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Planning for Peace

The crises of the 1930s produced two great debates: one about the role of centralized planning in mitigating the miseries of capitalism, and the other about how to avoid war. The thought and political activity that went into these debates laid the foundations for the post-war welfare state in Britain and also for the wider European Community. Barbara Wootton was a leading figure in both these arenas. Of all her public activities, these in the 1930s are probably the least well known. The links between her work for world peace and for a planned socialist economy and society have mostly escaped comment. Yet, for her, they were aspects of the same vision. How could you have justice and liberty without freedom from violence; what did democracy mean if the elected governors did not protect the vulnerable, and promote equal rights to life's necessities and opportunities; and how could these goals be achieved other than by organized planning which transcended the narrow limits of nationalistic sentiment?

'What is wrong at the moment, I believe,' she wrote in 1939, 'is that some of our established institutions no longer fit the realities and the wishes of our time.' The two key institutions were those of the nation-state and of war. International politics was 'a monstrous chess game of "national interests"'; between the nation-state and war there was a 'devilish interaction', so that killing people and being killed to defend national sovereignty had become a mindless reflex.¹ Since capitalist nations seemed especially prone to the disease of war, one could even argue that capitalism and war were directly related, although Barbara herself would not say this. Instead she pointed out that, as there had been wars long before capitalism, the main cause of war must lie in the absence of any kind of effective international machinery to prevent it.²

The Federal Union was born in Bloomsbury, in an office at 44 Gordon Square, on 14 September 1938, around a barrel of beer. Its midwives were three young men – Charles Kimber, Patrick Ransome and Derek Rawnsley. Kimber and Rawnsley had been at Eton and Oxford together, and both worked in the public relations

department of the oil company Shell, although Rawnsley, a perpetually restless character, had left in order to set up his own business, School Prints Ltd, supplying art reproductions to schools. Before that, he had made history by flying solo in a Tiger Moth from Australia to Oxford.³ Charles Kimber was equally known for his eccentricity; at various stages in his life, he ran a market garden in Devon and a pub in Oxfordshire, and enjoyed an adulterous union with a writer with whom he lived in a covered lifeboat in Port Meadow, Oxford.⁴ When Prime Minister Chamberlain returned from Munich in September 1938, declaring to cheering crowds at Croydon Airport that he had averted war, Kimber, sharing the depression of many at this strategy of appeasement, joined Rawnsley in Gordon Square to set up a new organization campaigning for a federation of nations committed to world peace. The term 'federation' was introduced to them by their friend, Patrick Ransome, a journalist with a degree in international law. Barbara remembers the 'oddly assorted trio' in her autobiography: 'Patrick Ransome, a life-long cripple, unable to move from his wheelchair the most intellectually sophisticated ... Derek Rawnsley ... the wildest of the three ... and both were quite unlike the gentle, idealistic, incurably amateurish and entirely lovable, Charles Kimber'.⁵ The three men drafted a pamphlet entitled *Federal Union* and sent it to their friends, some sixty or seventy of whom endorsed its aims, and who put up money to have it printed and distributed. Kimber searched through *Who's Who*, identifying four hundred public figures with an interest in international affairs; the pamphlet and a handwritten letter were then posted to each of these (with the local post office protesting at the consequent burden on its services). The response to the mailout was 'astonishing'.⁶ At a meeting in Gordon Square in April 1939, a panel of advisers was recruited: Lionel Curtis, founder of Chatham House (the Royal Institute of International Affairs); Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman*; politician and diplomat and guilty drafter of the failed Versailles Treaty, Lord Lothian; Wickham Steed, ex-editor of *The Times*; and Barbara Wootton.

Barbara probably came to Kimber's attention because she was Secretary to an outfit called 'Study Groups on Reconstruction' at Chatham House. This elitist organization, which occupied an elegant privately donated house in St James's Square, had been set up by Lionel Curtis in 1920 'to collect, examine, and distribute information on imperial and foreign, political, economic and social problems'.⁷ It was an attempt to translate the old-fashioned imperialism of Dominion into a new doctrine of internationalism, with the British Commonwealth of nations as an exemplar of international co-operation. Barbara was the TUC representative on the Chatham House Council in 1940–1. In her experience, the place resembled 'a miniature Foreign Office', and so was not much to her taste. When the bombing

of London started, she was put on firewatching duties there; staff were instructed that *for this purpose* the bosses and the porters and the women who did most of the work in between were to regard themselves as equals, an instruction she found to be an apt comment on the normal pattern of hierarchy.⁸ The Australian economic historian Keith Hancock, an expert on the British Commonwealth, was also involved with Chatham House, and he replied to Kimber's letter as an emissary of a group there interested in federalist ideas. Hancock's own peroration on the political troubles of the time, *Argument of Empire* (1943), must have pleased Barbara, with its focus on the three targets of welfare, freedom and peace.

The Federal Union's new panel of advisers wrote to friends and sympathizers for signatories to a statement about the urgent need to replace national sovereignty with an alternative ideology. Among the thirty-five they recruited were many divergent stars: the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of Chichester, Lord Astor, Lancelot Hogben, Julian Huxley, Storm Jameson, Ramsay Muir, Sir John Orr, J.B. Priestley, Lady Rhondda, Seeböhm Rowntree, Arnold Toynbee, and Ralph Vaughan Williams. The statement of aims they signed subscribed to a belief in 'a Federal Union of free peoples under a common government elected by and responsible to the people for their common affairs ... as a first step towards democratic self-government for the prevention of war, the creation of prosperity and the preservation and promotion of individual liberty'.⁹ Barbara Wootton's contribution to Federal Union was significant from the start.¹⁰ At the outbreak of War in September 1939, she was one of those elected to form a Council which would determine the policy of the Federal Union during the conflict. The Council decided to use any appropriate means to work towards 'securing the inclusion in statements of war aims or peace proposals of an announcement of readiness' on the part of any country to embrace the motives and strategies of federal union;¹¹ it also launched a mass membership campaign. By June 1940, membership of the Federal Union had reached 12,000 and there were 253 local branches organizing meetings; an international committee had been formed with contacts in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland.¹² The movement was supported by leading newspapers – *The Times*, *The Guardian*, the *New Statesman* and *Time and Tide* (of which Lady Rhondda was the editor). The idea of federalism – for Europe or a wider international geography – gained currency in the early months of the War, as many people understood that Britain was no longer a fortress, but a vulnerable, inadequately defended island off the landmass of Europe. The seriously contemplated possibility of invasion was met with equally serious plans: for example, the diplomat and politician, Harold Nicolson, and his wife, Vita Sackville-West, were not alone in persuading a friendly doctor to give them a poison pill with which they would be able to escape potential torture and humiliation.¹³

