had seen for almost two decades. Milner tried to avoid being a state guest of the new Prime Minister, yet another Boer General, J. B. M. Hertzog, whose Nationalist party had won the election that year with Labour help, but finally had to accept with a good grace.<sup>25</sup> Before they took ship on 31 October, he told Craven it had been his 'cherished desire for years to see

South Africa again – troublous as my days there were, I was very fond of the country. One thing or another has always prevented me. This time ... feeling that at 70 (!) I cannot afford to put it off any longer.' Milner went on that Violet was equally keen and they were 'at last making the jump. I mean to go all over the land, as far as the falls northwards, then back through Transvaal, O.F.S., Natal and across the Cape Colony back to Cape Town.'<sup>26</sup> Just before the Milners sailed a triumphant election victory brought Baldwin back to power. As Milner wished, Amery joined the Government at the Colonial Office. The first thing he did when seated in Milner's old chair was to 'write to him and thank him for all I owed him.'<sup>27</sup>

In Cape Town the travelers stayed at the Mount Nelson hotel. One of their excursions was to the white granite Rhodes Memorial on Table Mountain above Groote Schuur. Traveling to the north, they visited old haunts such as Kimberley, where they were feted by De Beers. Milner even managed to climb Spion Kop. He reported to a correspondent that his meeting with a group of Orange Free State 'Milner settlers' at Westminster was 'delightful and very interesting' and 'a complete success'. At Thorley on 22 December he was cheered by a crowd of eighty enthusiastic people and 'on the whole the tone was most optimistic ... Evidently a great many of our original settlers are doing very well'. Milner met more at Tweespruit who were also prospering. 'I think they were all very pleased to see me, and I was delighted to find them so prosperous and in such good heart.'<sup>28</sup>

At Pretoria the travelers stayed with the Governor General, the Earl of Athlone, who as a young officer twenty-five years before Milner had hosted at Government House in Cape Town. The earl took them on a tour of Herbert Baker's impressive new Union Buildings. At the opening of the Union Parliament, Milner noted that in the debates every government supporter used Afrikaans, while the Speaker attempted to keep a balance with English. He thought the dual language standard a great mistake, but was careful not to make any public criticism of Hertzog's government. Patrick Duncan reported to Lady Selborne from Johannesburg that the 'Milners have come back here again after having him over in Pretoria for a week'. He went on that Milner had seen settlements in the northern Transvaal and was impressed by progress made in opening up the country for agriculture. 'But he is very depressed about the political position here. Thinks the racial division is accentuated and that the Govt. is thoroughly untrustworthy as far as their relations to the Empire are concerned.'<sup>29</sup> Violet commented to Robert Borden that 'our trip to South Africa showed clearly the dangers there, of the carelessly drafted constitution. Of the race, inferior in competence & culture, dominating by pure brute force.' Milner, however, had 'expected to find it and was therefore not too disappointed.'<sup>30</sup> The heat and Violet's health led the travelers to abandon plans to visit Rhodesia. They departed

for home from Cape Town on 12 February 1925. Smuts, whom the travelers had visited at his farm Irene, near Pretoria, cabled, 'Bon Voyage to you and Lady Milner, trust your visit has been as agreeable to you as it has been helpful and encouraging to your friends.'<sup>31</sup>

Back in London, for a final time Milner wrote to his birthday twin, Bishop Baynes. 'I was delighted to see you looking so well and to find you still so fresh in mind, as I hope I am myself, despite our advanced age.' He went on that Curzon's recent death was 'a great blow indeed; and that his 'disappearance leaves a very large gap in the foremost rank of our public men.'<sup>32</sup> The death opened the way for a very reluctant Milner to accept election as Chancellor of Oxford. However, his own passing on 13 May 1925, from sleeping sickness contracted in South Africa, forestalled his installation. Amery was leaving that day's Cabinet when he received a note that Milner had died an hour before. He recorded, 'One of the greatest and best men there have been and a father to me. I think one of things that pleased him most at the end was that I was safely at the Colonial Office and likely to have time to carry out some of the things he most cared about.'<sup>33</sup>

In *The Times* of 16 May, Amery commented that Milner 'never troubled to gain credit for himself; all he cared for was that the right thing should get done', but his 'claim to greatness may well rest, even more than on his recorded or unrecorded work, on the influence which he exercised on others'. From his college days down to the end he was a 'counselor, guide and source of inspiration'. The power of that inspiration 'lay partly in the ideas for which he stood consistently throughout his life, but still more in his own personality' which it was not easy to convey. The ideal for which Milner lived and worked, and which 'his inspiration has so greatly quickened, was that of the British Empire united in free cooperation as a great instrument for human well being'. Nothing could be 'remoter from Milner than the narrow, bureaucratic, aggressive Imperialist invented by political opponents'. The full opportunity to do all he 'hoped was never given him but there are many who will work, here and overseas, inspired by his spirit. He wished no more.'<sup>34</sup>

To the end, Milner had continued to advise the Round Table members and the journal mourned 'in a very special sense the death of Lord Milner. For with him they have lost a not only a much-beloved friend, but one whom they have always regarded as their leader.' It was of 'melancholy interest to recall' that Milner had 'under-taken to come on May 13, the very day of his death, to a meeting specifically to discuss with them South African problems'. Since the days in South Africa the founders and editors had the 'advantage of Lord Milner's council and guidance, and they are grateful to think that, though at times he disagreed with them, he never ceased to regard himself as a leader to whom, above everyone else, they looked'.<sup>35</sup>

Lady Milner received hundreds of messages of condolence from friends and supporters throughout the empire. From South Africa, Sir Francis Drummond Chaplin shared that for many years Milner 'had been looked up to as the friend and leader' of the Anglo-Saxon community and that 'we all feel there is no one who can take his place'.<sup>36</sup> Robert Borden noted that 'we in Canada take a just great pride in Lord Milner's distinguished career and his most notable service to the Empire'. He had the 'happiest memory of my association with him in the Imperial War Cabinet and at the Peace Conference'. Milner's 'splendid vision, his dauntless courage, and especially his thorough grasp of the intricate problems that attend the governance of the British Commonwealth of Nations always impressed me most deeply. In his death not only the United Kingdom but the whole Empire has suffered a great loss'.<sup>37</sup> Lady Milner replied to Borden that her husband gave 'every atom of his strength and power to increasing the ties and advancing the progress of the Empire. He believed that only by holding on could the different portions of it sustain their individuality. "All For Each And Each For All." This faith was the motive power of his whole life and he counted himself as much a member of Canada & Australia as of England'.<sup>38</sup>

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After serving his imperial apprenticeship under Cromer in Cairo, Alfred Milner first made himself known to the wider world with *England in Egypt*. Years after its publication, F. S. Oliver remembered it as the only book he could recall which 'changed a situation completely', erasing the 'angry confusion which surrounded the subject'. Within a few months after it was published 'English opinion was clarified & enslaved. In his quiet, reasonable, sympathetic ... uncontentious, unprovocative style, he set out the matter; made no enemies & worked a complete revolution. The jingoes ceased from vain noises & the Whigs realized what shits they had been & were dumb'.<sup>39</sup> Though he gained a reputation as a skilled imperial administrator, Milner was frustrated by his service in the Egyptian bureaucracy. He had little power and vowed that if he once gained it, he would use it along the lines laid down by Cromer, his imperial model. In the succeeding years Milner closely followed Egyptian developments and also visited the country in which he served his imperial apprenticeship many times, but it would not be in Egypt, but in South Africa, where his future reputation, for good or evil, would truly be made.

Unfortunately, after a promising beginning in Egypt, Joseph Chamberlain's decision to send Milner out to South Africa turned out to be exponentially more costly in blood and treasure than Gladstone's more celebrated blunder in dispatching Chinese Gordon to evacuate Khartoum. As the 'men on the spot' both were inflexible zealots willing to sacrifice all for their causes, in Milner's

case ensuring British paramountcy in South Africa to keep unbroken the imperial chain. Milner's inability to compromise is best shown in the Bloemfontein Conference with Paul Kruger. John Buchan later wrote that Milner was the 'last man' who should have been chosen for this task. 'He detested lies and diplomacy demands something less than the plain truth ... His spiritual integrity made it difficult for him, when he had studied a problem, to temporise about the solution which he thought inevitable. Such a course seemed to involve some ... dereliction of duty, and to duty he had a Roman faithfulness.'<sup>40</sup>

Despite years of bloody warfare that Milner was instrumental in bringing on, it was the Boers, not the British, who eventually came out on top. In the post-war reconstruction, outside putting the economy right with the help of 'Chinese Slavery', all of Milner's grand schemes for British settlement or to create a South African Aldershot proved dismal flops. Despite Lionel Curtis's post-1948 comment, 'How different the South African situation would now be had we followed the lead given us in his watch-tower speech', Milner must share some of the responsibility for the British failure to address the 'Native Question'.<sup>41</sup> It is often forgotten that amongst Salisbury's three stated war aims was that 'due precaution' be taken for the 'philanthropic and kindly and improving treatment of those countless indigenous races of whose destiny, I fear, we have been too forgetful'.<sup>42</sup> Tragically, the British allowed themselves to remain 'forgetful' after peace was made.

After he returned to England in 1905, Milner was in many ways the Unionist Rosebery. He claimed an undiminished imperial faith, yet time and again also declined to lead when pressed by many fervent admirers. Unlike the orator Rosebery, however, Milner was handicapped by his inability to move the masses. Amery commented that Milner's greatness was 'not that of the democratic leader. It was not only that he disliked crowds, but that, in his utter sincerity, he could not bring himself to resort to even the slightest artifice to win them.' However, now and again, 'under the stress of strong emotion, and on some informal occasion, he could make a speech of strangely moving eloquence. But as a rule his speeches read much better than they sounded'.<sup>43</sup> As a testament to this, recently Milner's collected addresses, published in 1913 as *The Nation and the Empire*, have been called 'perhaps the most eloquent statement of the constructive imperialist case by arguably its most powerful and certainly its most rigorous high-level advocate'.<sup>44</sup>

Another legacy of Milner's work can be found in the Round Table movement. However, in the view of Amery, the attempt to be non-party was a fatal error. He later commented that the failure of the journal to have any 'lasting effect' sprung from it deliberately keeping the 'question of Empire economic cooperation out of its programme. This was staging *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark, and gave the whole movement an academic and unreal air'.<sup>45</sup> The anonymous



authorship of the journal articles, in addition to the rather furtive nature of the moots, over time fed conspiracy rumours which have haunted the movement.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the *Round Table* was not without influence in imperial circles and consistently reflected the Milnerian view of the dangers to the empire which lay in the deficiencies of imperial administration, the irrational organization of the British parliament, the ineffectual nature of the Imperial conferences and the injustice of the system which gave Britain war or peace authority over dominions given no say in the matter.

Round Table members would also make an imprint by producing much imperial history in the following decades.<sup>47</sup> Curtis, Reginald Coupland, Beit Lecturer and then Professor of History at Oxford; and Alfred Zimmern, Professor of International Relations at Oxford, all played important roles. In this effort the dominions were well represented by A. L. Burt, Vincent Massey, G. M. Wrong and George Glazebrook in Canada, by Eric Walker and W. M. Macmillan in South Africa, as well as Keith Hancock in Australia. The history these men produced reflected the Milnerian view, found from the earliest issues of the *Round Table*, that the British Empire had grown out of Britain's need for effective sea power from the sixteenth century and that the reluctant following extensions were due, not to the base profit motive, but to the need to calm turbulent frontiers, protect strategic lines of communication, and to project law and order into anarchy. In the bargain, the Empire spread liberty and civilization, not only in the interest of the British missionary, military and commercial elements, but also of the native populations, for which the British had a trustee's duty to train up for self-government at some admittedly distant future date.

Milner's fond desire was that the tragedy of the Great War might at last bring substantial progress towards his dream of imperial union, and he attempted to further the cause during his years in the War Cabinet. However, despite the illusion of unity presented during the war in several hopeful-sounding resolutions passed by the Imperial War Cabinet in 1917 and 1918, and in the very presence the British Empire Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, the world crisis in fact acted only to strengthen the self-awareness and resolve of the dominions to chart independent courses. Nevertheless, his years in the War Cabinet and then the War Office represent Milner's most vital contribution to the State. Robert Bruce Lockhart, with whom Milner worked closely on the Russian problem, commented that, 'To Mr Lloyd George he was the indispensable collaborator, who could be relied on to read every paper, to sift every scheme, and to form an unbiased and detached view of every problem that was put before him'.<sup>48</sup> In Philip Kerr's insider's estimation, Milner was the 'dominant personality among that company of great administrators whom Lloyd George collected about him ... It was impossible not to love a character so faithful, so selfless, so sincere'.<sup>49</sup>

This admission by Kerr is characteristic of Milner's magnetic influence on the next generations of imperialists, particularly through the Kindergarten, the Round Table, and his protégé Amery at the Colonial Office. John Buchan, who went out to South Africa to work for Milner in 1901, appraised him to be 'as infallible as Cromer in detecting the center of gravity in a situation, as brilliant as Alfred Beit in bringing order out of tangled finances, and he had Curzon's power of keeping a big organization steadily at work.'<sup>50</sup> To Arthur Glazebrook in Canada, Milner was both an elder brother and 'a great teacher'. The lesson he taught which was 'perhaps hardest to learn was to do service and not seek for credit'. This was what Milner did his whole life and was the reason why 'all of us who worked under him felt for him such extraordinary devotion'.<sup>51</sup>

Of all the young men, Milner had the closest and most productive working relationship with Leo Amery, culminating in their two-year partnership at the Colonial Office. With Milner busy in Paris and then with the Egyptian Mission, the lion's share of the work was left to Amery. Both men laboured to strengthen the Colonial Service, assist emigration to the dominions and further state sponsored imperial development. And in this period the first steps were taken towards the groundbreaking Colonial Development Act of 1929, perhaps Amery's greatest achievement once he became Colonial Secretary. Amery commented about their partnership that Milner was never able to give the 'kind of detailed personal supervision he had given to the reconstruction in South Africa. But he would tell me ... what he wanted, leaving me a wide freedom in carrying matters up to a point where his final decision or his authority with the Cabinet were required.' By this method a 'good start was made with migration, with the creation of a development council for the tropical empire, with tropical medicine, with tropical agriculture and research generally, with the creation of the machinery for selecting candidates for the Colonial Service, as well as with incidental matters like finding a financial and constitutional solution of the problems of Malta or disposing of the Mad Mullah in Somalia. Much else that we discussed was left to me to carry a stage further in subsequent years'.<sup>52</sup>

By the end of Milner's official career, the Egyptian negotiations in 1919 and 1920 exemplify a new realism, in this sphere at least, which his colleagues only reluctantly were forced to follow after he left office. The conversations must have stirred memories for Milner of Kruger and Bloemfontein; however, both the times and circumstances were changed. Egypt, unlike South Africa, was not part of the white settlement Empire Milner dreamed of uniting. He was no longer the belligerent and inflexible High Commissioner of twenty years before. At the time and in the circumstances, Milner was perfectly willing to negotiate if Britain's strategic and financial interests could be safeguarded. In fact he saw little alternative. There was little evidence in Milner of the 'failure of nerve' or 'weak-

ening of the will to rule' later claimed in some quarters as symptomatic of the post-war years.<sup>53</sup>

A year after his death Milner's influence can also be clearly seen in the often overlooked but important 1926 Balfour Report on Empire relations.<sup>54</sup> In this Balfour described the dominions as 'autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or internal affairs, although united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.'<sup>55</sup> This language and spirit would be carried on in the 1931 Statute of Westminster.

