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[The real war is on the home front] between civilian extremists and civilian moderates, between Imperialists and Democrats. The real Allies are the moderates in the various belligerent countries, be they Russian or British, Austrian, or French, or German. The real enemy are the extremists to whatever nationality they belong. The real alliance is, on the other hand, between those who, in every belligerent land, uphold the principles of the U.D.C., and, on the other, between those who, in every belligerent land, persist in sacrificing the manhood of Europe to their ambitions, their hatreds and the lively fears they entertain (and with reason) either for their political skins or for the great vested interests they represent. When the peoples fully realise the truth, the war will stop.

_U. D. C._ Editorial, 1917.²

The quotation above represents a perspective of the war perhaps unusual to the contemporary reader. However, this was precisely the view of a significant section of the population in Britain, Europe and the United States of America during the First World War. The editor of this _U. D. C._ editorial placed the most important battle lines in the war, not on the Western Front, but between the moderates and extremists of each belligerent nation. The _U. D. C._ journal was one of many publications which contained views opposed to the British government’s policy of ‘fight to the finish’, also known as the ‘Knock-out Blow’. The _U. D. C._ was the journal of the most important anti-war organisation in Britain, the Union of Democratic Control, known by its acronym, U. D. C. for the duration of the war. This organisation’s journal, called the _U. D. C._, was one of the many publications in which views diametrically opposed to the British Government’s line on the war were aired. Criticism of the Government’s policy could be a dangerous undertaking. Indeed, E. D. Morel, one of the five founding members of the U. D. C., was targeted by the Lloyd George Cabinet and gaolèd for his views on the war on a trumped-up charge in 1917. Bertrand Russell

² _U. D. C._, Editorial, July 1917.
was similarly imprisoned under the Defence of the Realm Act (D. O. R. A.) for making public statements likely to injure Britain’s relations with the United States. In the same way, Fenner Brockway, editor of the *Labour Leader*, was imprisoned for opposing conscription. Morel, Russell and Brockway were known as ‘Radicals’ and were members of the Union of Democratic Control. These men were just three of a host of Radical publicist opinion-makers writing in newspapers and journals between 1914 and 1918. How can it be that such significant opposition to the British Government’s conduct of the First World War existed? Why was the situation in the Great War so markedly different to the Second World War in terms of opposition to the government’s war effort? Why is it that many of those Radical publicists who lived to see the Second World War did not question the British Government’s conduct or the ideals for which their nation were fighting as they had in the First World War? Why did the Radical publicists believe that a negotiated peace with Germany was possible in the First World War but did not believe so in the Second World War? A good place to begin to consider questions such as these is to look at the views of the Radical publicists themselves during the First World War.

In August 1914, barely a week after the commencement of the First World War, the Union of Democratic Control (U. D. C.) was born. The U. D. C.’s five founding members were known at the time as ‘Radicals’. From the outset, the Radicals of the U. D. C. committed themselves to three objectives: the end of secret diplomacy accompanied by democratic control over foreign policy; the formation of

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3 One example of this view was the prominent Radical publicist Norman Angell who was equivocal about involvement in the 1914-1918 war, but in 1939-1945 believed that the cause of the Allies was just and promoted the British government’s case in his publications. J. D. B. Miller, *Norman Angell and the Futility of War* (London, 1986), p. 89. Ironically, it was the proponents of the ‘knock-out blow’, in the Great War, who were more inclined to look favourably on Hitler prior to the Second World War. A significant case in point was Lloyd George himself. Anthony Lentin has devoted chapters in his recent book to Lloyd George’s 1936 meeting with Hitler at the Berghof and deals with Lloyd George’s willingness to consider a negotiated peace with Hitler in October 1939. See Anthony Lentin, *Lloyd George and the Lost Peace* (New York, 2001), Chs. 5-6.
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an international body to prevent war; and the securing of a peace settlement that neither humiliated the enemy nor created conditions that would merely serve as causes for future wars.\(^4\) These aims were adopted and modified by many progressive groups in Britain and the United States throughout the course of the war and formed the basis of their approach to foreign policy issues.\(^5\) Most notably, the President of the United States used the principles of the U. D. C. as the starting point for his critique of the war and his promotion of a new open diplomacy with a ‘league of nations’ as its cornerstone.\(^6\)

The Radicals of the U. D. C. believed that the most important conflict was the one that was occurring between progressive and reactionary forces within each belligerent country. For them, this was the ‘real war’ and ideas were the weapons. Three out of the five founding members of the U. D. C. were professional politicians and two were journalists. However, they were all contributors to various organs of the Liberal, socialist or Radical press, and hence all could be classed as publicists. They, along with many other Radical colleagues, were publicists, in the sense of pursuing their political craft as writers, editors, or journalists. A publicist is defined here as a writer who transforms current political and social ideas into language that can be assimilated by the general population.\(^7\) It was their writing, primarily in the press, which broadcast the ideas of progressive internationalism to the people of Britain, across the Atlantic to the United States, to Europe and beyond. Those who hoped for a

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\(^5\) Ibid., p. 27.

\(^6\) In this thesis, the phrase ‘league of nations’ refers to the idea of a permanent world body, while ‘League of Nations’ is gradually used more frequently in throughout this study as the world body became more clearly defined in the writings of the Radical publicists, the press generally, and President Wilson and his supporters.

\(^7\) J. A. Thompson, *Reformers and War: American Progressive Publicists and the First World War* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 29. This was the definition used by J. A. Thompson in his study of the American progressive publicists.
positive outcome from the horrific conflict that had consumed their generation were greatly encouraged by the writings of the British Radical publicists.

The purpose of this study is to trace the evolution of British Radical opinion, from the German and American peace notes of December 1916, to the meeting of the Allied Supreme War Council in February 1918. To establish the context, the Radicals’ views about the direction of the war and the prospects of peace up to the end of 1916 will be surveyed. From 1917, the focus is on the Radical publicists’ discussion about momentous events such as: Germany’s campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare; the Russian Revolution; the American entry into the war; the Reichstag Peace Resolution; the Stockholm Conference; the Papal Peace Note; the Lansdowne Letter; and, finally, the prospect of peace between the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the Supreme War Council’s rejection of negotiations with Germany in early February 1918. One theme which runs through all of the Radical publicists’ writings is the conviction that the war could be over by the end of 1917 if the correct mixture of intelligent diplomacy and military force were used. Appreciation of the Radical publicists’ hope and the air of expectancy about the prospect of an imminent end to the war is an ingredient of this study. A secondary aim of this thesis is to determine the extent to which the Radical publicists agreed or disagreed about key events. Understanding the extent to which the Radicals exerted an influence on mainstream political and diplomatic activity in 1917, as well as the extent to which the Radicals were influenced by others, is also an objective. Essential to achieving these aims is a consideration of the nature, extent and significance of the Radicals’ trans-Atlantic links with like-minded individuals and groups. The most significant of these trans-Atlantic links was that which existed between the Radical publicists and the Democrat President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson. Finally, this thesis will reflect on
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the extent to which any of the Radicals’ concerns about the conduct of war or the international order have had resonance beyond the end of the First World War.

As stated above, the underlying theme which permeated the discussions in the Liberal, Radical and left-wing press was the prospect of an end to the war in 1917. The early, optimistic hope of Allied military success forcing Germany to sue for peace, a hope universally held by leaders and the general public, had clearly faded by the end of 1916. Few Radicals held out any hope that more of the same military action, such as had been witnessed during the Somme and Verdun offensives, would bring victory any closer by the end of 1917. In fact, the Radical publicists feared that Britain simply could not afford to continue the sacrifice of its youth or the extravagant borrowing and spending in pursuit of victory. However, by 1917 the Radicals were no longer alone in their fears for the future. As the war dragged on relentlessly through 1917, they were increasingly joined by moderate Liberals and even by Conservatives who feared the coming social upheaval and the pauperisation of the nation. Also, the Radicals and moderate Liberals feared that the decay of civil liberties at home and the defeat of liberal internationalism abroad would be more likely if the slaughter continued unabated on the current scale. Both in their writings and in their private correspondence, the Radical publicists consistently fostered the hope that an early end to the Great War by means of a negotiated settlement was not only possible, but also, highly desirable. Furthermore, they maintained this hope from the beginning to the end of the war. However, this domestic disquiet over war aims and the widely-held

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conviction that a negotiated peace was an essential ingredient to the establishment of a just and lasting peace, has been largely absent from mainstream histories of the First World War. Thus, popular presentations simply ignore these issues. For example, the 1996 BBC TV series, *1914-1918: The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century* that screened in Australia in 1999, failed even to mention, in the episodes reviewing the events of 1916 and 1917, the German or American peace notes of December 1916. Also, absent was any mention of the Reichstag Peace Resolution, the Stockholm Conference, or the Papal Peace Note. Yet these were hot issues at the time and the Radical publicists devoted much energy to debating these opportunities for a negotiated peace in the press. Furthermore, public displays of dissent over the British Government’s war policies were widespread. Debates about the war were not confined to the intellectual elites but also occurred among blue-collar workers. For example, the Labour Party’s Leeds conference in June 1917 was characterised by prolonged and emotional debates over the Stockholm Conference. A spin-off of this was the resignation from the government of Arthur Henderson, the only Labour member of the Lloyd George cabinet. This was front-page news. There was also a significant public outcry over the banning of the overseas circulation of the *Nation* newspaper in April 1917, and over the gaoling of the Radical publicist and U. D. C. leader E. D. Morel in August 1917, and fierce public debate over the Lansdowne Letter in the *Daily Telegraph* in November 1917 and the imprisonment of prominent Radical and N. C. F.\(^9\) leader, Bertrand Russell in May 1918. Though these significant events were widely reported in the British press, they have been given scant recognition in most mainstream narratives of the First World War.

\(^9\) No Conscription Fellowship
Undoubtedly, there is a rich literature on the military, social and economic aspects of the war. There is a fascination with life in the trenches, the privations and sadness of the home front, the social impact, the horror of the battles, and the effect of the new technologies on warfare. The futility of the war for many who participated has also been given wide coverage in the literature. However, as E. M. Andrews has observed, despite a ‘tidal wave’ of books on the First World War, most have ‘trodden well-worn paths’, resulting in considerable repetition in the literature.10 Furthermore, Andrews argued that too many books on World War I concentrated on one aspect to the exclusion of the general picture. Consequently, military historians have sometimes tended to overlook other factors, as if the war had been fought in a social and political vacuum.11 Indeed, one can read a host of books on the First World War and find few references to the Women’s Hague Congress, the German and American Peace Notes, the Reichstag Peace Resolution, the Papal Peace Note, the Stockholm Conference, the Lansdowne Letter, let alone the debate within belligerent countries about the possibility of a negotiated settlement.12 However, these topics are referred to in

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11 Ibid., p. 3. Examples of recent First World War histories which deal almost exclusively with military matters are: J. H. Johnson, *The Unexpected Victory* (London, 1997), John Keegan, *The First World War* (London, 1998), Alan Palmer, *Victory 1918* (London, 1998). One exception is Keith Robbins, *The First World War* (Oxford, 1993). Robbins included a brief discussion of the U. D. C. and Radical concerns. See pp. 132-134. More recently, popular titles on the First World War have been based on reinterpreting purely military aspects of the war. For example: R. Pryor and T. Wilson, *Passchendaele: The Untold Story* (New Haven, 1996), and Gary Sheffield, *Forgotten Victory: The First World War: Myths and Realities* (London, 2002). However, David Stevenson’s most recent study is the exception to this rule. Stevenson has marshed the high politics of the war with the military aspects. Stevenson places high politics back in the driving seat of the war. The war, he argues, was a political act, ‘a product both of supercharged emotions and of reason and of will.’ However, Stevenson follows the lead of many other historians in downplaying the possibilities for a negotiated peace. See David Stevenson, *Cataclysm: The First World War As Political Tragedy* (2004), p. xviii and p. 103.

12 In the recent work by retired British Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, there was no mention of the public attempts at mediation or the various peace feelers. Rather, three sentences were devoted to an outright rejection of the notion that a negotiated peace in the First World War was possible. Douglas Hurd, *The Search for Peace: A Century of Peace and Diplomacy* (London, 1997), p. 33. Jo Vellacott wondered how long it would be before the Women’s Hague Congress of 1915 took its just position in non-feminist historical writing or teaching. Jo Vellacott, ‘A Place for Pacifism and Transnationalism in Feminist Theory: The Early Work of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom’, *Women’s Historical Review*, Volume 2, Number 1, 1993.
specialised histories of the high politics and diplomacy of the First World War.\textsuperscript{13} Similarly, some of the studies of Britain’s ‘home front’ acknowledge how controversial the prolonged war became. For example, John Turner, in his \textit{British Politics and the Great War}, touches on the domestic political controversies of this period in Britain though he does not delve into any significant commentary about the rising public pressure for peace or diplomatic peace initiatives.\textsuperscript{14} Similarly, the more recent Oxford publication edited by Hew Strachan offers a formidable array of historians, each providing excellent summaries of their various areas of expertise: military, political, diplomatic, social, and economic.\textsuperscript{15} It contains a chapter by David Stevenson on the high politics of the war and one by John Turner on the politics of the home front.\textsuperscript{16} However, only minimal treatment is given to popular demands for a negotiated peace or the activities of peace groups.\textsuperscript{17} Niall Ferguson, author of \textit{The Pity of War}, is one of the few historians to step outside the ranks of the majority to place the futility of the war at the heart of his narrative. Ferguson touches on the Radical publicists and their concerns, though his treatment of diplomatic peace initiatives and the Radical publicists’ reaction to these is limited.\textsuperscript{18}


\textsuperscript{14} John Turner, \textit{British Politics and the Great War: Coalition and Conflict 1915-1918} (London, 1992), Ch’s. 4-7. John Turner was also editor of \textit{Britain and the First World War}, which cast a wider net to include military, social, and economic aspects alongside British politics, though again there was little treatment of peace initiatives or peace groups. John Turner (Ed.), \textit{Britain and the First World War} (London, 1988), pp. 126-127.


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., pp. 204-215 and pp. 163-178.

\textsuperscript{17} Another recent First World War history with a non-military emphasis is \textit{Capital Cities at War}. However, there is no specific mention of anything that touches on the diplomatic initiatives which encouraged domestic peace groups. Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Eds.), \textit{Capital Cities at War} (Cambridge, 1997).

There is, however, detailed information about Radical publicists in specialist studies of the peace movement in Britain. There are some very comprehensive works on Radicalism in the First World War such as those by Marvin Swartz, Keith Robbins, and more recently by Sally Harris. Among biographies of individual Radical publicists, there are impressively detailed studies of E. D. Morel, A. G. Gardiner, H. W. Massingham, Norman Angell, J. A. Hobson and Bertrand Russell. A more recent study, Beryl Haslam’s *From Suffrage to Internationalism*, concentrates on three prominent feminists, one of whom was Helena Swanwick, a member of the U. D. C. Executive. Haslam details the many interconnections between the Radicals, the Labour Party, the Lansdowne movement and the women’s movements. On the press in the First World War, there are a number of in-depth studies, notably, those by Stephen Koss and Armin Rappaport. Most useful for the evolution of opinion in the Liberal press is the contemporary writing of Irene Cooper Willis. By surveying the writings of key publicists in the Liberal press, Irene Cooper Willis illuminated many of the issues that confronted the Liberal Party during the war. For the relationship between the Radical publicists and President Wilson, there is the pioneering work by Laurence Martin and the recent study by Thomas Knock. However, there has been

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no overall analysis of the Radical publicists as a group during the First World War similar to that provided by John A. Thompson with respect to the Progressive publicists in the United States.\textsuperscript{25} There are many references in the texts mentioned above to the Radical publicists, but there has been no sustained analysis of their columns in the press. Considering the intellectual quality and voluminous material penned by the Radical publicists during the war years, this is a significant gap in knowledge. It is appropriate, therefore, that this study closely examines the views of the Radical publicists during the most crucial year of the war, 1917.

Much of the Radical publicists’ campaigning and theorising during the First World War occurred against the back-drop of American intervention. Recent works in this area deal with many and varied aspects of American intervention from April 1917.\textsuperscript{26} As mentioned above, closest to this thesis in its special interests is J. A. Thompson’s \textit{Reformers and War: American Progressive Publicists and the First World War}, a study of key American progressive journalists, editors and agitators during the war, many of whom had a similar approach to, and interacted with, the Radical publicists in Britain.\textsuperscript{27} This thesis, in a similar way, will provide an analysis of Radical publicist opinion in Britain. Beyond Thompson’s important work, there are also significant studies of the American peace movements.\textsuperscript{28} These have proved

\textsuperscript{25} John A. Thompson, \textit{Reformers and War}. (Cambridge, 1987).
\textsuperscript{26} Byron Farewell’s account does little beyond covering the military related aspects of the United States as a belligerent. Byron Farewell, \textit{Over There: The United States in the Great War, 1917-1918} (New York, 1999). More useful for the purposes of this study is Robert Zeiger’s work that provides a broader perspective covering the periods of neutrality and belligerency. Zeiger gives consideration to Wilson’s motives for intervention and his strategy in dealing with the Allied governments. See Robert H. Zeiger, \textit{America’s Great War: World War I and the American Experience} (Lanham, Maryland, 2000), pp. 32-34, 37-40, 42-56. Zeiger also discusses the negative and lasting impact of American belligerency on civil liberties in the United States and the continuing effects in the post-war period. See pp. 197-225. He also attempts to explain Wilson’s loss of the support of American progressives. See Ibid., p. 218. Most useful is Zeiger’s discussion of the impact of the United State’s experience of the First World War on U. S. foreign policy up to Pearl Harbour. See Ibid., pp. 227-237.
\textsuperscript{28} There is substantial literature on the American peace movement. Notable for its scope is Roland C. Marchand’s \textit{The American Peace Movement and Social Reform, 1898-1918} (Princeton, 1972). Chapter
important in this study due to the similarities to be discerned between the motives and wartime experiences of the American and the British peace groups. However, there were significant differences in their experience and reaction to wartime events. These differences arose, of course, from the fact that for nearly three years of the war the United States remained a neutral power. Significantly, though, the American progressive publicists, peace activists and the British Radical publicists had one significant link, a similar focus of hope, none other than the American President, Woodrow Wilson.

Considering the immense shadow cast by the American President over events that concerned the Radical publicists, Wilsonian historiography is an indispensable ingredient to this study. Virtually all aspects of Wilson’s presidency it seems have been scrutinised by historians and Arthur Link, his official biographer, has ensured that the Wilson presidency is the most thoroughly documented of all American

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29 I have opted for the term ‘peace activist’ in this thesis to describe Americans in the First World War who had a similar perspective on the war as the British Radicals. The term ‘pacifist’ has been avoided because of its identification in the modern reader’s mind with ‘absolute pacifism’, that is, opposition to the use of all force. For a discussion on the use of the terms ‘pacifist’ and ‘peace activist’, see James Hinton, *Protests and Visions: Peace Politics in the 20th Century* (London, 1989).
There is already an impressive number of extremely competent and comprehensive studies on Woodrow Wilson. John Thompson’s is only the most recent biography among dozens of the American President. On the relationship between Woodrow Wilson and the British Radicals, the most important is the study by Laurence Martin. Martin authoritatively established the strong ideological connection and mutual influence between Woodrow Wilson and the Radicals, though not without a few erroneous assumptions about Radical reactions to Wilson’s initiatives. More recently, Thomas Knock has explored the relationship between the British Radicals and the President and relies significantly on Martin’s work for some of his observations. Knock has not made extensive use of the Radical publicists’ writings in the press or in their private correspondence, and concentrated more on the American progressive internationalist movement which he believed was a more significant factor in Wilson’s attempts to mediate peace and his advocacy of the idea of a ‘league of nations’. Whether Woodrow Wilson was more influenced in his liberal-internationalist thinking by progressive internationalists in the United States or by the British Radicals is an unresolved issue in Wilsonian scholarship.

On the wider issues of Woodrow Wilson’s presidency, the conservative and ‘realist’ school of historians has condemned his impractical idealism. The most prominent example of this realist approach is Henry Kissinger. He argued that the

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32 James Robert Huntley, Pax Democratica., p. 142.
Wilsonian approach to international relations was dangerously utopian. Left-wing critics in turn have criticised Wilson for his naïve attitude to business interests in the American liberal internationalist movement, Henry Ford being a prime example.

Wilson has also been criticised for his poor record on civil liberties after the U. S. entry into the war. Others have criticised Wilson’s actions more broadly, arguing that the priority he gave to military victory contributed to the collapse of liberal internationalism in the United States during the war. On the other hand, John Milton Cooper and Ernest May have taken a more positive view of Wilson, defending him from critics to the left and the right. In general, American historians who favour Wilson applaud both his attempts to mediate a settlement to the war prior to April 1917, and his decision to wage war after April 1917, including his decision to spurn any attempts at mediation on the part of anyone else. There is little questioning of Wilson’s failure to commit Allied leaders to a revision of war aims soon after American entry, or of his silence over war aims between April and August 1917. Similarly, Wilson’s decision to shun attempts at a mediated peace proposed by the Pope and the socialist-inspired Stockholm conference, and his failure to pressure the Allied leaders to accept his war aims at the Inter-Allied Council in December 1917, are topics that receive scant recognition from American scholars. These and other instances of Wilson’s refusal to contemplate a negotiated settlement after April 1917

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were major issues for liberal internationalists on both sides of the Atlantic in 1917-1918. However, despite the fact that Wilson was immensely effective in firing the imagination of world public opinion for a just peace and a league of nations, his actions, once committed to the war, consistently baffled many of those who counted themselves among his ideological supporters. President Wilson’s actions often dismayed his supporters both at home and abroad. Most supporters soldiered on, believing Wilson was the only person who stood in the way of the jingoes and super-patriots and their plans for achieving a harsh and annexationist peace. Wilson was their only hope. However, this is a very controversial and largely unresolved aspect of Wilsonian scholarship. It remains to be explained why Wilson recklessly and progressively alienated his most ardent ideological supporters, both at home and abroad, to the point that after the Peace Conference in 1919 his support base had largely fallen away. Of course, this does not have to be resolved in this study. Nevertheless, it is relevant, in that British Radicals were puzzled over the extent to which Wilson’s passion for a ‘peace without victory’ continued to motivate him after April 1917. Perhaps this comes back to the question of what truly motivated the American President. Was his heart really with the American progressives and the British Radicals as he so often told them, or was he simply using their influence when he needed them to gain support at critical times in his presidency? Wilson’s motivation for his promotion of the progressive internationalist platform is not entirely clear. He seems to have become totally committed to the idea of a ‘league of

38 See Thomas Knock’s discussion in the chapter titled, “‘If the War Is Too Strong”: The Travail of Progressive Internationalism and the Fourteen Points’, in Knock, To End All Wars, pp. 123-147.
39 Wilson certainly courted the progressive and socialist vote in the November 1916 election. The election result was extremely close, so it can be assumed that without this support Wilson would have lost the election. Perhaps the highest profile progressive in America to express public support for Wilson in the 1916 Election campaign was Jane Addams. See Knock, To End All Wars, p. 94. This is interesting since in the 1912 election Addams had supported Theodore Roosevelt because of his commitment to female suffrage and social reform. James Chace, 1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft and Debs – The Election that Changed the Country (New York, 2004), pp. 162, 167-168.
nations’, though his refusal to discuss the details of how such a ‘league’ would be organised with those who held similar views is hard to fathom.

Some historians have sought to provide answers to Woodrow Wilson’s often-puzzling behaviour. To explain Wilson’s behaviour, historians have advanced two explanations. The first of these is Wilson’s egocentric personality. Dragan Živojinovic placed great weight on this factor in his discussion of the reasons why Wilson failed to achieve a mediated settlement to the war, even when this appeared to be his sincere aim. He argued that mediating an end to the war was always Wilson’s first and preferred option. However, Wilson’s unconscious attitude was that if there were to be a mediated settlement then it would be one mediated by him. This would explain the warm reception Wilson gave to American peace activists attempting to get a mediated settlement, happily taking their literature and listening to their proposals, while simultaneously carrying out secret diplomacy with British Foreign Minister, Grey.

When this secret channel for achieving mediation failed, Wilson went public with his Peace Note of December 1916 and later his ‘Peace Without Victory’ address in January 1917. However, once Wilson realised he could not mediate an end to the war, he was not interested in anyone else’s attempt, even though others attempting to do so may have espoused the same principles as he had in his ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech. Such also appears to have been the case with the Papal Peace Note and the

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41 This resulted in the House-Grey Memorandum.
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Lansdowne Letter. At times, the President’s actions and words mystified the Radical publicists, while on other occasions they regarded him as if he were virtually their messiah. Radical publicists differed in their estimates of the degree of egocentricity in Wilson’s motivation and this lies at the heart of the Radical publicists’ dilemma. It helps to explain their ambivalence about continuing to support Wilson, particularly after American entry, and explains why most were still willing to give Wilson the benefit of the doubt right up to the Versailles Treaty.

