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Ian Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler: Lord Londonderry, the Nazis, and the Road to War*. New York: Penguin, 2004. Pp. xix, 488. ISBN 1594200300.

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Ian Kershaw is clearly one of the world's foremost scholars on Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany. He has written numerous works that have become the standard in their respective fields, including keen analyses of the extent of popular support for Hitler and the Nazis in "*The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich*" (1987), the nature of Nazi rule in Germany in *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (1989), and, most recently, of the Nazi leader himself in *Hitler, 1889-1936: Hubris* (1999) and *Hitler, 1936-1945: Nemesis* (2000). In *Making Friends with Hitler*, Kershaw turns his critical eye to Great Britain's foreign policy towards Germany before the Second World War, culminating in the British prime minister Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, as well as the role of Lord Londonderry, a British aristocratic parliamentarian, in that process. The author seeks to answer many questions: how did Lord Londonderry manage to get mixed up with the Nazis? Was he really a Nazi sympathizer or simply misguided? Why did many observers in Britain share his enthusiasm for Nazism? Were Lord Londonderry's strategies for dealing with the Nazis totally outlandish or did they present a viable alternative that could have avoided war? Kershaw uses the role of Lord Londonderry as a lens to examine important historiographical questions concerning the origins of the Second World War (xvi-xxi).

Kershaw begins by tracing the rise of Lord Londonderry's political career. As a descendant of Castlereagh, the British foreign secretary at the 1815 Congress of Vienna, Lord "Charley" Londonderry was a prominent member of the British aristocracy who sought and expected to play a crucial role in British national affairs at home and abroad. After serving as an officer on the western front during the First World War, however, Londonderry was turned down twice for the position of Viceroy of India in the 1920s (8-17). In fact, it was in large part the efforts of Winston Churchill, Londonderry's cousin, which enabled Londonderry to establish "a toe-hold in central government" as Under-Secretary of State for Air (13). Londonderry furthered his political career, at least partially, when he married Lady Frances Anne Vane-Tempest, who created her own "exclusive dining club of the rich and famous" dubbed "The Ark" to suggest a place of refuge from the public sphere, established an intricate network of connections within elite circles, and exchanged a series of dotting letters with British prime minister Ramsey MacDonald, who in turn appointed Lord Londonderry Secretary of State for Air in 1931 (22-24).

Kershaw argues that Lord Londonderry's four-year term as Air Secretary was mostly a failure. Londonderry did enhance the British Royal Air Force to some degree, overseeing the designs for, if not the actual production of, Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft. However, Londonderry became widely unpopular within British society due to his two main propositions while in office. First, he staunchly advocated a gradual increase in the construction of

bomber planes while Britain was in the midst of the Great Depression. The British public wanted its government to disarm, not rearm, and concentrate on domestic social spending (67–79). Second, Londonderry was convinced that Great Britain should address Germany's grievances concerning provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. Kershaw notes that many British observers, especially conservatives, did not necessarily oppose this attitude, initially surmising that Nazism, despite its excesses, was "preferable to Communism" under Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union (50). Unfortunately for Londonderry, this lenient attitude toward the Nazi regime directly conflicted with French policy, which aimed to keep Germany weak internationally in order to ensure its own security (46–49). As a result, Londonderry's propositions worried wide segments of British society and, more importantly, alienated many of his colleagues in the Cabinet who were reluctant to endanger British-French relations.

Ironically, Kershaw points out that Londonderry was dismissed from his post as Secretary of State for Air in the summer of 1935 for neither of those reasons. In March 1935, Hitler announced that Germany would henceforth ignore the provisions of the Versailles Treaty, that his country had already secretly amassed a huge air force consisting of 550 planes, and that Germany would continue to rearm itself. British public opinion transformed itself overnight from a pacifist to a militarist stance and demanded a rapid expansion of armament production, especially in the air force. Londonderry refused to shift his policy, pointing to the need for a steady but incremental expansion and, to the shock of the British Cabinet, berated the government for not listening to him in the first place (113–17). In June 1935, Stanley Baldwin, the newly elected prime minister, dismissed Londonderry and awarded him as a consolation prize the position of Lord Privy Seal, which held prestige but little influence in British affairs. In November of that same year, Londonderry was relieved of this post as well for his continued public criticism of the British Foreign Office, leaving him deeply embittered against the government for what he interpreted as a personal affront (119–32). Londonderry's reaction to the dismissals also set the stage for his intimate contacts with the Third Reich.