The headmaster of Dartington Hall School, W.B. Curry, was a passionate early proponent of Federal Union. A lifelong pacifist, he was a believer in progressive education as a necessary step to a saner human society. Barbara's friendship with him was one of the 'most treasured incidental consequences' of the considerable time and energy she devoted to the Federal Union movement during these years.¹⁴ Curry wrote *The Case for Federal Union*, which was published as a Penguin Special in December 1939, and sold more than 100,000 copies in six months.¹⁵ He invited Barbara down to Dartington Hall in April 1940 to give a talk. 'What am I to do?' she responded. 'I have a firm rule that I will not speak on anything for anybody outside London.'¹⁶ She was just too busy with the Federal Union work and trying to maintain tutorial classes in the exigencies of wartime conditions. In this, her main daytime job – though it also occupied many of her evenings – her activities included promoting a 'tutorial version of history' which emphasized the increasingly deleterious effects of capitalism on the working classes, an approach rapidly spreading to adult education classes throughout the country.¹⁷ She was involved in other initiatives whose aim was the use of education as a political tool for spreading liberal-democratic values. The Association for Education in Citizenship was formed in 1934, with the industrialist and politician, Ernest Simon, and social reformer Eva Hubback as its leading lights, and Barbara Wootton as a member of its Council. Its rationale was the promotion of direct citizenship education in schools to counter the threat of totalitarianism.¹⁸ Nonetheless, Barbara did accede to Curry's invitation, and the audience at Dartington Hall was treated to a version of the tract about socialism and federation she was preparing for the Federal Union.

People in power were uncomfortable about these goings-on. A question was asked in the House of Commons about whether Barbara Wootton as a member of the Council of Federal Union was actually being paid by His Majesty's Government for her work as economic adviser to the Chatham House Reconstruction Committee; she was not.¹⁹ Curry's Penguin Special was regarded in certain circles as so scurrilous that another parliamentary question was raised about its bad effect on public morale, in view of which it should quite possibly be suppressed.²⁰ His book was addressed 'not to politicians or learned professors of political science' but to 'John Citizen (or Fritz, or Alphonse – it doesn't really matter)'. Curry's was an impassioned attack on the evils of national sentiment as a method for protecting individual freedom. This freedom, he argued, must be 'a very queer thing. It compels us to do without things we want in order to spend vast sums on armaments that we don't want. It causes us to throttle each other's trade and to impede each other's travel. From time to time it causes us all to be conscripted and thus lose our freedom altogether. Finally it gives rise to periodic outbreaks of mass mutual homicide during which millions

lose not merely their freedom but their lives.²¹ The practical proposals for reducing nationalism through federation included at the end of Curry's book were taken from another bestseller, American journalist Charles Streit's *Union Now*. Streit used the model of the United States of America to propose a similar arrangement for fourteen countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. These countries, along with USA, were, he argued, the 'founder democracies' and culturally interconnected; they governed nearly half mankind; conducted two-thirds of world trade; and owned nearly all the world's gold and banked wealth. Such a federation, though limited, would do as a beginning of a 'Great Republic' which would eventually spread round the earth, so that everyone would be 'a citizen of it, a citizen of a disarmed world enjoying free world trade, a world money and a world communications system'.²²

The language was visionary and emotional. But the notion of a Federal Union, however constituted, attracted the serious attention of many in this period. Most famously Clement Attlee, the British Labour politician and post-war Prime Minister, declared: 'Europe must federate or perish'.²³ A new and more dynamic structure was needed to replace the League of Nations, which had been set up after the First World War, and which had miserably failed to guarantee peace. It had done so, many argued, because it was based on that very sentiment of nationalism which led to war. The economist in Barbara saw what perhaps other people did not: 'In many fields – in economic fields especially – you will find policies in State hands which appear to be economic in intention, but which are really much more designed to promote politico-nationalist ends. Tariffs, currency manipulations, prohibitions of migration, often have more a political than an economic basis ... They are a form of economic planning conceived only in the interests of a particular state and which emphasize before the mind of every citizen the separateness of one state from another.'²⁴ The pursuance of nationalism would not only lead to more killing and dying, she argued, but would threaten people's ordinary standard of living. The columns of her piece 'Do the British Need Their Empire?' published in the journal *Common Sense* in December 1941, were arranged round a cartoon of her face – clear-eyed, square-jawed, determined. She was determined to point out what she anticipated would be some of the most important lessons of the War for Britain: that we would lose our foreign investments; that, if Britain and other countries practised extreme economic nationalism after the War – erecting 'a *cordon sanitaire* against everybody else's goods, as though they were infected with the plague' – then the British people would be thrown back on their own inadequate resources. It was time to learn the moral of the contrast between the economics of war and the

economics of peace: that, in wartime, the planners ensure a more or less equitable (and sometimes free) distribution of the necessities of life, whereas, in peacetime, we have yet to see that this is what we ought to do. 'When all is said,' she enquired with her customary logic, 'what *is* the objection to distributing milk or sugar or bread or butter or oranges on the same principle that we already distribute gas masks and domestic air-raid shelters?'²⁵ One of the major attractions of federalism for her was the possibility of central economic planning 'up to the Russian level'.²⁶

Barbara aired her views about the relationship between socialism and federation in a well-publicized debate held jointly by the Socialist Party and the Federal Union at the Conway Hall in London in May 1940, just before Britain settled down to total war. Ronald Mackay (solicitor, Labour MP, campaigner on internationalist issues and, later, Vice-President of the European Parliamentary Union) chaired the debate, and her adversary described himself as 'Mr E. Hardy'. This was Edgar Hardcastle, a Marxist economist and a founder member of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Barbara began by defining what she meant by Socialism: a Socialist is a person who thinks that the world's economic resources should be used and so organized to provide a good living for everyone in the world; someone who puts equality high in the scale of social values, 'who not only thinks that ordinary people ought to have enough, but also thinks that other people, also ordinary, ought not to have too much'; a Socialist believes that we are very unlikely to get equality and an equitable distribution of the world's resources without collective ownership and collective organization; and a Socialist is someone who abhors the class system as getting in the way of these ends. The definition does not end there, however, as a true Socialist cannot want these things for the people of one nation alone. True socialism is international: 'All Socialists are ashamed of themselves when they are not internationalists, and all Socialists...will blush to the roots of their hair if they lay themselves open to the charge of being called National Socialists'.²⁷ However – and Barbara emphasized this point – federalism is *not* socialism. To a socialist, Federal Union is like the engine on a train: a device for getting somewhere – to a socialist society; but the engine is not itself the place we want to go.