The second aspect of Wilson’s behaviour is the degree to which illness affected his dealings with others, and his political skills in general. Towards the end of his career of editing the Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Arthur Link identified the fact that Wilson had suffered strokes and mild heart attacks at crucial times. He believed that these attacks created rigidity in his personality making it impossible for him to compromise.43 Similarly, two recent biographers, Phyllis Lee Levin and John Milton Cooper, have speculated on the effect illness may have had on Wilson’s personality in their studies of the President.44 In any case, a full understanding of the Radical publicists in the First World War is not possible without an appreciation of their relationship with the American President and the complexity of the character of Woodrow Wilson himself.

While the degree of Wilson’s dependence on other progressive and radical thinkers is debated, by his own admission Wilson looked to the English for his

43 James Robert Carroll (ed.), The Real Woodrow Wilson: An Interview With Arthur S. Link (Bennington, Vermont, 2000), pp. 34, 36-7. In particular, Link believed that his ‘great discovery’ was that Wilson had had a stroke on 19 July 1919 (a stroke that was more important than the big one on 2 October) after his return to Washington. See pp. 51-54. These strokes meant that Wilson’s political skills were blunted at a time when diplomatic discussion with senators opposed to the League was essential.
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ideological inspiration, and in particular to the Radical branch of British Liberalism. These terms require some clarification. The term ‘Radical’ was used in early twentieth-century Britain to refer to those within the British Liberal Party who belonged to a faction that had emerged in opposition to the Liberal Imperialist direction of the Liberal Party under Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Minister. Curiously, the term was also applied at the time to those outside the Liberal Party who held similar views regarding domestic or foreign policy. Hence, some members of the Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party (I. L. P.) were referred to as ‘Radicals’ and, indeed, even Ramsay MacDonald, the leader of the I. L. P., was classed as a Radical because of his outlook on foreign policy. The use of the term ‘Radical’ was flexible at the time and therefore will be employed with the same flexibility in this study. The Radicals were a long-standing minority within the

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45 Up to a third of the Liberal Party were Liberal Imperialists who had supported the Conservative policy during the Boer War. See J. Turner, British Politics and the Great War, p. 15. The total number of Liberals in the House of Commons after the 1906 Election was 377, which gave them a majority of 84 over the other parties, namely, the Unionists, with 157, the Irish Nationalists with 83 and Labour with 29. Also, the 1906 Liberal Cabinet of twenty consisted of a number of factions. Though the Liberal Imperialists were influential and holding four of the senior positions in Cabinet, the Radicals saw the Prime Minister, Campbell-Bannerman, as ‘their own’. The Radicals were confident with Campbell-Bannerman at the head of the Government, but ‘there was still some hesitancy in trusting the Liberal Imperialists who seemed to enjoy a disproportionate share of Cabinet places.’ See A. J. A. Morris, Radicalism Against the War, 1906-1914 (London, 1972), p. 20. Donald Kagan stated that: ‘The Liberals were Britain’s “peace party” as compared with the Conservatives, and some members of the Cabinet were avowed pacifists. Grey, on the other hand, was a “Liberal Imperialist” who had supported the Conservative government’s policy in the Boer War while the radical Liberals were opposing it.’ D. Kagan, The Origins of War (London, 1955), p. 148. See A. J. P. Taylor, The Trouble Makers. Dissent Over Foreign Policy 1917-1939 (London, 1957), pp. 107-108, for a description of the contrasting views of the Radicals and the Liberal Imperialists.

46 See Howard Weinroth, ‘Peace by Negotiation and the British Anti-war Movement’, Canadian Journal of History, 10, 3 (1975), pp. 373 & 384; Taylor, The Trouble Makers, p. 133. In her work on the U. D. C., Sally Harris has chosen to differentiate between those on the left-wing of the Liberal Party, who she refers to as ‘radicals’ with a small ‘r’, and the term ‘dissenter’ as a broader label ascribed to all those, regardless of political persuasion, who called for a reformed foreign policy. See Sally Harris, Out of Control: British Foreign Policy and the Union of Democratic Control (Hull, 1996), p. 4. However, the position taken in this thesis is to use the term ‘Radical’ as one that is inclusive of all those who adopted their views on foreign policy. This is consistent with the contemporary use of the term. For instance, Ramsay MacDonald of the I. L. P. was known as a Radical. H. W. Massingham, editor of the Nation, classed himself as a Radical in the pre-war period. See Alfred F. Havighurst, Radical Journalist: H. W. Massingham (1860-1923) (Cambridge, 1974). Of course, the use of the term ‘Radical’ has been used in various ways through British history from 1763 to 1914. For an explanation of the pre-Edwardian evolution of the term ‘Radical’ see S. Maccoby’s introduction to his study. S. Maccoby (Ed.), The English Radical Tradition, 1764-1914 (London, 1952).
Liberal Party in Great Britain. They had emerged as a distinct group within the party during the 1890s when the party became dominated by ‘Liberal Imperialists’. The latter were Liberals who accepted that Britain had a legitimate role at the head of a vast world empire. The group of Liberals who protested at this imperial preoccupation became known as the ‘Radicals’. On the domestic front, the Radicals subscribed to New Liberalism. In New Liberalism, liberty meant more than simply the absence of restraints on civil liberty but rather a more activist state pursuing a ‘positive opportunity to realize human capacities.’ In the words of the Radical philosopher, L. T. Hobhouse, ‘Liberty without equality is a name of noble sound and squalid result.’ New Liberalism therefore believed that the state must play a positive role in society to enable the transformation of political liberty into social and economic terms. To provide equality of opportunity, the use of the state as an agency of reform was required. The Radicals embraced the New Liberalism, and naturally desired that the energies of the Liberal Government go into social reform. However, the Liberal Party’s ruling elite were concerned about moving too fast in this area. There was a program of reform enacted after the electoral victory of 1906, but after the narrow Liberal victory in the 1910 election the pace of reform was slowed down. Reluctantly, the Radicals were forced to support the Government lest the Unionists exploit the division and return to power.

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47 Allett offers this explanation of New Liberalism: ‘Classical political economy and the classical theory of political liberalism both began as a protest, the former rejecting mercantilism, the latter, the rule of the landed aristocracy. In both cases the state was identified with the activities of sinister interests and a corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy. It was this identification to which the New Liberals objected.’ John Allett, New Liberalism: The Political Economy of J. A. Hobson (Toronto, 1981), p. 259.
48 Ibid.
49 Quoted in Ibid., p. 259, from L. T. Hobhouse’s Liberalism (1911).
50 Ibid.
51 Swartz, The Union of Democratic Control, p. 3.
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At the outset, the term ‘Radical publicist’ also requires some clarification. ‘Radical publicist’ is used, in this study, as an all-encompassing term to denote anyone who wrote in the public domain from a Radical perspective. The reason for choosing the Radical publicists as the focus for this study is that those who set the Radical agenda were not only professional politicians, but also editors, writers, journalists, reporters, academics, businessmen and religious leaders. Furthermore, their writings in the press were voluminous, and their contributions to public debate were most significant. Many Radicals, both publicists and politicians, have been the subject of biographies and thematic studies but there has been no detailed analysis of Radical writings in the press during the First World War. The Radical publicists did not merely simplify complex contemporary issues for popular consumption but also acted as advocates for various causes and were even active participants in political campaigning and intrigue. The Radical publicists wrote in the pages of such newspapers and journals as the Daily Herald, Labour Leader, the Nation, Common Sense, the Manchester Guardian, the Westminster Gazette, the Daily News, the Star and the Daily Chronicle. Dozens of persons could be chosen as representative of the group of Radical publicists. However, this study will examine the views of some of the most significant. In embarking on this exploration of Radical thought, one cannot go past the influential editor of the Nation, Henry W. Massingham and the many publicists who wrote in his paper such as Henry Brailsford, Arthur Ponsonby, G. L. Dickinson, Norman Angell, Bertrand Russell and Ramsay MacDonald. Also, E. D. Morel, the tireless campaigner for human rights in the Belgian Congo, who became the de facto leader of the most influential peace group in Britain, the Union of Democratic Control, cannot be ignored. Likewise, the editors of the other major

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52 This was the definition used by J. A. Thompson in his study of the American progressive publicists. Thompson, Reformers and War, p. 29.
Radical newspapers, such as F. W. Hirst, economist and editor of the Common Sense, A. G. Gardiner, editor of the Daily News and C. P. Scott, editor of the Manchester Guardian cry out for inclusion.

Massingham has been selected because under his highly regarded editorship of the Nation newspaper a large number of Radical writers and journalists were able to give expression to their views on the war. Also, Massingham himself is of great interest because in August 1914 he differed with many of his Radical colleagues in supporting the Liberal government’s decision for British intervention and then continued to give support to the Asquith government’s conduct of the war. However, despite his decision to back the Government position on the war, Massingham allowed those Radicals who were resolutely opposed to British intervention in the war to write freely in his newspaper. Massingham not only encouraged freedom of speech during the war, but also practised what he preached in the columns of the Nation. Lastly, Massingham was representative of many people who initially supported the Government’s war policies but by 1916 favoured a negotiated peace. This dramatic turnaround in his views on the war can be charted through the editorials in the Nation.

Francis Hirst has been chosen for this study because he was steeped in the Liberal and Radical tradition, both in his ideology and in his family and friends. Like Massingham, in late July and August 1914, Hirst was opposed to British intervention and resolutely stood his ground on this point despite the fact that many of his friends, had reluctantly come to the conclusion that there was now no option but to support the Government until the war was won. Though stunned by Britain’s entry into the war and consumed by bitterness towards Lord Grey’s duplicitous diplomacy, Hirst was initially hesitant about going public with his views on the war. When Hirst did publicly join the debate about the war, he used his expertise in economics and his
weekly contacts with like-minded Liberal Lords, to add weight to his commentaries on the war. Lastly, Hirst was the lynchpin in the attempt to mobilise all those in favour of a negotiated peace around Lord Lansdowne after the publication of Lansdowne’s famous letter at the end of November 1917.

In contrast to Hirst and Massingham, Morel, MacDonald, and Ponsonby were immediately galvanised into action by British intervention and within weeks had formed the Union of Democratic Control. Despite calls for restraint from moderate Liberals, these Radicals went public with their critique of the war and their argument that it should end soon. As a result, the U. D. C. became the means by which many people, unhappy with the war, could channel their energies into something positive. As leading U. D. C. activists, Morel, MacDonald and Ponsonby are also prominent in this study.

Hobson, Angell, and Brailsford have been chosen for this study because of the depth of intellectual analysis that was the hallmark of their writings before the war, in addition to the very great power of their contributions to the peace movement during the war. Hobson and Brailsford had solid economic credentials established with their significant pre-war publications, Hobson’s *Imperialism* (1902) and Brailsford’s *The War of Steel and Gold* (1914), while Angell’s *Great Illusion* (1909) was an analysis of the effect of economic and financial globalisation on international relations. Each of these writers had achieved some degree of notoriety for their pre-war writings.

Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, known affectionately as ‘Goldie’ to his friends, was a Cambridge academic whose quest for a reformation of the international order placed him at the centre of the movement in Britain for the establishment of a
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‘league’. In fact, the phrase ‘league of nations’ was first coined by Dickinson.\textsuperscript{53} As part of the Bryce Group, Dickinson was at the forefront of the campaign for a ‘league of nations’ in Britain and exerted a significant influence on the American organisation, the League to Enforce Peace (L. T. E. P.). These intellectuals did not waver in their defence of Radical and Liberal principles, their questioning of the conduct of the war and their belief that achieving a negotiated peace offered the best chance of creating a stable and lasting peace.

Finally, the two editors, C. P. Scott and A. G. Gardiner, were Radicals who felt that Radical principles could be upheld through transforming the war into a crusade against militarism and supporting the Liberal Government’s efforts. Once British intervention was embarked upon, their consciences were eased by taking the approach that the nation was locked into a ‘Holy War’ for a better world. These two editors represented the views of more moderate Liberals, who initially supported the Government’s policies on the war, but by 1917, increasingly looked to either U. D. C. or Wilsonian prescriptions for a way out of the quagmire of war. Scott is significant too because his \textit{Manchester Guardian} was one of the two British newspapers Woodrow Wilson read after the outbreak of the war.\textsuperscript{54} The American President often read Scott’s editorials with interest. Scott and Gardiner were also representative of many Radicals who initially backed the Asquith Government’s policy on the war because it was their Liberal Government. In contrast to Hirst and a number of Liberal Lords, Scott and Gardiner believed that Foreign Minister Grey \textit{had} acted properly both in his pre-war diplomacy and in the July Crisis. Furthermore, they believed that


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now that Britain was in the war they must stand united and pursue the struggle until victory.

The Radical publicists chosen for this study were all of one mind before the war, but the impact of war tested them. However, the different attitudes that the various Radical publicists had towards the actions of Foreign Minister Grey, as well as the Government’s decision for intervention in 1914, opened up a fault-line in the ranks of the Radical publicists which was to widen as the war progressed. Some friendships between the Radical publicists were sorely tested while others experienced strengthened bonds of friendship. At times, the Radical publicists were bitterly divided, while on other occasions they closed ranks against common enemies. Nevertheless, they became a formidable force on the few occasions when there was genuine and unanimous agreement. As the consequences of a war locked in stalemate became apparent, one issue in which the Radical publicists had a common interest was the prospect of American intervention in the war. Yet their views on the actions and policies of President Wilson after April 1917 tested the Radical publicists in much the same way as British intervention had in 1914.

As mentioned above, the one individual who perhaps loomed largest in the minds of the British Radical publicists was the twenty-eighth President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson. An extraordinary link developed over the course of the war between the American President and the British Radicals. Woodrow Wilson was ideologically committed to a liberal-internationalist vision for world order based on the ideas of the great Liberal heroes of nineteenth century Britain such as Richard Cobden, John Bright and John Stuart Mill.\textsuperscript{55} These were also the heroes of the British Radicals. Their common ideological heritage led to mutual admiration and mutual

\textsuperscript{55} Martin, \textit{Peace Without Victory}, pp. 18-19.
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respect. As will be discussed below, through Colonel House, and the special agent in the U. S. Embassy in London W. H. Buckler, Wilson kept in touch with the opinions of British Radical journals and newspapers. As the United States gradually became more involved in the war it was to the Radicals that Wilson looked when formulating the American political agenda.\textsuperscript{56}

The main primary material used for this study is the British press. The Radicals’ views concerning the great issues of the day can be discerned in several key newspapers in which they wrote. Of these, the Star was the most ‘patriotic’. The Star, with a circulation of 500,000,\textsuperscript{57} was owned by T. P. O’Connor,\textsuperscript{58} a patriotically-minded Irish M. P. who hoped that Lloyd George would give Ireland home rule in return for patriotic loyalty. While the Manchester Guardian and the Daily Chronicle were initially pro-war, they increasingly distanced themselves from the government ‘line’ by 1917. The Manchester Guardian, a morning daily with a circulation of 35,000,\textsuperscript{59} was owned and edited by C. P. Scott, who was close to Lloyd George but increasingly had misgivings about his policies.\textsuperscript{60} The Daily Chronicle, with a circulation of 400,000,\textsuperscript{61} was edited by Robert Donald who was once a close associate, and for a time, golfing companion of Lloyd George.\textsuperscript{62} The Westminster Gazette, edited by J. A. Spender, enjoyed a circulation of 20,000,\textsuperscript{63} and was the most traditionally Liberal of the newspapers as well as being the favourite of Liberal

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., pp. 114-115.
\textsuperscript{58} For a biography of this editor see, L. W. Brady, T. P. O’Connor and the Liverpool Irish (London, 1983).
\textsuperscript{62} See H. A. Taylor, Robert Donald: Being the Authorised Biography of Sir Robert Donald - Journalist, Editor and Friend of Statesmen (London, 1934).
\textsuperscript{63} McEwen, ‘The National Press During the First World War’, p. 471.
parliamentarians.\textsuperscript{64} The \textit{Daily News}, owned by the Quaker, Cadbury family, and edited by A. G. Gardiner, was the most popular of the newspapers in the Liberal stable with a readership of 550,000.\textsuperscript{65}

\textit{Common Sense} and the \textit{Nation} were the most left-wing of the Liberal papers. \textit{Common Sense}, launched in October 1916, was a free trade journal edited by F. W. Hirst, who had previously been editor of the \textit{Economist} but was forced to resign in mid-1916 due to his opposition to the war. In \textit{Common Sense} Hirst consistently favoured a negotiated peace and was very supportive of President Wilson. The \textit{Nation} was a London weekly edited by H. W. Massingham,\textsuperscript{66} who opened up his paper to a wide spectrum of Radical and moderate Liberal opinion. He allowed extremely divergent views to fill the columns of the \textit{Nation}, even views about the war, which he personally opposed. After 1916, a large number of writers, offering a wide variety of views, contributed to this paper making it an accurate gauge of the swings in Liberal opinion and the direction of Radical thought.\textsuperscript{67}

Outside the Liberal stable and further to the left were the Labour \textit{Herald}, the Independent Labour Party’s \textit{Forward} and the \textit{Labour Leader}. The \textit{Herald} was founded by George Lansbury, a fervent socialist internationalist who favoured universal disarmament.\textsuperscript{68} H. N. Brailsford was a frequent contributor to the \textit{Herald}, but also wrote articles for other papers such as the \textit{Nation}.\textsuperscript{69} In fact many of the editors and writers of Liberal and left-wing newspapers made contributions to other newspapers, some even having regular columns. The \textit{Labour Leader} was a

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\item \textsuperscript{64} For a biography of Spender, see H. Wilson Harris, \textit{J. A. Spender} (London, 1946).
\item \textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p. 228.
\item \textsuperscript{68} See Raymond Postgate, \textit{The Life of George Lansbury} (London, 1951), and the more recent work by Jonathan Schneer, \textit{George Lansbury} (Manchester, 1990).
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Manchester-based journal of the I. L. P. edited by A. F. Brockway with a circulation of 40,000-80,000. Phillip Snowden, a prominent I. L. P. politician, was a regular contributor. *Forward*, with a circulation of 10,000 in 1914, was the Scottish equivalent of the *Labour Leader*. It was edited by Thomas Johnston, but, more importantly featured Ramsay MacDonald, the I. L. P. leader, as one of its leading columnists.

In this study, the diaries, personal papers and correspondence of key publicists are used to supplement the writings of Radicals in the press. Such resources add depth to this thesis by making it possible to weigh up constantly what the Radical publicists were happy to put on the public record with what they were willing to say in private. This provides a means whereby the sincerity and veracity of the Radical publicists’ public statements can be tested. Furthermore, it is important to know the degree to which Radical publicists felt constrained from speaking openly in public due to party loyalty, friendship, or fear of ostracism or persecution. To this purpose, a number of manuscript collections have been consulted both in the United Kingdom and the United States. The private papers of key Radical publicists in the United Kingdom have been researched at the following locations: Morel (editor, *U. D. C.*) and Gardiner (editor, *Daily News*) at the London School of Economics; Massingham (editor, *Nation*) at Norwich Public Records Office; Donald (editor, *Daily Chronicle*) at the House of Lords; Spender (editor, *Westminster Gazette*) at the British Library; and Hirst (editor *Economist* and *Common Sense*) at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Links with American progressives have been researched using the private papers of key individuals in the American peace movement from the following locations in the United States.

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United States: David Starr Jordan, Jane Addams and Lillian Wald at the Hoover Institute, Stanford University; Rebecca Shelley and Angela Morgan at the Bentley Library, Michigan; Lillian Wald at Columbia University, New York; Rosika Schwimmer and Lola Maverick Lloyd at the New York Public Library; Fanny Andrews at the Schlesinger Library, Boston; and Jane Addams, Julia Grace Wales and William Hull at the Swarthmore Library, Philadelphia. These sources are supplemented by biographies, memoirs and the post-war writings of British Radicals and American peace advocates, of which there is a wealth of material.

It is easy, when looking back at the First World War, to believe that Allied victory was inevitable, and that any outcome short of this, such as a negotiated peace, was neither necessary nor desirable. However, the widely held view in Britain from 1916, and even as late as the autumn of 1918, was that the war would go on into 1919 or 1920.\(^2\) This was certainly true of the Radical publicists who were horrified that their nation’s leaders were prepared to keep sacrificing the lives of young men when victory still seemed remote. The consensus of opinion in the British military leadership, shortly after the Armistice in 1918, was that the rapid finish to war had certainly not been expected and that the Germans were not beaten outright on the battlefield.\(^3\) By the autumn of 1918, eventual Allied victory seemed more likely but estimates of how long it would take to achieve the final knock-out blow still varied between six months and three years. It is in this light that the persistent calls of the Radical publicists for a negotiated peace must be viewed. Looking back in time,\(^4\)


through the lens of the Second World War, it is easy to view those calling for a negotiated peace as weak-kneed appeasers and those who advocated a fight to the finish as hard-nosed realists. However, just a brief immersion in the writings of the Radical publicists in 1917 brings these stereotypes into question. If not even the British military could be certain when military victory over Germany in 1918 would be achieved, then how much less certainty did they have in 1916 or 1917? The Radical publicists argued in 1917 that the path of a negotiated peace may have been a far saner option to what seemed at the time as a never-ending conflict, bringing with it the likelihood that the nation might be a totally spent force financially, physically, psychologically and emotionally, at war’s end. The point is surely that we do not know what would have happened if the Entente Powers had opted to give a positive response to the American Peace Note of December 1916, or if they had offered moderate war aims in the summer of 1917. We simply do not know what might have been the outcome. Would a negotiated peace in 1917, based on Benedict XV’s proposals, have been more lasting that the Versailles peace in 1919, as one author has suggested?74

The approach taken in this thesis is to look at the events through the eyes of the Radical publicists, free from all anachronistic assumptions gained from the course of history since the First World War, shunning the temptation to view either the duration or the outcome of the war as pre-ordained.75 In this same vein, the Australian historian, Inga Clendinnen, has recently offered an interesting metaphor for historical insight:

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74 See for example, Humphrey Johnson, *Vatican Diplomacy* (Basil, 1933), pp. 39-43.
75 On this, it is fitting to look at Richard Overy’s observations about the Second World War. Overy, in his work on the Second World War, *Why the AlliesWon*, sounds a warning against complacency. Overy makes the point that we must preserve doubt and not read history backwards: ‘It has always been tempting, psychological comforting, to see victory in 1945 as a natural inevitable outcome, the assertion of right over might, of moral order over nihilistic chaos.’ Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (London, 1995), p. 1.
Looking back, we see the people, or some of them. We see the path they end up taking. We do not see the fog: the mistaken hopes, the disabling despairs, the misdirected energies. That makes judgement easy. It also makes it vacuous. Only by reconstructing the fog of mistaken convictions through which people in their times battled in the direction they hoped was forward can we hope to dispel the mists which obscure our own vision.\textsuperscript{76}

So in studying the past there is a sense that the historian must be immersed in the sources to see the world as those in the past did, but with the fog. To suspend one’s judgement and see events as they would have been seen in the past, free from the distraction that history turned out in a particular way. Therefore, by interacting with the Radical publicists’ writings and seeing events through ‘the fog’ of the time, it is hoped that a greater understanding and appreciation will be gained of the Radical publicists’ hope for a negotiated settlement of the Great War.

Though 1917 is the key period of investigation, the relevant subject matter does not fit neatly within this chronological timeframe. Therefore, this thesis commences with an overview of the period up to December 1916 followed by a detailed investigation of the Radical publicist’s writings in 1917 and finishing in February 1918. Key British Radical publicists, and the newspapers to which they contributed, are introduced in Chapter 1. In addition, this chapter examines the Radical publicists’ reaction to the outbreak of war, their initial hopes for a just and fair settlement and the developing relationship with both American progressives and President Wilson up to November 1916. Chapter 2 examines the development of Radical publicist opinion from the Peace Notes of December 1916 to American entry into the war in April 1917. In Chapter 3 the impact of events in Russia, President Wilson’s silence on war aims, and the peace initiatives emanating from international

\textsuperscript{76} Clendinnen’s speech was given at the N. S. W. Premier’s History Awards on 15 October 2003. \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 16 Oct. 2003, Inga Clendinnen, ‘History as preferred past only hampers the way to clear future’.
socialism and international Catholicism are all considered. The high points of hope for the Radical publicists, represented by the Lansdowne Letter and Wilson’s Fourteen Points, through to the bitter disappointment of the Supreme War Council’s rejection of a negotiated peace in early February 1918, are covered in Chapters 4 and 5. Finally this thesis will offer some observations concerning the significance and value of the Radical publicists’ role during these horrific years of conflict and of the surprisingly resilient hope they had for a just and lasting conclusion to the war.