In a review of Edward Crankshaw's *The Forsaken Idea*, Edward Grigg (by that time Lord Altrincham) gave a fitting summation of Milner's imperial outlook:

He was able indeed from very youth to look at this island with some detachment because he received his early education in Germany and never found his way into the English houses which made our political climate in those days until he became Goschen's private secretary. His political convictions were therefore formed not by contact but by hard original thinking. He himself excogitated them – Imperial Preference, National Service, the Principle of the Commonwealth as an equal fellowship of sister-nations, the right of the dependent Empire not only to good government but to capital development, greater food production in these islands, the fight against poverty at home and the absolute necessity of raising the whole nation's standard of living, the categorical imperative requiring a happy and contented people in this country as centre of the Commonwealth and a co-operating Commonwealth as the lynchpin of this country's welfare and happiness. These convictions sound very modern – and they are so ... But Milner was the first man to enunciate them in combination, for his sympathies were as broad as his mind was keen, original and far ranging ... he lived for one purpose only ... the survival of Britain and to see that she used her power for the best in an imperfect world.<sup>56</sup>

# NOTES

## Abbreviations

AP	Amery Papers, Churchill College Archives Centre, Cambridge
BL	British Library
BP	Balfour Papers, British Library
C.	Command Papers (1870–99)
Cd	Command Papers (1900–1918)
CP	Chamberlain Papers, University of Birmingham Library
CRT	Curtis and the Round Table Papers, Bodleian Library
GP	Glazebrook Papers, Library and Archives Canada
HLRO	House of Lords Record Office
JP	Jebb Papers, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London
LP	Lyttelton Manuscripts, Churchill College Archives Centre, Cambridge
LSE	London School of Economics Library
MAP	Margot Asquith Papers, Bodleian Library
MP	Milner Papers, Bodleian Library
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew
RA	Royal Archives, Windsor
SP	Stead Papers, Churchill College Archives Centre, Cambridge
SPH	Salisbury Papers, Hatfield House
TA	Archive of <i>The Times</i>
UCTL	University of Cape Town Libraries
VMP	Violet Milner Papers, Bodleian Library
WP	Wilkinson Papers, National Army Museum

## Preface

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## 1 Introduction

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2. Alfred Milner, *The Nation and the Empire* (1913; repr. London: Routledge, 1998), p. 5.
  3. Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in English Speaking Countries During 1866 and 1867*, 3rd edn (London: Macmillan, 1869), p. 546.
  4. Sir Edward Grigg, 'Lord Milner', in W. R. Inge (intro), *The Post Victorians* (London: I. Nicholson and Watson, Ltd, 1933), pp. 393–409; p. 394.
  5. This was a common expression in Milner's time and is not directly attributable.
  6. Leo Amery, 'Foreword', in Vladimir Halpérin, *Lord Milner and the Empire* (London, 1952), pp. 7–23; p. 9.
  7. Laurie Magnus, *Herbert Warren of Magdalen: President and Friend, 1853–1930* (London: John Murray, 1932), pp. 31–2. For Parkin, see Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867–1914* (Toronto, 1970) and Sir John Willison, *Sir George Parkin: A Biography* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1929).
  8. Viscount Milner, *The British Commonwealth* (London: Constable and Co. Ltd, 1919), p. 5.
  9. Reproduced in E. B. Iwan-Muller, 'Sir Alfred Milner', *National Review* 37 (April 1901), p. 195.
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  12. John Evelyn Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner: The Man of No Illusions, 1854–1925* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd, 1958), p. 45.

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15. Speech to the Royal Colonial Institute, 16 June 1908, in Milner, *The Nation and the Empire*, p. 293.
16. *Ibid.*, p. xxxviii.
17. For this, see P. J. Cain, *Hobson and Imperialism: Radicalism, New Liberalism, and Finance, 1887–1938* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
18. Hobson wrote that no one ‘sounder’ or ‘more solid’ could have been found. *Derbyshire Advertiser*, 18 Feb 1897, quoted in Cain, *Hobson and Imperialism*, p. 66.
19. J. A. Hobson, ‘Capitalism and Imperialism in South Africa’, *Contemporary Review*, 77 (1900), pp. 1–17; pp. 14, 16; reprinted in P. J. Cain (ed.), *Hobson: Writings on Imperialism and Internationalism* (London: Routledge / Thoemmes, 1992); J. A. Hobson, ‘The Pro-Consulate of Milner’, *Contemporary Review*, 78 (1900), p. 553, quoted in Cain, *Hobson and Imperialism*, p. 94. For Hobson’s imperialism contrasted with that of Milner and the Round Table, see Norman Etherington, *Theories of Imperialism: War, Conquest and Capital* (London: Croom Helm, 1984).
20. *Spectator*, 20 February 1897.
21. For this see Peter Cain, ‘The Economic Philosophy of Constructive Imperialism’, in Cornelia Navari (ed.), *British Politics and the Spirit of the Age; Political Concepts in Action* (Keele: Keele University Press, 1996), pp. 41–65, Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform*, and Milner’s own speeches on the subject collected in *Constructive Imperialism* (London: National Review Office, 1908). More recent comment has ranged widely including the ‘greening’ of constructive imperialism noted by Richard Drayton in *Nature’s Government: Science, Imperial Britain and the ‘Improvement’ of the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 255–67.
22. Halpérin, *Lord Milner and the Empire*, p. 85.
23. *The Times*, 27 July 1925.
24. The publications include Leo Amery’s seven-volume *The Times History of the War in South Africa, 1899–1902* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company Ltd, 1900–9) and three volumes by the journalist W. Basil Worsfold: *Lord Milner’s Work in South Africa: From its Commencement in 1897 to the Peace of Vereeniging in 1902* (London: J. Murray, 1906) and *The Reconstruction of the New Colonies Under Lord Milner*, 2 vols (London: Kegan Paul and Co., 1913). Worsfold had been editor of the *Johannesburg Star* during the latter part of the reconstruction period. Though his work must be read as the work of a partisan, Worsfold’s exhaustive study nevertheless contains much valuable information, seldom recorded in detail elsewhere outside the bluebooks he uses as source material.
25. Cecil Headlam (ed.), *The Milner Papers: South Africa 1899–1905*, 2 vols (London: Cassell and Co., 1931–3).
26. Halpérin, *Lord Milner and the Empire*, pp. 231–2.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 177–8.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

29. Ibid., p 195.
30. Crankshaw, *The Forsaken Idea*, p. 133.
31. Ibid., p. 128.
32. Ibid., p. 137.
33. Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform*, ch. 9: 'Viscount Milner: Social-Imperialist Idealist'.
34. Stokes, 'Milnerism', pp. 47–60.
35. Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, pp. 606–7.
36. This rather expansive literature is intertwined with the debate over the Jameson Raid. For the Raid, see Jean van der Poel, *The Jameson Raid* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1951) and Elizabeth Longford, *Jameson's Raid: The Prelude to the Boer War* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982). For a more recent view, which includes historiography, see Jane Carruthers (ed.), *The Jameson Raid: A Centennial Retrospective* (Johannesburg: Brenthurst Press, 1996).

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  38. Marks and Trapido, 'Lord Milner and the South African State', pp. 58–9. See Blainey, 'Lost Causes of the Jameson Raid', pp. 351–66.
  39. See Porter, 'The South African War (1899–1902): Context and Motive Reconsidered' and Iain R. Smith, 'The Origins of the South African War (1899–1902): A Reappraisal', *South African Historical Journal*, 22 (1990), pp. 24–60.
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  41. Darwin, 'Imperialism and the Victorians', p. 641.

## 2 Imperial Propagandist: The Press, Politics and Public Opinion

1. 15 June 1899 entry, in Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events 1888–1914*, 2 Vols. (London: Martin Secker, 1922), vol. 2, p. 325.
2. Raymond L. Schults, *Crusader in Babylon: W. T. Stead and the Pall Mall Gazette* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), p. 17. When it appeared in 1865 the *Pall Mall Gazette* had been an important press ally of the Tories, but in April 1880 ownership passed to Henry Yates Thompson, an orthodox Liberal who reversed the paper's politics. To direct the new policy, Morley, already editing the Radical *Fortnightly*, was persuaded to take on the same job at the *Pall Mall Gazette*.
3. Frederic Whyte, *The Life of W. T. Stead*, 2 vols (London: J. Cape, 1925), vol. 1, p. 77.
4. Schults, *Crusader in Babylon*, p. 26.
5. Whyte, *W. T. Stead*, pp. 100–1.
6. Quoted in Stokes, 'Milnerism', p. 52.
7. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 24 February 1882.
8. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 11 July 1882.
9. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 March 1883.
10. *The Times*, 23 May 1883.
11. See, for example, 'A Good Start', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 July, 1885.
12. T. O. Lloyd, *The British Empire: 1558–1995* (Oxford, 1996), p. 228.
13. See John Gross, 'Editor's Introduction', in John Robert Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1883], 1971), pp. xvi–xxvii; pp. xxiii–iv. Morley's attack on Seeley and Imperial Federation is reproduced in the third volume of his *Critical Miscellanies*, 3 vols (London: Macmillan, 1886).
14. The editor's job officially went to the owner, Thompson, but he left running the paper to Stead.
15. Schults, *Crusader in Babylon*, p. 36.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
17. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 October 1883.
18. Quoted in Joseph Baylen, 'W. T. Stead's History of the Mystery and the Jameson Raid', *Journal of British Studies*, 4.1 (November 1964), pp. 104–32; p. 109, n. 26.
19. For this question, see D. M. Schreuder, *Gladstone and Kruger: Liberal Government and Colonial 'Home Rule' 1880–1885* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969).



20. Quoted in Schreuder, *Gladstone and Kruger*, pp. 376–7. For Mackenzie, see Anthony Sillery, *John Mackenzie of Bechuanaland 1835–1899: A Study in Humanitarian Imperialism* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1971).
21. Quoted in Schreuder, *Gladstone and Kruger*, p. 382.
22. Goschen had been Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in Lord Russell's Cabinet of 1866 and President of the Poor Law Board and First Lord of the Admiralty in Gladstone's first administration. His stubborn refusal, with Cardwell, to lower the estimates was a factor in Gladstone's January 1874 dissolution, after which Disraeli came to power for six years.
23. Milner to City of Oxford Liberal Association, n.d., dep. 25, MP.
24. Milner to Goschen, 31 August 1884, dep. 6, MP.
25. For this see Whyte, *Life of W. T. Stead*, vol. 1, pp. 145–58 and Schults, *Crusader in Babylon*, pp. 88–106. For Fisher see Ruddock Mackay, *Fisher of Kilverstone* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).
26. For Rosebery, the League and the empire, see J. E. Tyler, *The Struggle for Imperial Unity, 1865–1895* (London: Longman's, Green and Co., 1938) and H. C. G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists: The Ideas and Politics of a Post-Gladstonian Elite* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973). For the most recent life, see Leo McKinstry, *Rosebery: Politician in Turmoil* (London: John Murray, 2005).
27. Schults, *Crusader in Babylon*, p. 108.
28. Milner Diary, February 1885 entry, dep. 59, MP.
29. This series set out to expose and bring to an end the 'White Slave Trade', the sale of underage English virgins for defloration and export to continental brothels. Beginning on 6 July 1885, shocking *Pall Mall Gazette* revelations of depravity and disease outraged public sensibilities and attracted angry mobs to the doors of the Northumberland Street offices, which the police were forced to protect. To prove his charges, Stead arranged to purchase a girl, and in the end spent three months in Holloway gaol when the scheme misfired. The agent he found apparently lied about purchasing the girl from her parents, leaving Stead open to an abduction charge. For the campaign and Stead's imprisonment, see Schults, *Crusader in Babylon*, pp. 128–92 and Whyte, *Life of W. T. Stead*, vol. 1, pp. 159–220.
30. J. Saxon Mills, *Sir Edward Cook* (London: Constable and Co., 1921), p. 67.
31. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 Oct 1885.
32. Milner to Goschen, 31 January 1885, dep. 6, MP.
33. An address delivered at the National Schools, Harlesden, 16 October 1885, OTP 13/18, WP.
34. Ibid.
35. Oliver Ready, *Fifty Years On: Or Sidelights on the Intimate Personal Life of Alfred, Viscount Milner* ([Southsea]: n.p., 1930), p. 62.
36. Quoted in Schults, *Crusader in Babylon*, p. 110.
37. For a recent overview, see Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History, 1800–2000* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003).
38. Quoted in Stokes, 'Milnerism', p. 48. For the imperial implications of Home Rule, see Deirdre McMahon, 'Ireland, the Empire, and the Commonwealth', in Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 182–219.
39. Salisbury to Akers Douglas (Chief Conservative Whip), 9 February 1886, quoted in Eric Alexander, 3rd Viscount Chilston, *Chief Whip: The Political Life and Times*

of Aretas Akers-Douglas, 1st Viscount Chilton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 65.

40. For a more detailed look at Milner and the formation of the party, see J. Lee Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot: A Life of Alfred, Viscount Milner of St James's and Cape Town* (London: Associated University Presses, 2007), pp. 51–5.
41. Quoted in Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner*, p. 77.
42. Quoted in Terence O'Brien, *Milner* (London: Constable, 1979), p. 64.
43. Milner to Goschen, 25 April 1886, dep. 6, MP.
44. Milner to Goschen, 26 April 1886, dep. 6, MP.
45. Lords Selborne and Argyll were also in favour of this. Andrew Roberts, *Salisbury: Victorian Titan* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), p. 393.