Barbara's stance on socialism and federation entered the pages of the *Fabian Quarterly* in the summer of 1940 in another confrontation, this time with Denis Pritt, the lawyer who had been expelled from the Labour Party for his pro-communist views.²⁸ Her own socialism had strong roots in the Fabian tradition of gradualism. Many Fabians were committed to the principle of European unity.²⁹ The idea of a united Europe was an organizing platform for many left-wing intellectuals during this period, who saw it, not only as a method for preventing war, but as a strategy that would combat a trio of evils: fascism, communism

and British imperialism.³⁰ Barbara's position on the relationship between federal and socialist ideals was elaborated in the tract which she had tried out on the Dartington Hall audience, *Socialism and Federation*, published by the Federal Union in 1941. Her definition of federalism entailed:

the establishment over more than one previously independent state of a supra-national government with strictly limited functions. Those functions may be ranged in a sort of priority as follows: first is the rock-bottom minimum, without which a federation is not a federation, namely federal control of armed forces and of foreign policy. Next come powers which a large body of federalist opinion wishes to see federalized, but the lack of which would not actually destroy the distinctively federal character of a supra-national state. These are control of tariffs and other trade restrictions, control of migration and of currency, and administration of any dependent territories ... Finally, comes a third group of powers, such as the right to initiate public works and operate public utilities, and to enforce standards in working conditions and social services.³¹

Whether or not these latter powers ought to be included, she admitted, depended on the attitudes of different types of federalists themselves. Although anything was possible, a Western European federation looked most likely. Reading these words, one has a real sense of the person sitting there, head in hands, desperate to communicate and convince: 'twice in half a century socialists have seen the social progress of years shattered in a single night. Twice in half a century they have seen money desperately needed for the homes and health of the people diverted to the hideous business of war. So long as we have to carry burdens of this magnitude, so long shall we have, not socialist prosperity and equality, but poverty, malnutrition and colossal waste both of human and material resources.'³² These are the reasons why socialism and federation are complementary parts of the same whole.

Barbara was a leading speaker at the first Federal Union rallies in London. One admirer remembered her standing very demurely at the first Annual Conference of the Federal Union in February 1940 in the Queen's Hall, London (one of the last events before it was bombed), and replying with a simple 'Yes' to the question 'Do you really believe all this rubbish?'³³ She signed a letter to *The Manchester Guardian* in November 1939 with nineteen other notables (the psychologist Cyril Burt, Bill Curry, Lynda Grier – the Cambridge economist who had helped her with her Girton studies – economic historian Eileen Power, H.G. Wells and Ralph Vaughan Williams among them). The letter was headed 'Manifesto by Leading Educationalists' and it urged all educationalists to demand from the Government an unequivocal statement of commitment to the goals of Federal Union.³⁴

One (then) leading educationalist was William Beveridge. Before he achieved his most famous legacy of the Beveridge Report which gave Britain the blueprint for its welfare state, Beveridge was, with Barbara Wootton, an acknowledged ideologue of the Federal Union. Patrick Ransome, one of the original Federal Union trio, had known Beveridge when he was a student at University College, Oxford, where Beveridge was then Master, and he remembered Beveridge saying to him 'If there's a war, come and see me'. Beveridge laid out his own ideas in his pamphlet *Peace by Federation* for a collaboration between the British Dominions and Europe (excluding Russia, but possibly including the USA).³⁵ We do not know when Barbara Wootton and William Beveridge first met, but they knew each other by 1926, when he had identified topics of common interest and she was unable to find the time from her job at Morley College to meet him. By 1935 she knew him well enough to ask for his help in getting her name suggested (unsuccessfully) as 'the woman member' of the new Unemployment Assistance Board.³⁶ In 1937 she enlisted his help in securing funding for a student working on Soviet economics and planning who had been forced to leave Russia;³⁷ wearing a different hat, she later wrote to beg him to renew his annual subscription to the WEA.³⁸

Beveridge's plans about how Federal Union might develop as an organization led to an Executive Committee, chaired by Barbara, to supervise the Union's day-to-day affairs. It was under her leadership that the Union focused down on the practical proposal that the most manageable arrangement for post-war federation would be Britain, France and Germany, plus some of the smaller European democracies.³⁹ But much of her intellectual work for the Union was done in her key role for the Union's research wing, another of the ever-inventive Beveridge's initiatives. The Federal Union Research Institute, set up in March 1940, yielded the suitable acronym of FURI. FURI was chaired by Beveridge, with Ransome as the Secretary, and Barbara as a member of its Economic Research Committee.⁴⁰ The first event organized by the Committee was a conference on economic aspects of federation held at University College, Oxford, in the autumn of 1939. Barbara participated, and she wrote the report. The conference agreed on the aim of complete freedom of trade and migration, together with unification of the currency, federal control of legal tender and inter-state payments, and a federally controlled bank. This should prevent 'divisions of economic interest from coinciding with national boundaries, and so help to destroy the economic basis of nationalism'. Participants understood that the degree of unification to be proposed would depend on public sentiment.⁴¹

While it succeeded in swaying the opinions of 'John Citizen' with its tide of meetings and propaganda, as an organization Federal Union developed financial difficulties because of its rapid expansion. Barbara, as Chair, was 'flabbergasted' when

debts of several thousand pounds were uncovered.⁴² Since the Union had never been incorporated as a limited company, these debts were the responsibility of individual members. Incorporation was hurriedly arranged and Barbara became one of seven directors. Members sold icecreams on Hampstead Heath one August bank holiday to raise money. Partial recovery was achieved, but disputes broke out, and by the end of the War, Rawnsley, who had gone into the Royal Air Force, had been killed in a flying accident, and both Kimber and Ransome had resigned. After the War, the rumbling divisions between proponents of world government, European unity and Atlantic union, respectively, came to the surface, although the organization continues today as the Federal Trust, a non-partisan think-tank devoted to education and information. Barbara herself left the Federal Union in September 1944 when the short-term goal of European federation, rather than the more 'utopian' aim of world federation, was voted in. She was always in favour of utopianism, discerningly noting that the term 'utopian' tended to be applied to all studies that extended beyond the limited assumptions of contemporary power politics.⁴³