There is much about the Radical publicists’ writings which has resonance for the world of the twenty-first century. In their wartime writings the Radical publicists held wide-ranging discussions about a host of world and domestic issues, many of which have some relevance for the new century. Most significantly, the Radical intellectual tradition is one of the major contributors to both the League of Nations and later the United Nations. Nelson Mandela, in a speech in January 2003, castigated George W. Bush and Tony Blair for undermining the United Nations by their decision to go to war with Iraq. Mandela reminded Bush and Blair that the United Nations was sponsored by their predecessors, Winston Churchill and President Roosevelt. He could also have said that the United Nations’ forerunner, the League of Nations, was similarly a product of cooperation between their Anglo-American forebears. To be precise, it was the British Radicals who gave the intellectual impetus to the formation of a world body to prevent war, and it was an American President who provided the political ‘clout’ to ensure that the establishment of the League of Nations was the top priority for the peace conference at the end of the war. Although

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77 Other major contributions to the ‘league’ debate in Britain were made by Fabians and the Bryce Group. However, these other contributions were not mutually exclusive to those of the Radicals and the U. D. C. See Henry R., Winkler, The League of Nations Movement in Great Britain, 1914-1919 (New Brunswick, 1952), pp. 7-23. Fabian Leonard Woolf’s 1917 book made a significant contribution to the later debate on the League. See Leonard Woolf, The Framework of the Lasting Peace (London, 1917).
President Wilson succeeded in getting his League of Nations, of course he failed to achieve American acceptance or membership of it. If it were not for President Franklin Roosevelt’s revival of the progressive internationalist agenda in the Atlantic Charter in 1941, and its consolidation by his successor, Harry Truman, then prospects of peace and economic prosperity may have been just as elusive after 1945 as they were after 1919.  

The British Radicals of the 1914-1918 war have thus had an indirect but profound influence on both thinking and practice in the international arena. For this reason alone, these Radical publicists are worthy of renewed examination.

A study of the Radical publicists’ opinions on the creation of a new international order is also useful because of other links with the modern world. The First World War ended a period of unparalleled prosperity at the dawn of the then new century. The generation of 1914 had witnessed exceptional change in its lifetime. Rapid economic growth, expanding world trade, rapid technological advances in manufacturing, a communications revolution, and non-government transnational networking, had transformed life for those lucky enough to be part of the western world. Despite class struggle, imperial rivalry, the arms race, militarism, and opposing alliance systems, optimism abounded. This was the first golden age of globalisation. The tragedy of August 1914 was that this unprecedented period of prosperity was brought to a halt. Since the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and the resumption

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of globalisation, the world has regained that sense of optimism and progress that had existed in pre-1914 Europe. As Chris Patten has recently observed, ‘free trade, liberty and representative government were almost buried in Europe and by Europeans. Now here we stand, a hundred years on, with the same hopes that we had before.’

However, Patten warns that Europe needs to fix its eyes upon the awkward challenges of the future and urges Britain and America to join together to ensure that the twenty-first century will ‘carry indelibly the ideas that shaped Europe’s rich and free heartlands – the belief in market economics, representative government and the rule of law.’ Similarly, James Blight and Robert McNamara reflect on the Wilsonian legacy, in their recent book *Wilson’s Ghost*. They argue that the United States must take up the progressive internationalist agenda again to reduce the risk of conflict, killing and catastrophe. They estimate that over 160 million people have perished as a result of war in the twentieth century and, projecting a similar pattern of conflict and war into the twenty-first century, this would see a death toll exceeding 300 million - and this is without factoring in the use of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction!

According to these eminently qualified commentators, and the writings of many others, at the beginning of the twenty-first century it is imperative that the United States enhance its leadership role in the world by taking a multilateral approach to world order.

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83 Ibid., p. 325.
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International order, driven by the engine of liberal internationalism, ordered by a growing body of international law, and with world peace maintained by multilateral organisations such as the United Nations and NATO, was a vision well on the way to being achieved by the end of the twentieth century. But in a post-September 11 world, in which the United States pursues an aggressive unilateralist approach and is increasingly dismissive of the United Nations and multi-lateral cooperation, the vision has now dimmed. The hope that the Radical publicists maintained throughout the war years was that the world could resume its pre-1914 path of globalisation while reforming the defects in the relations between great powers. This hope was disappointed. In the same way, the contemporary situation is less than reassuring.

The administration of George W. Bush has now steered the United States down an unashamedly unilateralist path, with its assertion of the doctrine of pre-emption, its rejection of the Kyoto Protocol, its refusal to join the International Criminal Court, and its abandonment of the ABM Treaty of 1972, to name a few instances. This unilateralist direction in foreign policy was embarked upon before the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. In 2003 the United States invaded Iraq in defiance of the wishes of the United Nations Security Council. The approach to world issues now taken by the United States is the reverse of the approach, advocated by Woodrow Wilson (and the Radical publicists), and actually implemented by Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman. Also, violations of international law by the United

democratic nations, working both within and outside the United Nations. Huntley asserts that this would achieve far more than the United Nations in the political, economic and military spheres due to their like-mindedness and shared values emanating from their democratic credentials. Huntley, Pax Democratica, Ch. 8.

86 Kupchan, The End of the American Era, p. 15. This cannot be blamed solely on the administration of George W. Bush. Rather, unilateralism has increasingly become a bipartisan trend in American politics. James Huntley has pointed out that unilateralism is a powerful force in the electorate and can be explained by a number of motives ranging from apathy to outright hostility. Huntley, Pax Democratica, pp. 141-2.

87 It is interesting to note the similarities here with the views of the anti-League Republicans in 1919 who believed that the United States should not be tied down to multilateral commitments but should be
States in 2003 in the name of self-defence that may serve to alter international law permanently, with uncertain repercussions. Public debate has now been fired up between the ‘neo-conservative’ advocates of unilateralist America, relying on its immense ability to exercise hard power, and those arguing for a return to a progressive internationalism reminiscent of the Wilson, Roosevelt and Truman administrations, ideals linked, of course, to the kind of progressive internationalist policies advocated by the British Radical publicists under study here. Not only did this issue surface as a major issue in the 2004 American presidential election, but it is certain to remain a major focus of global debate as the world faces the challenges of terrorism, nuclear proliferation, international crime, human trafficking, poverty, starvation, disease, and environmental catastrophe, to name just a few contemporary nightmares. The Radical publicists of 1917 held out hope that the nations could make a satisfactory peace, bind their wounds, then work multilaterally to put an end to the causes of war, promote a just world order, and effectively confront the challenges of the future. Their contribution, therefore, remains defiantly relevant to the contemporary world.

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free to act in its own interests when and where it sees fit. See Cooper, *Breaking the Heart of the World*, p. 135, and Lloyd Ambrosius, *Woodrow Wilson and the American Diplomatic Tradition: The Treaty Fight in Perspective* (Cambridge, 1987), Ch. 4. Though there is one difference with the world in 2004. For the United States it is no longer a choice between an isolationist foreign policy and interventionist foreign policy, but rather the choice is between unilateral interventionism or multilateral interventionism.

Chapter 1: The Battle of Ideas – August 1914 to November 1916

All this is a question of ideas. There is a battle. The soul of Britain is as much engaged as its body, and is as bitterly contested between rival claimants. Can the country maintain the vision with which the best of its young men went out to fight the war, and can her leaders frame the settlement in its reflected light?

H. W. Massingham, *Nation*, October 1916

On Friday 31 July 1914, after reading the morning papers, Morgan Philips Price, correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, wrote to his friend, Francis Hirst, congratulating him on his letter in the Daily News:

Should Sir Edward Grey be hounded by the Foreign Office and those devils of the ‘Times’ to involve us in a European War, I hope a great outcry will be raised all over the country by those Liberals who still hold true to the traditions of Liberalism as enshrined in the lives of Bright, Gladstone and Cobden.

W. Robertson Nicoll, editor of the British Weekly, dashed off a note to Hirst along similar lines.

I cannot tell you how grateful I am for your anti-war article in the Chronicle and the letters which have followed it. I agree with every world you say, and I am persuaded that the Nonconformists almost to a man are of the same mind. Grey’s views are represented in the Westminster Gazette, and if so they are highly unsatisfactory. The danger is a closing up and the committal of the nation to war in the darkness. I am going to write strongly in the British Weekly, and I am doing what I can to set in motion the forces of Non-conformity.

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90 M. Philips Price to Hirst, 31 July 1914.
91 W. Robertson Nicoll to Hirst, 31 July 1914, Hirst Papers 1914. Nicoll was the editor of the *British Weekly*. 
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The following day, W. Robertson Nicoll again wrote to Hirst, ‘I am going to get petitions presented for signature at entrances of all chapels on Sunday week demanding strict neutrality. I only hope it will not be too late.’ By Sunday 2 August, as the outbreak of war in Europe appeared imminent, Hirst wrote to his youngest sister, Margaret, that the panic in London was quite unprecedented: ‘City business of all kind has broken down. The machinery has ceased to work. News of war decides me to return this afternoon.’ On the other side of the Atlantic, another of Hirst’s sisters, Gertrude, wrote from Columbia University, New York. As news filtered to the United States about the imminence of war, she commented: ‘This is a very black day; you will be very heartsick. I read your article this morning, but I suppose you would not be so hopeful now. I saw the Observer this morning. It had a wicked article. We can none of us remember anything so horrible.’

Similar fears were expressed by C. P. Scott, editor of the Manchester Guardian. Scott had passionately declared himself in opposition to British intervention in a European war in an editorial on Friday 31 July. Scott lamented that the ‘unthinkable supposition that by some hidden contact England had been technically committed, behind her back, to the ruinous madness of a share in the wicked gamble of a war between two militarist leagues on the Continent.’ On Saturday, 1 August, the editor of the Nation, H. W. M. Massingham, boldly declared: ‘It’s safe to say that there has been no crisis in which the public opinion of the English

92 W. Robertson Nicoll to Hirst, 1 Aug. 1914, Hirst Papers 1914.
93 Margaret was educated in Classics and Economics, had written two books, one of them on the Quakers, and was a lecturer in Classics at Birmingham University. For further detail, see Francis W. Hirst, In The Golden Days (London, 1947), p. 19.
94 F. W. Hirst to Margaret Hirst, Sunday morning 2 Aug. 1914, Hirst Papers.
95 Gertrude was the oldest of the five Hirst siblings. She had a successful career in the United States, ending as professor of Greek and Latin in Barnard College, the women’s branch of Columbia University in New York. Hirst, In The Golden Days, p. 18.
96 Gertrude Hirst to F. W. Hirst, 2 Aug. 1914, Hirst Papers.
people has been so definitely opposed to war as it is at this moment.\textsuperscript{98} Furthermore, Massingham asserted that, ‘it is everywhere recognised that a minister who led this country into war would be responsible for a war as causeless and unpopular as any war in history, and that he would cease to lead the Liberal party.’\textsuperscript{99} The following day, as war drew closer, Scott was pessimistic.

There is, in our midst, an organised conspiracy to drag us into the war should the attempts of the peace-makers fail. Conspiracy we say because it is disloyal to Parliament, which is the constitutional guardian of the national interests in times of crisis. The conspirators prefer the confidence of selected newspaper editors to that of the representatives of the people.\textsuperscript{100}

On 2 August W. W. Greg wrote to Hirst from Cambridge, praising him for his writings on the crisis and declaring that it was ‘madness’ for Britain to intervene.\textsuperscript{101}

These emotional declarations, both private and public, serve to underline the point that, right up to 2 August 1914, a great many Liberal publicists were intensely hostile to the prospect of British intervention. British intervention in the ‘causeless and unpopular war’ that now threatened to engulf Europe was ‘ruinous madness’ and a ‘wicked gamble’, according to these newspaper editors. It would be a ‘war in the darkness’, based on a ‘conspiracy’ and a ‘hidden contract’. The only sound course to take, these editors reasoned, was one of ‘strict neutrality’. Such sentiments are at odds with the popular view today that the prospect of war in August 1914 was widely welcomed by the British people. It is true that these views reflected a minority in August 1914, yet this minority was rooted in the traditional Liberal abhorrence of foreign entanglements and the more recently-formulated Radical foreign policy paradigm. This unique perspective was swept aside as war hysteria swept the nation.

\textsuperscript{98} Nation, Events of the Week, 1 Aug. 1914.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{100} Manchester Guardian, C. P. Scott, 1 Aug. 1914.
\textsuperscript{101} W. W. Greg to F. W. Hirst, 2 Aug. 1914, Hirst Papers 1914.
yet within two years Radical prescriptions for securing a just peace and a reformed international order were placed high on the national agenda. During this time, the Radical publicists were to play a key role in keeping alive debate on the necessity of a just peace and a reformed international order. However, astonished by the lack of response on the part of their own Liberal leadership, the Radical publicists increasingly placed their hope in the prospect of American mediation to end the conflict and secure the kind of peace that they were seeking. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine the positions adopted by some key Radical publicists at the outbreak of the war and to chart the evolution of the Radical debate about the desirability of both American intervention and a negotiated peace from the first weeks of fighting to the American Presidential Election of November 1916.

The distinctive perspective on Britain’s slide to war held by the influential Radical editors, Hirst, Massingham and Scott, followed logically from the Radicals’ consensus on international affairs, which had been moulded in the years since the Boer War.\(^{102}\) Francis Wrigley Hirst was not only editor of the prestigious *Economist*, but also an intellectual and Radical power-broker of eminence, well-known for his passionate defence of personal freedom and free trade.\(^{103}\) Hirst had grown up with a nonconformist background. On both sides of his family he had ancestors who had campaigned for the Great Reform Bill and the repeal of the Corn Laws, while his maternal grandfather, Joseph Woodhead of Huddersfield, had been prominent in supporting the Liberal icons, Richard Cobden and John Bright, in their opposition to the Crimean War. In his youth, Hirst was inspired by the Liberal principles of free speech, free trade and free service. In 1891 he began his university studies at Wadham

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\(^{102}\) The use of the term ‘Radical’ has been explained in the Introduction.

\(^{103}\) The *Economist* was a London Liberal weekly established in 1843. Hirst had been appointed editor in 1907 and was 41 years of age at the beginning of the war.
College, Oxford, and after successful studies in law, was awarded the Cobden prize in 1899. On leaving Oxford, Hirst began a distinguished career in journalism. He married Helena Cobden, a great niece of the famous Richard Cobden. As a Liberal writer and journalist, Hirst channelled his energy into Liberal causes such as the fight for free trade. Following his appointment as editor of the *Economist* in 1907, Hirst announced his intention to broaden the appeal of the newspaper beyond the business community. Hirst’s Cobdenite Liberalism, which he zealously embraced, placed him solidly in the Radical camp.\(^{104}\) His 1906 book, *The Arbiter in Council*, explored the futility of war on economic grounds, and, like many of the Radical publicists, he had developed a sophisticated philosophy of the international system well before 1914.\(^{105}\)

Henry Massingham (known often as H. W. Massingham, or just H. W. M. in many of his columns), happily described himself as a Radical in the years before the First World War.\(^{106}\) Massingham was born in 1860 and took up his first position as an editor for the *Star* at the age of thirty-four. Under his direction the *Star* became the leading Radical newspaper. Later, Massingham was editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, but resigned in 1899 over his opposition to the Boer War.\(^{107}\) For the next eight years Massingham worked for the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily News*. In 1907 he assumed an editorship of his own paper once again.\(^{108}\) Under Massingham, the *Nation* came to be regarded as the flagship of Radical opinion. Massingham was a strong supporter of the Liberal government of Henry Campbell-Bannerman that had won

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\(^{104}\) Hirst referred to ‘We Cobdenites’ when referring to his colleagues and his own intention to buy a London penny daily. See F. W. Hirst to Gertrude Hirst, 13 Feb. 1915, Hirst Papers. See Hirst’s memoir, which outlined the significance in his life of the heroes of Liberalism such as Cobden, Bright and Campbell-Bannerman. Francis W. Hirst, *In the Golden Days* (London, 1947).


\(^{106}\) Massingham’s definition was that a Radical Liberal was someone who believed in the principles of political liberty and social progress on the lines of democracy. See Alfred F. Havighurst, *Radical Journalist: H. W. Massingham (1860-1924)* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 177.

\(^{107}\) For further information, see Stephen Edward Koss (Ed.), *The Pro-Boers, The Anatomy of an Antiwar Movement* (Chicago, 1973).

power in the 1906 general elections. The editor of the Nation continued to champion reformist causes and was outraged by Conservative frustration of the Liberal program, particularly the House of Lord’s blocking of the Budget in October 1909. Massingham maintained his support of the Liberal leaders after Herbert Asquith assumed the prime ministership in 1908, upon the death of Campbell-Bannerman, though other Radical publicists working for the Nation were less keen about the new Prime Minister. One distinguishing characteristic of Massingham was his willingness to allow his staff to maintain divergent opinions and to express these opinions in the columns of the Nation. Regular Nation lunches were held for the staff and contributors during which differences over key issues often emerged.

From 1912 the Nation joined other Radical M. P.s and Radical newspapers in criticism of Lord Grey’s foreign policy, though that criticism became muted somewhat in 1913-14. Like many of his colleagues, Massingham was totally opposed to the idea of British intervention in any European war.

Charles Prestwick Scott, more usually known as C. P. Scott, was perhaps the most eminent Liberal editor of the era, having been editor of the Manchester Guardian from 1872. He had close connections with many Liberal politicians having sat in the House of Commons from 1895 to 1905. He was an advanced Liberal who had identified his newspaper with reform issues of the ‘Left’ such as Home Rule for

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110 Radical opposition to Asquith began to form around C. P. Scott and L. T. Hobhouse. In contrast, Massingham believed that there was talent in the Asquith cabinet, describing Lloyd George as a Liberal with a bright future, and he acknowledged Winston Churchill as especially dedicated to social reform. Ibid., pp. 184-6.
111 One area in which difference of opinion was felt strongly was women’s suffrage. Contributors to the Paper, Nevinson and H. N. Brailsford, were strong supporters of women’s suffrage, while Massingham himself was supportive of women’s suffrage but opposed to militant action. Ibid., p. 195.
112 Ibid., p. 197.
113 Ibid., p. 219.
114 Havighurst, Radical Journalist, p. 222. This was helped by the fact that Anglo-German naval rivalry seemed dead. See p. 220.
Ireland in 1896,\textsuperscript{115} Liberal-Labour cooperation,\textsuperscript{116} along with staunch opposition to both Protectionism and Imperialism. Scott was fearless in standing by these principles and was resolutely prepared to face the ‘patriotic’ wrath of the general public over his pro-Boer stance.\textsuperscript{117} In July 1914, C. P. Scott stared down the ‘super-patriots’ and spoke out forthrightly against intervention.\textsuperscript{118}

There were a number of eminent Radical writers who contributed to the pages of the \textit{Nation}, \textit{Daily News} and the \textit{Economist} who are also noteworthy. Edmund Dene Morel, known to all simply as E. D. Morel, had earned a fearsome reputation as a Radical reformer as a result of his involvement in the Congo Reform Association (C. R. A.). This was largely a one-man campaign to end the horrific human rights abuses that were a routine part of Belgium’s administration of the Belgian Congo from the 1890s. From 1904, Morel built the C. R. A. into a national organisation, took the campaign to the United States, produced numerous books, pamphlets, and articles on the Congo question, and wrote dozens of letters each day to prominent people.\textsuperscript{119}

During the Agadir Crisis in 1911, Morel enhanced his reputation by launching bold attacks on Lord Grey’s foreign policy. He developed a comprehensive critique of British foreign policy in his 1912 article, ‘Morocco in Diplomacy’, denouncing the secretive nature of treaties with Britain’s Entente partners.\textsuperscript{120} Morel accepted the Radical critique of the dangers of following a foreign policy based on maintaining a

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p. 86.
\textsuperscript{118} The most authoritative study of C. P. Scott is Trevor Wilson (ed.), \textit{The Political Diaries of C. P. Scott, 1911-1928} (London, 1970).
\textsuperscript{119} Catherine Cline, \textit{E. D. Morel 1873-1924: The Strategies of Protest} (Belfast, 1980), p. 44. By 1904, Morel had won over to his position forty M. P.’s and ten peers, and went to the United States where he met with Theodore Roosevelt and secured his backing for his campaign. See pp. 44-45.
\textsuperscript{120} Laurence Martin called ‘Morocco in Diplomacy’ a ‘powerful denunciation of secret diplomacy’. According to Martin, the Agadir Crisis caused Morel to fear that Britain might become committed to aid France in a future war with Germany, which in turn led to his conviction that war was the enemy of democracy, and that the democratic control of foreign policy was needed. Also see Martin, \textit{Peace Without Victory}, pp. 10-13, for an outline of Hobson’s views on imperialism.
‘balance of power’, a policy that entailed secret treaties and understandings with France, a nation which had been a staunch supporter of Belgian imperial policies and of autocratic Russia. For these reasons, Morel was resolutely opposed to British involvement in any European war in 1914.

John Atkinson Hobson, at 64 years of age in 1914, was the oldest of the Radical publicists. After teaching in English literature and classics, Hobson joined the Fabian society in 1887 and became an active member. C. P. Scott, the editor of the \textit{Manchester Guardian}, recruited Hobson as the newspaper’s foreign correspondent in South Africa. The Boer War (1899-1902) transformed Hobson’s thinking. He saw the war as a capitalist plot organised by investors in South African mines.\textsuperscript{121} When the war ended Hobson was to incorporate the South African case into a general theory of economic imperialism, published under the title \textit{Imperialism: A Study} (1902).\textsuperscript{122} In this work he linked imperialism with his theory of under-consumption, by arguing that the former was the result of increased pressures on capitalists to find an outlet for their surplus profits. \textit{Imperialism} soon acquired the status of a classic.\textsuperscript{123} After returning from reporting the Boer War, Hobson became a celebrity in Radical circles and his publication of \textit{Imperialism} cemented his reputation.\textsuperscript{124} Hobson became a prominent speaker and a writer in the Radical press. Like the other Radical publicists, he had been encouraged by the election of the Campbell-Bannerman Liberal government in 1906. In 1907 Hobson joined the staff of the \textit{Nation} newspaper and entered the circle of the Radical publicists, along with H. W. Nevinson, and J. L. Hammond, whom

\textsuperscript{122}J. A. Hobson, \textit{Imperialism} (New York, 1902).
\textsuperscript{123}Ibid., p. 27. John Strachey considered Hobson’s study the highest point of development of Liberal thought in Britain. See the following for an outline of Hobson’s ideas on imperialism: Keith Robbins, \textit{The Abolition of War: The Peace Movement in Britain 1914-1919} (Cardiff, 1976), pp. 24; Laurence Martin, \textit{Peace Without Victory} (New York, 1958), pp. 7-9.
\textsuperscript{124}H. N. Brailsford praised Hobson’s courage and moral stature in standing up to the ‘Jingo’, and delivering a frontal attack on Imperialism and all it meant, rather than pleading for moderation and the middle-ground as Liberals usually did. See Allett, \textit{New Liberalism}, p. 28.
Massingham had drawn to his paper.\textsuperscript{125} Hobson’s especially combative style was his trademark. This could be glimpsed in July 1914 when Hobson wrote a scathing indictment of the forces of reaction that were conspiring to kill off the Asquith government’s plans for Irish independence in the Home Rule Bill.\textsuperscript{126} Hobson was alarmed at how easily the Conservative statesmen were willing to ‘abandon the pretense of submission to the popular will and to fall back upon their control of organised physical force for the protection of their privileges’.\textsuperscript{127} In July 1914 Hobson believed that reactionary forces were talking-up the possibility of war and he was reinforced in his commitment to Cobdenite principles of non-intervention.\textsuperscript{128} At the end of July 1914, Hobson joined the British Neutrality Committee.\textsuperscript{129}

Henry Noel Brailsford was another Radical journalist, but both more youthful and adventurously left-leaning than those above.\textsuperscript{130} Brailsford had been a member of the I. L. P. since 1907 and had started his career as a foreign correspondent for the Manchester Guardian, followed by a stint as a journalist for the Morning Leader from 1899. Brailsford’s career then blossomed as a leader writer for the Daily News and a contributor to the Star and the Nation. Jane Brailsford, his wife, was a member of the Women’s Social and Political Union (W. S. P. U.) and Henry shared her views on women’s suffrage. This commitment to women’s suffrage, and his passionate criticism of the force-feeding of women prisoners, brought Brailsford into conflict with the staff of the Daily News and led to his resignation from the paper in 1909. Brailsford continued to contribute to the Nation, in addition to the Herald.