### 3 Cromer and Egypt

1. Milner to Goschen, 5 January 1890, dep. 7, MP.
2. Alfred Milner, *England in Egypt* (London: Edward Arnold, 1892), ch. 8.
3. The Law of Liquidation in the end involved six powers in Egypt's finances – Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary. These and eight others made the list of Capitulatory Powers whose citizens enjoyed special privileges. Therefore, fourteen powers had to be consulted on any important changes made in Egypt. For this Byzantine system, see Robert Tignor, *Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966) and Lowell Ragatz, *The Question of Egypt in Anglo-French Relations, 1875–1904* (Edinburgh: F. Pembroke, 1922).
4. For this see Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt and Cromer: A Study in Anglo-Egyptian Relations* (London: John Murray, 1968). The original Caisse was made up of representatives of the chief bondholding countries: Britain, France, Italy and Austria-Hungary. Russia and Germany would be added later.
5. In 1885 Sir Henry Drummond Wolff began negotiations with the Porte for an understanding concerning the conditions under which the British remained. Although this so-called Drummond-Wolff Convention was never finally ratified, it nevertheless drew the lines of British occupation.
6. Evelyn Baring, Earl of Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan and Co., 1908), vol. 1, p. 5.
7. For the most recent life of Baring, see Roger Owen, *Lord Cromer: Victorian Imperialist, Edwardian Proconsul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
8. Cromer wrote to Rosebery on 4 November 1893 that he knew 'only three possible men – Nicolson, Milner and Portal'. Cromer Papers, FO/633VI, PRO, quoted in al-Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt and Cromer*, p. 82. Sir Gerald Portal was the First Secretary of the Cairo Agency. Sir Arthur Nicolson, later Lord Carnock, was an experienced British diplomat, who had accompanied Lord Dufferin to Cairo in 1882.
9. Milner to Goschen, 5 January 1890, dep. 7, MP.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. For this subject see Anthony Sattin, *Lifting the Veil: British Society in Egypt 1768–1956* (London: Dent, 1988).

13. Milner to Edith Gell, 27 December 1889, Gell Papers, MIL–1/262/ii, quoted in Peter Mellini, *Sir Eldon Gorst: The Overshadowed Proconsul* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1977), p. 23.
14. Milner to Goschen, 3 March 1890, dep. 7, MP.
15. O'Brien, *Milner*, pp. 89–90. The Prince died two years later.
16. Peter Marsh, *Joseph Chamberlain: Entrepreneur in Politics* (London: Routledge 1994), p. 319.
17. 8 August 1890 Diary, dep. 59, MP. For Blum see Mellini, *Sir Eldon Gorst*, p. 38.
18. Quoted in John Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of Empire* (London: Hamish Hamilton 1978), p. 18.
19. Milner Diary, 9 September 1890, dep. 59, MP.
20. Gorst eventually rose to become a financial advisor and followed Baring as a somewhat forgotten consul general. For Gorst, see Mellini, *Sir Eldon Gorst*.
21. For Blunt's assertions, see *My Diaries*, vol. 1.
22. Milner 1891 Diary, dep. 59, MP.
23. *Review of Reviews* (January 1891).
24. Milner to Mackenzie, 14 May 1889, in Anthony Dachs (ed.), *Papers of John Mackenzie* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press for African Studies Institute, 1975), pp. 225–6.
25. Quoted in Sillery, *John Mackenzie*, p. 160. Milner had commented on the Chartered Company's usefulness in the imperial struggle to Mackenzie that 'Whatever may be the personal sentiments of its managers, the force of circumstances will make the Company British. He must be a pessimist indeed who does not see but surely ... [that] British influence is once more on the ascendant ... the Cape might be separatist, and South Africa by itself might be separatist, but a South Africa reaching up to the Zambezi, marching into foreign spheres of influence, and needing the protecting arm of Great Britain against Portuguese or German interference with its own development will lean more and more on us.' Smith, *Origins of the South African War*, pp. 60–1.
26. Milner Diary, 31 June 1891, dep. 59, MP.
27. Baring to Milner, 27 June 1891, quoted in Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner*, p. 119.
28. Milner Diary, 7–11 July 1891, dep. 59, MP.
29. al-Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt and Cromer*, p. 79.
30. Milner Diary, 7–11 July 1891, dep. 59, MP.
31. Ibid.
32. Milner Diary, 15 September 1891, dep. 59, MP.
33. Milner Diary, 18 October 1891, dep. 59, MP.
34. Milner to Goschen, 11 November 1891, dep. 7, MP.
35. Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner*, pp. 132–3.
36. Milner to Goschen, 11 January 1892, dep. 7, MP.
37. Milner to Goschen, 11 January 1892, dep. 7, MP.
38. al-Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt and Cromer*, p. 98.
39. Milner to Birchenough, 25 January 1892, dep. 27/1, MP.
40. Milner Diary, 23 January 1892, dep. 59, MP.
41. Milner, *England in Egypt*, p. 4.
42. Ibid., p. 252.
43. Ibid., p. 310.
44. Ibid., p. 37.
45. Ibid., p. 39.

46. Ibid., p. 75.
47. Ibid., p. 7.
48. Ibid., p. 197.
49. Ibid., p. 198.
50. Ibid., pp. 378–9.
51. Ibid., pp. 389–90.
52. Ibid., p. 405.
53. Ibid. pp. 424–8.
54. Winston Churchill, *The River War: An Historical Account of the Reconquest of the Sudan*, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1899), vol. 1, pp. 149–50.
55. Rhodes to Milner, n.d., dep. 28, MP.
56. Ibid. Subsequent letters by Rhodes to Rosebery at the Foreign Office, and to others, take very much the line that Milner recommends for Egypt in his book.
57. Cromer to Milner, 23 December 1892, dep. 27/1, MP.
58. Asquith to Milner, 17 January 1893, dep. 27/2, MP. For this crisis, see al-Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt and Cromer*, pp. 98–114.
59. O'Brien *Milner*, p. 108; Rosebery to Milner, 17 January 1893, dep. 27/2, MP; 1893 Diary, 18 January 1893, dep. 63, MP.
60. For Rosebery as Foreign Secretary, see Gordon Martel, *Imperial Diplomacy: Rosebery and the Failure of Foreign Policy* (Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986).
61. Chamberlain to Milner, 19 January 1893, dep. 27/2, MP.
62. Hardinge to Milner, 20 January 1893, dep. 27/2, MP.
63. Harcourt to Milner, February 1893, dep. 27/2, MP.
64. Milner to Harcourt, 2 February 1893, Harcourt papers, dep. 426, Bodleian Library.
65. For this see, Christopher Saunders and Iain R. Smith, 'Southern Africa, 1795–1910', in A. N. Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III, The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 597–623.
66. Milner, *The Nation and the Empire*, p. 5.

#### 4 Building Bridgeheads to War

1. Victoria signed the Commission appointing Milner Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Cape Colony on 27 February. The Governor was constituted High Commissioner of South Africa in an 1889 Order in Council. The territories under his authority were defined in an 1891 Order in Council as 'the parts of South Africa bounded by British Bechuanaland, the German Protectorate, the rivers Chobe and Zambesi, the Portuguese possessions, and the South African Republic.' Headlam (ed.), *The Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 36, n. 1.
2. Brett to Stead, 19 February 1897, STED 1/25, SP. This is also in Maurice Brett, (ed.), *Journals and Letters of Reginald Viscount Escher*, 4 vols (London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson Limited, 1934), vol. 1, p. 210. As things developed, Milner's old chief Sir William Harcourt became the dominant member on the South Africa Committee investigating the Jameson Raid, which began its proceedings at last on 6 February 1897 and would drag on until July.
3. *Review of Reviews*, 1 May 1897.
4. Milner to Low, 28 February 1897, dep. 32, MP. Low left the *St James's Gazette* the following year and began writing leaders for the *Standard*.

5. Milner described Garrett as 'the one honest, competent man in South Africa.' A. N. Porter, 'Sir Alfred Milner and the Press, 1897–1899', *Historical Journal*, 16:2 (1973), pp. 323–37; p. 326.
6. 27 March 1897 Program, WP.
7. Chamberlain to Milner, 16 March 1898, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, pp. 226–9. In this letter, written a year after Milner was dispatched to South Africa, Chamberlain summarized their 1897 discussions.
8. Henry Spencer Wilkinson, *Thirty-Five Years, 1874–1909* (London: Constable, 1933), p. 235. For Wilkinson's work, see *The Brain of an Army: A Popular Account of the German General Staff* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1890), *The Command of the Sea* (London: A. Constable and Co., 1894), *The Great Alternative: A Plea for a National Policy* (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1894), *The Brain of the Navy* (London: A. Constable and Co., 1895), *The Volunteers and the National Defence* (London: A. Constable and Co., 1896) and *The Nation's Awakening: Essays Towards a British Policy* (London: A. Constable and Co., 1896).
9. For the 'April Crisis', see J. S. Marais, *Fall of Kruger's Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), ch. 6.
10. Milner to Selborne, 20 April 1897, in O'Brien, *Milner*, p. 137.
11. Milner to Rendel, 30 May 1900, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 103–4.
12. Porter, 'Sir Alfred Milner and the Press', p. 326.
13. Milner to Hely-Hutchison, 20 June 1897, in Headlam, *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 53.
14. For a recent life of Fitzpatrick, see Andrew Duminy and Bill Guest, *Interfering in Politics: A Biography of Percy Fitzpatrick* (Johannesburg: Lowry Publishers, 1987). For Wernerher Beit, see Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *The Randlords* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986) and A. P. Cartwright, *The Corner House* (Cape Town, 1965).
15. Fitzpatrick to Beit, 4 March 1899, in A.H. Duminy and W. R. Guest (eds), *Fitzpatrick: South African Politician: Selected Papers, 1888–1906* (Johannesburg: McGraw-Hill, 1976), p. 143; Smith, *Origins of the South African War*, pp. 199–200.
16. Milner to Selborne, 9 May 1898, in D. George Boyce (ed.), *The Crisis of British Power: The Imperial and Naval Papers of the Second Earle of Selborne, 1895–1910* (London: The Historian Press, 1990), pp. 58–60.
17. Milner to Greene, 17 August 1898, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, pp. 237–8.
18. Wyndham to Milner, 5 October 1898, quoted in H. W. McCready, 'Sir Alfred Milner, the Liberal Party, and the Boer War', *Canadian Journal of History*, 2:1 (1967), pp. 13–44; p. 15, n. 8.
19. 1 December 1898 entry, Queen Victoria's Journal, RA.
20. Quoted in Porter, *Origins of the South African War*, pp. 180–1.
21. For this newspaper warfare in South Africa, see Porter, 'Sir Alfred Milner and the Press'; Jeeves, 'The Rand Capitalists and the Coming of the South African War' and Smith, *Origins of the South African War*, pp. 214–15.
22. Notes of Conversation on Milner to Wilkinson, November 1898, OTP 13/18, WP.
23. Wilkinson, *Thirty-Five Years*, pp. 236–7.
24. Joseph Baylen, 'W. T. Stead and the Boer War: The Irony of Idealism', *Canadian Historical Review*, 40:4 (1959), pp. 301–14; p. 311. For Stead, the Hague Conference and the British peace movement, see Paul Laity, *The British Peace Movement, 1870–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001).
25. Milner to Fiddes, 23 December 1898, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 299–300.

26. Milner to Fiddes, 3 January 1899, in Stokes, 'Milnerism', p. 54.
27. Milner to Selborne, 31 January 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, pp. 301–2.
28. Duminy, *Sir Alfred Milner and the Outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War*, p. 16.
29. Milner to Selborne, 8 March 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 295.
30. Milner to Selborne, 31 January 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, pp. 301–2.
31. Milner to Chamberlain, 4 March 1899, Chamberlain to Milner, 10 March 1899, quoted in Duminy, *Sir Alfred Milner and the Outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War*, pp. 19–20.
32. Milner to Chamberlain, 22 March 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 328–9.
33. Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 340.
34. C. (2nd series) 9345; Milner to Chamberlain, 4 May 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, pp. 349–53. Although its classical Greek lineage must have appealed, the 'helot' description for the Uitlanders did not originate with Milner. It had been used several years before by J. W. Leonard QC., who declared at a meeting of the Transvaal National Union that 'We protest, a children of a proud race and proud fathers against being made pariahs and helots'. Lord Grey had described the South African situation to Milner soon after he arrived as 'Hollander oligarchy v. English helots'. Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 355. In *The British Pro-Boers, 1877–1902* (London: Tafelberg, 1978), p. 37, Arthur Davey attributes the origin of the phrase to R. G. Webster, a backbencher who proclaimed in the Commons on 4 May 1893 that an Englishman in the Transvaal had 'about as much political right as a helot had in Sparta'.
35. Smith, *Origins of the South African War*, p. 267.
36. Milner to Hely Hutchison, 8 May 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, pp. 358–9.
37. Milner to Greene, 12 May 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 378.
38. Wyndham to Milner, 18 May 1899, in Stokes, 'Milnerism', p. 54. For the Imperial South African Association, see Andrew S. Thompson, 'The Language of Imperialism and the Meanings of Empire: Imperial Discourse in British Politics, 1895–1914', *Journal of British Studies*, 36 (April 1997), pp. 147–77.
39. Milner to Chamberlain, 22 May 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, pp. 398–9.
40. Milner to Selborne, 24 May 1899, in Boyce (ed.), *Crisis of British Power*, pp. 80–3. At the same time, Gell suggested to Milner that it was 'probably best in the long run that your un-moderation should not be known unto all men. Your conciliatory reputation is an asset.' Gell to Milner, 25 May 1899, in Smith, *Origins of the South African War*, p. 302.
41. Quoted in Michael Howard, 'Empire, Race and War in pre-1914 Britain', in Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Valerie Pearl and Blair Warden (eds), *History and Imagination: Essays in Honour of H. R. Trevor-Roper* (London: Duckworth, 1981), pp. 340–55; p. 350.
42. John Buchan, *Memory Hold the Door* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 1941), pp. 99–100.
43. Chamberlain to Milner, 5 June 1899, in J. L. Garvin and Julian Amery, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, 6 vols (London: Macmillan, 1932–69), vol. 3, p. 408.
44. For a closer examination of the conference, see Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, pp. 135–40.
45. For pre-war conditions in Johannesburg, see Diana Cammack, *The Rand at War 1899–1902: The Witwatersrand and the Anglo-Boer War* (London: James Currey, 1990).