In 1946, Harold Laski, Chairman of the Labour Party, proclaimed, 'We cannot rest content until we have a genuine World Government expressing, through the direct choice of peoples, in a parliament responsible to them, the will of the common folk, instead of being dependent, like the United Nations, upon the sovereign wills of nation states which express, in all vital matters, the purposes of their ruling classes and subordinate to those purposes the interests of the common peoples'.⁴⁴ The idea of world government was espoused by many politicians in the years immediately after the War.⁴⁵ This was one sign that the Federal Union's influence on world politics had been very much greater than its power. In their book about its history, John Mayne and Richard Pinder observe that it was the first 'avowedly popular federalist movement in Europe'; its intellectual contribution was recognized and used by continental federalists whose influence helped shape the European Community; on the Atlantic front, it provided the basic ideas which led to the formation of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; it helped to shape and articulate pressure for the reform of the United Nations and for an international peacekeeping force; and today it continues to promote the much-needed message that 'unfettered national sovereignty is outdated and a barrier to peace'.⁴⁶ On the back of the enthusiasm for the idea of international federation generated by the Federal Union, Jean Monnet, who would later be celebrated as the father of the European Community, put the idea of Anglo-French union to the British War Cabinet, which approved it, making its historic offer of union to France. Monnet was one of those eclectic individuals whose activities spanned many different sectors, from being Deputy Secretary General

of the League of Nations, to running the family cognac business, becoming an international financier, and advising the Chinese on the reorganization of their railway system. However, he was not a federalist in the sense that word held for the thousands of Federal Union activists in Britain. It was the thinking of these federalists, especially those who worked for FURI, which gave force and conviction to the design of post-war European integration. The successful campaign for membership of the European Economic Community in the early 1970s was led by federalists, and they played an important role in the 1975 referendum.⁴⁷

The European Union had a godfather as well as a father.⁴⁸ The Italian political theorist, Altiero Spinelli, spent sixteen years as a political prisoner under Mussolini, the last four of these on the island of Ventotene off the coast of Italy between Rome and Naples. A professional revolutionary, he was imprisoned for his anti-fascist activities in the Italian Communist Party, but he left the Party six years before his release in 1943, and became, instead, a proponent of federalism, convinced that particular ideologies, such as communism and liberalism, all in their own ways feed the aggressive narcissism of nation-states.⁴⁹ Ventotene was a 'revolutionary hothouse',⁵⁰ home to around a thousand political prisoners. Its link to the mainland was a twice-weekly supply boat on which political material could be illicitly shipped in and out. Some of this reached Spinelli via an economics professor, Luigi Einaudi, whose own views about national sovereignty had been heavily influenced by three British writers – William Beveridge, Walter Layton, editor of *The Economist* (Einaudi was a financial correspondent for the journal), and Barbara Wootton. Einaudi sent Spinelli some of their publications, which Spinelli assessed as 'first class'. Informed by this reading, the 'Ventotene Manifesto', *Towards a Free and United Europe*, was drafted in 1941 and delivered by boat to the mainland written on cigarette papers and concealed in the false bottom of a tin box. This manifesto positioned European federation as the first and necessary stage to world federation; the aim was to tie European countries so intimately together that they would no longer be able to go to war with one another. The Ventotene Manifesto was circulated through the Italian Resistance, becoming the basic document of the European Federalist Movement.⁵¹ After his release from Ventotene, Spinelli travelled to Milan where he established the Movimento Federalista Europeo (MFE). MFE published clandestinely eight issues of a newsletter *L'Unità Europea*; four of these carried reprints of articles by Beveridge, Layton and Wootton. When the war finished, the MFE persuaded all the Italian political parties, except the Communists, to include federalism in their programmes. Membership of the MFE spread to France. Spinelli eventually became a member of the European Parliament in 1976. He and Jean Monnet were both forceful characters, but held rather different views. After Monnet's

death in 1979, it was Spinelli's position which directly influenced the Maastricht Treaty;⁵² the main building of the European Parliament in Brussels is named after him.

Thus, by a roundabout route entailing a conjunction of historical accidents, political subterfuge, risk-taking, revolutionary passion, and boxes with false bottoms, the focused clarity of Barbara Wootton's thought helped to shape the political contours of modern Europe. How much of this history did Barbara herself know? Probably not very much. Her influence on the Italian federalist movement has mainly been explored by the Italian historian of ideas, Alberto Castelli, whose publications on this did not begin to appear until 2001. Barbara would, of course, have known about the Italian translation of her *Socialism and Federation*, which appeared in 1945,⁵³ and a publishing house run by Einaudi's son translated her *Freedom Under Planning* into Italian in 1947.⁵⁴ In the Italian literature, much more recognition is given than in British or American commentaries to the singularity of her contribution, especially in the area of economic thinking. Castelli's 'I Socialisti Britannici e l'idea di "Popolo Europeo"' ('British Socialists and the idea of a "People's Europe"') identifies Beveridge, Ronald Mackay and Barbara Wootton as the only three thinkers who get close to the central notion of European unity – the indissolubility of peace and democratically elected government.⁵⁵ While the Federal Union literature produced in Britain has been almost completely forgotten here, it continues to be highly regarded by continental scholars, especially in Italy, where they consider it to be the foundation of the modern European federalist movement.⁵⁶ The range of political positions adopted by federalists, and the oscillation between idealism and realism in their politics, succeeded in paralyzing many British scholars.⁵⁷

Both socialism and peace can be construed as matters of basic human rights. Barbara Wootton fought metaphorically for these on various fronts. The year her *Socialism and Federation* was published also saw a slim volume by Barbara called *End Social Inequality: A Programme for Ordinary People*. This was one of seventeen pamphlets edited by her friend, the journalist Francis Williams, later Lord Francis-Williams. The series, under the title *The Democratic Order*, was devoted to an elaboration of different aspects of what was by now widely called post-war 'reconstruction'. The focus of *End Social Inequality* is on the 'hard, real facts' of class, which must be faced to bring such a society into being.⁵⁸ Class differences, Barbara argued, are made up of two related structures: 'opportunity-class' and 'social-' or 'snob-class'. The most fundamental aspect of opportunity-class is the opportunity to go on living, but, as Richard Titmuss had shown in *Poverty and Population* (his book, published in 1938, which documented the relationship between

environmental factors and preventable death), premature mortality strikes most at those who are already disadvantaged. 'Snob-class' inflicts the further insult of differentiated social prestige: manual work has low social status; people of different social statuses are not expected to mix together socially. But, in Britain, the true problem is not the consciousness of class but *unconsciousness* about it. *End Social Inequality* contains some of Barbara's most acute and memorable observations: for example, 'public life is administered by people who, quite literarily, know next to nothing, at first hand, about the life of the public. And these people are not even conscious of their own ignorance.'⁵⁹