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., p. 31.
\textsuperscript{126} J. A. Hobson, Traffic in Treason (London, 1914). Traffic in Treason was about the so-called Curragh Camp mutiny in July 1914 when the Home Rule Bill was to become law. ‘Bonar Law … was implicated in an attempt to get British officers stationed in Ireland to disobey orders, issued by the Liberal government, to curb street demonstrations then being planned by Ulster Unionists.’ Allett, New Liberalism p. 35.
\textsuperscript{127} Quoted in Ibid., p. 35.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., p. 37.
\textsuperscript{130} For a biography of Brailsford, see F. M. Leventhal, The Last Dissenter.
Brailsford’s progressive internationalist credentials were firmly established with his writing of what became a landmark book on international relations in 1914 called *The War of Steel and Gold*.\(^{131}\) Contrary to most Radical publicists, Brailsford argued that the days of Britain’s ‘splendid isolation’ were over and that, while the policy of alliances was dangerous, Britain was very much coupled with Europe. Furthermore, though war was irrational from the standpoint of nations, it was a rational option for governing power elites. Like many of his contemporaries interested in the issues of war and peace, Brailsford was optimistic about the prospects of peace in 1914, despite recognising the dangers of the international situation.\(^{132}\)

In 1914, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson was a relative newcomer to the staff of the *Nation*. Dickinson was born in 1862 and was 52 years old in 1914. He spent much of his life as an academic at King’s College, Cambridge. Dickinson had some interest in Fabianism, which brought him into contact with people like Sidney Webb and Bernard Shaw after 1895.\(^{133}\) As a strong internationalist and free trader, he had sympathy with pacifism, but was no pacifist himself.\(^{134}\) At the turn of the century he had participated in the founding of a new monthly journal, *The Independent Review*, which first appeared in 1903. Dickinson joined F. W. Hirst, C. F. G. Masterman and G. M. Trevelyan on the editorial council. The journal was founded to combat Protectionism and aggressive Imperialism that were at that time being championed by Joseph Chamberlain, the leader of the Conservatives.\(^{135}\) On overseas trips prior to 1914, Dickinson came to admire America, and came to the conclusion that ‘the future

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\(^{134}\) Ibid., p. 157.

\(^{135}\) Ibid., p. 115.
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of the world lies with America.\textsuperscript{136} After Woodrow Wilson’s election to the Presidency in 1912, his feelings towards America became even more upbeat.\textsuperscript{137}

Ralph Norman Angell Lane, otherwise known as Norman Angell, was an eccentric who had become a cult figure in internationalist and pacifist circles by 1914. Angell was born in 1872 and had a cosmopolitan education in London, the Lycée in France, and the University of Geneva. At the age of seventeen, Angell decided to immigrate to the United States and then lived there for the next six years.\textsuperscript{138} This experience made him feel quite at home in either the United States or Britain. He returned to Europe in 1895, picking up a journalistic job in Paris, where he stayed for sixteen years. During this time Angell became editor of the continental version of Lord Northcliffe’s \textit{Daily Mail}, which saw him based in Paris. His interest in the issues of war and peace intensified after the Moroccan crisis of 1905. In 1909 he published \textit{Europe’s Optical Illusion} at his own expense and also under the name ‘Norman Angell’ so as not to embarrass his patron, Northcliffe.\textsuperscript{139} His main argument in this book was that the economic strength of a nation was based on international trade and credit and that it was an illusion to think that it was based on military prowess.\textsuperscript{140} Further, he argued that a war between industrial powers would damage the basis of modern prosperity that was built on the delicate interdependence of international trade and finance. However, Angell was most troubled over the militaristic spirit which, he observed, was dominant in all the European powers, and it was this spirit that he attempted to counter through his book.\textsuperscript{141} His book was expanded under the title \textit{The

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., p. 129.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., p. 133.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., p. 4.
\textsuperscript{141} Miller, \textit{Norman Angell}, p. 5.
Great Illusion in 1910, and was received with wide acclaim. Sir Richard Garton, and some wealthy Quakers, such as Joseph Rowntree, funded a second edition in 1912. Angell’s fame spread, due to the success of the second edition, and a hundred organisations were established in England to study and propagate his views. In 1913 a Norman Angell monthly called War and Peace was established with contributions from a wide variety of writers including other prominent Radical publicists such as G. Lowes Dickinson, F. W. Hirst, and J. A. Hobson. Angell’s fame spread internationally with over a million copies of the Great Illusion being translated into seventeen languages. Angell’s writings were devoured by Quakers and American pacifists. The highlight of Angell’s work for the cause of international peace was a Summer School held near London in July 1914, which attracted young men from Britain, the United States, France and Germany. The Summer School instilled in the hearts of many young students a passion to work towards the goals of international peace and justice. However, a few days after the end of the conference, the First World War began.

This brief sketch of some of the key Radical publicists illustrates their common concerns in 1914. However, the onset of war challenged the Radical publicists’ pre-war consensus more quickly than anyone could have imagined. In the 1 August edition of the Manchester Guardian, C. P. Scott elaborated on his accusation that there was an organised conspiracy to drag the nation into war. He dismissed the three arguments being put forward in the conservative press to justify intervention: the

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142 Also see Laurence Martin, Peace Without Victory (New York, 1958), pp. 9-11, for an outline of the ideas in The Great Illusion.
143 Ibid., p. 7.
144 However, the Quakers and American pacifists disagreed with Angell over his acceptance of the use of armaments for defence. Ibid., p. 8.
145 Ibid., p. 9.
need to preserve the balance of power; the need to protect Belgian neutrality; and the argument that Britain was honour-bound to help its friends, which in this case meant both Russia and France. Regarding the balance of power, Scott raised a concern which was to be an on-going theme among the Radical publicists, that is, the fear of a triumphant Russia dominating Europe at the end of the war. On 3 August, the *Manchester Guardian* highlighted the danger of Russia crushing Germany and ‘straddling’ Europe. Russia was as bad as Serbia, as far as Scott was concerned, particularly in the area of violations of human rights and suppression of democracy. Furthermore, Britain’s interests in Asia would be under more threat from a triumphant Russia than from any other power. The idea that Russia cared about European morality was a ‘joke’, according to Scott:

> The Russian Government, like most other despotic governments, regards war with absolute cynicism, and any country of Western Europe which went into war, of its own free will, in league with so tainted an ally, would do well to forget the language of morality and Christianity until that particular association had ceased.  

This was a harsh description of Britain’s eastern ally. Furthermore, Scott questioned the Government’s real motive for going to war, implying that dark forces were at work. Like an Old Testament prophet, Scott declared that, ‘foreign war is the lightning conductor with which every corrupt Government tries to divert from itself the fire that its crimes have called down on it.’

Meanwhile, the *Manchester Guardian* of 3 August gave prominence on the front page to the manifestos of two committees that had been hastily formed to ensure

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146 *Manchester Guardian*, 1 Aug. 1914.  
147 ‘We set her up again as a confident and secure persecutor of the Jews; we put back the clock of freedom and of civilized government throughout by far the largest area that the misconduct of any one Power in Europe can injure, and besides all that we make securely dominant in Asia the one Power which threatens us there.’ *Manchester Guardian*, 3 Aug. 1914.  
149 Ibid.
The manifesto of the ‘British Neutrality Committee’ was set up by Graham Wallas and signed by a number of prominent Radicals, including the publicists J. A. Hobson, F. W. Hirst (editor of the *Economist*), and A. G. Gardiner (editor of the *Daily News*). The second manifesto mentioned in the *Manchester Guardian*, was the ‘Provisional Committee’, otherwise known as the ‘British Neutrality League’. This committee included a number of peers, a bishop, some well-known identities, and prominent publicists including C. P. Scott as its signatories. Its declared intention was ‘to bring home to the public the importance of showing the strength of feeling in favour of neutrality’ and the manifesto alerted the public to the danger that success in the war would leave Russia as the dominant power in Europe. Furthermore, Britain had far more in common with ‘civilized’ Germany than with ‘autocratic’ and barbaric Russia. The manifesto urged that Britain follow Italy’s example and remain neutral. Intervention would imperil Britain’s role as the financial centre of the world. The manifesto concluded: ‘The British people can best serve the cause of right and justice, their best interests and those of civilisation, by remaining the one Great Power in Europe that has not yielded to the war madness.’ Letters from a number of influential people supported these two manifestos. In the first few

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151 Harris, *Out of Control*, p. 25.
152 The other members were: Lord Courtney of Penwith, J. Ramsay MacDonald, Gilbert Murray, Graham Wallas, G. M. Trevelyan, L. T. Hobhouse, J. L. Hammond and Basil Williams. See *Manchester Guardian*, 3 Aug. 1914.
154 Ibid.
155 Ibid.
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days of August, Radical publicists joined with other opinion-leaders in voicing their horror at the prospect of British intervention in a European war.

The pages of the *Manchester Guardian* over a two or three day period prior to the war, displayed very clearly the utter astonishment felt by moderate and Radical Liberals that the nation could so suddenly be brought to the brink of war, and even worse, that this could happen under the auspices of a Liberal Government! There was a sense of powerlessness and a growing realisation that events were really out of their control.157 All the pre-war assurances of Asquith and Grey that Britain was under no obligation to intervene in a European conflict now sounded extremely hollow. The threat of war hit the Liberals like a ‘death warrant’.158 But there was still hope. There was a large anti-war demonstration in Trafalgar Square, organised by the Socialists, on the afternoon of Sunday 3 August. The *Manchester Guardian* observed that, ‘the mind of the crowd was full of a quiet indignation and of alarm at the realisation that they had been, as it were, pushed to the edge of a precipice without a word of warning.’159 Furthermore, it was felt that the ‘Jingo case for war’ would just not hold up. The only other possible reason for intervention, a ‘secret obligation’, was ‘still unthinkable’ in view of recent Ministerial pledges, and ‘its existence would mean the betrayal of democracy.’160

On the evening of 3 August 1914, cold, hard reality struck down the Radical publicists’ hopes that war would be averted. Foreign Minister Grey’s speech in the Commons that afternoon came as a shock to moderate Liberals and Radicals alike.161

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157 Irene Cooper Willis has argued that the Liberals had been caught napping over foreign affairs, and ‘hurriedly awakening, found them in a most uncomfortable predicament’. She argued also, that the Conservatives were far better informed about foreign affairs than the Liberals. See Irene Cooper Willis, *England’s Holy War: A Study of English Idealism During the Great War* (New York, 1928), pp. 4-5.

158 Ibid., p. 67.


160 Ibid.

161 The reaction of the Liberal parliamentarians was another matter, however. Publicly they had maintained silence in the week before the war and restricted themselves to ‘private discussions and
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The *Daily News* and the *Manchester Guardian* gave accounts of Grey’s war speech while still giving prominence to anti-war speeches. The *Daily News* referred to the ‘courage’ of Ramsay MacDonald, the ‘eloquence’ of Philip Morrell, and noted Edmund Harvey’s declaration that it was not a peoples’ war but a ‘war in high places – [of] bureaucrats.’\(^{162}\) The *Daily News* quoted approvingly Mr. Wedgwood’s warning: ‘War! Yes – it is war to-day; to-morrow – Revolution.’\(^{163}\) The same paper noted the dissenting speeches of Sir Albert Spicer, Mr. Rowntree and Mr. Keir Hardie, all of whom denounced Britain’s intervention, while Arthur Ponsonby was ‘impressive as doom’ as he lamented the cost of this decision.\(^{164}\)

Meanwhile the *Manchester Guardian*, in a major editorial on 4 August, almost certainly written by C. P. Scott, attacked Foreign Minister Grey’s speech:

> Mr. E. Grey’s speech last night, for all its appearance of candour, was not fair, either to the House of Commons or to the country. It showed that for years he has been keeping back the whole truth and telling just enough to lull into a false sense of security, not enough to enable the country to form a reasoned judgement on the current of our policy.\(^{165}\)

In a similar editorial in the 5 August edition, the *Daily News* highlighted its conviction that Britain had pursued a ‘mistaken’ foreign policy for the past ten years and declared that it would have been ‘just and prudent and statesmanlike’ for Britain

\(^{162}\) *Daily News*, 4 Aug. 1914.
\(^{163}\) Ibid.
\(^{164}\) Ibid.
\(^{165}\) *Manchester Guardian*, 4 Aug. 1914.
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to have remained neutral.\textsuperscript{166} It predicted that eventually the people would judge intervention as an error never to be repeated. Then the unbelievable happened. In a massive about-face, the\textit{Daily News} editorial, penned as always by A. G. Gardiner, concluded its analysis with the astonishing statement that, ‘Being in, we must win.’\textsuperscript{167} After all its strident opposition, the\textit{Daily News} threw in the towel, so to speak. The\textit{Daily News}’ opposition to British participation was over. Despite all his hype about the need to keep out of the European conflagration, Gardiner’s attitude had been transformed by the actuality of the war. Gardiner repented of his anti-war statements and pledged the\textit{Daily News} to the cause of winning the war.

Despite all the beliefs that Alfred Gardiner held in common with his fellow Radical publicists, he had been deeply affected by Grey’s appeal to Britain to intervene in the European war in response to Belgian violation.\textsuperscript{168} By 8 August Gardiner had transformed his opposition to British intervention in a ‘questionable war’ into support for what he now argued was ‘not a war of peoples’, but a war of ‘despots and diplomatists’. Gardiner put forward the unconventional proposition that this war was not directed at the German people:

\begin{quote}
It is, we may hope, the last supreme struggle of the old dispensation against the new. Let us be quite clear in our minds as to the real enemy. We have no quarrel with the German people. No, it is not with the people with whom we are at war. It is the tyranny which has held them in its vice, the tyranny of personal government armed with a mailed fist, the tyranny of a despotic rule, countersigned by Krupps. In this war we are engaged in fighting for the emancipation of Germany as well as for the liberties of Europe.\textsuperscript{169}
\end{quote}

Gardiner now viewed the war as a struggle against a form of tyranny embodied in the political, economic and military leadership of Germany. The potential threat of

\textsuperscript{166}\textit{Daily News}, 5 Aug. 1914.
\textsuperscript{167}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{169}\textit{Daily News}, 8 Aug. 1914.
German tyranny was now ascendant while the menace of autocratic Russia was conveniently pushed to one side. For Gardiner, the war was to be a crusade to rid Europe of the tyranny of the German government and that was to be the target of military efforts, not the German people. Thus Gardiner eased his conscience, stricken by advocating war, by taking refuge in the cause of higher idealism. Irene Cooper Willis makes a telling observation of Gardiner’s declaration: ‘It is remarkable for showing, at that early date, the ideal war aims in almost as perfect a state of development as that afterwards reached, even in the speeches of President Wilson.’

Even more interesting, however, was the reason Cooper Willis gave for Gardiner’s turnaround to support the war for these aims. She said of Gardiner’s aim in the war that, ‘it needs no profound knowledge of human psychology to see that they were the offspring of a forced union between abhorrence of, and submission to, the war.’

The only way Gardiner could justify his abandonment of dearly-held Radical principles, to himself and his readers, was to argue that it was for a higher cause.

However, Gardiner was not the first to take the road of higher idealism in defecting to the ‘pro-war’ camp. The previous day, the *Daily Chronicle* had been the first Liberal paper to take the line that this war was to be an idealistic crusade. The author of this significant statement was H. G. Wells. Wells declared that:

> Every sword that is drawn against Germany is a sword drawn for peace. That trampling, drilling foolery in the heart of Europe that has arrested civilisation and darkened the hopes of mankind for forty years, German Imperialism, German militarism, has struck its inevitable blow. The victory of Germany will mean the permanent enthronement of the War God over all human affairs. The defeat of Germany may open the way to disarmament and peace throughout the earth. To those who love peace there can be no other hope in the present conflict than the defeat, the utter discrediting of the German legend, the ending for good and all of the blood and iron superstition, Krupp, flag-waving Teutonic Kiplingism, and all that criminal sham efficiency that centres in Berlin.

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171 Ibid.
Never was war so righteous as war against Germany now. Never has any state in the world so clamoured for punishment. That is why I, with my declared horror of war, have not signed any of these ‘stop the war’ appeals and declarations that have appeared in the last few days.¹⁷²

However, not all those publicists who held Radical views before the war jumped onto the pro-war bandwagon, proclaiming the righteousness of fighting a war against tyranny, nor were all filled with an optimistic belief that the war could transform Europe for the better. Some retreated into silence. Francis Hirst received a letter displaying the sense of resignation, common to many Liberals, from his close friend, G. W. Pawle, in which he lamented that, ‘Now that we are at war it’s no use saying anything more.’¹⁷³ However, Hirst was not inclined to sacrifice his Radical convictions in a self-imposed silence nor was he willing to join the clamour in favour of a war for Liberal causes in the aftermath of the declaration of war. Hirst did not share the recently-acquired optimism then suddenly being reflected in the pages of the Daily Chronicle and Daily News. Rather, he was despondent and pessimistic about the prospect of war. Writing to his sister Margaret on 6 August, Hirst was full of foreboding about the effect the war was already having: ‘The city is dead and cannot revive for a long time. It is full of bankrupt firms – their bankruptcy only postponed by Moratorium.’¹⁷⁴ He reported the view of the Radical elder statesman, Lord Morley,¹⁷⁵ that Britain’s intervention was ‘a dire piece of folly.’¹⁷⁶

While Hirst sank deeper into despondency, other Radicals were galvanised into action. Charles Trevelyan informed Radical publicist, E. D. Morel, that there was a ‘body of Liberal members united for a common action on the war questions, trying

¹⁷³ G. S. Pawle to F. W. Hirst, 5 Aug. 1914, Hirst Papers.
¹⁷⁵ Morley was one of only two ministers who resigned from the Liberal Cabinet in protest at British intervention. Burns was the other.
to establish connection with the Labour Party. Ponsonby, Philip Morrell and Rowntree inspire it.’\textsuperscript{177} If a secretary was needed for this organisation, Trevelyan promised, ‘I shall think of you first.’\textsuperscript{178} Charles Phillips Trevelyan was a Liberal M. P. in the Radical faction of the party. He had been a member of the Liberal Foreign Affairs Group formed in 1911 at the height of the Agadir Crisis.\textsuperscript{179} While Hirst was in a state of despondency, Morel joined the other true believers who were prepared for action.

In the \textit{Nation’s} 8 August edition, Radical publicists still opposed to the war criticised those who now propagated the view that Britain was fighting a war for idealistic reasons. Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson countered with a different sort of ‘Holy War’ than that envisaged by Gardiner and Wells. Rather, he portrayed he and his colleagues who opposed British intervention in the war as ‘friends of reason’ who would not be heard ‘for the moment’, but would fight their own ‘holy war’. Quite prophetically, he warned:

\begin{quote}
As this war pursues its dreadful course, as its fatal and foreseen consequences unroll, as the fact of what we are doing begins to penetrate from our senses to our imagination, as the dreadful awakening succeeds to the stunning shock, it will be for the friends of reason to drive home the lesson, first and chiefest into their own heart and brain, then, if strength be given them, into the conscience of mankind. That is our war - those of us who believe in reason - our eternal and holy war. In this dark hour of our defeat, let us not forget it.\textsuperscript{180}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{177} C. P. Trevelyan to E. D. Morel, 5 Aug. 1914.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{179} C.P. Trevelyan’s father and brother were both well known historians. Also, Trevelyan’s cousin was Morgan Phillips Price who was a well known Radical journalist who worked for the \textit{Manchester Guardian}. Schwarz, The \textit{Union of Democratic Control}, pp. 11-12. From 1904 Trevelyan had become very critical of Britain’s slavish loyalty toward both France and Russia. In 1913 he waged a vigorous private campaign against the popular idea that Britain was morally obliged to defend France. Trevelyan also became the principal financial contributor to Graham Wallas’ Neutrality Committee which, as we have seen, was set up with the express purpose of preventing Britain’s involvement in a general European war. See A. J. A. Morris, \textit{C. P. Trevelyan 1870-1958. Portrait of a Radical} (Belfast, Blackstaff Press, 1977).
However, in August 1914 the Radical publicists who stood firm against the war were like voices crying in the wilderness. In their view, irrationality now reigned supreme. Dickinson expressed the essential paradox in this way: ‘We are sane people. But our acts are mad. Why? Because we are all in the hands of some score of individuals called Governments. These men have willed this thing for us over our heads.’\(^{181}\) The people did not want this war, explained Dickinson: ‘All are powerless. The die has been cast for them. The crowned gamblers cast it, and the cast was death.’\(^{182}\) It was not only the leaders who were to blame but also, journalists, who have been ‘sowing mistrust and hatred between nations’, as well as ‘every historian who has used history to glorify or apologise for war.’ Indeed, and Dickinson concluded, ‘every man who has exalted passion at the cost of reason, is an accomplice in this crime.’\(^{183}\) For Dickinson it was nonsense that the war could produce something positive, but rather, the catastrophes in which the nation was plunged would produce ‘incalculable evils.’ So, for Dickinson pessimism abounded. He could only hope that there would come a time when the ‘friends of reason’ would be listened to.\(^{184}\)

In a similar vein, Norman Angell complained that, though the nation knew the right path to take, it did the exact reverse. He declared that the British people were ‘slaves and puppets’ of forces that compel them to override their minds and consciences to follow a path ‘divorced from moral responsibility and human choice as the bending of the growing corn before the wind.’\(^{185}\) It was not a matter of ‘uncontrollable passion’, Angell declared:

\(^{181}\) Ibid.
\(^{182}\) Ibid.
\(^{183}\) Ibid.
\(^{184}\) Ibid.
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Nor is it a question of the collision of two rights. Everybody wanted not to go to war. Everybody has gone to war. The action which we did not intend, we have taken. The action we did intend, we have not taken.\textsuperscript{186}

The reason for this state of affairs, argued Angell, was the secret action of three or four men who now informed the nation that there were obligations of ‘honour’.\textsuperscript{187} Angell was pessimistic about the effect of the war on both domestic democracy and social reform:

The problem of peace is neither more nor less than the problem of laying the foundation of civilised society that a stable and secure superstructure becomes possible. It is all one general interdependent problem. Constructive social work depends upon making peace secure; peace depends upon an educated democracy, while the militarism in the long-run is fatal to democracy, and if democracy is to survive, the general war problem must find a solution.\textsuperscript{188}

Also, on a global scale, war was outdated because of global interdependence in many areas, especially finance, argued Angell:

The interdependence of the modern world has made the whole conception of society as conglomerations of rival States an absurdity, an impossible foundation for our work in the world. What is now happening to the credit system of the world is important in this: that it is a very visible demonstration of the unity of mankind, of the need for confidence and co-operation, if States are to fulfil those functions for which they were created.\textsuperscript{189}

For Angell, the declaration of war came about due to the action of a handful of leaders and failed to be questioned or resisted by the majority due to poor education. Angell believed there was absolutely nothing to be optimistic about. Rather the war would threaten all the domestic and international progress made in recent years.

Editor of the \textit{Nation}, H. W. Massingham, shared the pessimism of Angell and Dickinson, but came to a different conclusion.\textsuperscript{190} He agreed that social progress was

\textsuperscript{186} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{190} On Sunday 2 August, Massingham had been at the peace rally in Trafalgar Square. On 3 August, it seemed to J. A. Hobson that Massingham was going to commit the paper to opposition to intervention.
now under threat: ‘European statesmanship has with its own hands torn up its timid projects for relieving the always-pitiful lot of the poor. The society of hope and ideas lies in ruins.’\[^{191}\] Massingham’s writings at this time conveyed a feeling of helplessness, a sense that the Liberal program was no longer relevant: ‘As for our own limited purposes of political action we need at this hour merely to note their extinction. A party restored to power for the preservation of free trade has become involved in a European war. Liberalism has no more immediate message for the Administration. Political controversy is at an end.’\[^{192}\] There is a resignation in this last sentence similar to A. G. Gardiner’s declaration that ‘being in, we must win’.\[^{193}\] Despite allowing the *Nation* to be used as a vehicle for others to attack the Government’s line on the war, Massingham’s personal view saw him join the ranks of the pro-war Radicals. Elsewhere in the 8 August edition, Massingham made his thoughts perfectly clear: ‘the feeling is unanimous that the struggle must now be carried on with the utmost energy, not indeed until Germany is crushed, but until a German aggression is defeated and German militarism broken.’\[^{194}\]

Meanwhile, F. W. Hirst, editor of the *Economist*, still dumbfounded by recent events, was consoled by the Liberal peer, Lord Farrer: ‘What a pretty pass Jingoism has brought us, and not only us, but the Liberal Party.’\[^{195}\] Worse was to come, in Farrer’s view. Protectionism and conscription threatened on the horizon, though, ‘the

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\[^{192}\] Ibid.


\[^{194}\] *Nation*, Events of the Week, 8 Aug. 1914. In the following weekend’s issue, Massingham took this thinking further, hoping that at war’s end a revamped Hague Conference could be the basis of international law, as well as establishing an international police force. Also, he expressed the hope that there would be a resolve in Western Europe to achieve adult universal suffrage, arms limitation and an end to conscription. ‘When the end is achieved, the task of reconstruction will begin, and we shall not lightly believe that Europe will free herself of one incubus only to load her back with another.’ *Nation*, ‘The End of the Armed Peace’, Politics and Affairs, 22 Aug. 1914.

\[^{195}\] Farrer to F. W. Hirst, 9 Aug. 1914, Hirst Papers.
one bright spot is the U. S. A., according to the Liberal Lord. Though Hirst was repulsed by those Radicals who had converted to pro-war optimism, he did not, at this stage, seem inclined to join other politicians and publicists in a combined show of force in opposition to the war policy. His response to C. P. Trevelyan’s invitation to join others in making a public statement was certainly more cautious, and in stark contrast to Morel’s enthusiastic response to Trevelyan, a few days earlier. In the climate of war hysteria that now prevailed, Hirst advised caution. He urged Trevelyan to send out things privately to ‘people who are in sympathy’ and for people only to get together for a particular purpose, such as to oppose martial law, rather than to form a permanent group. Personally, he did not want to be on committees ‘as I don’t want to be responsible for anything except the conduct of the Economist’. In Hirst’s opinion, the proper way of acting was to examine carefully the foreign policy mess that got the nation in the war, and then try to ‘bring about a fundamental change in the control of foreign policy.’ Hirst was apparently suffering the strain of the previous weeks as a letter from Lord Eversley indicated. Grey’s duplicitous foreign policy was, to Hirst and many other Radical publicists, the overriding issue.