46. *The Times*, 12 June 1899, quoted in Dorothy Helly and Helen Callaway, 'Journalism as Active Politics: Flora Shaw, *The Times* and South Africa', in Donal Lowry (ed.), *The South African War Reappraised* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 50–66; p. 60.
47. E. B. Iwan-Muller, *Lord Milner and South Africa*, (London: W. Heinemann, 1902), p. 648.
48. This was edited, both in light of Bloemfontein at Milner's request and to delete the warning of the growing military strength of the Transvaal as Chamberlain wished. The Blue Book (C. (2nd series) 9345) also contained the Uitlander's petition and Chamberlain's 10 May Despatch.
49. Cook to Milner, 16 June 1899, in Stokes, 'Milnerism', p. 55. Wilfrid Blunt recorded in his 15 June Diary that the plot for annexing the Transvaal has taken a new development. Chamberlain, to force the hand of the Government, has published a despatch of Milner's ... of the most aggressive kind, and the newspapers are full of flame and fury, the 'Daily News' leading the chorus. They talk of Milner's cool and impartial judgment as if Milner had not been specially selected by Chamberlain to put the job through ... he has been sent to the Cape to convert English Liberal opinion to the idea of reannexing the Transvaal. Milner, though an excellent fellow personally, is quite an extremist as an imperial agent, and his journalistic experience of the 'Pall Mall Gazette' has given him the length of John Bull's foot very accurately, so he is invaluable to the Empire builders. Now there will certainly be war in South Africa. (Blunt, *My Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 325).
50. For Spender, see James D. Startt, *Journalists for Empire: The Imperial Debate in the Edwardian Stately Press, 1903–1913* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991).
51. Quoted in Porter, *Origins of the South African War*, p. 231.
52. Cook to Milner, 20 July, 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 355.
53. Selborne to Milner, 25 June 1899, in Boyce (ed.), *Crisis of British Power*, pp. 83–5.
54. Quoted in Porter, *Origins of the South African War*, p. 229.
55. Wyndham to Milner, 13 July 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 454.
56. Milner Diary, dep. 69, MP.
57. Milner to Rendel, 21 July 1899, dep. 14, MP.
58. Milner to Wilkinson, 26 July 1899, WP. Milner would be among the original trustees of his will when Rhodes died the next year.
59. Ibid.
60. Worsfold, *Lord Milner's Work in South Africa*, p. 222.
61. Smith, *Origins of the South African War*, pp. 321–2.
62. Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of Empire*, p. 82.
63. Parl. Debs (series 4) vol. 75, cols 728–36, quoted in Porter, 'Sir Alfred Milner and the Press', pp. 338–9.
64. Parl. Debs (series 4) vol. 75, cols 661–4 (28 July 1899), quoted in Garvin [and Amery], *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, p. 424 and A. N. Porter, 'Lord Salisbury, Mr. Chamberlain and South Africa, 1895–9', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth Studies*, 1 (1972), p. 19.
65. Roberts, *Salisbury*, pp. 732–3, 736. See Porter, 'Lord Salisbury, Mr. Chamberlain and South Africa' for an earlier statement of this revised estimation of Salisbury.
66. Selborne to Milner, 27 July 1899, in Boyce (ed.), *Crisis of British Power*, pp. 91–2. For the latest judgment on Balfour, see R. J. Q. Adams, *Balfour: The Last Grandee* (London: John Murray, 2007).

67. Merriman to Bryce, 9 August 1899, in Phyllis Lewsen (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of John X. Merriman 1899–1905* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1966), pp. 75–6.
68. Chamberlain to Salisbury, 16 August 1899, SPH.
69. Salisbury to Chamberlain, 17 August 1899, quoted in Garvin [and Amery], *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, p. 436.
70. Quoted in Garvin [and Amery], *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 3, pp. 438–9; Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 493.
71. Gell to Milner, 25 August 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 497–8.
72. Milner to Selborne, 30 August 1899, in Boyce (ed.), *Crisis of British Power*, pp. 93–4.
73. Chamberlain to Milner, 2 September 1899, JC10/9/50, CP. Not being classically educated, Chamberlain misunderstood the story of the Sibyl of Cumae who demanded the same price for the remaining three after burning in turn six of the nine books of prophecies first offered to Tarquin. Salisbury later denied that he meant to ask for more as Chamberlain said, but that Britain would not lower her demands upon victory. Roberts, *Salisbury*, p. 730.
74. Davey, *British Pro-Boers*, p. 49.
75. C. 9530; Headlam, *Milner Papers*, I, p. 558.
76. Haldane to Milner, 11 October 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, pp. 559–60.
77. Milner to Selborne, 11 October 1899, in Boyce (ed.), *Crisis of British Power*, pp. 95–6.

## 5 Milner and the Imperial Ladies

1. Hugh and Mirabel Cecil, *Imperial Marriage: An Edwardian War and Peace* (London: John Murray, 2002), p. 116.
2. Lord Belgrave to Mrs. Wyndham, 23 August 1899, WP1/11, Westminster Papers, Chester Record Office.
3. Viscountess Milner, *My Picture Gallery 1886–1901* (London: Hutchinson, 1951), p. 133.
4. Violet Markham, *Return Passage* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 55.
5. Julia Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power*, (London: Cassell, 2000), pp. 45–6.
6. For Markham and the League, see Eliza Riedi, 'Options for an Imperial Woman: The Case of Violet Markham, 1899–1914', *Albion*, 32 (2000), pp. 59–84.
7. Violet Markham, *South Africa, Past and Present* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1900), pp. 215–16.
8. Viscountess Milner, *My Picture Gallery*, pp. 134–5.
9. Milner to Lady Edward Cecil, 12 September 1899, VM 85, VMP.
10. Sygne to Milner, 3 November 1899, dep. 17, MP.
11. Milner to Sygne, 11 December 1899, dep. 17, MP.
12. Viscountess Milner, *My Picture Gallery*, p. 161.
13. Milner to Sygne, 25 April 1900, dep. 17, MP.
14. After a trip to Windsor, Salisbury's daughter Gwendolen assured Violet Cecil that she 'had not been included in the Queen's disapproval'. Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power*, p. 44.
15. Milner to Chamberlain, 10 April 1900, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 73–4.
16. 20 June 1900, MSS. Eng. d. 3272, MAP.



17. For Lady Sarah at Mafeking, see Brian Roberts, *Churchills in Africa* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1970).
18. Rendel to Milner, 19 May 1900, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 75.
19. Merriman to Goldwin Smith, 12 July 1900, in Lewsen (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of John X. Merriman*, pp. 223–4.
20. Viscountess Milner, *My Picture Gallery*, p. 203; Milner to Violet Cecil, 22 July 1900, VM 85, VMP.
21. Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power*, p. 48.
22. Milner to Margot Asquith, 20 June 1900, MSS Eng. d. 3272, MAP.
23. For this, see Brian Roberts, *Cecil Rhodes and the Princess* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, 1969).
24. Gell to Milner, 23 June 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 10. Headlam dates this letter as 1899, but the contents mark it as after the outbreak of war, probably 1900.
25. Quoted in Robert Rotberg, *The Founder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 655–6.
26. Milner to Rhodes, 28 August 1900, dep. 467, MP.
27. Rhodes to Milner, n.d., dep. 467, MP.
28. Edith Lyttelton South African Diary, 4 September 1900, Chandos 6/3, LP.
29. Edith Lyttelton South African Diary, 22, 25 September 1900, Chandos 6/3, LP.
30. Edith Lyttelton South African Diary, 2 September 1900, Chandos 6/3, LP.
31. Lyttelton and Cecil served on the Executive Committee, while Markham was on the Council. For the League, see Eliza Riedi, 'Women, Gender and the Promotion of Empire: The Victoria League, 1901–1914', *Historical Journal*, 45:3 (2002), pp. 569–99.
32. For the Canadian effort, see Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity: Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).
33. *Victoria League First Annual Report* (London, 1903). This also includes a brief history of the League's formation.
34. Milner to Violet Cecil, 10 December 1900, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 191.
35. Milner to Violet Cecil, 29 October 1900, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 166. In India, Sir Power Palmer had been appointed acting Commander-in Chief in March 1900. His term was extended for a first and then a second year. He would be given an additional six months so that his term finally expired in October 1902. The Viceroy, Curzon, wanted Kitchener, but Victoria had been against the choice. With her death the way was clearer.
36. Milner to Violet Cecil, 29 October 1900, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 166. For the struggle between the generals and the civilians over war policy, See Keith Surridge, *Managing the South African War, 1899–1902: Politicians v. Generals* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998).
37. For this, see S. B. Spies, *Methods of Barbarism?: Roberts and Kitchener and Civilians in the Boer Republics, January 1900–May 1902* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1977).
38. Milner already had a bad experience at Worcester weeks before the Bloemfontein meeting with Kruger when Bend'Or reported he had travelled there to 'open a show' and it turned out to be a 'perfect hot-bed of Boers ... not a hat was raised, not a cheer ... Sir Alfred was very much struck with his reception.' Lord Belgrave to Duke of Westminster, 17 May 1899, WP 3/3, Westminster Papers, Chester Record Office.

39. Milner to Chamberlain, 5 December 1900, JC13/1/97, CP.
40. 21 December 1900 Diary, in Lionel Curtis, *With Milner in South Africa* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1951), p. 188.
41. Milner to Markham, 19 December 1900, Markham Papers, 25/56, LSE.
42. Milner to Markham, 27 December 1900, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 179.
43. Chamberlain to Milner, 25 January 1901, JC13/1/119, CP; Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 188–9; [Garvin and] Amery, *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 4, pp. 6–8.
44. Milner to Chamberlain, 20 February 1901, JC13/1/135, CP.
45. Milner to Violet Cecil, 2 March 1901, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 211.
46. Milner to Violet Cecil, 8 March 1901, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 214–15.
47. Spies, *Methods of Barbarism*, p. 215.
48. For Hobhouse's recollections, see A. Ruth Fry (ed.), *Emily Hobhouse, A Memoir* (London: J. Cape, 1929). For Hobhouse in South Africa, also see Brian Roberts, *Those Bloody Women: Three Heroines of the Boer War* (London: John Murray, 1991).
49. 31 January 1901, in Lewsen (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of John X. Merriam*, p. 245, n. 307.
50. Emily Hobhouse, *Report of a Visit to the Camps of Women and Children in the Cape and Orange River Colonies* (London: Friars Printing Association, 1901); see Le May, *British Supremacy*, p. 106. Hobhouse listed the style of the Commandant, the proximity of wood and water supplies, the distance from a base store, the presence of public opinion and the date of commencement as important factors. The earlier camps, for example, had 'opportunities of getting many necessities which are no longer obtainable'. Fry, *Emily Hobhouse*, p. 126.
51. Fry, *Emily Hobhouse*, p. 95.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
53. John Wilson, *C.B.: A Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman* (London: Constable and Co., 1973), p. 349. Milner had used 'barbarous' the previous October to describe the indiscriminate burning of farms. S. B. Spies points out that Louis Botha had used 'barbarities' and 'barbarously' in the same context in a letter to Roberts in May 1900. Roberts himself had written to the Boer Presidents in February 1900 that it was 'barbarous to attempt to force men to take sides against their own Sovereign and country by threats of spoliation and expulsion'. See Spies, *Methods of Barbarism*, p. 126.
54. For Fawcett's account, see Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *What I Remember* (London: F. Unwin, 1924).
55. Spies, *Methods of Barbarism*, pp. 254–5.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 223.
57. [Garvin and] Amery, *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 4, pp. 36–7.
58. Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of Empire*, p. 115.
59. For the BWEA, see Jean Jacques Van-Helten and Keith Williams, "The Crying Need of South Africa": The Emigration of Single British Women to the Transvaal, 1901–1910', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 10:1 (1983), pp. 17–38.
60. Knightley's Journal, 19 June 1901, quoted in Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power*, p. 52.
61. M. Streak, *Lord Milner's Immigration Policy for the Transvaal, 1897–1905* (Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University, 1970), pp. 44–6.

62. Milner to Mrs Humphry Ward, 24 June 1901, JC13/1/153, CP. This is also cited in Paula Krebs, *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire: Public Discourse and the Boer War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 37. For the writer, see John Sutherland, *Mrs Humphry Ward: Eminent Victorian, Pre-Eminent Edwardian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
63. Milner to Violet Cecil, 28 August 1901, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 269.
64. Milner to Syngé, 19 December 1901, in Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner*, p. 233.

## 6 The Most Important Question: Race in South Africa

1. Order of Activities, dep. 344, MP.
2. Milner to Glazebrook, 29 September 1897, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 80.
3. For this see Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1990).
4. According to Act 9 of 1892, in the Cape qualifications for the Franchise (for Europeans, coloured or native persons alike) were to be male, twenty-one years of age, occupy a house worth £75 or earn a yearly salary of £50 for twelve months, and the ability to sign one's name and write one's address and occupation.
5. Marais, *Fall of Kruger's Republic*, pp. 180–3. For Milner and the Pass Laws, see Martin Chanock, 'South Africa, 1841–1924: Race, Contract, and Coercion', in Douglas Hay and Paul Craven (eds), *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562–1955* (Chapel Hill, NC, and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 338–64.
6. Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 92.
7. Milner to Margot Asquith, 4 September 1897, MS. Eng. d. 3272, MAP.
8. Milner to Henry Asquith, 18 November 1897, MSS Asquith 9, Bodleian Library. For a close analysis of this letter, see Jeffrey Butler, 'Sir Alfred Milner on British Policy in South Africa in 1897', in Jeffrey Butler (ed.), *Boston University Papers in African History* (Boston, MA: Boston University Press, 1964), pp. 243–70.
9. Morley to Asquith, 21 December 1897, quoted in Butler, 'Sir Alfred Milner on British Policy', p. 258.
10. Asquith to Ripon, 28 December 1897, Ripon to Asquith, 29 December 1897, quoted in Butler, 'Sir Alfred Milner on British Policy', pp. 259–61.
11. Lyall to Asquith, 14 January 1898, quoted in Butler, 'Sir Alfred Milner on British Policy', pp. 264–5.
12. Asquith to Milner, 12 January 1898, quoted in Butler, 'Sir Alfred Milner on British Policy', p. 262.
13. For a recent view, see Neil Parsons, *King Khama, Emperor Joe, and the Great White Queen* (London, 1998).
14. Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 130.
15. 12 November 1897 Diary, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 132.
16. Milner to Mackenzie, 13 December 1897, in Dachs (ed.), *Papers of John Mackenzie*, pp. 252–3.
17. Milner to Syngé, 23 March 1898, dep. 17, MP.
18. Milner to Syngé, 20 April 1898, dep. 17, MP.
19. Milner to Horner, 15 April 1898, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, pp. 163–4.
20. For this crisis, see, Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, pp. 182–92.