These were years which spawned one radical organization after another. The Federation of Progressive Societies and Individuals (FPSI) – which some joked stood for the Federation for the Promotion of Sexual Intercourse⁶⁰ – had its origins in a breakaway group from the Rational Press Association. The dissidents were led by the philosopher and renowned womanizer Cyril Joad, who had taught some of Barbara's London tutorial classes. Joad's letter to *The Manchester Guardian* announcing the formation of the FPSI explained its rationale: the existence throughout England of many small groups of 'advanced' persons who were politically impotent because of their isolation. The FPSI had a catholic list of aims: central economic planning; the abolition of national armaments; access to birth control; the abolition of censorship; the preservation of rural England; and the rescue of Sundays 'from the dead hand of the nineteenth century'.⁶¹ It was a group of what the outspoken author, socialist and pacifist H.G. Wells called 'open conspirators to change the world'.⁶² Barbara helped to found the FPSI, becoming one of its Vice-Presidents and, later, its President. The FPSI was a pressure group to which she devoted some time, writing in its mouthpiece, *Plan*, speaking on an FPSI platform at Conway Hall in London, and signing letters to newspapers about issues such as the unwarranted imprisonment of two members of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement.⁶³ A national organization of this kind was partly an attempt to re-affirm a humanist socialism as the basis of Labour politics at a time when the British Labour Party was in disarray following its major defeat in the 1931 General Election.⁶⁴

H.G. Wells reappeared on the stage with Barbara Wootton when he launched a new version of an old campaign for a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man.⁶⁵ In September 1939, *The Times* hosted a series of letters reframing the aims of the War in terms of rights. Wells set out ten principles intrinsic to the 'rights of man' which he had assembled 'in conjunction with a few friends', and which he hoped would set the discussion of the aims of the War on a new and more constructive footing. The 'few friends' were a small group of socialists, writers, teachers and lawyers, including

the peace campaigner and writer, Norman Angell, J.B. Priestley, A.A. Milne (who was said to motor up from the proximity of Pooh Corner to make his contribution⁶⁶), Viscount Sankey (the first Labour Lord Chancellor), G.B. Shaw and Barbara Wootton. Barbara had first got to know Wells as a result of the tribute she had paid to 'the masterly sanity' of his writings in the Preface to her *Lament for Economics* (her attack on neoclassical economics, discussed in the next chapter). Wells had responded by inviting her to his home in Regent's Park for 'many a Sunday evening flowing with vodka and conversation'.⁶⁷ What Wells and his friends put together was the first modern Declaration of Human Rights. Men – the androcentrism of the old language did not shift in this new version – had rights to nourishment, housing, covering, medical care, employment and education sufficient to promote health, ensure effective citizenship and realize individual potential; they and their property were entitled to legal protection and to protection from 'secret dossiers'; free movement around the world should be guaranteed, as well as the right to buy anything that is for sale; they should not be imprisoned for more than three weeks without being charged, and not for more than three months without a public trial; all forms of bodily assault should be outlawed, along with non-consensual sterilization and imprisonment in infectious, verminous or otherwise insanitary conditions; they should not be forcibly fed, and they had the right to starve themselves if they wanted; no drugs should be given without knowledge or consent; and these rights should be established in a formal legal code; since they incorporated all previous declarations of human rights, they should stand as 'the fundamental law for mankind throughout the whole world'.⁶⁸

Wells called for a broad public debate on the issue. Details of the Declaration were sent to over 300 newspapers in 48 different countries.⁶⁹ In Britain, *The Daily Herald*, the left-wing newspaper, made a page a day available for a month for a discussion of the draft declaration. 'HISTORIC CHALLENGE TO CIVILISATION' ran the advertisement for the series everyone ought to read on a 'modern Magna Charta' [sic] written by 'many of the foremost thinkers of the day'. The names included Clement Attlee, Sir Arthur Greenwood (Barbara's old boss at Transport House), J.B. Priestley, G.B. Shaw, Cyril Joad, the Liberal MP Sir Richard Acland (inventor of the 'Common Wealth' movement, which supported Federal Union), various religious notables, the chairman of the TUC, socialist and peace activist Ritchie Calder (who was secretary of the Declaration's Drafting Committee), and scientists J.B.S. Haldane and Lancelot Hogben.⁷⁰ The newspaper's headlines were stirring: 'You are the Heir to the Earth's Wealth', 'End the Death Penalty', 'Leave Creeds Out'. Towards the end of the month, women were allowed to put their particular case. This included a representation from an Indian Women's Organization: 'Urge include women by changing title ... into Declaration of Human Rights'.⁷¹ The title was

not changed. *The Rights of Man* was issued as a Penguin Special, and translated into thirty languages. The British Foreign Office translated it into German and dropped it on the Nazis as they advanced through France. The Nazis probably did not read it, but Wells sent it to his friend President Roosevelt, to Gandhi and Nehru (all of whom responded to him with reactions), and to Jan Christian Smuts, the South African Prime Minister, who later drafted the preamble to the United Nations Charter.⁷² Roosevelt drew on the efforts of Wells and his friends in his famous 'For Freedom' speech in January 1942, which set the aims of the War in the framework of human rights, and the four essential freedoms of speech and religion, and from hunger and fear.⁷³ But it was Eleanor Roosevelt who, after her husband's death, finally accomplished the transition from 'men's' to 'human' rights in her work with the United Nations. This led to the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 1948, which in turn laid down the framework of international human rights as it exists today. The European Convention of Human Rights was made enforceable in British courts by the Human Rights Act of 2000.

The work of Wells and his friends was among the first in English to substitute the language of enforceable social rights for the pre-modern lexicon of 'natural' rights. Although their role has been largely forgotten, these people were 'the true progenitors of the modern human rights movement'.⁷⁴ The contribution Barbara Wootton made to the political values of modern democracies is evident when one traces these particular histories of the federal and human rights movements. She combined, and saw no essential disjunction between, searching intellectual analyses and the kind of practical networking, dissemination and political negotiation that turned these analyses into tools for action. This approach to the shaping of public policy, with the ultimate goal of creating a more equal, just, and peaceable society, was one she followed throughout her life.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Barbara was forty-two and George Wright was thirty-six. The story she tells in her autobiography is that he registered as a conscientious objector and was deployed first in agricultural work, and then in civil defence as an ambulance driver, while her own work as a magistrate exempted her from being called up. George and she had a 'daily woman', a Mrs Brown, the same age as Barbara; Mrs Brown was also let off on the grounds that her services were necessary to the Wootton-Wright household.⁷⁵ However, a somewhat more complicated story lies behind Barbara's telling of it. George was not registered for National Service until the spring of 1941, and his conscientious objection would probably have been heard by a local tribunal in the summer. But neither Barbara nor Mrs Brown, as ageing women, came within the purview of the National Service (Armed Forces) Act of 1939; an extension to that Act in 1941 applied only

to women aged between twenty and thirty. What did apply to Mrs Wright and Mrs Brown was the Registration for Employment Order of 1941, according to which the Ministry of Labour and National Service had the power to require whole classes of people to register at their local employment exchanges, not with a view to call-up into the armed forces, but as part of an attempt to monitor the types of labour power available for civilian employment directed to the war effort. Women of Barbara's cohort were included in this scheme sometime in 1943. She would have been interviewed by a man from the Ministry, a National Service Officer, who probably decided on the spot that her work as a magistrate was of sufficient use, and so the monitoring authorities would no longer need to bother with the labour of Barbara Wootton, which could therefore go on being deployed as she chose in her own effort to avoid not only personal involvement in the War, but the involvement of all human beings in all wars.⁷⁶