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196 Ibid.
197 F. W. Hirst to C. P. Trevelyan, 12 Aug. 1914, Hirst Papers.
198 Ibid.
199 Ibid.
200 Lord Eversley sympathised with Hirst who was ill: ‘The strain of the last few weeks must have been very great.’ Also, Eversley’s note to Hirst analysed some of the key events in the recent diplomacy which led to war. Lord Eversley to F. W. Hirst, 12 Aug. 1914, Hirst Papers.
201 William T. Clark [John Bright’s son-in-law] to F. W. Hirst, 12 Aug. 1914, Hirst Papers. It is interesting to note that Clark took the public approach suggested by C. P. Trevelyan, and wrote a letter to his constituents, which he believed was the ‘best thing’ so far. Clark to Hirst, 16 Aug. 1914. Also see Molteno’s letter to Merriman in which Molteno stated that, ‘this is purely a diplomatist’s war and we have been dragged in quite unnecessarily and automatically by arrangements made with France years ago of which the House and the country knew nothing.’ P. A. Molteno to Merriman, 14 Aug. 1914, Hirst Papers. This is also expressed by J. Allen Baker: ‘I have always taken the view that we ought to have declared our neutrality, and a large group of us pressed it as hard as we could, but there is no use now in discussing the course of events, but it seems clear, both from the White Paper and from what Sir Edward Grey said, and did not say, that we had some sort of secret understanding with France.’ J. Allen Baker to Hugh Richardson, 14 Aug. 1914, Richardson Papers.
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By the second weekend of the war, the pages of the *Nation* offered a wide variety of views. Radical and I. L. P. politician, Ramsay MacDonald, explained his disagreement with the *Nation’s* editor, Massingham, and his dictum, announced in the previous week’s issue that, ‘political controversy is at an end’.\(^{202}\) MacDonald was critical of the view, held by Massingham and many others, that differences should be put aside and that all political parties and factions should stand united for the duration of the war. MacDonald argued that it was this sort of attitude (of dodging around Grey’s foreign policy) in the previous years that had got them into this mess:

> There is a disposition to stand by and - putting all political thoughts into the background - confining our energies to helping our country, in what way our conscience allows, to emerge as unscathed as possible from this war. But is that our sole duty? For eight years we have been weaving round ourselves, under Sir Edward Grey’s management, the mesh of entanglements which has brought us to our present confusion.\(^{203}\)

MacDonald went on further to condemn Grey’s foreign policy since 1906 in the most strident terms, and branded Grey’s last minute attempt to mediate as ‘feebly pathetic’.\(^{204}\) He expressed the general fear of a triumphant despotic Russia rising out of the destruction of German militarism. Silence was not an option for MacDonald:

> Whilst we are waiting for the issue of military events, surely we must be taking counsel and maturing plans for opposing a Government which has led us blindly into war, which has shattered our programmes of social reform, and which has as an ally the Power which, most of all, threatens democracy and European civilization.\(^{205}\)

Bertrand Russell, in the same issue of the *Nation*, pulled no punches in his analysis of the situation. Russell was sickened by the blood-lust of the press and the spectacle of the ‘hitherto peaceable and humane’ population who had in a few days

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\(^{203}\) *Nation*, J. Ramsay MacDonald, ‘The Foreign Office and the War’, Letters to the Editor, 15 Aug. 1914

\(^{204}\) Ibid.

\(^{205}\) Ibid.
slipped ‘down the steep slope to primitive barbarism’. 206 Who did Russell blame?: ‘A set of official gentlemen, living luxurious lives, mostly stupid, and all without imagination or heart, [who] have chosen that it [the war] should occur rather than anyone of them should suffer some infinitesimal rebuff to his country’s pride.’ Behind the leaders, Russell saw ‘vast forces of national greed and national hatred’ directed by ‘Governments and the Press, fostered by the upper class as a distraction from social discontent, artificially nourished by the sinister influence of the makers of armaments, encouraged by a whole foul literature of “glory”, and by every textbook of history with which the minds of the children are polluted.’ 207 He accused the Government and the Press of fostering hatred towards Germany over the previous ten years and of ‘secret arrangements, concealed from Parliament’. 208 However, this was too much for the editor, Massingham, who felt compelled to attach a rider to Russell’s letter, something which he seldom did: ‘We print this eloquent statement of opinion, expressing elsewhere our disagreement with its argument.’ Massingham then gave a defence of Grey’s actions in the last few days before war. 209

While MacDonald and Russell refused to be silent and felt it was their duty to speak out, H. G. Wells would also not keep quiet, not in opposition to the war, but in support of it. Wells unfurled the new flag for the ‘Holy War’ crusaders. Wells’ mind raced with the possibilities opened up by the war, and he seemed possessed by a veritable frenzy of optimism. Amidst the chaos and destruction, Wells saw opportunity: ‘Institutions and conventions crumble about us, and release to unprecedented power the two sorts of rebel that ordinary times suppress, will and ideas.’ Wells saw possibilities at the end of the war (envisaged to be short) for

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207 Ibid.
208 Ibid.
209 Ibid.
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achieving European unity, disarmament, a re-drawing of the map of Europe and the
creation of a new economic order:

First, as to peace. Do Liberals realize that now is the time to plan the
confederation and collective disarmament of Europe, now is the time to re-
draw the map of Europe so that there may be no more rankling sores or
unsatisfied national ambitions? If Liberalism throughout the world
develops no plan of a pacified world until the diplomatists get to work, it
will be too late. Peace may come to Europe that winter as swiftly and
disastrously as the war.\footnote{Nation, H. G. Wells, ‘Opportunity’, 15 Aug. 1914.}

Wells wanted to work towards planning a new settlement so that the reactionaries did
not determine the peace settlement; because as he explained, if it was left to them,
they ‘will surely contrive some monstrous blundering settlement, and the latter state
of this world will be worse than the former.’\footnote{Ibid.} To counter this, Wells hoped for the
participation of the United States of America which he felt sure would insist on a
‘World Conference’ and the setting up of a ‘Peace League that will control the
globe.’\footnote{Ibid.} This last point, referring to the possibility of American involvement in
pursuit of grand international undertakings, was to prove quite prophetic.

By Saturday 15 August, it was apparent that editors who had held Radical
views before the war were hopelessly split over their approach to the war. A. G.
Gardiner (\textit{Daily News}) had taken a strong pro-war position while still levelling blame
at the deceptive pre-war foreign policy of Foreign Minister Grey. C. P. Scott, on the
other hand, was against any discussion of pre-war policy once the war had begun.
Scott’s concern was now mainly for the prosecution of the war.\footnote{Haley (ed.), \textit{The Political Diaries of C. P. Scott 1911-1928} (London, 1970), p. 102. Trevor Wilson asserted that despite Scott’s private correspondence giving the impression that he was close to Radical publicists such as E. D. Morel and Ramsay MacDonald, he could not join with them wholeheartedly in their view of the war. Rather, he found himself following ‘in the footsteps of Lloyd George.’ Trevor Wilson (ed.), \textit{C. P. Scott} (London, 1934), p. 181 and 184. Hammond agreed that Scott’s friendship with Lloyd George was more than just political agreement but that there was deep affection and that ‘this view of Lloyd George impacted on Scott’s treatment of all the personal controversies that became acute during the war.’ Hammond, \textit{C. P. Scott}, p. 185.}

211 Ibid.
212 Ibid.
213 Haley (ed.), \textit{C. P. Scott}, p. 52. Also, J. L. Hammond, \textit{C. P. Scott} (London, 1934), p. 181 and 184. Trevor Wilson asserted that despite Scott’s private correspondence giving the impression that he was close to Radical publicists such as E. D. Morel and Ramsay MacDonald, he could not join with them wholeheartedly in their view of the war. Rather, he found himself following ‘in the footsteps of Lloyd George.’ Trevor Wilson (ed.), \textit{The Political Diaries of C. P. Scott 1911-1928} (London, 1970), p. 102. Hammond agreed that Scott’s friendship with Lloyd George was more than just political agreement but that there was deep affection and that ‘this view of Lloyd George impacted on Scott’s treatment of all the personal controversies that became acute during the war.’ Hammond, \textit{C. P. Scott}, p. 185.
position at the *Nation* had firmed over the previous two weeks from one of being critical of the Government’s pre-war foreign policy, to one of being willing to give Grey the benefit of doubt when it came to his role in the July Crisis, and of supporting the war now that it was an accomplished fact. However, to his credit, Massingham did not impose his views on the whole content of his newspaper. Rather, he allowed a variety of opinions to be aired in his columns. Meanwhile, Francis Hirst at the *Economist* was unsure whether it was a good idea to wage campaigns or join groups to protest about the war at this stage. Hirst was preoccupied with how Britain had got into the war. To his sister, Margaret on 17 August, Hirst wrote that he was anxious to show her, ‘how the press forced along the war, especially the Harmsworth papers.’

Hirst hoped that an armistice was possible through the intervention of the King of Sweden and also that ‘something may come of President Wilson’s efforts’. It is again important to note that Radical publicists were looking to America for possible salvation even at this very early stage in the war. Hirst, like many other Radical publicists, had numerous contacts in the United States with whom he confided. On 18 August, Hirst wrote to an American friend, Columbia University President, Nicholas Murray Butler, explaining his views on the situation: ‘A great many of us, with the support of Bryce and Loreburn, worked very hard in the short week we had to keep Britain at peace. We still hold with Morley and John Burns that the policy of strict neutrality was the proper policy to adopt.’ Among Radicals, hope in the prospect of American mediation was common. Such hope was expressed as early as mid-August 1914 by the Fabian, Graham Wallas to his American friend, David Starr Jordan, President of Stanford University. Wallas, who was preparing to leave Britain after a

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215 Ibid. This refers to the American President’s offer to mediate on 28 July and 4 August 1914. See Peterson, *Propaganda for War*, p. 203.
216 F. W. Hirst to N. M. Butler, 18 Aug. 1914, Hirst Papers.
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visit, commented to host: ‘I want you to realise before you go the conviction among many friends of peace and sanity in Europe that the fate of civilisation in the present crisis may depend chiefly upon the action of the United States.’ Wallas’ deep respect for Woodrow Wilson, was clear: ‘And it’s fortunate for the world that President Wilson has inspired throughout Europe, not only confidence in his morals but personal regard.’

Wallas did not think that any intervention by a neutral would be possible until after the first battles, but noted that ‘intervention, when the time comes for it, will be useless unless it has been prepared for.’

By the third week of August, the acceptance of war on the part of some Liberals and Radicals appeared to provoke a flowering of all sorts of ideas about what advances the future battles would or should bring. One optimistic Radical wrote in a similar vein to Wells, outlining in the Daily Herald the possibilities opened up by the war: a re-drawing of the map of Europe, a lasting peace, a Peace Congress, a police force on the high seas, the nationalisation of the armaments industry and the abolition of conscription. Though this article appeared to soar into the heights of idealistic fantasy, its inclusion of a list of detailed terms of peace was to be the first of many attempts to nut out what the essential ingredients of a satisfactory peace needed to be.

These terms are summarised below:

**TERMS OF PEACE**

1. Abolition of conscript armies…
2. The creation of an international navy…
3. The Hague Tribunal to become a judicial body to settle disputes.
4. The creation of a Federated Balkans.
5. The restoration and neutralisation of the Polish nation.

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218 Ibid. There are other examples of Radicals identifying from very early in the war the United States as a potential mediator in the war. Norman Angell, writing to his friend, George Nasmyth in August 1914 said, ‘A bold and shrewd initiative will have to come from some American quarter.’ Further, he urged that the U. S. A. must not be a ‘timid arbiter, but come out boldly toward a ‘Federative Council of Civilisation’. Norman Angell to George Nasmyth, Aug. 1914, Box 2, Nasmyth Papers.
(7) No indemnities and no annexations of territory.\textsuperscript{220} The solution must in the last resort rest upon the consent of the peoples.\textsuperscript{221}

Though its author was against war in principle, he urged that this war be fought to bring it to a swift conclusion: ‘Yet we will still continue to advocate peace. No war is ever just, and this one least of all. Now we appeal to all who, like ourselves, hate war to come together and to work unceasingly to bring it to a conclusion.’\textsuperscript{222} However, this approach to the war was predicated on the assumption, also held by Wells, that the war would be short. Therefore, both authors reasoned that no time should be lost in coming up with proposals for a just settlement. In contrast to this view, other Radical publicists, such as Hirst, found the idea of a short war cold comfort because a swiftly victorious Russia would dominate Europe. The editor of the \textit{Herald}, George Lansbury,\textsuperscript{223} also expressed his fear of Russian aggrandizement: ‘Many Britons are gravely concerned as to what Russia and Tsardom may possibly mean in Europe as a consequence of the present titanic struggle.’ As noted above, from the early days of the July-August crisis, there ran a strong current of mistrust for Britain’s Tsarist ally, in Radical ranks. There was a tendency to regard Russia in general as a semi-barbarous country, and as a potential menace to what was called ‘Western civilisation’. Therefore, it was argued, a short war would not bring deliverance, but a Russian-dominated Europe. Along with the other Radical publicists who opposed the

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{220} Scurr advocated that Germany be allowed to keep her colonies at the end of the war. ‘In the event of this country being victorious a certain section will bawl for the annexation of the German colonies. It is to be hoped that our rulers will turn a deaf ear to such proposals. Most of them are unsuitable for white occupation, and we have quite enough trouble on hand with coloured races. Let Germany keep them!’ Ibid.
    \item \textsuperscript{221} Ibid.
    \item \textsuperscript{222} Ibid.
    \item \textsuperscript{223} George Lansbury had joined the I. L. P. in 1903 after leaving the Social Democratic Federation due to his dislike of Karl Marx’ brand of socialism. In 1906, he campaigned to improve the conditions of people in workhouses in Britain and in 1913 was imprisoned for making speeches in defence of suffragettes. In 1911, he had helped start the \textit{Herald} and in 1913 became the editor, and assumed complete control, replacing Charles Lapworth, in February 1914. Raymond Postgate, \textit{The Life of George Lansbury} (London, 1951), p. 142. Schneer gives slightly different dates, noting that Lansbury was editor from 1912-22. Jonathan Schneer, \textit{George Lansbury} (Manchester, 1990), p. 2.
\end{itemize}
war, Lansbury also saw it as a duty ‘in the present ordeal’ to ‘suppress hate and rash judgement’, and to work towards a peace in which there would be an ‘ever-widening development for the individualities of every race, religion and colour’. However, as much as they wanted to discuss Europe’s transformation in the future, the Radical publicists were dogged by debate over the mistakes of the recent past.

In September and October 1914, the Radical publicists found themselves torn over two issues. The first was whether the pre-war foreign policy of Sir Edward Grey constituted the major reason for Britain being drawn into the war. Related to this was a debate about suitable Radical action: should they simply move on and look to the future, or dwell on correcting the mistakes of the past? On the issue of Grey, Radical publicists were to appear on both sides, some accusing and some defending him. For example, H. W. Massingham maintained his support for Grey, and defended his actions during the weeks immediately preceding the war, on the basis of the evidence given in the White Paper. In contrast, F. W. Hirst, Bertrand Russell and E. D. Morel remained obsessed with Grey’s guilt, both in his pre-war diplomacy from 1906 and in his actions in the weeks before the war, as outlined by the White Paper. Hirst’s and Morel’s preoccupation with Grey’s guilt did not end in 1914 but burned within them throughout the war. The second issue affecting the Radical publicists was what action was appropriate to take with a view to the future. A number of prominent Radical publicists argued that they should confront the errors of the past so that concrete proposals for terms of settlement could be built upon a firm foundation. Some Radicals, including Ponsonby, MacDonald, Morel, Angell and Dickinson, brought

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225 The full title of the White Paper was *Great Britain and the European Crisis: Correspondance and Statements in Parliament* (London, 1914). It was tabled in the House of Commons on 6 August 1914. It contained the diplomatic correspondence relating to the British government between 23 July, when Austria’s note was presented to Serbia, and the outbreak of war on 4 August. Eventually, over one million copies were issued. See the introduction in G. P. Gooch and H. Temperley, *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, vol. XI, (London, 1926).
this issue to the fore in their efforts to establish an organisation to promote the democritisation of foreign policy as well as progressive war aims. This organisation, which will be discussed below, was to become known as the Union of Democratic Control. Immediately debate within this new organisation focused on these same arguments. Was Grey guilty? Should Radicals point the finger at the mistaken policies of the past, or ignore the past and look to the future.

H. W. Massingham defended Grey from the outset mentioning his ‘untiring efforts to mediate’ and argued that, despite his not telling the nation the precise nature of its obligations to France, Grey’s actions were honourable, and that he had ‘left nothing undone to secure peace’. Massingham maintained his support for Grey well into 1915, though by the end of the year he was inclined to turn aside from the divisive issue of Grey’s past performance and look to the future. On the other hand, Ramsay MacDonald thought that the White Paper represented ‘the most telling condemnation of the Foreign Policy and the diplomatic methods of the Liberal Government’. The best that MacDonald could say about Grey was that, ‘doomed to failure by his own past policy, Sir Edward Grey impotently strove to avert the crash.’ The issue was crystal clear for MacDonald and in his judgement he pulled no punches: ‘The White paper is a judgement of time upon Sir Edward Grey as Foreign Minister. He laboured patiently for eight years and he made war inevitable

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230 In a review of Ponsonby’s book, *Democracy and Diplomacy*, he said that Ponsonby’s judgements are ‘not ours’ but nevertheless gave an outline of Ponsonby’s criticism of statesmen who ‘slipped out of the habit of telling the country where it was going.’ Massingham ignored this and focused on Ponsonby’s prescription for ‘a new order, a new relationship between the thoughts of the mass and the deeds of their rulers.’ *Nation*, ‘Diplomacy and War’, Politics and Affairs, 27 Nov. 1915.
232 Ibid.
whilst pursuing what he thought to be the way of peace. Bertrand Russell was no kinder in his reproach directed at Grey: ‘No literary tragedy can approach the futile horror of the White Paper.’

The communications of F. W. Hirst and his circle also indicated a simmering hostility to Grey. In letters to his sisters in late September 1914, Hirst was still ruminating over the last few days before the war. Meanwhile, a number of Liberal Lords were willing to complain privately to Hirst about Grey, but publicly they preferred silence, using the tired old argument that they could not criticise their Government while the war was on. Lord Loreburn explained to Hirst: ‘While we are fighting, not a word can be said in public about that. I resolved even to say nothing in private and would not have done so even to you but for the openness with which you have expressed yourself to me, which imposes reciprocity.’ In the summer of 1915 Loreburn confided to Hirst that when he wrote to Grey he had to control himself and that he gets the ‘old helpless feeling that used to arise when discussing things with him.’ Most of all, Loreburn had trouble reconciling ‘the honesty and genuineness of the man’ with ‘the feeling that here was a brick wall. Just a solid brick wall.’ Edward Boyle, writing from Athens, complained to Hirst about Grey’s failure in the Balkans since the war’s beginning, while a Foreign Office contact, also desiring silence on these matters, complained to Hirst that there was too much ‘muck raking and unreasonableness’.

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233 Ibid.
236 Lord Loreburn to F. W. Hirst, 15 Sept. 1914, Hirst Papers.
237 Ibid.
238 Edward Boyle to F. W. Hirst, 11 Nov. 1915, Hirst Papers, and Eustace Percy to F. W. Hirst, 31 Oct. 1915, Hirst Papers. In addition, Percy defended the Foreign Office against the charge that they were reactionaries and backward-looking and assured Hirst that Foreign Office officials ‘have learnt much
Grey’s conduct of foreign policy: ‘Grey ought to be pinned with the responsibility’ for the continuation of the war, fumed Hirst.\textsuperscript{240}

Meanwhile, William Cadbury, tried to quell E. D. Morel’s anger over Grey’s actions. ‘You should concede Grey’s willingness to meet all’, said Cadbury, while chiding him for his ‘readiness to see all the virtues in the enemies of England, and all the wrong in her.’\textsuperscript{241} Cadbury implored Morel not to criticise Grey publicly but to wait for the end of the war and the next election because, ‘just now we don’t want England’s dirty linen washed in public.’\textsuperscript{242} However, as Catherine Cline explained, Morel ‘refused to be diverted from criticism of the war by what he regarded as sentimental or falsely patriotic appeals.’\textsuperscript{243} Morel had little concern about ‘little Belgium’ after his ten-year campaign against Belgian atrocities in the Congo.\textsuperscript{244} The truth was at stake, as Morel explained to Charles Trevelyan in July 1916: ‘No greater danger can assail a nation than that its national policy should be directed from a basis of falsehood. When the war started it was on a lie. Ever since, the official machinery has been pouring out lies in one incessant stream, with the result that lies are corroding our public life in every filament of the national consciousness.’\textsuperscript{245} For Morel, the Government’s lack of honesty over foreign policy had to be tackled head on. Morel was unrelenting in pursuit of this issue.

\textsuperscript{240} F. W. Hirst to Lord Courtney, 5 July 1916, Courtney Papers XII.
\textsuperscript{241} William A. Cadbury to ‘George’ [E. D. Morel], 3 Oct. 1914. Note that Cadbury had been Morel’s benefactor ever since his involvement in the Congo Reform Association. This was also kept a secret. See Catherine Cline, \textit{E. D. Morel 1873-1924: The Strategies of Protest} (Belfast, 1980), p. 49.
\textsuperscript{242} William A. Cadbury to ‘George’ [E. D. Morel], 3 Oct. 1914. Also, see Channing’s rebuke to Morel: ‘To concentrate on the small matters’ of errors in British foreign policy is to miss the ‘root evil’ of Germany’s preparation for war. Channing of W. to Morel, 18 Oct. 1914, Morel Papers.
\textsuperscript{243} Cline, \textit{E. D. Morel 1873-1924}, p. 99. Thomas Fleming’s recent work focused on what he believed was the hypocrisy of the Entente governments’ defence of ‘poor Belgium’, a nation that had committed the equivalent of the ‘holocaust’ in the Belgian Congo. See Thomas Fleming, \textit{The Illusion of Victory: America in World War I} (New York, 2003), p. 49.
\textsuperscript{244} Cline, \textit{E. D. Morel 1873-1924}, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{245} E. D. Morel to C. P. Trevelyan, 12 July 1916, Trevelyan Papers.
Those in agreement with Morel, who could not keep silent over the policy pursued by the Asquith-Grey Liberal Government, swiftly mobilised. Within twelve hours of Britain’s declaration of war on Germany, Trevelyan had contacted Morel to organise opposition to the war. Morel and Trevelyan were soon joined by Ramsay MacDonald, who, on the day before had resigned his chairmanship of the Labour Party over its failure to oppose the voting of war credits. Morel also made contact with Arthur Ponsonby, to invite him to join in the task of opposing the war. Ponsonby was particularly welcomed because of the influence he had on other Radicals in the Liberal Party. In addition, Norman Angell, J.A. Hobson, Bertrand Russell and Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson joined this meeting from which a new organisation was born, the Union of Democratic Control (U. D. C.).

Morel and MacDonald were so convinced that it was the inept ‘policy of the Entente’ of the pre-war Liberal Government that had played a large part in starting the war that they wanted to go to the public immediately with a pamphlet condemning Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary. However, their co-founders attempted to restrain Morel and MacDonald during August out of fear of losing the chance of getting strong Liberal support. C. P. Scott, the owner and editor of the Manchester Guardian and a friend of Lloyd George, was in agreement with the U. D. C.’s aims. However, along with Phillip Morrell, a moderate Liberal M.P., Scott was alarmed at the prospect of the U. D. C. going public on the failings of the Liberal Government’s...
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pre-war foreign policy. Fearing the alienation of moderate Liberal opinion, the U. D. C. agreed to delay publication of a draft pamphlet prepared by Morel that was sharply critical of Grey. However, their hand was forced when on September 10, 1914, the Morning Post, a conservative ‘patriotic paper’, published a circular letter from the U. D. C. soliciting funds and announcing its cardinal points. Overnight the U. D. C. was branded a ‘public enemy’ by the conservative press. In response, the U. D. C. decided to publish a full statement of its aims in a letter to the press published on 17 September. This was too much for C. P. Scott who left the organisation. After losing Scott’s support, the U. D. C. Radicals were not able to win over as large a number of moderate Liberals to their cause as they had hoped for initially, and for some time they only had a tiny band of supporters in the House of Commons.