21. Word reached Milner of a conversation in which Reitz had declared himself in favour of the gradual enfranchisement of the Uitlander population, though he admitted it would be hard to convince the old Boer oligarchy. About the Pretoria administration, Reitz was reported to have said 'there were many things ... at which no honest man can look with approval'. Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 191.
22. Milner to Selborne, 19 September 1898, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 1, p. 192.
23. Milner to Fitzpatrick, 28 November 1899, in Duminy and Guest (eds), *FitzPatrick: South African Politician*, pp. 233–4.
24. J. P. R. Wallis, *Fitz: The Story of Sir Percy Fitzpatrick* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1955), p. 78. For Fitzpatrick's recollections of this episode, see Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, *South African Memories: Scraps of History* (London: Cassell and Co., 1932).
25. Milner to Chamberlain, 24 November 1899, in Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London: John Murray, 1979), p. 167. For the African place in the war, see Peter Warwick, *Black People and the South African War, 1899–1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
26. Warwick, *Black People and the South African War*, p. 15.
27. Milner to Lagden, 3 November 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 20.
28. Lawley to Milner, 30 October 1899, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 6–7.
29. For this subject, see Bill Nasson, 'Why They Fought: Black Cape Colonists and Imperial Wars, 1899–1918', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 37:1 (2004), pp. 55–70.
30. Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 224–5. For an example of Africans striking back in the Cape, see Bill Nasson, '“Doing Down their Masters”: Africans, Boers and Treason in the Cape Colony during the South African War of 1899–1902', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 12 (1983), pp. 29–53.
31. Lewsen (ed.), *Selections From the Correspondence of John X. Merriman*, p. 380, n. 113.
32. Cd 547, Cd 663, quoted in Worsfold, *Lord Milner's Work in South Africa*, p. 427.
33. For this see, Bill Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War: A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899–1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and 'The War of Abraham Esau 1899–1901: Martyrdom, Myth and Folk Memory in Calvinia, South Africa', *African Affairs*, 87: 347 (April 1988), pp. 239–65.
34. Quoted in G. B. Pyrah, *Imperial Policy in South Africa 1902–1910* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 91.
35. Quoted in Rev. J. D. Kestell and D. E. Van Velden, *The Peace Negotiations between the Governments of the South African Republic and the Orange Free State, and the Representatives of the British Government, which Terminated in the Peace of Vereeniging on the 31st May, 1902* (London: Richard Clay & Sons, 1912), p. 212.
36. Peter Marsh blames Milner for 'gutting' this provision, although there is little evidence that Chamberlain saw things much differently at this point. *Joseph Chamberlain*, p. 521.
37. Milner to Selborne, 10 May 1905, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 353.
38. Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 465–70.
39. Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 510–11. For Gandhi's struggle, see Maureen Swan, *Gandhi: The South African Experience* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985) and Robert Huttenback, *Gandhi in South Africa: British Imperialism and the Indian Question, 1860–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971).
40. Donald Denoon, *A Grand Illusion: The Failure of Imperial Policy in the Transvaal Colony During the Period of Reconstruction, 1900–1905* (London: Longman, 1973), p. 111.

41. In one of his despatches Milner had declared that 'the faster we get (the gold) out the greater is the overspill ... and it is that overspill which benefits the local community and fills the coffers of the state.' Cd 1895, quoted in Persia Crawford Campbell, *Chinese Coolie Emigration to Countries within the British Empire* (London: P. S. King & Son Ltd, 1923), p. 170.
42. For this question, see Peter Richardson, *Chinese Mine Labour in the Transvaal* (London: Macmillan, 1982) and Campbell, *Chinese Coolie Immigration*. For a broader perspective, see David Northrup, *Indentured Labour in the Age of Imperialism, 1834–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
43. 29 August 1902, CO291/41, in Streak, *Lord Milner's Immigration Policy*, p. 52.
44. Jameson complained to his brother that Milner wanted him to do more than I think safe. It is a beastly difficult position. Of course they [the Chinese] must come, and the sooner the better; but I have to continue the egg dance down here till they do arrive'. He went on that he was trying to get Milner to 'hurry it up so that the legislation can be published before our elections. Then I can say "I told you so" and get my coloured brethren to believe that we have been sincere and can help them better than the Bond in keeping them [the Chinese] out of the Colony'. At the end of the month Jameson reported that he was leaving for six weeks of political meetings leading up to the Cape election and without 'this abominable Chinese question we should have swept the floor with them. Now it is all very doubtful'. It was difficult to keep the party together, but he had 'good hopes – especially if Milner hurries up and gets them sanctioned before February 10' when the elections began. Ian Colvin, *The Life of Jameson*, 2 vols (London: Edward Arnold, 1922), vol. 2, p. 230.
45. Milner told the banker Lewis Michell 'It makes just the whole difference to have a loyal Government at the Cape'. Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of Empire*, p. 150.
46. Milner to Gell, 13 December 1903, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 481.
47. Cd 1896, Cd 1899; in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 478, 482.
48. Denoon, *A Grand Illusion*, pp. 146–7.
49. Milner to Violet Markham, 19 January 1904, Markham Papers, 25/56.
50. 22 February 1904, in Lewsen (ed.), *Selections From the Correspondence of John X. Merriman*, p. 432.
51. Quoted in Startt, *Journalists for Empire*, p. 78. Startt includes two chapters on the Chinese Labour issue.
52. Milner to Lyttleton, 21 February 1904, dep. 10, MP. Selborne warned Milner on 14 March that the Government were doing all they could for him on Chinese labour, but that the electoral consequences would be 'disastrous to ourselves'. He was anxious over what would likely be for the Radicals a 'very big majority ... and the cry (now become "Chinese Slavery") was the most criminal and remunerative electorally he had known'. Nevertheless, Selborne assured Milner that his 'friends were sticking to you'. O'Brien, *Milner*, p. 216.
53. 18 March 1904, in McCready, 'Sir Alfred Milner, the Liberal Party, and the Boer War', p. 40.
54. Lloyd George made a 'strong personal attack' on Milner which was parried by Col. W. S. K. Slaney. W. Akers Douglas to Edward VII, 24 March 1904, RA.
55. Wilson, *C. B.*, p. 400.
56. McCready, 'Sir Alfred Milner, the Liberal Party, and the Boer War', p. 40.
57. Milner to Synge, 23 May 1904, dep. 17, MP.

58. On 21 March Hereford moved that ‘this House disapproves of the importation of Chinese Labourers into the Transvaal until the grant of full self-government’ and further that it ‘would be a great boon to South Africa if Lord Milner were no longer there. He has shown his disqualification for the position in two ways; (i) his temper constantly obscures his judgement, and (ii) his language is constantly running away with him.’ Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of Empire*, p. 163.
59. Milner to Baynes, 28 March 1904, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 487–8.
60. The regulations provided for government officials in China to supervise the recruitment and to explain the terms of the contract, which the labourer was given the power to terminate at any time, on condition he repay the costs of importation and repatriation. Every man was entitled to be accompanied by his wife and children at the expense of the importer. The labourer was to be returned to the port of embarkation. No clause prohibited corporal punishment as this was already an offence under Transvaal law. Campbell, *Chinese Collie Emigration*, p. 181–2. See also Worsfold, *The Reconstruction of the New Colonies*, vol. 1, pp. 360–2 for the details of the ordinance.
61. Quoted in Startt, *Journalists for Empire*, p. 82.
62. Milner to Lyttelton, 29 July 1904, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 485.
63. Milner to Oliver, 25 July 1904, dep. 10, MP.
64. Milner, *The Nation and the Empire*, pp. 89–90.

## 7 A Kindergarten to Govern the Country: South African Reconstruction

1. Selborne to Milner, 10 November 1899, in Boyce (ed.), *Crisis of British Power*, pp. 96–7.
2. Milner to Selborne, 30 November 1899, in Boyce (ed.), *Crisis of British Power*, pp. 97–8.
3. For this subject, see Walter Nimocks, *Milner’s Young Men: the “Kindergarten” in Edwardian Imperial Affairs* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1968). For a more recent, and briefer, view of the Milner and his acolytes, see Iain R. Smith, ‘Milner, the “Kindergarten” and South Africa’, in Andrea Bosco and Alex May, (eds), *The Round Table, the Empire/Commonwealth, and British Foreign Policy* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1997), pp. 35–53. For the most recent Curtis life, see Deborah Lavin, *From Empire to International Commonwealth: A Biography of Lionel Curtis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).
4. Curtis, *With Milner in South Africa*, p. 344.
5. Percy Fitzpatrick, *Lord Milner and His Work* (Capetown: n.p., 1925), reprinted from the *Cape Times*. The high cost of living in South Africa also made the job less attractive than it might have been.
6. Charles Stewart to Milner, 7 September 1900, MSS Curtis 1, f 55, CRT.
7. At this time Curtis commented in his diary about his talks with Milner about the municipality that his chief ‘has a trick of putting you so much in possession of your wits that you can convey to him in 10 minutes what would take 30 minutes to express to other people’. 23 April 1901, in Curtis, *With Milner in South Africa*, p. 216.
8. Milner to Mrs. Montefiore, 22 March 1901, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 235–6.
9. Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 274–5.

10. In his study, Walter Nimocks assigns Robinson and Wyndham places in the 'nucleus' of the Kindergarten with Buchan outside as he left South Africa in 1903. Wyndham also assigns the origin of the appellation to Milner, not J. A. Marriott or John X. Merriman as do others. *Milner's Young Men*, pp. 27–8.
11. For Robinson, who changed his name to Dawson in 1917 as part of the terms of an inheritance, see John Evelyn Wrench, *Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times* (London, 1955).
12. John Buchan, *Memory Hold-the-Door* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1941), pp. 95–9.
13. Milner to Asquith, 13 September, 1901, MSS Asquith 10, f. 33, Bodleian Library.
14. Cd 626, in Worsfold, *Lord Milner's Work in South Africa*, pp. 516–17.
15. Cd 1163, in Worsfold, *Lord Milner's Work in South Africa*, pp. 516–19.
16. Milner to Chamberlain, 8 November 1901, quoted in Streak, *Lord Milner's Immigration Policy for the Transvaal*, p. 15; Milner to Chamberlain, 30 December 1901, quoted in Streak, *Lord Milner's Immigration Policy for the Transvaal*, p. 32.
17. For Milner and the Treaty, see Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, pp. 189–203.
18. Milner to Chamberlain, 9 June 1902, JC13/1/260, CP.
19. For a brief overview, see Kenneth E. Wilburn Jr, 'Engines of Empire and Independence: Railways in South Africa, 1863–1916', in Clarence Davis and Kenneth E. Wilburn Jr, with Ronald E. Robinson (eds), *Railway Imperialism* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), pp. 25–40.
20. Worsfold, *The Reconstruction of the New Colonies*, vol. 2, p. 44.
21. Cd 1551, quoted in Worsfold, *The Reconstruction of the New Colonies*, vol. 2, pp. 49–50.
22. Sargent returned after a year's leave because of illness and issued a 1904 report on the subject.
23. D. J. N. Denoon, "'Capitalist Influence" and the Transvaal Government During the Crown Colony Period, 1900–1906', *Historical Journal*, 11:2 (1968), pp. 301–31; p. 322.
24. Johannes Meintjes, *General Louis Botha* (London: Cassell, 1970), p. 117.
25. Quoted in W. K. Hancock and J. van der Poel (eds), *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966–73), vol. 2, p. 151.
26. Worsfold, *The Reconstruction of the New Colonies*, vol. 2, p. 70.
27. 18 October 1902, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 381.
28. According to Nimocks the true members of the group, recognized by the others, were Curtis, Duncan, Perry, Robinson, Wyndham, Feetham, Hichens, Dove and three added later, Robert Brand, Philip Kerr, and Dougal Malcolm. *Milner's Young Men*, pp. 28, 44.
29. In one of his early addresses Chamberlain observed that 'one of the Radical newspapers at Home has declared that I am an uncommercial traveller. I don't know exactly what they mean, but I am sure they mean something disagreeable. I should prefer myself to say that I am here as a missionary in the cause of the Empire.' Quoted in Worsfold, *The Reconstruction of the New Colonies*, vol. 1, p. 123, n. 2.
30. Chamberlain to Milner, 4 September 1902, JC13/1/179, CP.
31. Milner to Hely-Hutchinson and Hime, 5 November 1902, dep. 237, MP.
32. Worsfold, *The Reconstruction of the New Colonies*, vol. 1, pp. 159–60.
33. [Garvin and] Amery, *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 4, pp. 307–8; Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 433.
34. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 340.
35. Milner to Chamberlain, 20 January 1903, dep. 237, MP; JC29/3/3/1, CP.

36. Quoted in Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, p. 40. Besides Milner as President, the Council was made up of the Lieutenant-Governors of the two colonies, the Inspector-General of the South African Constabulary, two further nominated officials from each of the two colonies, two nominees of the Secretary of State, and two representatives elected by each of the Colonial Legislative Councils. Duminy and Guest, *Interfering in Politics*, p. 105.
37. Worsfold, *The Reconstruction of the New Colonies*, vol. 1, pp. 231–2; [Garvin and] Amery, *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. 4, p. 341.
38. Worsfold, *The Reconstruction of the New Colonies*, vol. 1, p. 305.
39. Milner to Chamberlain, 27 March 1903, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 451–2.
40. In an April letter to Milner, Lyttelton asked 'whether the first step towards self-government had not better be taken under your and our guidance, than under men who seem very reckless of the essential interests of South Africa.' Lyttelton to Milner, 26 April 1904, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 520–1.
41. Milner to Lyttelton, 9 May 1904, dep. 10, MP.
42. Milner to Lyttelton, 2 May 1904, CHAN2/23, LP; also in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 521–7.
43. Milner to Lyttelton, 20 May 1904, in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, p. 528. Milner's ideas, which were largely incorporated in the new constitution, included a Legislative Assembly consisting of thirty to thirty-five members elected on the basis of a wide franchise in districts with equal numbers of voters and six to nine officials. The elected members were to have almost complete control of legislation finance and legislation.
44. Milner to Lyttelton, 12 September 1904, dep. 10, MP.
45. Milner to Balfour, 20 October 1904, Balfour Ad. MSS, 49697, BP.
46. Milner to Lyttelton, 23 January 1905, dep. 10, MP.
47. After the funeral, Olive Schreiner reported to her husband that she had been told that the King had ordered Milner to attend the funeral, but he had feared assassination and stayed away. She went on that such worries were nonsense as Milner was 'the best friend we have, he's ruining the British Empire faster than all the Boers in creation could'. 16 December 1904, in S. C. Cronwright-Schreiner (ed.), *The Letters of Olive Schreiner* (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd, 1924), p. 250.
48. This was announced at the Empress Theatre, Pretoria, on 28 January 1905. For this, see N. G. Garson, "'Het Volk': The Botha-Smuts Party in the Transvaal, 1904–1911', *Historical Journal*, 9:1 (1966), pp. 101–32.
49. Denoon, 'Capitalist Influence', pp. 323–5.
50. Milner to Lyttelton, 23 January 1905, dep. 10, MP.
51. Lyttelton to Milner, 17 January 1905, dep. 10, MP.
52. Balfour to Milner, 23 February 1905, Balfour Ad. MSS, 49697, BP. The 2 March *Daily News* announced Milner's retirement with the comment that it was 'as inevitable as the coming Liberal victory. His retention of office a day after the accession of the Liberals to power would be impossible ... He represents the war and all the waste and ruin and bloodshed it created.' Quoted in Stephen Koss, *Fleet Street Radical: A. G. Gardiner and the Daily News* (London: Archon Books, 1973), p. 81.
53. Milner to Balfour, 27 March 1905, Balfour Ad. MSS, 49697, BP.
54. Milner to Lyttelton, 2 April 1905, dep. 10, MP.
55. Milner to Selborne, 14 April, 1905, in Boyce (ed.), *Crisis of British Power*, pp. 198–203 and Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 550–8. For Selborne as High Commis-



- sioner, see David Torrance, *The Strange Death of Liberal Empire: Lord Selborne in South Africa* (Montreal, QC: Queen's University Press, 1996).
56. Quoted in Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, p. 55.
  57. Milner, *The Nation and the Empire*, pp. 68–76.
  58. Ibid., pp. 77–91; Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 543–7.
  59. Milner to Robinson, 21 August 1906, Dawson MS 61, Bodleian Library.
  60. Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, p. 79.
  61. Churchill to Campbell-Bannerman, 18 February 1907, Campbell-Bannerman Papers, 52516, BL. Printed CO doc *African (South) No. 859, Confidential*.
  62. Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner*, p. 254.