George and Barbara did help as volunteers with the ambitious and premature scheme – a good example of centralized planning – for evacuating children out of London. Their group of children came from the East End of London and was transported to Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. The children were 'shrewd, entertaining, bored and intermittently troublesome'; their hosts 'bewildered, well-meaning and outraged',⁷⁷ but it all worked reasonably well. In this early phase of the evacuation, more than a million children and adults were moved in four days, a figure which included three-quarters of a million children who went without their parents.⁷⁸ Very quickly complaints were fed back to the Ministry of Health and local authorities: rough language, bad behaviour, bedwetting, headlice, dirty bodies and clothes. Britain's two nations were encountering each other at close quarters for the first time.⁷⁹ At County Hall in London, Geraldine Aves, an almost exact contemporary of Barbara's at Cambridge, was organizer of the evacuation schemes, and therefore on the receiving end of many of these laments. The evacuation of children, and the needs of those made homeless because of the War, created a new public awareness of the vast range of deprivation and social need existing in Britain's unequal society. Public services were mainly restricted to those provided under the Poor Law. Britain needed a welfare state.

When Barbara and George returned from their month-long efforts to settle troublesome children in rural England, they were surprised to find their flat in Fulham still intact. During the six years of the War, the ceilings collapsed, but not a single pane of glass was shattered. People in 'essential' occupations had no choice but to go on living in London. The blackout was the one real inconvenience – hence the old lady who said that the good thing about the Blitz, when it came, was that it took your mind off the blackout. It was during this period that bored

soldiers in camps demanded social and political reading matter, and talk of Federal Union escalated, though it seemed to some, including Kingsley Martin, about as far off as Mount Everest from the South Downs.⁸⁰ Steeped in the ideological and economic meaning of warfare and the need for revolution, Barbara Wootton and George Wright found their own escape in the Chiltern Hills in Oxfordshire, where they enjoyed weekend retreats in a pub in a village called Fingest. The communist physicist J.D. Bernal lived opposite the pub with one of his 'wives', an entertaining and artistic woman called Margaret Gardiner, and their 'most undisciplined' small son Martin (later a distinguished and highly disciplined sinologist), so there was much stimulating conversation to be had.⁸¹

She mentions it only in passing in her autobiography, so presumably it was not an important experience in her life, but at the end of 1938 Barbara followed her success as the token woman on the Colwyn Committee with membership of her first Royal Commission, on financial compensation for injured or sick workers. The TUC had long been agitating for reform of the law on payment to workers who were injured in the course of their employment. The machinery for compensation was complex, litigation was often costly and lengthy, the awards paltry, and the people who made the most profit were the insurance companies. Most basic of all, existing legislation did not guarantee compensation, because employers did not have to insure against accidents or provide a fund from which compensation could be paid. The State needed to take this out of the hands of insurance companies and, through a levy on companies, ensure that all workers had the right to compensation in the event of injury or death.⁸² The remit of the Royal Commission on Workmen's Compensation was to inquire into, and report on, the operation and effects of the existing system and the scope of the relevant law, and to examine how this related to others for helping the unemployed or incapacitated. Sir Hector Hetherington, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Glasgow, agreed to chair it. Barbara was one of fifteen other members, one of only two women and thus no longer quite the token woman she had been on the Colwyn Committee in 1927. The work of the Royal Commission on Workmen's Compensation was disrupted by the War; although a report was published in December 1944,⁸³ its findings were largely amalgamated with those of its much bigger sibling, the Beveridge Committee on Social Insurance.

If the notion of planning had been used with different political meanings in the early 1930s, by the end of the decade it had become so fashionable that it was in danger of meaning both everything and nothing. 'A flood of literature on social planning pours continually from the presses,' observed Aldous Huxley in 1937. 'Every "advanced" thinker has his favourite scheme, and even quite ordinary people have caught the infection. Planning is now in fashion. Some kind of deliberate

planning is necessary. But which kind and how much?⁸⁴ The rhetoric and policy of planning were a response to the economic and political crises of the years between the two world wars, but it was the experience of the Second World War that led to the widespread acceptance of the need for central direction of the economy to avoid the kinds of instability that helped to produce war.⁸⁵ The product was a new national consensus about the need for a programme of economic reconstruction.⁸⁶ The publication in 1936 of Keynes' *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* provided some elements of the rationale needed to support the general approach of planning. Firstly, Keynes demonstrated that the way out of economic crises was not to reduce public spending and investment but to increase it. Secondly, it followed that this goal would not be accomplished by the chaos of markets left to themselves, but required instead some degree of centralized planning. Like Beveridge, Keynes was not a socialist radical, but a liberal; his analysis of the workings of capitalism led to a re-conceptualization of the Government's role as requiring intervention in the interests of improving efficiency, and in order to save both individualism and the principles of a market-based economic system.⁸⁷

In 1934, the BBC had run a series of weekly broadcasts under the heading 'Poverty in Plenty' (later printed as a book, *The Burden of Plenty*?⁸⁸). Contributors to the series included Keynes and Wootton. Her piece was called 'The Necessity of Planning',⁸⁹ and its premise was a paradox: economic systems which depend on markets regulated by price are both so simple (because nobody plans them) and so complicated (because every sale is the product of so many separate contracts and decisions) that it is surprising they work at all. These arguments drew on an article she had published a little earlier in the WEA journal *The Highway* which proffered the entertaining metaphor of capitalism as a recurring digestive disorder. We are hungry and greedy for more wealth; we get it; and then are sick. Growth is followed by recession; prices fall too low for producers and rise too high for consumers. 'Not merely is there poverty in plenty ... there is poverty *because* of plenty.'⁹⁰

Among the most central goals of planning was the maintenance of high levels of employment. The security and income provided by jobs help to protect the individual from poverty and need, and the economy from the escalating dangers of under-consumption. William Beveridge, emerging from the blaze of notoriety that greeted his Social Insurance Report of 1942, found himself sidelined in the post-war reconstruction programme as a man more given to brilliant ideas than practical plans. In 1943 he decided to pursue the all-important subject of full employment policy with a privately financed inquiry, and he enjoined a number of 'technical' experts, including Barbara Wootton, E.F. Schumacher (later famous for his book on economics and environmentalism *Small is Beautiful*), Joan Robinson,