Almost immediately after his departure from political office, Londonderry began to establish cordial relations with Nazi leaders. Kershaw shows how Londonderry exchanged correspondence with Nazi henchmen such as Joachim von Ribbentrop, Hitler's "unofficial" ambassador in London, and Hermann Göring, commander-in-chief of the German air force (153–56, 161–63), whom he frequently accompanied on hunting trips. In May 1936, Ribbentrop visited Londonderry at his Mount Stewart estate in Northern Ireland, a visit that the local media entitled "swastika over Ulster" (161–70). During their brief time together, Lord Londonderry and Ribbentrop discussed the possibilities of a renewed British-German understanding, the necessity of arms limitation, and the state of British-French relations. In order to signify the importance of his visit, Ribbentrop gave the Londonderrys a present, a white porcelain figure the Londonderrys later referred to as "the stormtrooper" (170–72). Londonderry strenuously maintained his efforts to create a British-German rapprochement until shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War.

Kershaw painstakingly examines Lord Londonderry's attitude toward Nazi Germany. He asserts that Londonderry was not a Nazi sympathizer, but rather strongly believed that Great Britain should both reach an agreement with Hitler as part of a larger four-power

pact comprising Britain, Germany, France, and Italy, and that the British should enact a policy of steady, incremental rearmament in order to negotiate with the Nazis from a position of strength. Londonderry proclaimed that only through these actions could another world war be avoided. Kershaw is highly skeptical of Londonderry's assertions. The author, who admittedly enters the realm of speculation to do so, concludes that Londonderry's policies would have failed to prevent another world war. If Britain somehow reached an accord with Germany during the 1930s, it would have been based on Germany respecting Britain's sovereignty in Western Europe and its overseas empire in exchange for a free hand in Eastern Europe. Kershaw rightly notes that Adolf Hitler still would have attempted to build a New Order in the East through the annihilation of Jews, Poles, Slavs, and other eastern peoples. In other words, Lord Londonderry failed to comprehend the true nature of the Third Reich, which placed racial war at the center of its monstrous ambitions rather than as a mere excess of its aim for Germany to reacquire its pre-1914 status as a world power (340–49).

At the same time, *Making Friends with Hitler* is important because Kershaw employs parliamentary debates, diplomatic correspondence, memoirs, letters, and especially newspapers to demonstrate convincingly that Lord Londonderry was certainly not the only individual in interwar Britain to be duped by Hitler and the Nazis. In the early 1930s several British newspapers, including *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Daily Herald*, the *News Chronicle*, and the *Daily Mail* presented wide ranging, often sympathetic views of Hitler (28–35). Newspapers with leftist leanings underestimated Hitler badly, frequently stating that he was “not in control of his own party” (29); print media on the British Right “advocated moderation and the attempt to construct cordial relations with Germany as with other nations” (35). Kershaw notes that British government officials also misunderstood Hitler's aims, a facet that is particularly striking considering that the British ambassador in Berlin during Hitler's rise to the German chancellorship, Sir Horace Rumbold, sent numerous reports full of foreboding to the British Foreign Office about the future of Europe if the Nazi party came to power in Germany (36–46).

In the late 1930s, British politicians were no less fooled by the intentions of Hitler and Nazi Germany. Upon visiting Hitler in 1937, Lord Halifax, leader of the House of Lords, believed that Hitler only wanted to regain territory that Germany had lost at Versailles (208–12). British leaders and society at large reacted overwhelmingly positively to the September 1938 Munich Conference that awarded Nazi Germany the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, the archetype of Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policy (242–51). Not until Hitler's entry into Prague in March 1939 did British public opinion take a swift turn against appeasement (266–76). Kershaw states that, at this point, Lord Londonderry and other British observers who had desired close British-German relations also belatedly realized the mistake of trusting the Third Reich (276–86). Nevertheless, Lord Londonderry's earlier attempts to befriend the Nazis made him a Nazi sympathizer in the eyes of the British public, despite his ubiquitous protestations to the contrary until his death in 1949 (286–327).

This review cannot do justice to the great number of provocative insights in Kershaw's account. His skepticism regarding Lord Londonderry's strategies for dealing with the Nazis demonstrates that “British policy choices were severely constrained” during the interwar

period (46). Moreover, Londonderry's flirtations with Nazi Germany "reflected those of his social class," as many conservatives in Britain regretted the rise of democratic institutions and thus viewed some aspects of Nazism favorably (349). Kershaw's work is also admirably suited to a diverse audience. Scholars of Britain, Germany, and the interwar period will appreciate the author's careful efforts to evaluate the diplomatic initiatives and decisions of various individuals. For undergraduates and general readers, Kershaw provides a cohesive narrative and analysis of European diplomacy during the 1930s, covering many of the watershed moments of Nazi aggression and British appeasement. The author includes several illustrations showing Londonderry's intrigues with the Nazis. In summary, *Making Friends with Hitler* is an extremely useful addition to the scholarship on the origins of the Second World War, evoking the range of British public opinion in the atmosphere of those dark days just before the war.