## 8 Constructive Imperialism

1. For the domestic aspect, see Alan Sykes, *Tariff Reform in British Politics 1903–1913* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979). For the Empire, see Andrew S. Thompson, 'Tariff Reform: An Imperial Strategy, 1903–1913', *Historical Journal*, 40:4 (1997), pp. 1033–54.
2. For Roberts and the National Service League, see Michael John Allison, 'The National Service Issue, 1899–1914' (PhD thesis, University of London, 1975) and R. J. Q. Adams and Philip Poirier, *The Conscription Controversy in Great Britain, 1900–1918* (London: Macmillan, 1987).
3. E. H. H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism: The Politics, Economics and Ideology of the British Conservative Party, 1880–1914* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 249.
4. Fabian Ware to Milner, 28 June 1905, dep. 32, MP.
5. Milner to Curtis, 25 August 1905, MS Curtis 1, CRT.
6. For this, see A. K. Russell, *Liberal Landslide: The General Election of 1906* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973). The final numbers for the new House of Commons showed 401 Liberals, 83 Irish Nationalist and 29 Labour MPs who soon began to call themselves a Labour party. The Opposition was made up of 132 Conservatives and 25 Liberal Unionists.
7. *Outlook*, 20 January 1906. For Garvin, see Startt, *Journalists for Empire*.
8. Quoted in Colin Cross, *The Liberals in Power, 1905–1914* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1963), p. 23.
9. 28 September 1906 Diary, in John Barnes and David Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, 2 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1980, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 55–6.
10. Milner, *The Nation and the Empire*, pp. 136–52.
11. Amery stood again, unsuccessfully, when his opponent, Sir Henry Fowler, was elevated to the peerage in 1908. The futile exercise was repeated in January 1910. A seat was finally found for him in 1911 in south Birmingham, with help from the Chamberlain family.
12. Milner, *The Nation and the Empire*, pp. 152–63.
13. Jebb to Arthur Atkinson, 17 January 1907, JEBB/A 1907, JP. For Jebb, see J. D. B. Miller, *Richard Jebb and the Problem of Empire* (London, 1956).
14. Quoted in Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 57.
15. 18 December 1906 Diary, in *ibid.*, p. 58.
16. Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, p. 111. For the efforts to oust the group, see Alan Sykes, 'The Confederacy and the Purge of the Unionist Free Traders, 1906–1910', *Historical Journal*, 18:2 (1975), pp. 349–66 and Larry L. Witherell, *Rebel on the Right: Henry Page*

- Croft and the Crisis of British Conservatism, 1903–1914* (London: Associated University Presses, 1997).
17. Sandars to Balfour, 13 January 1907, Balfour Add Ms 49765, BP.
  18. Milner to Amery, 20 January 1907, AP, quoted in Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, pp. 114–15.
  19. Chamberlain to Amery, 23 January 1907, in Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 58.
  20. Milner to Amery, 28 June 1907, AP, quoted in Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, pp. 116–17. For Mackinder, see Brian W. Blouet, *Halford Mackinder: A Biography* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1987).
  21. For this see John Edward Kendle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887–1911: A Study in Imperial Organization* (London: Longmans, 1967), pp. 83–106.
  22. Alfred Milner, 'Some Reflections on the Coming Conference', *National Review* (April 1907), pp. 193–206.
  23. Cd 3337, 'Agenda of the Colonial Conference 1907'.
  24. Milner to Deakin, 25 February 1907, Deakin Papers, quoted in John E. Kendle, *The Round Table Movement and Imperial Union* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1975), pp. 47–8.
  25. Milner to Amery, 13 April 1907, AMEL 1/31/38, AP.
  26. Amery to Milner, 16 April 1907, in Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 58.
  27. Milner papers dep. 33, f 171. 'Invitation to Parliamentary Luncheon to the Colonial Premiers, Westminster Hall April 24th 1907'.
  28. Milner to Gwynne, 26 April 1907, HAG/21, Gwynne Papers, Imperial War Museum.
  29. Milner to Amery, 25 September 1907, AMEL 1/3/38, AP.
  30. For this see Cain, 'The Economic Philosophy of Constructive Imperialism', Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform* and Milner's own speeches on the subject collected in *Constructive Imperialism*. More recent comment has ranged widely including the 'greening' of constructive imperialism in Drayton, *Nature's Government*, pp. 255–67.
  31. Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, pp. 7–33.
  32. Milner to Gwynne, 26 October 1907, HAG/21, Gwynne Papers, Imperial War Museum.
  33. Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, pp. 34–49.
  34. For this, see Sykes, *Tariff Reform in British Politics*, pp. 141–3. At Birmingham the party resolved to 'commit itself to fiscal reform as its first constructive policy in order to broaden the basis of taxation, safeguard home industries against unfair competition, strengthen the Governments' hand in commercial negotiations, and to establish a system of imperial preference – in that order' (p. 141).
  35. Milner, *Constructive Imperialism*, pp. 69–87.
  36. Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 62.

## 9 The Most Vital Link: Canada and the Empire

1. For overviews of Canada and the Empire in this period see, Colin M. Coates (ed.) *Imperial Canada, 1867–1917* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Centre of Canadian Studies, 1997) and Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867–1914* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1970).
2. Markham to Amery, nd, AMEL 2/5/25, AP.

3. Markham to Amery, 1 June 1907, AMEL 2/5/25, AP.
4. Milner to Grey, 28 June 1908, dep. 34, MP.
5. Grey to Edward VII, 16 September 1908, RA.
6. Milner to Denison, 20 September 1908, Milner Fonds, A-883, Library and Archives Canada.
7. Viscount Milner, *Speeches Delivered in Canada in the Autumn of 1908* (Toronto, ON: William Tyrrell and Co., 1909), pp. 1–12.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 13–26.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–41.
10. Glazebrook to Jebb, 2 November 1908, JEBB/A 1908, JP.
11. Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*, p. 54–5.
12. Milner to Glazebrook, 28 October 1908, GP.
13. Glazebrook to Drummond, 26 November 1908, GP.
14. Milner, *Speeches Delivered in Canada*, pp. 59–73.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 85–93.
16. 30 October 1908 Diary, dep. 79, MP. For the views of the Nationalist leader, see Joseph Levitt (ed.), *Henri Bourassa on Imperialism and Bi-culturalism, 1900–1918* (Toronto, ON: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1970).
17. Milner to Bourassa, 6 November 1908, Bourassa Papers, Library and Archives Canada.
18. *Montreal Gazette*, 22 December 1908.
19. For Hughes, see Ronald G. Haycock, *Sam Hughes: The Public Career of a Controversial Canadian, 1885–1916* (Ottawa, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986).
20. Hughes to Milner, 4 November 1908, dep. 35, MP.
21. Hughes to Amery, 13 November 1908, AMEL 2/5/7, AP.
22. Milner to Grey, 5 November 1908, dep. 35, MP.
23. Grey to Milner, 22 January 1909 tl. fr. Gov House Ottawa, dep. 35, MP. For example, the 14 January 1909 *Victoria Daily Colonist* disagreed with an *Observer* statement that Milner has ‘arrested the decline’ of imperial sentiment in Canada. In the paper’s view he had rather ‘contributed to the crystallization’ of sentiment by ‘laying stress upon the equality of the component parts of the Empire’. The British press was ‘doing its best to make “loyalty” hateful to Canadians’. The phrase was ‘bandied about in a way that is almost a profanation’. Another expression being overworked was ‘imperial sentiment’. Milner’s visit ‘did a great deal of good, not because it altered the course of Canadian sentiment in the slightest degree, but because he enabled us to get the viewpoint of one of the foremost British statesmen, of a man who may one day give the word to the people of the United Kingdom as to what they should do to consolidate the Empire’. If the ‘imperial fabric was ever broken’, the paper concluded, the ‘line of cleavage will not begin in the overseas Dominions’.
24. Milner to Glazebrook, 10 March 1909, GP.
25. *Daily Mail*, 29 January 1909, quoted in Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, p. 147.
26. Chamberlain to Denison, 9 November 1908, Dennison Papers, Library and Archives Canada. This is also quoted in Christopher Rickerd, ‘Canada, the Round Table and the Idea of Imperial Federation’, in Andrea Bosco and Alex May, *The Round Table: The Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1997), pp. 191–221; p. 195.
27. Milner to Dawson, 19 February 1909, MS Dawson 61f 69.
28. Milner to Willison, 8 May 1910, Willison Papers, MG-30-D29, Library and Archives Canada.

29. Ibid.
30. For this, see Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada, 1896–1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), p. 179–82.
31. Milner to Denison, 10 April 1911, dep. 37, MP.
32. Borden to Milner, 13 May 1911, dep. 37, MP.
33. Milner to Tupper, 24 May 1911, Borden Papers, C–4354, Library and Archives Canada.
34. Milner to Glazebrook, 28 June 1911, GP.
35. Milner to Borden, 24 September 1911, Borden Papers, C–4199, Library and Archives Canada.
36. Borden to Milner, 24 October 1911, Borden Papers, C–4199, Library and Archives Canada.
37. Rickerd, 'Canada, the Round Table and the idea of Imperial Federation', pp. 201–2.
38. Milner, *The Nation and the Empire*, pp. 478–86.
39. Bourassa to Milner, 7 October 1912, Bourassa Papers, M–722, Library and Archives Canada.
40. Milner to Bourassa, 9 October 1912, Milner Fonds, A–883, Library and Archives Canada.
41. Bourassa to Milner, 10 October 1912, Bourassa Papers, M–722, Library and Archives Canada.
42. Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner*, p. 278.
43. Marc Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 28.
44. 31 May 1913, in Rickerd, 'Canada, the Round Table and the idea of Imperial Federation', p. 202.

## 10 President of an Intellectual Republic: The Round Table

1. For a more detailed examination of the movement, see Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*.
2. Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*, p. 60.
3. For a brief view of Curtis and the movement, see Deborah Lavin, 'History, Morals and the Politics of Empire: Lionel Curtis and the Round Table', in John Bossy and Peter Jupp (eds), *Essays Presented to Michael Roberts* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1976), pp. 117–32. For Kerr see Jeffrey R. M. Butler, *Lord Lothian* (London, 1960).
4. Curtis to Amery, 29 March 1909, AMEL 1/3/41, AP.
5. Curtis to Amery, 29 March 1909, AMEL 1/3/41, AP.
6. Milner to Amery, 3 July 1909, AMEL 1/3/39, AP.
7. Talks previously had taken place at F. S. Oliver's house at Checkenden.
8. Oliver to Amery, 17 September 1909, AMEL 2/5/8, AP.
9. 3 and 4 September 1909 Milner Diary, dep. 80, MP, also quoted in Nimocks, *Milner's Young Men*, p. 149.
10. According to an undated list in MS. eng.hist.c. 776, f. 149, CRT, the original Moot included Milner, Lovat, Lord Robert Cecil, Lord and Lady Selborne, Wolmer, Howick, Oliver, Lionel Hitchens, Arthur Steel-Maitland, Craik, Amery, Holland, Geoffrey Robinson, Kerr, Brand, John Dove and D. O. Malcolm. G. M. Paterson acted as Secretary and sub-editor of the *Round Table*.

11. For the group in the dominion, see Rickerd, 'Canada, the Round Table and the idea of Imperial Federation' and James Eayrs, 'The Round Table Movement in Canada, 1909–1920', *Canadian Historical Review*, 38:1 (March 1957), pp. 1–20.
12. Oliver to Amery, 17 September 1909, AMEL 2/5/8, AP.
13. Milner to Glazebrook, 16 September 1909, GP.
14. Milner to Glazebrook, 14 October 1909, GP.
15. For this, see David Watt, 'The Foundation of the Round Table: Idealism, Confusion, Construction', *Round Table*, 60 (November 1970), pp. 425–33.
16. *South Africa as a Field for Settlers*, 25 July 1910, pp. 1–3.
17. *Round Table*, 1 (February 1911).
18. For the debate, see J. E. Kendle, 'The Round Table Movement and "Home Rule All Round"', *Historical Journal*, 11:2 (1968), pp. 332–53.
19. John Ramsden, *The Age of Balfour and Baldwin, 1902–1940* (London: Longman, 1978), p. 35.
20. Milner to Balfour, 5 November 1910, Balfour Ad MSS 49697, BP.
21. Milner, *The Nation and the Empire*, p. xxx.
22. Amery to Milner, 9 November 1910, quoted in Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, pp. 169–70.
23. *Daily Mail*, 9, 10, 21 December 1910.
24. Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, p. 37; Cross, *Liberals in Power*, p. 123.
25. Kipling to Milner, 14 December 1910, dep. 37, MP.
26. Minutes of 19 January 1911 Moot, MS eng.hist.c. 776, LRT.
27. G. F. Plant, *Oversea Settlement: Migration from the United Kingdom to the Dominions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 60.
28. Milner to Glazebrook, 28 June 1911, GP.
29. Milner to Glazebrook, 28 June 1911, GP.
30. Glazebrook to Milner, 22 September 1911, dep. 38, MP.
31. R. J. Q. Adams, *Bonar Law* (London: John Murray, 1999), pp. 80–1.
32. Kendle, *The Round Table Movement*, pp. 119–21.
33. Milner to Sygne, 14 July 1912, dep. 18, MP.
34. Lavin, 'Curtis and the Round Table', p. 129. According to Nimocks the name was given by an undergraduate, Philip Kerr's younger brother David, killed in France in 1915. *Milner's Young Men*, p. 208.
35. Milner to Robinson, 10 August 1912, MSS Dawson 61, Bodleian Library.
36. For Milner and the Ulster Controversy, see Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, Chp. 18.
37. Covenant Pledge, 20 February 1914, MSS eng.hist. c. 689, MP.
38. Robinson to Milner, nd, dep. 349, MP.
39. Garvin to Milner, 3 March 1914, dep. 41, MP. For Garvin in this crisis, see A. M. Gollin, *The Observer and J. L. Garvin: A Study in Great Editorship, 1908–1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).
40. Oliver to Milner, 2 March 1914, dep. 13, MP.
41. Milner to Oliver, 4 March 1914, dep. 13, MP.
42. 'The Irish Crisis', *Round Table*, 4:14 (March 1914), pp. 201–30.
43. Dep. 349, MP.
44. Milner to Grigg, 14 April 1914, MSS. Eng. Hist.c.782, CRT.
45. For this see A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis* (London: Faber, 1967).
46. Jebb to Deakin, 8 April 1914, JEBB/A 1914, JP.
47. Milner to Jebb, 23 April 1914, JEBB/A 1914, JP.