Despite these handicaps, the U. D. C. succeeded in becoming a viable organisation by mid-November 1914. Its Committee included both Radical Liberals and members of the Labour Party. The leadership of the U. D. C. was dominated by the Radicals who formed the ‘officer class’ of the U. D. C. and directed its activities from its head office in London. The U. D. C. drew significant support from the

251 Wilson (ed.), The Political Diaries of C. P. Scott, pp. 105-106.
252 This is not to be confused with Morel’s draft pamphlet. See Sally Harris for a discussion of these events and the context of MacDonald’s letter in the Labour Leader and Morel’s draft pamphlet.
253 Swartz, Union of Democratic Control, p. 36. Harris, Out of Control, p. 53.
254 Harris, Out of Control, p. 54.
255 Ibid., p. 37
257 Swartz, Union of Democratic Control, p. 59. According to Taylor, Labour followed the Radical lead in regard to foreign policy. Though Labour leaders were fully aware of Marxist critiques of capitalism being the cause of war, they spoke in Radical terms of secret diplomacy and the arms race. Taylor, The Troublemakers, p. 104.
Quakers,\textsuperscript{258} who eventually adopted the ‘Four Cardinal Principles’ of the U. D. C. at a Quaker Conference in June 1915. For the rest of the war the Quakers provided invaluable financial support to the U. D. C.\textsuperscript{259} Also notable in the Executive Committee was the campaigner for female suffrage, F. W. Pethick-Lawrence.\textsuperscript{260} The U. D. C. drew support from journalists, politicians, businessmen and female peace activists.\textsuperscript{261} In addition, the Radical publicists in the U. D. C. had many outlets for publication such as the I. L. P.’s weekly, \textit{Labour Leader}, the \textit{Nation} and the \textit{Daily News}, as well as its own journal, the \textit{U. D. C.}\textsuperscript{262} By the end of November 1915, the U. D. C. had 137 organisations affiliated to it giving it, a total membership of 300,000. By the end of the war the Union had 300 affiliated bodies with a total membership of 600,000.\textsuperscript{263} Also, the U. D. C. had refined its platform into Four Cardinal Points which, as we have seen, were first published in the press in September 1914.

\begin{itemize}
\item[i).] No province shall be transferred from one Government to another without the consent, by plebiscite or otherwise, of the population of such province.
\item[ii).] No Treaty, Arrangement, or Undertaking shall be entered upon in the name of Great Britain without the sanction of Parliament. Adequate machinery for ensuring democratic control of foreign policy shall be created.
\item[iii).] The Foreign Policy of Great Britain shall not be aimed at creating Alliances for the purpose of maintaining the Balance of Power, but shall be directed to concerted action between the Powers, and the setting up of an International Council, whose deliberations and decisions shall be public, with such machinery for securing international agreement as shall
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{259} Swartz, \textit{Union of Democratic Control}, p.56.
\textsuperscript{260} Taylor, \textit{The Troublemakers}, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{262} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{263} See Swartz, \textit{The Union of Democratic Control}, pp. 60-61. In 1915, 48 out of 107 affiliated bodies came from the Labour movement, according to Taylor. Taylor commented that, ‘The I.L.P. and other Labour groups were against the war without knowing why. They jumped at the clear answers provided by Morel. Some of his pamphlets came out under the imprint of the I.L.P.’ Taylor, \textit{The Troublemakers}, p. 135.
be the guarantee of an abiding peace.

iv). Great Britain shall propose as part of the Peace settlement a plan for the drastic reduction, by consent, of the armaments of all belligerent Powers, and to facilitate that policy shall attempt to secure the general nationalisation of the manufacture of armaments, and the control of the export of armaments by one country to another.264

The Radical publicists discussed in this thesis were members of the U. D. C. and therefore identified with this platform.

The Union of Democratic Control was formed with the aim of educating the public, reforming foreign affairs and conducting open discussion on how to achieve a lasting peace. Morel explained the reason for the creation of the U. D. C. It was to be a ‘movement against the institution of war; pursuing it not on the old lines, but by the political and educational weapon, by a definite constructive policy: to lay the basis of what may eventually develop into a permanent organisation for peace, to oppose the existing organisation for war.’265 The Radical publicists conducted a vigorous debate about war aims and on what the nature of the peace settlement should be. Over the course of the war, the U. D. C. published 28 pamphlets, 47 leaflets, 18 books and a monthly journal, the U. D. C., edited by Morel. The authors of the bulk of this material were the Radical publicists, Norman Angell, Bertrand Russell, J. A. Hobson, H. N. Brailsford, G. L. Dickinson and E. D. Morel.266 In 1915, half a million copies of the first 15 pamphlets were sold. Morel’s books, Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy (1915) went through five editions during the war, while Truth and the War (1916)

264 See Martin, Peace Without Victory, pp. 57-58. Martin noted the similarity with Wilson’s ideas of August 1914. The U. D. C.’s first point was similar to Wilson’s first point. They both agreed that armaments manufacture should be nationalised. Also, they were in agreement on the need to have an international machinery for guaranteeing peace.

265 E. D. Morel to Mrs. Snowden, Undated, Morel Papers, F 6/7.

266 Cline, E. D. Morel, p. 103.

The Radical publicists were passionate about their ideas. They felt they had been badly burnt in the past by trusting that their leaders were conducting foreign policy with the good of the nation in mind. They would no longer be satisfied with mere assurances when it came to matters of national importance, but continually challenged the Government over what the nation was fighting for and what sort of settlement they envisaged. However, there were a number of Radicals who, while believing in what the U. D. C. stood for, decided that they should remain publicly silent and not criticise their Liberal leaders. In F. W. Hirst’s circle there were a number of prominent Radicals who confided in him but who baulked at speaking publicly themselves and shuddered when others did so.\footnote{The self-imposed silence adopted by some could lead to much inner turmoil. For example, Morley was critical of his fellow-Radical Loreburn: ‘Between ourselves strictly, I am rather disappointed at the persistence with which Loreburn singles out some individuals in Govt. for too bitter denunciation.’ It is not good, ‘to live in a hot atmosphere of personal invective.’ Morley to F. W. Hirst, 14 Nov. 1915, Hirst Papers, 1915. A few days later Morley disputed the idea that the Government was full of deceivers or had ‘secret motives’, asserting rather, they were ‘blunderers on a large scale.’ Morley to Hirst, 16 Nov. 1915, Hirst Papers, 1915. When Loreburn thought of speaking out in the House of Lords, he realised there would be no-one to support him ‘except Courtney, and what he says is so clumsy and ill weighted that he hangs like a millstone on everyone he supports.’ Lord Loreburn to F. W. Hirst, 22 Dec 1915, Hirst Papers, 1915. A. G. Harvey told Hirst that he nearly threw his ‘Common Sense’ pamphlet in the wastepaper basket, and after reading Loreburn’s letter. He suggested that Hirst advise Loreburn ‘not to speak in the strain he suggests. I am sure it will do him harm. I firmly believe that there is nothing that can be usefully said in public (beyond the ordinary criticism of the conduct of the war) except to prepare the public mind for a recantation of the “crushing of Germany” attitude which I am sure is doing more to embarrass leading politicians than anything else.’ A. G. Harvey to F. W. Hirst, 30 Dec 1915, Hirst Papers, 1915. In a letter to his sister, Gertrude, Hirst outlined in detail all of Morley’s views about the war and noted that Morley ‘agrees that all the fighting governments are afraid to make peace on any feasible terms.’ However, Morley would not sign a public letter on free trade. ‘He prefers to remain behind the wall like Plato’s philosopher.’ F. W. Hirst to Gertrude, 2 July 1916, Letters to Gertrude Hirst 1894-1929, Hirst Papers.}

Terms of peace and the nature of the future settlement were issues of immense importance to Radical publicists from the outset of the war. Indeed, with the


reconstruction of the future in mind, the *Herald* on 22 August 1914 urged all reformers not to sink into despair, but rather, to mould public opinion:

> Here and on the Continent the need of a deep, ardent, reconstructive spirit will be paramount. To become panic-stricken or pessimistic, or wait nervously or listlessly, would be grossly unworthy of men and women who believe they have a cause and a mission.  

Ponsonby in the *Nation* vowed not to be silent on the mistakes of the past, but he too focused on the future, urging fellow Radicals to try to ‘secure fair terms for a lasting peace and to cope with the colossal problems of the future.’ By the end of August 1914 Massingham offered an all-encompassing vision of what the terms of settlement needed to be, though his optimistic list of peace terms seemed little more than a wish-list, along the lines of H. G. Wells’ rhetoric at that time. Henry Brailsford was sure about one thing, that is, that it must be a just settlement. ‘A settlement which leaves anger and fear behind it will create and perpetuate militarism.’ While some publicists stated their views on what the settlement should be, some highlighted the danger of an inflation in war aims. George Lansbury, for example, questioned the vagueness of the Government’s crusade against Prussian militarism:

> The Prime Minister has raised the cross of a new crusade. He will go to the nation asking recruits to aid in crushing Prussian militarism. But by what will he replace it? To that question let us have an answer in the clearest terms. What is Great Britain asking? What are the demands of France? What are the demands of Tsar-ridden Russia? Let him come to the people and say that we and our allies are determined to ask nothing for ourselves which we are not ready to give to others. Let him make it plain that this war is to end war, that an international court of arbitration, reinforced by an international police, will have the final decision in the future. Let him tell the people that the reward of their sacrifices is their economic emancipation.

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271 Massingham proposed that there be a United States of Europe, the extension of democracy in Europe, open foreign policy, the abolition of tariff barriers, a reduction in armed forces, international police force and an international parliament. *Nation*, ‘The Europe of Tomorrow, Politics and Affairs, 29 Aug. 1914.
274 *Daily Herald*, editorial, 1 Sept. 1914.
Again raising the Tsarist bogey, Lansbury questioned what ‘crushing Prussian militarism’ would mean and cast doubt on how much influence Britain would have with its allies, France and Russia, implying that they certainly would be seeking aggrandizement of territory in any settlement. He urged that there be a ‘democratic peace’ with all the international mechanisms necessary to prevent future wars established securely. Discussions among Radical publicists reflected their suspicions about both the competence and motives of the British Government. The Radical publicists’ reservations reveal two characteristics that were to remain throughout the war. The first was the concern for long-term peace and stability and the second was the need to be specific over what the nation’s objectives were in the war and prevent an enlargement of war aims driven by alliance obligations.

In the 19 September 1914 edition of the *Nation*, Brailsford offered a detailed explanation of why punishing Germany would not destroy militarism, among other things. Brailsford elaborated on the following points:

One-sided disarmament would come not as deliverance but as humiliation. All the powers without exception, must bind themselves either to reduce their future military and naval expenditure to some fraction of the figure that it had reached before the war, or else to accept a militia system with six or twelve months service.

In the last resort, the fate of provinces must be decided not by the fortunes of alien armies, but by the votes of their own inhabitants. It must be, moreover, an honest plebiscite, conducted with full liberty for discussion, and not under martial law.

I am not among the optimists who imagine that a true Concert is going to emerge by miracle from hatreds of this war. The first step is that each and all the Powers should, at the peace, renounce their existing alliances. The next step is to erect some barrier against aggression by a general defensive understanding among all the Great Powers, by which each should agree to defend another if menaced by an enemy who, in any quarrel, had rejected the arbitration of neutrals.

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275 The idea that Britain could have common war aims with Russia was commonly questioned in the *Daily Herald*. For example, see *Daily Herald*, ‘The Russian Danger’, Editorial, 16 Sept. 1914.

However, for Brailsford, and for other Radical publicists, it was assumed that there would have to be some military victories, involving the expulsion of Germans from France and Belgium, before neutral mediation would be welcome.\textsuperscript{277} At this point, Massingham felt bound to intervene, offering a warning that a ‘half-peace might be no peace.’\textsuperscript{278} Massingham was of the opinion that there needed to be some convincing military victories against Germany to bring about a ‘general reduction of European armaments.’\textsuperscript{279} He did not want Germany to ‘get away with what it had done’, arguing that, although Britain might not be crushed, ‘we should remain weakened, and there would follow a ‘period of armed peace’ during which even America and the rest of the world would be under threat. He wanted to fight on for a ‘real peace’ to have ‘a new world organisation’ based on disarmament.\textsuperscript{280} By January 1915, Massingham started placing more emphasis on the need for the Allies to define aims while still asserting that an Allied military breakthrough was needed. Importantly, another reason Massingham offered for clearly defining reasonable war aims was to ‘win the full help and sympathy of America.’ However, Massingham did not want America simply to mediate a settlement as a neutral, but rather to choose between ‘military force and civilised war’ and join the Allies as a belligerent.\textsuperscript{281}

The beginning of 1915 saw increasing calls for clearly stated war aims and terms of settlement in the press. For example, A. C. Pigou, a prominent Cambridge economist and internationalist rejected ‘fighting for victory’s sake or for a harsh peace’, because:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{277} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{278} Nation, H. W. Massingham, ‘The Aim of Britain’, Politics and Affairs, 17 Oct. 1914.
\item \textsuperscript{279} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{280} Ibid. Massingham repeated these arguments again vehemently in December, stating that Britain could not contemplate an early end to the war, and could not consider one, otherwise the blood of those who had died would have been shed in vain. ‘If, in truth, this be a war of deals, our ideal has not yet triumphed.’ Nation, ‘The Crisis and the War’, Politics and Affairs, 12 Dec 1914.
\item \textsuperscript{281} Nation, H. W. Massingham, Politics and Affairs, 23 Jan. 1915.
\end{itemize}
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If a proud nation is battered to her knees, it is inevitable that her whole thought and energy will be concentrated upon preparations for revenge. We shall be building up in the German people that very will to power which we deplore, and strengthening in the German Government that very military party whose policy we suspect.\textsuperscript{282}

Rather, Pigou advocated that an ‘honourable peace’ be signed so that the ‘war spirit’ might quickly fade and the road be made open for the establishment of some sort of commonwealth of states. But, regardless of the expected German response, it is the ‘Allies’ duty to decide in rough outline the nature of their terms.\textsuperscript{283} Radical publicists, Bertrand Russell and Vernon Lee,\textsuperscript{284} supported the Pigou’s proposals. In Lee’s opinion:

Surely, it is necessary that British democracy should prepare the mind of the Allies for what it will claim as its share in a joint victory, namely, that victory should not be soiled or jeopardised by self-righteousness, vindictiveness or short-sighted self-seeking.\textsuperscript{285}

While there was agreement that the peace should not be a vindictive one, there was still no agreement among Radicals on the appropriateness of launching a discussion of possible peace terms. Hirst’s friend, G. S. Pawle, was still of the view that there was ‘no point attacking the war while fighting is going on. No one will listen.’\textsuperscript{286} William Cadbury wrote to Morel, dismissing any talk of peace terms until the Germans had been driven from Belgium, although he saw no harm in asking the Government to state broad war aims.\textsuperscript{287} Others noted sadly that peace terms could not be considered by Britain alone, in any case. Loreburn reiterated the point to Hirst that Britain’s treaty obligations to the Russians and the French ‘will require us to go on to

\textsuperscript{282} Nation, Professor Pigou, ‘A Plea for the Statement of the Allies’ Terms’, Communications, 6 Feb. 1915.
\textsuperscript{283} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{284} Vernon Lee was the pseudonym of Violet Paget (1856-1935), the celebrated author. For details of her involvement with the Radical publicists, see Harris, \textit{Out of Control}, pp. 55, 93, 97. For biographies, see Peter Gunn, \textit{Vernon Lee-Violet Paget 1856-1935} (London, 1964), and more recently, Vineta Colby, \textit{Vernon Lee: A Literary Biography} (Charlottesville, 2003). \textsuperscript{285} Nation, ‘The Policy of the Allies’, Letters to the Editor, 20 Feb. 1915.
\textsuperscript{286} G. S. Pawle to E. D. Morel, 31 Mar. 1915, Hirst Papers.
\textsuperscript{287} William Cadbury to E. D. Morel, 1 June 1915, Morel Papers, F8/13.
the last, whether it ruins us or not,’ and he railed against the fact that ‘we are not our own masters.’

Massingham agreed: ‘How are we to get out of our compact to conclude peace with our Allies, if Germany offered us terms which (relying on sea power) we might accept?’ While Radical publicists believed that a clear statement of aims, and if possible, terms of settlement, was most desirable, in order both to make Germany more receptive to peace and to appeal to America, there was disagreement over when these terms should be formulated and what they should be.

By the end of 1915, the Radical publicists were apprehensive that no clear formulation of Britain’s war aims had been forthcoming from the Government. After reading in the *Yorkshire Post* about Asquith’s speech at the annual Guildhall banquet in November 1915, in which he insisted on fighting on to military victory, Hirst despained over the fact that Britain’s aims had got no clearer after a year’s fighting. At an address to bankers in Leeds, Hirst ‘foretold national bankruptcy if this rate of national expenditure is not curtailed.’ Hirst predicted that the war would not be brought to an end by military action but by economic exhaustion.

Similarly, in the Autumn of 1915 Hobson argued that the war would not end by any military developments, at least not while the strategy of attrition was employed. Of this strategy, Hobson complained that it might take several years and involve the loss of millions more lives, not to mention the devastation, before this strategy might bear fruit. The people were assured, Hobson observed, that this was the only way of winning peace. However, Hobson asked, ‘does a military deadlock involve a psychological deadlock, destroying in all the responsible statesmen and governments

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288 Lord Loreburn to F. W. Hirst, 14 Aug. 1915, Hirst Papers.
289 H. W. Massingham to Lord Courtney, 13 Nov. 1915, Courtney Papers, XI.
290 Forever the economist, Hirst’s notes reveal that he was keeping a tally of the cost of the war. At this point, he had estimated that the war was costing £5,000,000 a day. He had calculated that, as of the previous Monday (8 Nov. 1915), the grand total was £1,662,000,000. On Monday 8 November, Hirst noted that the House of Commons had voted a credit of £400,000,000. Hirst’s comments on Asquith speech at the Guildhall banquet, 13 Nov. 1915, Hirst Papers.
the freedom of will?’ With a war of attrition in full swing, the Radical publicists searched for initiatives to break the political deadlock.

On the attrition theme, Charles Roden Buxton complained also in the Autumn of 1915 that one of the outstanding features of this war of attrition was that it was, ‘a war in which each of the combatants is in almost total ignorance of the real demands (as distinct from bluff) of the other. A war of attrition may be a necessity; but a war in the dark is not.’ He argued that it was up to the statesmen to find out what the real demands of the enemy were, as opposed to just bluff. To those who would argue that the time was not right and that Allied victories were needed first, Buxton reminded the Nation’s readers that Britain dominated the seas, held practically the whole German Empire, and had made great inroads into Germany’s fighting strength in France. Furthermore, Buxton insisted, there was evidence that moderate opinions were growing in Germany. On this point Buxton could claim special expertise, for his wife Dorothy produced ‘Notes From the Foreign Press’, a special supplement to the Cambridge Magazine from August 1915. To those who would argue that publishing clear and moderate aims would have no effect on the enemy, Buxton countered that:

It is, of course, possible, if you will, probable that we shall find that no terms satisfactory to ourselves and our Allies can be obtained. If so, then we can go on with more determination than before, because with a more definite knowledge of what we are fighting for. No member of the general public can tell for the moment whether our objects are obtainable; but why not find out? In other words, no harm would be done in publishing clear aims. It is worth a try.

293 On this, Buxton elaborated: ‘We know that in every country men are driven to continue the war by a belief in the insatiable demands of the enemy, and that this belief is largely due to the selective process by which the press, week after week, and month after month, magnifies every violent utterance on the other side, and conceals or throws into the shade every utterance which breathes a spirit of moderation.’ Ibid.
295 Ibid. Also, Buxton made much the same points in the November edition of the U. D. C. journal. ‘If terms satisfactory to ourselves and our Allies could be obtained at a comparatively early date, we ought
Meanwhile, Hobson added that, in the event of the commencement of peace negotiations, there must be:

a serious attempt to re-establish public law in Europe in some formal arrangement to which all the Great Powers, including Germany, shall be parties. The terms of peace must be determined primarily with this end in view, and all considerations of retributive justice must be subordinated to it. The reason why Germany should, if possible, be included in any general League of Powers from the beginning, is not in the least complimentary or honourable to that country, it is in plain consideration that she would be more dangerous outside than inside.\(^{296}\)

The December edition of the *U. D. C.* summarised four books published during the year on the ‘international machinery’ that would be needed after the war. Ideas were floated for an ‘International High Court’ and a ‘World League’.

However, Morel in this issue of the *U. D. C.*, was very suspicious about why the Government would not discuss peace and accused the Northcliffe Press of preaching ‘a war à outrance’ and denouncing any talk of peace discussion as ‘pro-German’.\(^{298}\)

By the end of 1915, the Radical publicists were full of ideas on how the war should be ended. They not only advocated the formulation of detailed war aims but constantly looked to the creation of an ambitious new international order, based on the League of Nations. While the Radical publicists were convinced that a dramatic shift was needed in the approach to the war and in planning for a post-war world, there was despair over the British Government’s lack of interest in such matters and a realisation on the

\(^{296}\) [*Nation*, J. A. Hobson, ‘Approaches to Peace’, Letters to the Editor, 20 Nov. 1915.]


part of the Radicals that, on their own, their views were of little account in the circles of power.\footnote{The Government’s lack of interest was made all too apparent in Asquith’s reply to Phillip Snowden’s question in the House of Commons about whether the Government would give an assurance it would not reject neutral (i.e. from the U. S. A.) peace proposals without the knowledge of Parliament. Asquith replied that Snowden ought to have been aware that ‘the Governments of France, Russia, Japan, Italy, and Great Britain have mutually agreed not to conclude peace separately during the present war.’ Any proposal would have to be discussed first by the Allied governments. \textit{U. D. C.}, ‘America at the Crossroads’, vol. 1, no. 2, Dec. 1915.} Despite these challenges, the Radical publicists maintained their hope that a just and lasting settlement could be achieved through a negotiated peace.

As outlined above, there were serious differences in the ranks of the Radical publicists over the approach to the war by the end of 1915. There was disagreement over whether to speak up or keep silent about Grey’s pre-war foreign policy. Also, the Radical publicists differed over whether significant military victories over Germany were needed before peace could be considered, or whether terms for a negotiated peace should be formulated immediately. However, by the end of 1915 a consensus was building among the Radical publicists that when the peace did come it should not be a vengeful peace. On the contrary, the peace settlement should lay the foundations for European and international cooperation and so avoid any repetition of such a disastrous war in the future. While the Radicals were building their vision to show how the end of the war could result in a lasting settlement, there was little indication this could be achieved, either by military victories or by diplomatic initiatives, on the part of either the Allies or the Central Powers. For this reason, the Radical publicists increasingly looked outside the belligerent powers for a solution. At the beginning of 1916 there was a flickering flame of hope that a peace could come sooner, rather than later, with the assistance of the mediation of neutral nations. Of course, the key to neutral mediation was the United States of America. As the war dragged on
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relentlessly into 1916, the Radical publicists increasingly looked for salvation to the idealistic statesman on the other side of the Atlantic, Woodrow Wilson.

This hope that America could somehow have a constructive role to play in helping to end the conflict had its origins in the first days of the war among American, as much as British, peace activists.\(^{300}\) Indeed, President Wilson offered to mediate in the first days of the war\(^ {301}\) and as we have seen, the British Radical publicists were open to this possibility from the outset.\(^{302}\) However, the chance of a successful American mediation was boosted by a significant grassroots agitation in the United States which urged that, not only should America remain impartial in the war, but that the country should offer itself as a mediator. From the outset of the war, American peace activists worked incessantly for neutral mediation of the war and for American leadership of the neutrals in this mission. The British Radical publicists were not unaware of the American peace activists’ involvement in the highly publicised Dutch-initiated International Women’s Congress at The Hague in April 1915\(^ {303}\) and of Henry

\(^{300}\) In the first few months of the war, American peace activists planned to draft an appeal to Wilson. They proposed that President Wilson should urge the neutral countries of Europe to ‘unite with our government in making, on the first favourable occasion, a joint offer of mediation in the interests of humanity, civilization and lasting peace, in which all the nations of the world are equally concerned.’ There were 54 names already on this letter to Wilson. William H. Short to F. F. Andrews, 7 Aug. 1914, A-95, Box 33, Folder 387, Andrews Papers.

\(^{301}\) On 28 July, 5 August and in September 1914, the President offered himself as a mediator to both sides in the conflict. L. Martin, Peace Without Victory, p. 92, and H. C. Peterson, Propaganda for War, p. 203.