Elsbeth Mair (his step-daughter), and Frank Pakenham (who had been his research assistant, later Lord Longford) to help him work out the details.⁹¹ The results of this Beveridge inquiry were published as *Full Employment in a Free Society*. The report proposed a level of central budgeting and direction of labour resources which went far beyond that then contemplated by government; it built directly on the new economic models, linking Keynesian economics with a general strategy for post-war social policy.⁹² Although Beveridge wrote the report, it depended heavily on the ideas of the economists in the group, including Barbara Wootton's persuasive analysis which helped to change his mind about Keynes.⁹³

Barbara's own views about full employment were laid out in a Fabian pamphlet published in 1943. She began with the paradox that war generates full employment, so the important question is whether full employment is possible 'otherwise than as a consequence of mutual slaughter'. Let us consider then, she proposes, what it is that happens in wartime that effectively ensures full employment. First of all, the Government obliges most of us to work in the war effort; secondly, no fuss is made about the cost of this; thirdly, much of the output is given away free: 'The soldier ... does not actually own his own rifle; but, equally, he does not buy it. The question whether he can afford it has nothing to do with whether he gets it'; fourthly, the State controls labour and capital markets; fifthly, there is a change in attitudes: 'No more black looks at the married woman, the old age pensioner, or the refugee ... The woman no longer steals the man's job; she releases him for the war effort.' In peacetime, a small wave of unemployment can quickly become a big one, because people and governments stop spending money. In wartime, this does not happen because there is no dependence on 'the moods, hopes, fears and calculations of profit-seeking investors'. Thus, the common analogy between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the prudent housewife is false: the former, unlike the latter, needs to spend what he does not have. 'The straight road to full employment is a comprehensive and considered plan of public outlay.'⁹⁴ This is straightforward Keynesianism. But some of Barbara's other suggestions in *Full Employment* are not: for example, the notion that the Government should be committed to providing everyone with a minimum diet, thus killing the two birds of feeding the nation and creating jobs in the food trades with one stone. The double attack on unemployment and poverty has much to recommend it as a peacetime policy: 'the mind recoils from a doctrine that it is economically sound to give bombs away to people who don't want them, and unsound to give buns to people who do'.⁹⁵

Barbara Wootton's contribution to the debate about planning took place in a broader intellectual context: that of the efforts of a group of socialist economists centred on Evan Durbin, an LSE economist and later a Labour MP, and the politician

and economist, Hugh Gaitskell, to fashion a new type of socialist economics for a post-war Labour Government. The work of this group has been charted in detail by Elizabeth Durbin, Evan Durbin's daughter, herself an economist, in her book *New Jerusalem: The Labour Party and the Economics of Democratic Socialism*.⁹⁶ In 1934–5, Durbin and Gaitskell convened a small group of economists and politicians to discuss the Labour Party's future programme, and to develop resolutions which they put to the Party (most of which were unanimously adopted). Barbara was a member of this group. She was also a contributor to the work of the New Fabian Research Bureau (NFRB) which had been set up in 1931 by G.D.H. Cole out of frustration with the failure of the Fabian Society to come up with any new ideas to confront the contemporary social and economic crisis. Barbara chaired the NFRB's Taxation Committee which convinced the Labour Party of the merits of a Keynesian managed economy. The Committee's publication, *Taxation Under Capitalism: Effects on Social Services*, of which Barbara is the first author, is a clear exposition of the purposes and history of taxation, and of the differential class effects of different types of taxes; its central question – whether large-scale investment in the social services can be adequately financed through existing systems of taxation – leads inexorably to the answer that it cannot, as the necessary taxes would impose too large a burden on the private functions of saving and enterprise, which consequently need to become public functions. Once the country's economic activities are in public hands, taxation becomes simply part of the apparatus for distributing the nation's wealth. Socialized industries pay their surplus to the State, which uses it for the public good.⁹⁷ There is, nonetheless, the possibility of a 'real' conflict between economic planning and personal freedom. The balance between the two is one to be negotiated, to be determined on rational and empirical grounds. Barbara is credited with being the first to raise the full implications for the Labour Party of this issue.⁹⁸ She also foresaw the adaptation of capitalism to accommodate a considerable degree of state planning that happened in many Western democracies after the Second World War.⁹⁹

One platform of disagreement during these years involved Barbara personally: she engaged in an infamous debate with the Austrian neoclassical economist, Frederick Hayek, about the relationship between centralized economic planning, and freedom and individual rights. Hayek had been a member of the FURI group and Barbara had travelled with him, Beveridge, Ransome and Robbins to Paris in April 1940, to confer with French counterparts on a plan to federate France, Britain and a democratic post-war Germany. The journey was bumpy, leaving Barbara with 'an endearing mental picture of Beveridge with a cloth cap drawn well over his forehead plunged into the depths of airsick gloom'.¹⁰⁰ Like many others, including Barbara, Hayek's determination to work for peace had been formed directly by his experiences in the

First World War. But unlike Barbara's husband and brother, Hayek had survived his active participation in the War, and had gone on to study law, political science, psychology and economics at the University of Vienna, where he gained a reputation as a theoretical economist. In 1931, he was recruited by Lionel Robbins for a Chair at the LSE. He is much less well known for his work in the economics department there than as the author of a highly contentious book called *The Road to Serfdom*, which was published in 1944, and which provided Barbara Wootton with a case against planning that could not be allowed to pass unchallenged.¹⁰¹

The Road to Serfdom began life as a memorandum to Beveridge, then Director of the LSE, disputing the popular claim that fascism represented the dying scream of a failing capitalist system.¹⁰² Hayek's view was that centralized planning, or state intervention, was a form of totalitarianism that would unavoidably deprive people of their freedom. The best guarantee of freedom was competition, and, thus, the only kind of planning that could be countenanced was planning to make competition as efficient as possible. Contemporary difficulties with the capitalist system were merely due to inefficiencies in the system, which could be remedied; socialists (or collectivists, Hayek considered the two one and the same) were misguided in believing that directed economies were compatible with the preservation of individual liberty. There were three essential points in Hayek's case: firstly, that the most efficient form of regulation in complex industrial systems was the price mechanism; secondly, that no form of centralized planning could match the success of the market in achieving this; and, thirdly, that the inevitable economic failure of centralized planning would have the further disastrous consequence of disposing both of free markets and of individual freedom. Although Hayek and Wootton shared an interest in a federalist Europe as a means of preventing war, the attraction for Hayek was in the abolition of trade barriers and tariffs, whereas Barbara saw it as a mechanism for achieving socialist political goals.