48. Milner to Henley, 10 July 1914, Henley papers, 6111–45, NAM.
49. L. S. Amery, *My Political Life*, 3 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1953–5), vol. 1, p. 465.
50. HL Debs, vol. 16, 6 July 1914, col. 705, HLRO; Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner*, pp. 289–90.

## 11 The Empire at War

1. No separate study of Milner in the war has been published. Cecil Headlam began one, 'Lord Milner's Part in the Great War', and his unfinished draft can be found in the Milner papers. The most complete treatment is N. T. A. Forster's excellent thesis 'The Religio Milneriana & The Lloyd George Coalition, 1916–1921' (PhD thesis, Keele University, 1989).
2. Milner to W. C. MacGregor, 8 August 1914, dep. 41, MP.
3. Hew Strachan, *The First World War, Volume I: To Arms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 495. For a brief view of the Empire's contribution, see Robert Holland, 'The British Empire and the Great War, 1914–1918', in Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (eds), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume 4, the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 114–37.
4. Milner to F. J. Henley, 18 September 1914, Henley Papers, NAM.
5. For this campaign, see Strachan, *First World War*, pp. 543–69.
6. Glazebrook to Milner, 29 September 1914, GP.
7. 'The Conduct of the Round Table Work during the War', MSS eng.hist.c.779, CRT.
8. 12 November 1914 statement, marked confidential, dep. 349, MP.
9. Extract of letter from Osmund Walrond, 25 February 1915, dep. 42, MP.
10. Glazebrook to Milner, 20 November 1914, GP.
11. Glazebrook to Milner, 5 January 1915, GP.
12. Glazebrook to Milner, 15 February 1915, GP.
13. Speech at Royal Colonial Institute, 24 March 1915, dep. 373, MP.
14. Glazebrook to Milner, 25 March 1915, GP.
15. Amery to Milner, 27 April 1915, AMEL 1/3/4, AP.
16. Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, p. 395.
17. Milner to Glazebrook, 16 September 1915, GP.
18. Glazebrook to Milner, 16 December 1915, GP.
19. Milner diary, 18 July 1915, dep. 86, MP.
20. Milner to Wilson, 3 July 1915, in Forster, 'Religio Milneriana', p. 115.
21. Amery to Fitzpatrick, 27 July 1915, AMEL 1/3/3, AP.
22. Glazebrook to Milner, 28 July 1915, GP.
23. Milner to Glazebrook, 16 September 1915, GP.
24. Glazebrook to Milner, 28 July 1915, GP.
25. Milner to Glazebrook, 16 September 1915, GP.
26. Milner to Curtis, 27 November 1915, MS Curtis 2, CRT.
27. Lionel Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd, 1906), pp. 109–12. The less controversial *The Commonwealth of Nations* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd, 1916), meant to be the first in a wider-ranging series adding India and the dependent empire to the overall analysis, was published later in the year.
28. Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, pp. 127–8.
29. Glazebrook to Milner, 18 January 1916, GP.
30. Milner to Glazebrook, 18 March 1916, dep. 44, MP.

31. Milner to Glazebrook, 18 March 1916, dep. 44, MP.
32. For this subject, see 'Lord Milner and Patriotic Labour, 1914–1918', *English Historical Review*, 87:345 (October 1972), pp. 717–54 and Brock Millman, *Managing Domestic Dissent in First World War Britain* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).
33. That spring Milner suggested to Henry Wilson that the 'wonderful little midger' should 'head the whole show'. Forster, 'Religio Milneriana', p. 39. For Hughes in the war, see L. F. Fitzhardinge, *The Little Digger, 1914–1952: William Morris Hughes, a Political Biography* (London: Angus and Robertson, 1979).
34. Millman, *Managing Domestic Dissent*, p. 111.
35. Glazebrook to Milner, 5 June 1916, GP.
36. Glazebrook to Milner, 20 June 1916, GP.
37. Glazebrook to Milner, 11 July 1916, GP.
38. Milner Diary, 28 July 1916, dep. 87, MP.
39. Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner*, p. 312.
40. Quoted in Stubbs, 'Lord Milner and Patriotic Labour', pp. 731–2.
41. Glazebrook to Milner, 20 June 1916, GP.

## 12 Imperial War Cabinet

1. For the details of Milner's ascension, see Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, pp. 328–31.
2. 16 December 1916, in Stubbs, 'Lord Milner and Patriotic Labour', p. 734.
3. Glazebrook to Milner, 12 December 1916, GP.
4. After spending two hours with Milner, Hankey recorded that he had 'always hated his politics but found the man very attractive and possessed of personality and got on like a house on fire'. Hankey Diary, 10 December 1916, in Stephen Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets*, 3 vols (London: Collins, 1970–4), vol. 1, p. 329–30.
5. Hankey Diary, 1, 10 January 1917, in Roskill, *Hankey*, vol. 1, p. 349 and Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 136.
6. For this, see John Turner, *Lloyd George's Secretariat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). One thesis of Turner's book was first revealed in his 'The Formation of Lloyd George's "Garden Suburb": "Fabian-Like Milnerite Penetration"?', *Historical Journal*, 20:1 (1977), pp. 165–84, which argues against preceding accounts of extensive Milnerite influence.
7. Kerr was caricatured by H. W. Massingham in *The Nation* as 'Narcissus whose duties included 'rapidly assimilating the popular ideas or tendencies of the day, and presenting them to his chief ... in concentrated pellets'. Most of Kerr's work was in fact devoted to the future of the Empire, the Irish Question, and foreign relations with Europe and the USA, sometimes circumventing normal channels. Quoted in John Turner and Michael Dockrill, 'Philip Kerr at 10 Downing Street, 1916–1921', in John Turner (ed.), *The Larger Idea: Lord Lothian and the Problem of National Sovereignty* (London, 1988), pp. 33–61; pp. 33–4.
8. *The Nation*, 24 February 1917, quoted in Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, p. 380.
9. Milner diary, 22, 23 December 1916, dep. 87, MP; Roskill, *Hankey*, vol. 1, p. 348. Hankey was amused that the Cabinet in fact seemed to have no idea what they were to discuss and recorded that Bonar Law declared 'When they are here, you will wish to goodness you could get rid of them'.
10. John Grigg, *Lloyd George: War Leader, 1916–1918* (London: Allen Lane, 2002), p. 61.
11. Quoted in Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of Empire*, p. 267.

12. *The Times*, 26 January 1917.
13. Milner to Thornton, 3 February 1917, quoted in Turner and Dockrill, 'Philip Kerr at Downing Street', p. 34.
14. Amery to Hughes, 8 January 1917, in Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, pp. 138–9.
15. Ibid.
16. 14 January 1917, quoted in Turner, 'The Formation of Lloyd George's "Garden Suburb"', p. 183.
17. Glazebrook to Milner, 8 March 1917, GP. A copy of the memorandum can be found in the Milner Fonds, A–883.
18. Milner to Glazebrook, 21 April 1917, GP.
19. Milner diary, 14 March 1917, dep. 88, MP. Unlike South Africa, which sent Smuts as a substitute, Hughes's absence left Australia without political representation.
20. Amery diary, 14 March 1917, in Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 145. Hankey, on the other hand, recorded that Smuts was very reluctant in the discussions and 'very suspicious of Milner'. 18 March Diary, in Roskill, *Hankey*, vol. 1, p. 370.
21. Milner diary, 15 March 1917, dep. 88, MP.
22. These meetings alternated days with the normal War Cabinet. Long, as Colonial Secretary, was also included in the IWC sessions.
23. Milner diary, 20 March 1917, dep. 88, MP. Long, Balfour (as Foreign Secretary), the first Sea Lord Jellicoe and General Maurice (in place of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Robertson, who was in Italy) were also present.
24. The other members were Henderson, Long, H. A. L. Fisher, Borden, Smuts, Sir Eyre Crowe, Sir Joseph Ward, Sir Edward Morris, Sir J. Meston, and the Maharajah of Bikanir. Thomas Jones acted as Secretary.
25. For the Minutes of the committee, see AMEL 1/3/33.
26. Rickerd, 'Canada, the Round Table, and the Idea of Imperial Federation', pp. 210–211.
27. Milner to Glazebrook, 21 April 1917, dep. 45/1, MP.
28. Amery Diary, 24 April 1917, in Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 151.
29. Amery diary, 26 April 1917, in Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 152.
30. Grigg, *Lloyd George: War Leader*, pp. 102–3.
31. Forster, 'Religio Milneriana', p. 79.
32. Glazebrook to Milner, 17 August 1917, GP.
33. Milner to Glazebrook, 7 October 1917, GP. During the Battle of Arras in April, the Canadian troops had distinguished themselves and rallied their country with their heroism by taking the Vimy Ridge.
34. Milner to Willison, 17 August 1917, dep. 45/2, MP.
35. Quoted in Eayrs, 'The Round Table Movement in Canada', pp. 6, 17–18.
36. Amery, *My Political Life*, vol. 2, p. 157.
37. Glazebrook to Milner, 21 May 1918, GP.
38. Milner to Lloyd George, 9 June 1918, dep. 355, MP.
39. Ibid.
40. In 1918 the IWC sat on Tuesdays and Thursdays, while the premiers met in an Imperial War Conference with Walter Long at the Colonial Office on Mondays and Wednesdays.



A further Committee of Prime Ministers, a kind of inner cabinet of the IWC, was gathered as needed.

41. Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of Empire*, p. 310.
42. Milner recorded, 'Important speeches from Smuts and Sinha & a brief very sensible statement from Lloyd (Newfoundland)': Milner diary, 13, 14 June 1918, dep. 89, MP; Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 223; Grigg, *Lloyd George: War Leader*, p. 540.
43. Fitzhardinge, *The Little Digger*, p. 322.
44. Grigg, *Lloyd George: War Leader*, p. 551.
45. Fitzhardinge, *The Little Digger*, p. 325.
46. For Australia and the German Colonies, see Chapter 6 in Wm. Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006).
47. For Bonar Law and the 1918 Election, see Adams, *Bonar Law*, pp. 275–80.
48. Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of Empire*, p. 311–12.
49. Glazebrook to Milner, 2 December 1918, GP.
50. Milner diary, 1–5 November 1918, dep. 89, MP.
51. Quoted in Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner*, p. 351.
52. George I. R. to Milner, 11 November 1918, dep. 355, MP.

### 13 An Imperial Peace

1. Milner to Violet Cecil, 27 December 1918, F110/93, VM30; Diary of William Bullitt, 11 December 1918, in Arthur S. Link, (ed.), *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 69 vols (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966–94), vol. 53, pp. 366–7.
2. 7, 8 January 1919 diary, in Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, pp. 250–1.
3. 9, 10 January 1919 diary, in Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 252.
4. 18 December 1918, in Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 247.
5. 9, 10 January 1919 diary, in Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 252.
6. Milner to Amery, 12 January 1919, AMEL 1/3/42, AP.
7. For a recent view, see Margaret MacMillan, *Peacemakers: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and its Attempt to End War* (London: John Murray, 2001).
8. Roskill, *Hankey*, vol. 2, p. 46.
9. Hankey to Milner, 14 January 1919, AMEL 2/1/2, AP.
10. Curtis to Milner, 19 January 1919, AMEL 2/1/2, AP.
11. Amery to Milner, 24 January 1919, AMEL 1/3/42, AP.
12. Amery, *My Political Life*, vol. 2, p. 179; 7 February. 1919, AMEL 1/3/42, AP.
13. For a brief view of France's long-held designs on Syria, see L. Bruce Fulton, 'France and the Ottoman Empire, in Marian Kent (ed.), *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), pp. 141–71.
14. Riddell diary, 1 September 1919, Riddell Ad. Ms 62984, BL. This is also recounted in Hugh and Mirabel Cecil, *Imperial Marriage*, p. 292.
15. Milner to Amery, 7 February 1919, AMEL 1/3/42, AP.
16. For the 'Repatriation of Africa', see ch. 7 in Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism*.

17. 20 December 1918 IWC meeting, quoted in Forster, 'Religio Milneriana', p. 279.
18. In a secret memo titled, 'Australia and the Pacific Islands' dated 6 February 1919, Hughes argued that the Australians considered control 'absolutely necessary for her security'. He underlined the strategic importance of New Guinea, and an array of nearby Islands which he considered an 'integral part of New Guinea, and accordingly must be treated as integral parts of Australia'. He also put in a claim for the Solomon island and Nauru as well. W.C.P. 71, dep. 389, MP.
19. MacMillan, *Peacemakers*, p. 56.
20. 'Minutes of the British Empire Delegation Meeting', 20 February 1919, dep. 389, MP.
21. *Mandates. Under Clause Six of the Draft Covenant of the League of Nations*, 8 March 1919, dep. 389, MP.
22. Ibid.
23. Milner to Massey, 30 January 1919, in Forster, 'Religio Milneriana', p. 279.
24. *Mandates. Under Clause Six of the Draft Covenant of the League of Nations*, 8 March 1919, dep. 389, MP.
25. A similar Emigration Bill had been withdrawn the year before under pressure from the shipping industry.
26. Amery to Milner, 12 February 1919, AMEL 1/3/42, AP.
27. Ibid. For a brief comment on Amery, Milner and native labour in this period see M. K. Banton, 'The Colonial Office, 1820–1955: Constantly the Subject of Small Struggles', in *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562–1955* (Chapel Hill, NC, and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 251–302.
28. Amery to Milner, 27 February 1919, AMEL 1/3/42, AP.
29. Amery to Milner, 5 March 1919, AMEL 1/3/42, AP.
30. For this subject, see Dane Kennedy, 'Empire Migration in Post-War Reconstruction: The Role of the Overseas Settlement Committee, 1919–1922', *Albion* 20:3 (Autumn 1988), pp. 403–19; Stephen Constantine (ed.), *Emigrants and the Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990); Plant, *Oversea Settlement*; W. A. Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles: With Special Reference to the Development of the Overseas Dominions* ([1929]; repr. London: Frank Cass, 1966).
31. Amery to Milner, 3, 5 March 1919, AMEL 1/3/42, AP.
32. Milner to Glazebrook, 11 March 1919, GP.
33. Milner to Devonshire, 25 March 1919, Milner Fonds, A–883, Library and Archives Canada.
34. 22 March 1919, in Forster, 'Religio Milneriana', p. 252. For Keynes, with whom Milner had some discussions in Paris, see Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes: Hopes Betrayed 1883–1920* (London: Macmillan, 1983), pp. 354–75.
35. Bruce Kent, *The Spoils of War: The Politics, Economics and Diplomacy of Reparations, 1918–1932* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 30.
36. For this, see Michael Callahan, *Mandates and Empire: The League of Nations and Africa 1914–1931* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1999) and Wm. Roger Louis, *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies 1914–1919* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) and *Ends of British Imperialism*.
37. Amery, *My Political Life*, vol. 2, p. 181. For the struggle over Belgium's claims, see Forster, 'Religio Milneriana', p. 281–3.
38. Milner to Lloyd George, 16 May 1919, dep. 46, MP.
39. Ibid.