\(^{302}\) Gilbert Murray referred to the President’s specific proposal. ‘As to President Wilson’s proposal, my own inclination would be to jump at a cessation of the war at the first reasonable opportunity.’ Gilbert Murray to Hugh Richardson, 26 Aug. 1914, Richardson Papers. Also, see Nation, H. G. Wells, ‘Opportunity’, Politics and Affairs, 15 Aug. 1914; Nation, G. B. Shaw, ‘Open Letter to the President of the United States’, 7 Nov. 1914; Nation, Events of the Week, 12 Dec. 1914.

\(^{303}\) The Hague Congress was proposed by Dr. Aletta Jacobs from the Netherlands and some British suffragists, notably, Chrystal Macmillan. See Beryl Haslam, From Suffrage to Internationalism (New York, 1999), p. 50. One cannot read the 20-point resolution without being struck by its practicality and commonsense. Any member of the U. D. C. would happily subscribe to such a program. For a description of the International Congress of Women at The Hague one cannot go past the classic 1915 account by three of the women of the American delegation. Jane Addams, Emily G. Balch and Alice Hamilton, Women At The Hague: The International Peace Congress of 1915 (New York, 1915). Note also that Beryl Haslam placed the prescription for a reformed world order offered by the women at the Congress in the mainstream of liberal internationalist thought. These ideas exercised a significant influence on President Wilson’s thinking, for he read the resolutions with great interest. See Haslam, From Suffrage to Internationalism, pp. 63-71.
Ford’s ‘Peace Ship’ in December 1915.\(^{304}\) It is true that these were privately-sponsored attempts to encourage diplomatic mediation. However, these bold initiatives were both linked to the ultimate aim of encouraging President Wilson to take the leadership of a grand peace initiative sponsored by the neutral nations. This was no pie-in-the-sky hope. Firstly, an ambitious plan for conducting a permanent peace conference in Europe, probably to sit at The Hague, had been drawn up in detail by an American peace activist, Julia Grace Wales. The plan for so-called ‘continuous mediation’ had been passed as a resolution by the legislature of the state of Wisconsin in April 1915 and communicated publicly to the President.\(^{305}\) The second reason that appeared to give this bold endeavour a realistic chance of coming about was that, in numerous personal meetings which the peace activists had with President Wilson, he appeared supportive and gave the impression that he would act along such lines as they suggested at the opportune time.\(^{306}\) The possibility of an American-led neutral mediation of the war in 1915 seemed feasible to politically aware Americans of all political persuasions. From late spring 1915, the American President appeared to be offering his services to bring into reality the type of post-war international order that the Radical publicists had been hoping for. However, what was not clear at the time was what actions, if any, Wilson was prepared to take to make a negotiated peace a reality.

It is possible that Wilson was first made aware of the U.D.C.’s principles through an article written by G. L. Dickinson, entitled, 'The War and the Way Out',


\(^{305}\) ‘The Record of the Wisconsin Peace Plan – Mediation Without Armistice’, typescript, Julia Grace Wales Papers, 1.

\(^{306}\) Knock, *To End All Wars*, pp. 67-68.
which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in December 1914.\(^{307}\) This article had ‘enormous intellectual and emotional appeal’ to Wilson.\(^{308}\) Interest in the ideas of Radical publicists and the U. D. C. prompted the President to arrange for Colonel House to make contact with prominent Radicals during his trip to Britain and Europe early in 1915. During his visit to Europe, from February to June 1915, Colonel House sought out the views of the Radicals whom he found to be ‘sane, reasonable men.’ After meeting with Lord Loreburn, House commented that, ‘his views coincide with mine.’\(^{309}\) House also met with F. W. Hirst, editor of the *Common Sense*, A. G. Gardiner, editor of the *Daily News*, and John Burns, a former member of Asquith’s Cabinet, who had resigned his post in August 1914 as a protest against British intervention in the war. In their conversations with Colonel House they pressed him to urge Wilson to stand up for neutral rights and a new code of international law. After these meetings, House concluded that the Radicals were Wilson’s strongest supporters in Britain.\(^{310}\)

Another source of influence on Wilson was the Bryce Group. It was named after Lord Bryce who was the former ambassador to the United States and the Group’s nominal chairman. G. L. Dickinson was instrumental in its inauguration. Three other prominent members of the U. D. C., Arthur Ponsonby, W. H. Dickinson and J. A. Hobson participated.\(^{311}\) The Bryce Group aimed to influence other Liberals through academic enquiry and discussion on ways of preventing wars in the future.\(^{312}\)

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\(^{307}\) Ibid.

\(^{308}\) Ibid., p. 38.

\(^{309}\) Martin, *Peace Without Victory*, p. 95.

\(^{310}\) Ibid., p. 95.

\(^{311}\) Harris, *Out of Control*, p. 101.

\(^{312}\) For a concise outline of the Bryce Group see E. M. Forster, *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson* (New York, 1962), pp. 163-7. Also, see M. D. Dubin, ‘Towards the Concept of Collective Security: The Bryce Group’s “Proposals for the Avoidance of War”’, *International Organisation*, XXIV, 2 (Spring, 1970), pp. 288-317. An important aspect of Dickinson’s involvement in the Bryce Group was the encouragement the new Bryce Group gave to the new American body, the League to Enforce Peace. After the formation of the League of Nations Society in Britain, Dickinson conducted a lecture tour of
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Through this group the U. D. C. Radicals were able to influence Liberals who did not yet subscribe to a belief in a negotiated peace. However, the Bryce Group’s impact in the United States was more pronounced. The Group influenced the ideas of the League to Enforce Peace (L. T. E. P.), founded in the U. S. in June 1915, which in turn influenced Wilson’s own thinking on a model for post-war mutual security alliance as part of a ‘league of nations’. Swartz has suggested that Wilson’s views on the issue were more influenced by the U.D.C.’s ideas indirectly through the Bryce Group than directly through the U.D.C. contacts and appeals.\(^{313}\) Eventually a League of Nations Society (L. N. S.), which was the counter-part to the U. S.- based L. T. E. P., was formed in Britain. Among its membership were a host of Liberal M.P.’s including the Radical publicists, G. L. Dickinson and H. N. Brailsford and the Radical economist Raymond Unwin.\(^{314}\)

In addition to these organisations, there were public and private contacts between individual Radical publicists and Wilson. On 4 July 1915 an article written by E. D. Morel entitled, ‘Save the World - An Englishman To Wilson’, appeared on the front page of the New York Tribune’s Sunday feature section.\(^{315}\) Finally, in December 1915, Colonel House made his second wartime trip to Europe which was to include London, Berlin and Paris, once again upon Wilson’s instructions but also with the encouragement of Grey. On January 9, 1916 Wilson contacted House who was still in Britain, and promised that he would ‘cooperate in a policy seeking to bring the United States between January and April 1916. It is interesting to note that on the ship journey to the U. S. A., Dickinson shared the ship with the remnants of the Ford Peace Expedition. Ibid., pp. 166-7. Also see, Swartz, Union of Democratic Control, p. 97, and Taylor, The Troublemakers, p. 142. On the foundation of the League to Enforce Peace, and its promotion of the idea of collective security, see W. F. Kuehl, Hamilton Holt: Journalist, Internationalist, Educator (Gainesville, 1960), Ch. IX. Also, see Roland Marchand, The American Peace Movement and Social Reform, 1898-1918 (Princeton, 9172), pp. 152-162.\(^{313}\) Swartz, Union of Democratic Control, p. 98.\(^{314}\) D. S. Birn, The League of Nations Union 1918-1945 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 7.\(^{315}\) Swartz, Union of Democratic Control, p. 98.
about and maintain permanent peace amongst civilised nations.' Of significance during House’s trip to Britain once again were his contacts with the Radicals, contacts which contributed to his further distrust of the British Government. F. W. Hirst took Colonel House to see Lord Loreburn who told him about Grey’s deceit at the outbreak of the war. House appeared to identify with the Radical standpoint, asking Loreburn what the U.S.A. could do to counter extremism and to set the Allied cause on a more idealistic plane. While in England, House also briefed A. G. Gardiner, editor of the *Daily News*, for an article Gardiner was planning entitled, ‘Mr. Wilson’s Policy and the Pact of Peace’, which later greatly pleased Wilson when published. The Radical publicists hailed House’s visit as a ‘landmark in the war’, during which he ‘impressed everyone’. The point was made that House was the ‘eyes and ears of Wilson’.

By the beginning of 1916, the Radical publicists were busy formulating peace terms based on U. D. C. principles. In February, C. R. Buxton published his ‘Terms of Peace’ article as a U. D. C. leaflet, and H. N. Brailsford wrote an article called ‘A Peace of Satisfaction’ in the *U. D. C.* journal. After two sittings in February and March 1916 a U.D.C. conference drew up its ‘general conclusions’ on the possibility

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317 The Radicals gave House frequent personal assurances of the strength of peace sentiment in Britain. In addition, the Radical M.P. Howard Whitehouse gave his low opinion of the Cabinet and warned that Lloyd George was an extremist at heart. Whitehouse told House to urge Wilson to intervene in the war. Charles Roden Buxton also gave House an optimistic view of British public opinion though, he conceded, the conservative press distorted it. Nevertheless, Buxton argued that there was still considerable scope for a negotiated peace. Ibid., pp. 103-4.
318 Ibid., p. 104
319 *Nation*, 26 Feb. 1916.
320 By the end of 1915 a number of factors encouraged the U. D. C. to brush away any reservations they had about speaking out publicly. Firstly, there was the military stalemate on the Western front and the failure of the Dardanelles campaign. Secondly, Asquith’s May coalition drove a wedge into the Liberal Party causing many to join the U. D. C. Thirdly, there was mounting concern over the threat of conscription. H. Weinroth, ‘Peace By Negotiation and the British Anti-War Movement, 1914-1918’, *Canadian Journal of History*, 10/3 (1975), p. 391.
321 *U. D. C.*, H. N. Brailsford, ‘A Peace By Satisfaction’, Vol. 1, No. 4, Feb. 1916. He started the article with, ‘Lord Courtney has argued powerfully for a peace in which there will be neither victor, nor vanquished.’ This phrase was to be echoed in 1917 by Woodrow Wilson, who called for a ‘peace without victory.’ Also, in the same edition see, F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, ‘Why Not State Terms?’
of a negotiated peace. Soon after, a Peace Negotiations Committee was formed with representation from a range of bodies in the peace movement, while the U. D.C. began to campaign openly for a diplomatic settlement. Meanwhile, in the press, Radical publicists pursued the now familiar themes. They steadfastly opposed the erosion of civil liberties, argued vehemently against protectionism and conscription, criticised the ‘fight to the finish’ thinking, and despaired of the idea of fighting an economic ‘war after war,’ a slogan that was being discussed at that time, and was to be embraced eventually by Allied representatives at the Paris Economic Conference in June 1916. The Radicals persevered in asking for a public statement of war aims, and looked hopefully at statements from Asquith and Bethmann-Hollweg for hints that they might consider a negotiated peace.

The Spring of 1916 brought one disappointment upon another, from the point of view of the Radicals. First, relations between the United States and Germany

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322 Swartz, Union of Democratic Control, p. 75.
323 In April 1916 the U. D. C., the I. L. P., the N. C. F. (No Conscription Fellowship) and the F.O.R. (Fellowship of Reconciliation) started gathering signatures for a peace memorial which led to increased support. Weinroth, ‘Peace by Negotiation’, pp. 381-382. Also, Robbins, Abolition of War, pp. 96-7.
326 Protectionism would mean the ‘death and burial of Liberalism’. Nation, 4 Mar. 1916. Australian Prime Minister Hughes was described as a ‘Protectionist of the Australian type’ and his support for Allied plans to conduct an economic war against Germany at the end of hostilities was roundly condemned. Nation, 25 Mar. 1916. The imminent success of the conscription campaign was viewed, by Radical publicists, as a betrayal of Liberal principles by Lloyd George. Nation, 1 Jan. 1916. An article lamenting the defeat of Liberalism followed the passage of the Conscription Bill. Nation, 6 May 1916.
327 Brailsford reasoned: ‘We may weaken the enemy for ten or twenty years, but the more we weaken him the heavier will our own sacrifices be.’ Nation, H. N. Brailsford, ‘Approaches to Peace’, 1 Jan. 1916.
328 Nation, ‘War After War’, 8 April 1916.
329 ‘Mr. Asquith, answering Mr. Snowden’s sincere and passionate challenge on Wednesday for a further statement of British policy, contented himself with rehearsing the terms of his Guildhall speech, delivered in the autumn of 1914.’ Nation, ‘The Crisis of the War’, 26 Feb. 1916.
330 Nation, 8 April 1916.
reached flashpoint with the sinking of the Sussex by a U-boat on 24 March.\footnote{On 24 May, a German submarine torpedoed the Sussex, an unarmed French steamer, in the English Channel, resulting in eighty casualties, four of whom were Americans. See Knock, To End All Wars, p. 73.} Second came the gloomy news of the Easter Rebellion in Ireland in the last week of April 1916, and thirdly, the expanded Conscription Bill became law on 25 May.\footnote{The Radical publicists saw the passing of the Conscription legislation in Britain in May 1916 as a blow to Liberalism, particularly H. W. Massingham who had been waging a long campaign against conscription. Massingham had not agreed with the U. D. C. approach of challenging the Government over its conduct of the war. He had believed that once the war had been entered the Asquith Government should be supported until the war was won. However, the more the Asquith Government appeared to undermine Liberal principles of free speech, free service and free trade, the more that Massingham believed that the war must be ended sooner, rather than later, before all Liberal principles and democratic freedoms had been eroded. Massingham also appeared to be changing his other core belief that there must be significant victories on the battlefield before a peace could be negotiated with Germany. For a few examples of Massingham’s long campaign against conscription see the following articles in the Nation: - ‘The Europe of Tomorrow’, 29 Aug. 1914; ‘The Insult of Conscription’, 11 Nov. 1914; ‘The Perils of Conscription’, 15 May 1915; ‘The Case for Freedom’, 21 Aug. 1915; ‘The Insanity of Conscription’, 28 Aug. 1915; ‘A Rich and Powerful Conspiracy’, 23 Oct 1915; Conscription – A Warning’, 27 Nov. 1915.} The Sussex incident had made the prospect of America’s entry into the war, as a belligerent, a distinct possibility. However, Radical publicists’ hopes for a ‘league’ were given a boost by the so-called Sussex pledge made by Germany on 4 May 1916. The threat of hostilities between the United States receded in consequence of what was widely regarded as a dramatic back-down by the German government.\footnote{Thomas Knock asserted that Wilson had really placed the decision over whether there would be war with Germany in the hands of the Germans. However, when the Germans backed down, with their pledge that German submarines would observe cruiser rules (visit and search), it appeared to be the ‘greatest diplomatic triumph of Wilson’s first administration’. However, Knock pointed out that luck played a large role in the outcome. Importantly though, for Wilson, the Sussex pledge also ‘contributed to the President’s belief that both peace in Europe and the establishment of a ‘league of nations’ were now attainable, if only the Allies would cooperate.’ See, Knock, To End All Wars, p. 74.} On 20 May, Massingham praised Wilson’s conduct during the crisis over the Sussex and observed that although ‘for the moment, the League of Peace remains a vision’, he hoped that it would be ‘a fact, if ever, in obedience to principle, America should enter the war.’\footnote{Nation, 20 May 1916.} In the same month, Foreign Minister, Grey, and First Lord of the Admiralty, Balfour, gave interviews to American journalists in an attempt to sell the idea to the Americans that Britain and her Entente partners were already fighting for
an international program. Balfour dealt with the ‘freedom of the seas’ and argued that there should be the creation of a ‘powerful international machinery to enforce the law of nations’, code for a ‘league’. However, Massingham observed cynically that, the main point of the interview was to explain what the ‘crushing of Prussian militarism’ meant.\textsuperscript{335} Both British and American progressive internationalists had consistently sought to entice the American President to commit himself to the concept of neutral mediation and, of course, the British Government was persistent in its attempts to sell the Entente case for the war. Up to this time, despite displaying an interest in the progressive internationalist agenda of American peace activists and British Radicals, and giving personal assurances to both groups that he would act for peace at an opportune time, Woodrow Wilson had taken no definite steps to support the progressive internationalist cause. This was soon to change.

On 27 May, 1916 President Wilson, in his most dramatic diplomatic move of the war so far, made a commitment the repercussions of which have been felt to the present day. Woodrow Wilson was the first world statesman to take seriously the concept of forming a ‘league of nations’ for the prevention of war. Even more significant was the fact that this commitment was made in the most unequivocal way. It was a commitment that was to consume the President from this time until his death in 1924. In his May 1916 landmark speech to the League to Enforce Peace, in New York, Wilson publicly urged the creation of a universal association of nations.\textsuperscript{336} Most importantly he indicated that the United States would be willing to join in such an organisation. This willingness to join an international organisation to preserve peace – and it was implied the U. S. would be guaranteeing a peace to resolve the present war

\textsuperscript{335} Ibid.
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- was recognised by many at the time to be an historic break with isolationist foreign policy based on the Monroe Doctrine.  But of even greater import for the Radical publicists was the fact that this was the first time that the establishment of a ‘league of nations’ had been advocated by a head of state. What was also significant is the degree to which Wilson and the Radical publicists now appeared to be working closely towards the same ends. Phillip Snowden hailed the American President’s speech as a culmination of everything the U. D. C. had been campaigning for:

What the U. D. C. said nearly two years ago is now being expressed by prominent statesmen and leaders in all countries…. Every one of the principles of the U. D. C. was stated and approved in this speech of the American President.  

Martin has suggested that Wilson’s speech was specifically designed to please the Radicals.  In fact, the Radicals had a small part to play in the preparation of this speech. Firstly, there was the general influence of G. L. Dickinson who was touring the United States at the time. In addition, Norman Angell, who was also in the United States, suggested to House that Wilson use a tactic employed by the U. D. C. in its sixth pamphlet, of quoting the idealistic utterances of Allied statesmen. Angell sent Wilson a list of idealistic quotations of Allied leaders from 1914. Also, the New Republic in its editorials and articles, some of which were written by Angell, had a considerable influence on the drafting of Wilson’s speech. The Radical publicists were greatly encouraged by Wilson’s speech.  Even the moderate Liberal Westminster Gazette, edited by J. A. Spender, gave editorial support to Wilson’s proposal and ran an article by Gilbert Murray showing that many prominent people in Britain accepted the idea of a league. Wilson’s speech to the League to Enforce

\[337\] See Knock, To End All Wars, p. 78.
\[339\] Martin, Peace Without Victory, p. 108.
\[340\] Ibid., p. 110.
Peace of May 1916 marked a turning point in Wilson’s strategies concerning the mediation of an end to the war. Wilson now decided to abandon confidential overtures and to go public with mediation. Now more than ever Wilson turned to the Radicals for inspiration ‘exactly as they had looked to him.’

The Radical publicists and the American peace activists were energised by Wilson’s public commitment to the idea of establishing a ‘league’ after the end of hostilities. Indeed, just days before Wilson’s path-breaking speech, the two leading Radicals in the House of Commons, Ponsonby and MacDonald raised on Wednesday 24 May 1916, the question of the immediate possibility of peace negotiations, and were heard with attention in the House of Commons. However, it was Massingham’s reaction to Wilson’s speech that was the most interesting. Massingham credited the recent rumours of peace more to Wilson’s offer to mediate than to a well publicised and moderate interview by Bethmann-Hollweg which was also published at this time. Most significantly, though, Massingham stated that ‘almost any way out of the war would be better than going on with it if it is to end in turning us into barbarians.’ This statement is at odds with Massingham’s view since August 1914, that the nation must persevere with the war to the end. The Editor of the Nation appeared to have undergone a transformation of his views on a negotiated peace. He

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342 Martin, *Peace Without Victory*, p. 114. Through August and September the Radicals sent Wilson increasing amounts of information and much encouragement. All this information passed through the hands of William H. Buckler, an American attached as a special agent to the U. S. Embassy in London. Buckler was the half brother of Henry White, an American diplomat, and he had close relations with many Radicals, including C. P. Trevelyan and Noel Buxton, with whom he had studied at Cambridge. Also, Buckler had many friends in the Radical press such as H. N. Brailsford, H. W. Massingham and Henry W. Nevinson, and was a sympathetic supporter of Lord Lansdowne, Lord Haldane and Ramsay MacDonald. A. Nevins, *Henry White: Thirty Years of American Diplomacy* (New York, 1930), p. 341. Buckler sent House regular reports on Radical opinion from 1916 on. Buckler’s role was crucial because, in getting Radical literature to House, he had to avoid the British censors, as well as the ultra-patriotic Ambassador Page, who would have censored it as well, if he had laid eyes on it. Through Buckler at the American Embassy in London, Radical encouragement flowed freely to Wilson over the next few months.

343 *Nation*, 27 May 1916.

344 Ibid.

no longer argued for significant military victories before considering peace with Germany. Massingham’s dramatic about face was very probably due to his observation that the war had progressively eroded Liberal principles and civil liberties. To continue the war indefinitely would mean their total disappearance. Likewise, the whittling away of civil liberties by the Government, the extension of executive powers and suspension of party government also increasingly disturbed other Radical publicists at this time. For example, J. A. Hobson warned about the growth of militarism in Britain and argued that it was striking roots sufficiently deep to outlast the war.\textsuperscript{346} For Massingham and Hobson, mediation by President Wilson offered an acceptable way out of the downward spiral into an authoritarian state devoid of civil liberties.

Public debate about a ‘league’ sparked by Wilson’s League to Enforce Peace Speech gave the Radical publicists some cause to be hopeful about the future, though this was soon overshadowed the following month by the reactionary pronouncements of Entente statesman in Paris gathered for the Economic Conference.\textsuperscript{347} The Radical publicists were alarmed about the Paris Resolutions of June 1916.\textsuperscript{348} This agreement committed the Entente powers to a continuation of the economic war against Germany at the conclusion of military hostilities. The protectionist Paris Resolutions of June 1916 were anathema to those who genuinely believed in progressive liberal internationalism.\textsuperscript{349} Similarly, the increasing violation of civil liberties, the

\textsuperscript{346} Allett, \textit{New Liberalism}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{347} \textit{Nation}, ‘If America Backs the Bill’, 3 June 1916.
\textsuperscript{348} For a discussion of the resolutions, see R. Bunselmeyer, \textit{The Cost of War, 1914-1919: British Economic War Aims and the Origins of Reparation} (Hamden, 1975).
\textsuperscript{349} \textit{Nation}, 17 June 1916. \textit{Nation}, ‘After Peace’, 24 June 1916. For J. A. Hobson, the British government’s agreement to the Paris Resolutions was the final straw, striking as it did at the Liberal principle of free trade. Hobson hurriedly wrote a book, \textit{The New Protectionism}, which was a warning to the nation of the danger of the Paris Resolutions. This book also served as his resignation from the Liberal Party. In 1919 Hobson’s total disillusionment with the liberal internationalism in the wake of the Treaty of Versailles led to his joining the Labour Party. Allett, \textit{New Liberalism}, p. 38.
Government’s persecution of conscientious objectors, and the widespread hope that just one more offensive might achieve the big breakthrough, weighed heavily on the minds of those who desired an early peace. To the disappointment of the Radical publicists, even Lord Bryce placed his hope in the next offensive, which was soon to open on the Somme on 1 July 1916. Bryce placed his faith in the military who assured all that a breakthrough was certain. He reasoned that this would then transform the diplomatic situation. ‘Lord Bryce, I see, declines to talk of immediate peace on the ground that we have not yet made it clear we are winning’, commented a disappointed Massingham. In contrast, Massingham no longer trusted the generals who said victory was merely one offensive away. The main obstacle to peace, Massingham now insisted, was that ‘we are being misunderstood in Germany.’

In August 1916, rays of hope reappeared. The Nation used an article from the Wilsonian New Republic to inform its readers that America was only interested in sponsoring a progressive peace. ‘American opinion can be won only by proof that Europe is dominated by Liberals. America would take no responsibility for the peace of Europe if policy is to be dictated by men like Carson, Northcliffe and Curzon.’ The article listed all the things that were alienating America, such as the proposal for a war after the war involving tariffs and trade barriers, the activity of Japan and Russia in China, and the publication of the blacklist against American firms alleged to have traded with the Central Powers. Massingham concluded with the warning that

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351 Nation, 8 July 1916. Note that newspaper reports a week after the start of the battle contained little hint of the staggering casualty rate of the first day, only that, ‘we have suffered heavy loss, though not incommensurate with our gains.’ Nation, ‘The Opening Move of the Offensive’, 8 July 1916.
352 Ibid.
353 Nation, 29 Aug. 1916.
the realisation of President Wilson’s promise ‘hangs on the victory of Liberalism in Europe, and especially in England.’ He observed that ‘America will not allow herself to be used to forward a European reaction. If we mean to go on with the Paris Resolutions we must give up all hope of American participation in a League of Peace, and, of course, of the League itself.’ Massingham was convinced that the more the Allies pursued reactionary policies, the less likely the United States would want to be part of a settlement, nor would she launch a ‘league’, at the end of the war. Concerned at the small-minded visions of the political leaders, Massingham expressed his frustration about Allied leadership: ‘We don’t know what they are thinking. We do not even know whether they are thinking at all.’ Massingham despaired at the lack of imagination that the Allied leaders’ speeches demonstrated, suggesting that they were just mechanically following developments in campaigns. He concluded with this eloquent plea:

All the nations must perish unless they devise a means of living together under a form of law approaching at least the degree of security they obtain under national law. ....Give society hope and it will outlast worse horrors than it is enduring and even be the stronger for them. Base it upon hatred, and build on that idea a wall of economic barriers, and hope will not come. .... And therefore credit will not revive, industry will not revive, the healing social forces will not revive. Europe will sink again beneath the rule of fear under which she entered upon the war; and her dead will have died in vain.