Hayek was a life-long opponent of socialism. His book was enormously influential. It was read by, and responded to, by many. For instance, Winston Churchill's enthusiasm for it was reflected in his ill-fated 1945 election campaign, and he won no respect from Labour leaders for rehashing Hayek's specious arguments.¹⁰³ In the 1980s and 1990s, the book enjoyed a new spate of attention as among the favoured writings of conservative leaders in the UK and the USA. Thatcher took to heart Hayek's arguments about the evils of state planning,¹⁰⁴ and some of Ronald Reagan's economic advisers were friends of Hayek's, and shared the same anti-planning views.¹⁰⁵ Among academic reviewers at the time, *The Road to Serfdom* got a predominantly hostile reception. Many saw the book as damaging polemic: 'the most sinister offence against democracy to emerge ... for many decades'.¹⁰⁶ Hayek sent the proofs of his

book to Barbara Wootton; her response, *Freedom Under Planning*, was published in 1945. While many of the responses to Hayek's book had pointed out the failures of logic and convincing reference to real world examples which characterized his case, it was Barbara who provided the most reasoned and carefully argued objections. *Freedom Under Planning* was received as 'a highly significant contribution to one of the most important debates of our time';¹⁰⁷ 'the most cautious and candid defence of planning that has so far appeared';¹⁰⁸ 'an essay ... written with diverting whimsy and often with philosophical penetration';¹⁰⁹ and a 'keenly reasoned, closely organized, and concisely stated' compendium of effective arguments against Hayek's extreme conclusions.¹¹⁰ After reading it, the 'somewhat soporific effect on capitalistically inclined readers' of Hayek's tome would undoubtedly be shaken off.¹¹¹ Both *The Observer* and *The Manchester Guardian* used medical analogies to describe Barbara Wootton's treatment of the problem; she was 'a first-class surgeon' in her excision of unwarranted matter,¹¹² and 'a doctor for fevered subjects', in providing 'a cooling draught of pure facts' for the raised temperatures of the planning debate.¹¹³

The problem with Hayek's book, as some of its reviewers noted, was that his 'cynical and confused appeals' were not directed to reason at all, but to 'fear and distrust'.¹¹⁴ *The Road to Serfdom* was an anti-rational text; Barbara, a specialist in rational thinking, was therefore bound to find it wanting. Central to *her* case was that one may 'philosophize endlessly about freedom', but in ordinary daily life it is *freedoms* that people want – civil, cultural, political and economic freedoms; it is therefore necessary to consider the impact of planning, conceived as 'the conscious and deliberate choice of economic priorities by some public authority',¹¹⁵ on these different varieties of freedom, and to do so by drawing on the evidence of how different societies have deployed centralized planning and how their citizens have been affected by this. Only then can we reach sensible conclusions about whether planning really interferes with liberty – the central plank in the anti-planners' case. Barbara's own conclusion, drawn after eight chapters considering the relationship between planning and different varieties of freedom, was that,

there is nothing in the conscious planning of economic priorities which is inherently incompatible with the freedoms which mean most to the contemporary Englishman or American. Civil liberties are quite unaffected. We can, if we wish, deliberately plan so as to give the fullest possible scope for the pursuit by individuals and social groups of cultural ends which are in no way state determined ... Planning need not even be the death-warrant of all private enterprise; and it is certainly not the passport of political dictatorship ... A happy and fruitful marriage between freedom and planning can, in short be arranged.¹¹⁶

In the Preface to the book, Barbara thanked her husband George for 'daily experience in the marriage of freedom and planning', perhaps subtly acknowledging that the lived experience of such unions could be a little more tricky than the theory suggested.¹¹⁷

Barbara's confrontation with Hayek's case against planning was notable for the amicable terms in which it was conducted. 'Intellectual controversy on serious practical and political issues is not always conducted in an atmosphere of personal goodwill,' she observed. 'It is on that account the greater pleasure to express here my appreciation and reciprocation of the unchanging friendliness of Professor Hayek's attitude.'¹¹⁸ Hayek did not see it quite like that. Looking back on their exchanges many years later, he commented on the 'curious experience' he had had with Barbara Wootton. 'She said, "You know, I wanted to point out some of these problems you have pointed out, but now that you have so exaggerated it I must turn against you".'¹¹⁹ In a nicely Woottonesque note, her final thanks in the Preface to *Freedom Under Planning* were to the staff of the Fulham Public Library, 'whose helpfulness, freedom from red tape and relentless struggle against the book famine are a magnificent demonstration of the standards of elasticity and efficiency attainable in the public services'.¹²⁰

The Wootton-Hayek conversation about planning and freedom pushed forward the integration of Keynesian ideas with the progressive political mood that came to dominate Britain at the close of the Second World War. Neither the Keynesian mixed economy nor the Beveridgian welfare state – the 'managed economy' and society paradigm – would have been possible without the ideological groundwork of open discussion to which Barbara made a major contribution.¹²¹ What she provided was the application of cool logic and the scientific method she so consistently championed to the highly emotional characterization of the state-as-dictator that inspired *The Road to Serfdom* and other contemporary anti-planning writings. It is impossible to read the intellectual and political history of the 1930s and 1940s without being impressed by the overlapping membership of the different circles participating in the debates and decisions which produced post-war Britain. Perhaps the most bizarre evidence of the interactions between different cultural networks is a letter published in *The Manchester Guardian* addressed to Hitler, then Chancellor of Germany, in 1934.¹²² Its point was to request the release of Ernst Torgler, a well-known German Communist Party member, who had been arrested following a fire in the German Parliament in 1933 which was viewed by the Nazis as a communist plot against them. Torgler was charged with arson and treason. Barbara Wootton's name is there among the signatories appealing to Hitler, along with a catalogue of some of the most famous and argumentative figures of the time: Norman Angell,

Ernest Bevin, Vera Brittain, C. Delisle Burns, E.M. Forster, Winifred Holtby, Julian Huxley, Storm Jameson, C.E.M. Joad, John Middleton Murry, Emmeline and F.W. Pethick-Lawrence, Eleanor Rathbone, Seeborn Rowntree, Bertrand Russell, Siegfried Sasson, H.G. Wells, and 'the Wolves' (Leonard and Virginia) – among them.

The number and range of activities and networks with which Barbara Wootton engaged during this period is legion. It could, of course, be argued that she was just a woman who had a finger in a very large number of pies. It was a habit of the time to sign letters with one's friends; to invent and join campaigns; to name and re-name movements. But we are left with one simple point: she was there, and she made a difference. By the time Barbara published her autobiography more than twenty years later, complaining in its title about the world she never made, it is possible that she was in part observing that the world had forgotten how much she actually *had* made it.

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