40. "Equitable Compensation" for Italy in Africa, 30 May 1919, dep. 389, MP.
41. For this see John Darwin, 'An Undeclared Empire: The British in the Middle East, 1918–39', in Robert D. King and Robin M. Kilson (eds), *The Statecraft of British Imperialism: Essays in Honour of Wm. Roger Louis* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), pp. 159–76; and Kent (ed.), *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire*.
42. 2 April 1919, quoted in Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of Empire*, p. 329.
43. *Sunday Express*, 30 March 1919, quoted in Forster, 'Religio Milneriana', p. 286.
44. Quoted in Forster, 'Religio Milneriana', p. 287.
45. Milner to Devonshire, 12 July 1919, Borden Papers, C–4343, Library and Archives Canada.
46. He told his old friend, now Sir Henry Birchenough, the Chairman of the British South Africa Company, that, 'Personal influence is such a varying thing and just now I am not in the disposition to use it with the PM: 25 May 1919, quoted in Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of Empire*, p. 335.
47. The other members appointed 27 June 1919 were Colonel Edward House of the USA, Simon of France, Crespi of Italy and Viscount Chinda of Japan. Paul Mantoux, *The Deliberations of the Council of Four (March 24–June 28, 1919): Notes of the Official Interpreter*, trans and ed. by Arthur Link, 2 vols (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), vol. 2, p. 582.
48. Minutes of the Special Mandates Commission, 28 June 1919, dep. 390, MP.
49. Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of the Empire*, p. 335.
50. Milner to Devonshire, 27 June 1919, Borden Papers, C–4343, Library and Archives Canada.
51. *The Times*, 10 July 1919, quoted in Forster, 'Religio Milneriana', p. 288. W. A. S. Hewins, who had advised Milner on the economic clauses of his Peace Terms Committee the year before, considered Milner's speech 'on the status of the Dominions was ill-advised and if acted upon would break up the Empire'. How, asked Hewins, could the 'different parts of the Empire enter into separate international arrangements and remain united?' Walter Long told Hewins that the speech did not reflect the policy of the Government, that it was 'merely an excursion of Milner's, who never came to the Cabinet'. 10 July 1919 diary, in *The Apologia of an Imperialist: Forty Years of Empire Policy*, 2 vols (London: Constable and Co., 1929), vol. 2, pp. 186–7.
52. HL Debs (series 5), vol. 36, cols. 66–73.
53. Milner, *The British Commonwealth*. From the March 1919 issue the *Round Table* was no longer subtitled 'A Quarterly Review of the Politics of the Empire', but instead of the 'Commonwealth'. For a helpful overview of the use of the term, see W. David McIntyre, 'The Commonwealth', in Robin W. Winks (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V, Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 558–70.
54. O'Brien, *Milner*, p. 344.
55. *The Future*, September 1919, quoted in Forster, 'Religio Milneriana', p. 289.
56. 31 October 1917 memo, quoted in John Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East: Imperial Policy in the Aftermath of War 1918–1922* (London: Macmillan, 1981), p. 85.

## 14 Egypt Again: The Milner Mission and After

1. For Milner's Mission in the wider context, see Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*.

2. Curzon declaration in Lords, 15 May 1919, in Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, p. 87.
3. Milner to Stamfordham, 19 November 1919, RA.
4. 25 November 1919, quoted in Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of Empire*, p. 341–2.
5. Milner to Curzon, 2 December 1919, dep. 449, MP.
6. For a record of the activities of the other members, see dep. 448, MP.
7. Milner memo, n.d., in Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, p. 90.
8. For Wingate as High Commissioner, see C. W. R. Long, *British Pro-Consuls in Egypt, 1914–1929* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005). For Zaghlul, see Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid-Marsot, *Egypt's Liberal Experiment: 1922–1926* (Berkeley, CA, and London: University of California Press, 1977) and Elie Kedourie, 'Sa'd Zaghlul and the British', in *The Chatham House Version and other Middle-Eastern Studies* (London: Frank Cass, 1970).
9. For a recent view of Allenby, see Lawrence James, *Imperial Warrior: The Life and Times of Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby 1861–1936* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993).
10. Long, *British Pro-Consuls*, p. 112.
11. 'Lord Milner's Conversations on Egyptian Affairs While Chairman of the Special Mission to Egypt', dep. 448, MP.
12. 10 December 1919, dep. 449, MP.
13. Milner to Thornton, 18 December 1919, dep. 19, MP.
14. Milner to Curzon, 18 December 1919, dep. 449, MP.
15. Milner to Lloyd George, 28 December 1919, F/39/1/52, LGP.
16. Dep. 448, MP. Allenby's main concern was to uphold the protectorate he had been sent out to defend. He feared that the manifesto, and the release from prison Milner insisted on over his objections of notables so they might be free for discussions, would be seen as signs of weakness.
17. Curzon to Milner, 3 January 1920, dep. 449, MP.
18. 'Lord Milner's Conversations on Egyptian Affairs', dep. 448, MP.
19. Milner to Violet Cecil, 23 January 1920, F110/117, VM30, VMP.
20. Since the 1899 Anglo-Egyptian Agreement imposed after Kitchener's re-conquest of the Sudan, it had been an Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, theoretically under joint control, but in reality administered almost as a Crown Colony. Milner agreed with Allenby and Wingate, who both recommended that, whatever measure of self-government might be given to Egypt, the Sudan should stay under British control.
21. Milner to Curzon, 17 February 1920, dep. 449, MP.
22. Quoted in Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, pp. 94–5.
23. Milner to Violet Cecil, 1 February 1920, F110/118, VM30, VMP.
24. Milner to Amery, 11 February 1920, AMEL 1/3/42, AP.
25. 'Lord Milner's Conversations on Egyptian Affairs', dep. 448, MP.
26. Walrond was the agent in the negotiations to get Adli and Zaghlul to agree to come to London.
27. Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, pp. 100–1. Under the Protectorate, the old title of Khedive had been replaced by Sultan.
28. For this see Michael Bishku, 'The British Press and the Future of Egypt, 1919–1922', *International History Review*, 8:4 (1986), pp. 604–12.
29. *Manchester Guardian*, 23 January 1920.
30. Milner to Montagu, 14 June 1920, MSS eng. hist.c.691, MP.

31. Milner advised the Foreign Office not to allow Allenby to 'form a "cave" in Cairo' or fall under the influence of the Sultan. Milner to Spender, 27 June 1920, quoted in Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, p. 104.
32. Milner to Chirol, 18 August 1920, in Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, p. 104.
33. 'Egypt. Special Mission To. 1920 Report and Memoranda', n.d., CAB1/44, PRO.
34. 24 August 1920 memo, in Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, p. 109. Darwin also noted (p. 110) that in the Cabinet warfare going on at the time, discrediting the scheme also got back at Milner and Curzon for blunting Churchill's criticism of Curzon's designs in Persia, which Churchill feared might lead to another military disaster (at the hands of the Bolsheviks) for which he might be blamed as the Dardanelles episode of 1915.
35. 19 October 1920 memo for Cabinet, in Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, p. 110–11.
36. 5 October 1920 Fisher diary, in Forster, 'Religio Milneriana', p. 257.
37. 11 September 1920 diary, in Keith Middlemas (ed.), *Thomas Jones Whitehall Diary, Volume I, 1916–1925* (London, 1969), p. 121.
38. Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, pp. 105, 111.
39. 'Egypt. Special Mission To. 1920 Report and Memoranda', CAB1/44, PRO.
40. 16 September 1920 memo, in Darwin, *Britain, Egypt and the Middle East*, pp. 106–7.
41. HL Debs (series 5), vol. 42, cols. 210–13.
42. 'Egypt. Special Mission To. 1920 Report and Memoranda', CAB1/44, PRO, p. 39.
43. Milner to Borden, 30 June 1920, Borden Papers, C–4343, Library and Archives Canada.
44. Glazebrook to Milner, 9 June 1920, GP.
45. Milner to Glazebrook, 25 December 1920, GP.
46. Milner to Borden, 10 July 1920, Borden Papers, C–4343, Library and Archives Canada.
47. Milner to Devonshire, 28 April 1920, Mackenzie King Papers, C–2243, Library and Archives Canada.
48. Milner to Lloyd George, 8 October 1920, F/39/2/22, LGP.
49. Milner to Devonshire, 28 January 1921, Mackenzie King Papers, C–2243, Library and Archives Canada.
50. Milner to Violet Cecil, 10 January 1921, F110/113, VM30, VMP. Violet's long-estranged husband, Lord Edward, died of influenza in December 1918.
51. Forster, 'Religio Milneriana', pp. 295–6.
52. Milner to Drummond Chaplin, 2 February 1921, dep. 48, MP.
53. Amery, *My Political Life*, vol. 2, p. 212.
54. He wrote to Amery on 26 February 1921, 'I have not the least doubt that you will ultimately get your proper recognition, but I should certainly have been much happier if you had come to your own at this stage'. In Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 269.
55. Curzon to Milner, 13 February 1921, dep. 48, MP.
56. Milner to Percy Matheson, 31 January 1921, dep. 48, MP.

## 15 Conclusion: A Wider Patriotism

1. Foreword to Halpérin, *Lord Milner and the Empire*, p. 16.

2. Dawson to Milner, 18 June 1921, dep. 48, MP.
3. Milner to Dawson, 2 November 1922, MS 61, Dawson papers.
4. For this, see Kendle, *Round Table Movement*, pp. 260–74.
5. 2 May 1946 letter by Lady Milner, quoted in Halpérin, *Lord Milner and the Empire*, p. 201.
6. *The Times*, 11 June 1921.
7. Milner to Craven, 24 April 1922, dep. 50, MP.
8. Marlowe, *Milner: Apostle of the Empire*, p. 359.
9. Violet Milner prepared a revised edition published in late 1925, after Milner's death, which includes notes he made in the intervening period and his 'Key to My Position' credo, which had been previously published in *The Times*.
10. Viscount Milner, *Questions of the Hour* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1925), p. xi.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–25
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 134–7
15. Glazebrook to Milner, 2 August 1923, GP.
16. Strachey to Milner, 7 August 1923, dep. 52, MP.
17. Ramsden, *Age of Balfour and Baldwin*, pp. 178–180.
18. Milner to Sygne, 4 December 1923, dep. 18, MP.
19. Press Release, Baldwin Papers, vol. 27.
20. Milner to Maxse, 25 December 1923, in Forster, 'Religio Milneriana,' p. 384.
21. Milner to Birchenough, 1 January 1924, dep. 53, MP. For the committee recommendations, see the Tariff Advisory Committee report, 22 December 1923, BT232/3, PRO.
22. Baldwin to Milner, 4 January 1924, dep. 53, MP.
23. Sir John Willison, *Partners in Peace: The Dominions, the Empire and the Republic* (Toronto: Warwick Bros. & Rutter, 1923), p. 73.
24. Milner to Willison, 27 January 1924, dep. 53, MP.
25. 20 August 1924, F110/196, VM30, VMP.
26. Milner to Craven, 29 October 1924, dep. 53, MP.
27. Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 411.
28. Milner to Mr. Palmer, 3 January 1925, dep. 54, MP.
29. Duncan to Lady Selborne, 17 December 1924, Duncan Papers, UCTL.
30. Lady Milner to Borden, 9 June 1925, Borden Papers, C-4436, Library and Archives Canada.
31. Smuts to Milner, 14 February 1925, dep. 54, MP.
32. Milner to Baynes, 23 March 1925, dep. 54, MP.
33. Barnes and Nicholson (eds), *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 411. For Amery at the Colonial Office, see Wm. Roger Louis, *In the Name of God, Go!: Leo Amery and the British Empire in the Age of Churchill* (London and New York: W. W. Norton, 1992).
34. *The Times*, 16 May 1925.
35. *Round Table*, 15:59 (June 1925), p. 427.
36. Drummond Chaplin to Lady Milner, 15 May 1925, dep. 664, MP.
37. Borden to Lady Milner, 25 May 1925, Borden Papers, C-4436, Library and Archives Canada.
38. Lady Milner to Borden, 9 June 1925, Borden Papers, C-4436, Library and Archives Canada.

39. Oliver to Amery, 17 September 1909, AMEL 2/5/8, AP.
40. Buchan, *Memory Hold-the-Door*, pp. 99–100.
41. Lavin, *From Empire to International Commonwealth*, p. 322.
42. Roberts, *Salisbury*, p. 743.
43. Amery, *My Political Life*, vol. 2, p. 210–11.
44. Ewen Green, in his Introduction to the 1998 reprint of Milner's *The Nation and the Empire*, pp. vi–vii; p. vii.
45. Quoted in Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics*, p. 166.
46. For an example of this see Carroll Quigley, *The Anglo-American Establishment: From Rhodes to Cliveden* (New York, NY: Books in Focus, 1981).
47. For this see Chapter 11, 'The Patriots Fight Back: The Round Table Tradition in Imperial Historiography', in Etherington, *Theories of Imperialism* and Frederick Madden, 'The Commonwealth, Commonwealth History, and Oxford, 1905–1971', in Frederick Madden and D. K. Fieldhouse (eds), *Oxford and the Idea of Commonwealth: Essays Presented to Sir Edgar Williams* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), pp. 7–29.
48. R. H. Bruce Lockhart, *British Agent* (London: Putnam, 1933), p. 205.
49. *Nation and Athenaeum*, 23 May 1925, quoted in J. R. M. Butler, *Lord Lothian* (London, 1960), p. 63.
50. Buchan, *Memory Hold-the-Door*, pp. 95–9.
51. Glazebrook to Lady Milner, 22 February 1926, dep. 665, MP.
52. Foreword to Halpérin, *Lord Milner and the Empire*, pp. 19–20.
53. Kedourie, 'Sa'd Zaghlul and the British', in *The Chatham House Version*, p. 121.
54. John Darwin, 'A Third British Empire? The Dominion Idea in Imperial Politics', in Judith Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (eds), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV, The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 64–87; pp. 68–9.
55. Halpérin, *Lord Milner and the Empire*, p. 224.
56. Lord Altrincham, 'Forgotten Patriot', *National and English Review* (December 1952), pp. 359–64; p. 362.

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