In this article, Massingham encapsulated the agenda that the Radical publicists had pursued since September 1914, when they had started drawing up terms for the post-war settlement. The Radical publicists had the understanding to see, even in the early part of the twentieth century, that the relentless cycle of war and destruction would be repeated again and again with increasingly catastrophic results. This, they warned, would surely follow if the post-war settlement were to be based on hatred and

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354 Nation, 26 Aug. 1916.
356 Ibid.
revenge. Massingham had the foresight to realise that the only way to avoid total
destruction in the future was to build up international law, along with the international
means of enforcing it via collective security arrangements. Only a post-war settlement
that ensured fair international trade and finance, free from economic barriers, would
lead to a revival of hope and the healing of society’s deep wounds caused by the war.
Most importantly, Massingham and the Radical publicists reasoned that this was the
only outcome to the war that would ensure that the youth of Europe had not died in
vain. In hindsight, nearly a hundred years later, these words of Massingham’s seem
truly prophetic.

Between September and December 1916, the Radical publicists’ hope for a just
and lasting peace ushered in by a negotiated settlement, reached its peak. There was a
rising sentiment within the British government and among the people in the Entente
countries that the war was unwinnable and would end soon in some sort of compromise.\footnote{Bentley B. Gilbert, \textit{David Lloyd George: A Political Life} (Columbus, 1992), p. 367.} Bentley Gilbert has argued that many contemporary thinkers, as well
as the majority of people in Europe, saw during these few months a clear division
opening in the war. Also, at the time, there was a clear expectation that President
Wilson would make an attempt to intervene in the war by offering to mediate a
negotiated settlement.\footnote{Peter Rowland, \textit{David Lloyd George: A Biography} (New York, 1975), p. 345.} It was in this context that Woodrow Wilson, Lord Grey and
eventually Bethmann-Hollweg made promising statements about the possibility of a
post-war formation of a ‘league’. The Radical publicists were alert to this mood
change in the war and were hopeful that wise actions by the political leadership of
belligerent and neutral countries could see an end to the war soon. However, into this
growing sentiment for a negotiated peace, a wild card was thrown in. Roumania

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\textsuperscript{357} Bentley B. Gilbert, \textit{David Lloyd George: A Political Life} (Columbus, 1992), p. 367.
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entered the war on the side of the Allies at the end of August 1916.\textsuperscript{359} For some who had been reluctant to support negotiations with Germany until the Allies had won some decisive victories, the Roumanian entry to the war, opening up another front for the Germans to deal with, promised to tip the balance in favour of the Allies. Massingham, who himself had previously argued that Allied victories were needed before negotiations could be considered, worried that, ‘a full tide of military and diplomatic success may carry prudent statesmanship along with it. From the notion that Germany cannot win, we may leap too soon to the idea that Germany can be beaten to the dust.’\textsuperscript{360} It was generally assumed that Roumania’s entry to the war would have a negative effect on Germany’s ability to deal with another front, but within weeks it would become clear that the Roumanian campaign was faltering and that a German victory was the more likely outcome. Hope that Roumania would change the military balance in favour eventually turned out to be misplaced. Of more interest to the British Radical publicists, however, was the Presidential Election campaign in the United States.

The Radical publicists hoped for a victory for Woodrow Wilson, as did the American peace activists. Even though the League to Enforce Peace was partly an initiative of the ex-President, William Howard Taft, the \textit{Nation} believed Republican support for internationalism was weak and that many of the Republican supporters of the L. T. E. P. simply saw it as a development of the earlier ‘preparedness’ campaign. Besides, the Republicans made no commitments to the League in their platform, while the Democrats did.\textsuperscript{361} Furthermore, Wilson was viewed as ‘an effective man of action who always saves a desperate situation by some prompt expedient’, a man who ‘has

\textsuperscript{359} \textit{Nation}, Events of the Week, 2 Sept. 1916.
\textsuperscript{360} \textit{Nation}, A London Diary, 2 Sept. 1916.
\textsuperscript{361} \textit{Nation}, ‘What America is Thinking’, 2 Sept. 1916.
probably improved his position both with labour and with the general public.’ In this regard, the Radical publicists were impressed with Wilson’s awarding of an 8 hour day to railway workers. The Nation’s assessment of Woodrow Wilson was that he ‘started his period of office as a rather old-fashioned believer in laissez-faire, very jealous of State rights. He has evolved, with four years’ administrative experience, towards an active and constructive Liberalism.’

As the prospects for a military resolution to the war seemed to grow ever more remote, with neither the Western Front nor Roumania producing the much-anticipated victory, in the autumn of 1916 the Radical publicists shifted their public relations campaign for an effective and lasting peace into a higher gear. Massingham argued against humiliating the enemy because, ‘extreme humiliation would produce a degree of resentment and bitter feeling of revenge, which would obscure the unpopularity of the military school and its aggressive policy.’ Massingham also argued that American mediation was needed because the German Government ‘needs American mediation in order to save its face, and to survive the attacks of the Jingo parties [within Germany].’ Moreover, he suggested, ‘it is felt that American mediation ought to be preferred by the Allies, since Germany would clearly prefer mediation by the Pope or the King of Spain.’ Meanwhile, J. A. Hobson proposed that the Allies repudiate the right of conquest, and make a denial of the doctrine of possession. Rather, the Allies should present themselves as honest brokers, avoid hypocrisy and stick to their promises that they were not in the war for selfish gain. ‘Let us consider that our unpopularity as a nation is due to the incorrigible habit we have of giving utterance to high-sounding phrases as to our motives, and following them up with

362 Ibid.
363 Nation, 9 Sept. 1916.
365 Ibid.
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deeds which are in no way in accordance with our declarations,’ urged Hobson.  

Furthermore, if the peace settlement was approached in a

spirit of reasonable accommodation and our disinterested motives are shown to be sincere, there will be some hope of European harmony being restored. But if the war is to be a demonstration of how British supremacy can be extended in a still wider world dominion, we shall be, in spite of all protestations, exploring the very doctrines we condemn, and drawing upon ourselves the indignation of the civilised world.  

G. Lowes Dickinson, meanwhile, countered the notion that Germany must be punished, weakened and disarmed. Rather, it would be more sensible to ‘allay the fears which led up to the war, and devise more sensible ways than war for determining future disputes.’ Besides, punishment would not have the good effect of changing the spirit of the offender. Furthermore, the possible aims of punishment need to be analysed, because the intention was to prevent future wars, then Britain should acknowledge that there are other nations capable of starting them. Weakening Germany would only serve to encourage and strengthen another rival state. The disarming of Germany, with the Allies remaining armed, and with nothing else done, would not cure ‘the international anarchy. All that would have been done would be to remove temporarily one competitor from the contest for power, leaving the others to compete with one another.’ Dickinson wrote that:

All of this talk of punishment, and of prevention by ‘crushing’ Germany, only distracts our minds from the real problem before us. If we are to do anything worth doing we have completely to remodel our ideas and prejudices in international politics, and to construct international machinery to embody the new policy. In other words, we have, all of us, and not only Germany, to abandon an isolated nationalism, openly or secretly aggressive, and to enter on the way of internationalism.  

366 Nation, ‘Some Views of the Settlement, 9 Sept. 1916.
367 Ibid.
368 Nation, G. Lowes Dickinson, Letters to the Editor, 16 Sept. 1916.
369 Ibid.
370 Ibid.
Furthermore, Dickinson drew attention to the danger of Britain indulging in rank hypocrisy: ‘Would it not be better frankly to admit that Great Britain intends to dominate or supervise the world?’ He objected to the idea that Britain’s rule of its world empire was a benevolent one and superior to any other nation’s imperial rule. ‘It is just these sort of naïve notions that are the greatest obstacle to any just and durable settlement. There is no way but the way of internationalism. And, internationalism means equal treatment for all nations, including those with which we are at war.’

As the Nation looked to Germany, hopeful signs appeared. Bethmann-Hollweg was observed as a force for moderation keeping the ‘Jingo’ in Germany at bay. According to the Nation, the political alignments on view inside Germany indicated clearly the Chancellor’s middle way: ‘the enmity of the annexationists [in Germany] and the support of the Socialists are proof enough that in Germany he is judged to be a factor making for moderation.’ The Nation argued that Bethmann-Hollweg desired, ‘a moderate peace’, and, ‘he seems to be anxious not to drive us into an extreme attitude and to keep America as a moderating influence.’

However, at this point, there was a development that was to affect the whole course of the war. Lloyd George’s ‘Knock-out Blow’ interview had an enormous impact on Britain’s domestic politics. Lloyd George, then the War Minister in the Asquith cabinet, had spoken to American journalist, Roy Howard, on 27 September 1916. In an attempt to head off any attempt by moderates to achieve peace by

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371 Ibid.
372 Nation, 30 Sept. 1916.
373 Ibid.
negotiation, the Lloyd George argued vehemently for a ‘fight to the finish’ and bluntly warned against any neutral mediation. Lloyd George told Roy Howard:

> Britain is not prepared to stop the war because of the squealing done by Germans or done for Germans. We must fight to a finish, to a knock-out blow. There can be no outside interference at this stage. Britain can tolerate no intervention. The enemy is whimpering and whining. With regard to the duration of the war there is neither clock nor calendar in the British army today. Time is the least vital factor. It took England twenty years to defeat Napoleon, and the first fifteen of those years were bleak with British defeats. It will not take twenty years to win this war, but whatever time is required it will be done.\(^{375}\)

This was a direct assault on the idea of an early negotiated peace. Although a minister in the Asquith cabinet, on his own authority it seemed Lloyd George declared to the world that a negotiated settlement was out of the question and that Britain would not welcome any American attempt to mediate.\(^{376}\) Despite the obvious annoyance that his interview had caused Foreign Minister Grey, Lloyd George was unrepentant. On 2 October, he informed Lord Grey that:

> Any cessation of hostilities now would be a disaster, and although we could always refuse or put up impossible terms, it is much better that we should not be placed in that predicament. You [Grey] could not have warned off the United States without doing it formally. I could commit a serviceable indiscretion; you could not. It would ruin you; I am inoculated! You will find that it will work out all right! I know the American politician. He has no international conscience. He thinks of nothing but the ticket, and he has not given the least thought to the effect of his action upon European affairs.\(^{377}\)

This was an unmistakable challenge to anyone in the Asquith Government contemplating an early end to the war and a warning to the United States not to attempt mediation.\(^{378}\) Lloyd George, once the darling of the Radical publicists, now represented the voice of conservative hardliners who refused to entertain anything less

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\(^{376}\) Gilbert, *David Lloyd George*, p. 368.

\(^{377}\) Quoted in Rowland, *David Lloyd George*, p. 346.

\(^{378}\) For discussion about what motivated Lloyd George to make these bold moves see Rowland, *David Lloyd George*, p. 345-6 and Gilbert, *David Lloyd George*, p. 367-9.
than total victory over Germany.\footnote{379} Lloyd George’s was a thorn in the side of his Cabinet colleagues who privately entertained the idea of an early negotiated peace but who, in public, had to appear tough and resolute in waging the war.\footnote{380}

As a result of Lloyd George’s public and private warnings against a negotiated peace, the public statements of Asquith and Grey became more disciplined. On 11 October 1916, Asquith made a speech in which he said that, for the Allies, the war ‘cannot be allowed to end in some patched up, precarious, dishonourable compromise, masquerading under the name of peace.’\footnote{381} Furthermore, ‘as to America, we doubt whether a single new fact exists warranting the suggestion that she proposes to offer mediation.’\footnote{382} Similarly, in speech to the Foreign Press Association on 23 October, Grey endorsed the idea of a post-war league of nations, but gave no hint of favouring an early peace by negotiation.\footnote{383} Publicly at least, Asquith and Grey were shunning the idea of an American-mediated peace. However, for Massingham and the other Radical publicists, there was sufficient evidence that an American offer to mediate was likely, and that a negotiated peace was possible in the near future. Not only was a negotiated peace possible, it was immensely desirable. The alternative, as far as the Radical publicists were concerned, was an indefinite war of attrition with no hope of it ending in the next year. In the autumn of 1916 the issue of whether to attempt to end the war immediately or to fight on indefinitely in the hope of a conclusive military

\footnote{379} Lloyd George was once considered one of the rising new stars of the Liberal Party. He was also once considered a Radical. However, his call for conscription in September 1915 shook off the last remaining vestiges of Radicalism that Lloyd George possessed. This earned the wrath of the Radical publicists, A. G. Gardiner and C. P. Scott and the Liberal editor, J. A. Spender. Gilbert, David Lloyd George, p. 260. It is interesting to note how far the perceptions of Lloyd George had changed. In July 1914, Lloyd George was viewed as one of the potential leaders of an anti-intervention faction in the Liberal Party. However, Lloyd George had been moving away from conventional Radical attitudes since 1911. See Hazlehur, Politicians At War, pp. 54-76.


\footnote{381} Nation, 14 Oct. 1916.

\footnote{382} Ibid.

\footnote{383} Manchester Guardian, 24 Oct. 1916.
victory, hung in the balance.\textsuperscript{384} In the pages of the \textit{Nation}, the Radical publicists did their utmost to argue their case, appealing to their Liberal leaders, Asquith and Grey, to public opinion, and to the American President, Woodrow Wilson. However, the forces resolutely opposed to a negotiated peace were seemingly invincible. Massingham, who had once urged that the nation could only talk peace when significant battles had been won against Germany, now believed that the most important battle to be won was the battle of ideas.

One week after Asquith’s rejection of a ‘patched-up peace’ speech and over three weeks since Lloyd George’s ‘Knock-out Blow’ speech, Massingham fired the opening salvo in what he saw as the decisive battle for the hearts and minds of those people who controlled policy both in Britain and the United States. The trigger for Massingham’s decision to go all out in advocating a negotiated peace may have been Emily Hobhouse’s report of her visit to Germany in the late summer of 1916, which was published in the \textit{Nation} in October 1916. Hobhouse reported that the Germans ‘clearly appear to wish for peace’.\textsuperscript{385} From a high official of the Foreign Office she heard ‘that Germany wished for peace, and was willing to enter into negotiations to that end, but he reiterated that he feared there was no such disposition of the part of English statesmen.’\textsuperscript{386} He reminded her that ‘twice Germany had plainly set forth to the world that she desired peace.’\textsuperscript{387} Hobhouse concluded her letter with the challenge:

\textsuperscript{384} For a discussion of Cabinet consideration of this issue in the Autumn of 1916, see David French, \textit{British Strategy and War Aims, 1914-1916} (London, 1986), pp. 227-238.
\textsuperscript{386} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{387} Hobhouse claimed that the high official, ‘spoke much of the necessity for England and Germany to live in amity; race, kinship, interests all demand it.’ Also, ‘he showed me that they were prepared to be moderate and reasonable in the proposals on their side, but such intricate matters I will not approach. This and much more he said to me.’ Ibid.
Sir, does it not seem as if negotiations might easily be opened? If the moral courage of the governments equalled the immortal military courage of their soldiers, private conversations between ministers might begin, and a basis for honourable peace be found by nobler, saner methods than those that shock the world today.\footnote{388}

Massingham needed to hear no more, declaring that:

No war was settled by soldiers alone, or ever can be. No peace, ‘conclusive’ or ‘inconclusive’ ever rested on the unaided effect of arms. On the contrary, a militarily ‘conclusive’ war might well produce, in the extreme exasperation of the beaten party, a political condition incompatible with a substantial settlement.\footnote{389}

This declaration of Massingham’s, that a conclusive Allied victory might actually be a negative thing, was not an argument he would have used in 1914. In a theme that the editor was to repeat often over the course of the next few years, Massingham lamented the quality of statesmanship that had arisen in the environment of war. Political leaders were now motivated by ‘blind animal passion.’\footnote{390} War divides, but true statesmanship unites, he argued. Massingham made a plea that in the long run there needed to be reconciliation between Britain and Germany for there to be lasting peace:

If the Great Land-Power and the Great Sea-Power are to be at each other’s throats after the present encounter has reached some kind of material issue, the European world may suffer a number of truces, but it can never enjoy a peace. It is for that reason that the end of statesmanship must be to secure a measure of amity, rather than formal pacification.\footnote{391}

This reconciliation could come about in two ways. One was that Germany renounce her, ‘fatal error of 1914’, and the second was that she consent to the creation of an organ for preventing war, a ‘league’, as proposed by the Americans. Based on Miss Hobhouse’s reports of words from a High German official, Massingham declared that,

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‘there indeed lie the broad general foundations of an enduring world peace.’

Massingham concluded that:

All this is a question of ideas. There is a battle. The soul of Britain is as much engaged as its body, and is as bitterly contested between rival claimants. Can the country maintain the vision with which the best of its young men went out to fight the war, and can her leaders frame the settlement in its reflected light? We have, indeed, no exclusive power of settlement; but it would be mere scepticism to deny that, so long as sea-power remains to us, we have a largely determining voice. Is it to be used to enlarge the world’s freedom, economic and political, or to curtail it? That is the main question, and substantially there is no other. Free Trade was our electoral issue in 1906. It is the world issue in 1916.

The following week, Norman Angell joined the fray, tackling the ‘nervousness about mediation’ that had been ‘so played upon by certain sections of the press as seriously to befog the national vision in this matter.’ Angell offered a justification for neutral mediation of the war to counter Lloyd George’s ‘fight to the finish’, and he urged his readers to take the long-term view. ‘Our whole plea is that in continuing the war we have our eyes on the conditions of ten or twenty or thirty years hence.’

Angell refuted Grey’s argument, in his speech to the Foreign Press Association on 23 October, that punishment was needed to make Germany realise that force could not pay and to force the Germans to think twice in future about aggression. Angell argued that it was possible to consider an early peace because America would be the guarantor of that peace. He expressed his astonishment that neither British statesmen nor the press realised the enormous significance of the ‘league of nations’ idea: ‘This alliance of the future which is now offered to us we treat either with chill aloofness as something not touching our present problems or (as in the case of certain of our

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392 Ibid.
393 Ibid.
394 Ibid.
396 Ibid.
newspapers) with positive hostility. Meanwhile, Massingham put a positive spin on Grey’s speech, seeing it as a request to a neutral US-led mediation to assist the political settlement of Europe by basing it on international law. ‘When Germany accepts that position; and comes in as a loyal member of the League of Nations which it assumes, the key of the fortress that we seek to conquer will have to be surrendered.’ The editor of the Nation recognised that, ‘America has not offered mediation, for the simple reason that no party to the war requested it’, but America, he argued, had offered a guarantee of peace via a League. After Lord Grey’s acceptance of this, he argued, the USA had become a ‘party to the business of pacification.’ But Britain must be prepared to make a contribution to this sort of settlement. However, Massingham recognised the opposition to the possibility of peace. ‘There is a shallow and dangerous element in the thought that would belittle the vast peril of this war. It is no ordinary conflict; it is almost the last chance for civilization.’ Once again, taking the long-term view, Massingham argued that if the war could be ended immediately and an international body was instituted to guarantee the peace settlement, then there would be endless benefits that would come from international cooperation. A Political Council of Europe, an International Maritime Commission, a Boundary Commission, and an International Commission to consider

396 Ibid.
397 Nation, ‘The Appeal to International Right’, 28 Oct. 1916. ‘Events of the Week’, indicates that it was Grey’s ‘fine speech’, to the Foreign Press Association, of 23 October, to which reference was being made. Massingham referred to this as an ‘express endorsement of the great League to Enforce Peace, which has captured the imagination of the American Continent, and Lord Grey invited neutral States to develop its ideas while the war proceeded.’ The view was also expressed in the column that Lord Bryce’s suggestion of a British branch of the League ‘will be at once taken up by all parties.’ Nation, ‘Events of the Week’, 28 Oct. 1916. In the same issue background was given on how the American League To Enforce Peace organisation was formed and what it proposed. The idea that thinking about a League should be postponed was rejected: ‘There is plenty of mental energy in this country available for taking up this new work. It cannot be neglected or postponed without impairing the possibility of a durable peace when the war ends.’ Nation, ‘A British Branch of the League’, 28 Oct. 1916.
398 Ibid.
399 Ibid.
400 Ibid.
the fair distribution of the world’s raw materials, could all become a reality. In addition, as Massingham argued, ‘the Treaty of Peace should declare the inviolability of the small States’, introduce a plan of disarmament, as well as the nationalisation of the Straits and all international canals. This was truly visionary thinking, but Massingham believed that Radical reformers must focus on the positive benefits of post-war cooperation:

But the moment we attempt to visualize the vaguest conception of an after-war Europe that will not be a hell on earth, we presuppose a state of amity between the Great Powers - yes, between the chief belligerents of the hour. There is the true dilemma. Can we and Germany, whose antagonism has torn the world in twain, become associates in the work of re-settlement?

However, this post-war reconciliation had to be attempted, otherwise the war would go on for years. Massingham argued that:

unless we can think of Europe as one, unless we consciously aim at a peace which goes deeper than a scheme of territorial adjustment, and seek to exorcise the opposing spirits of racial hatred and sectarian ambition, the war may prove almost interminable, and the false ideas from which it sprang grow till they are woven into Europe’s winding sheet.

If the war was not ended then Europe would be poisoned by it, Massingham warned. As far as the editor of the Nation was concerned, American mediation was indispensable to reversing Europe’s downward spiral and achieving a satisfactory end to the war:

There, even more than in the pains and horrors of slaughter, lies our danger, and we see no escape from it unless, at the fit moment, we can resort to influence, at once detached, and powerful, and sympathetic to the world’s better soul and intelligence. That influence can only flow from one source, America.

Despite the Radical publicists’ agreement over many things in the autumn of 1916, one area over which they remained at loggerheads was the quarrel over the

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401 Ibid.
402 Ibid.
403 Ibid.
404 Ibid.
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responsible of Britain in the origins of the war. This dispute between the Radical
publicists resurfaced again when E. D. Morel replied to Massingham’s criticism of his
recently published Truth and the War. Morel and Massingham obviously still
disagreed over how much, if at all, the mistakes of pre-war Liberal diplomacy should
be analysed. Massingham preferred to look forward, not back. Morel, preferred to get
the past right and then look forward. Taking an historical approach, Morel believed
that it was important to gather evidence for the collective responsibility of the war,
seeing this as a crucial factor in achieving a rational settlement of the war and having
any hope of saving Europe from ‘ultimate shipwreck.” However, Morel was totally
in agreement with Massingham’s opposition to those conservative voices in the
Government who wanted to fight the war till the bitter end. Morel too, was filled with
dread at the prospect of Lloyd George’s ‘war á outrance’, extending the hostilities
years longer than necessary so as to obtain a military victory ‘so crushing that certain
ends may be thereby secured.” Morel was appalled at the thought of the youth of
Britain fighting on for questionable motives:

The question arises whether the manhood of Britain is being immolated
to-day upon the altars of national necessity and honourable obligation
contracted before the war; or upon the altars of British and Continental
Imperialism and capitalistic interests, arising out of obligations
contracted since the war.

Morel also took a swipe at the Paris Resolutions – the Allied plan to fight an
economic war with Germany at the end of hostilities to achieve ‘economic
strangulation and industrial paralysis in Germany’. He accused Asquith of caving in
to the economic warriors in the cabinet over this issue and felt this placed a question
mark over Asquith’s ‘constructive idealism’ and his commitment to reasonable

407 Ibid.
408 Ibid.
409 Ibid.
Further, Morel took aim at those moderate Liberals, particularly the elder statesmen, for their silence on these issues up to the present:

Is it too much to hope that those who have kept a complete, or comparative, silence since the war broke out, but whose experience is ripe and knowledge extensive, may consider that the time has come when the nation is entitled to ask for their assistance in elucidating these mysteries.\textsuperscript{411}

Though Morel and Massingham could not agree on the need for investigating the origins of the war, they were at one in their criticisms of the Paris Resolutions and their advocacy of a negotiated peace to be followed by the establishment of a ‘league of nations.’

In November 1916, the \textit{Nation} continued its campaign for a League. Massingham argued that the two rival approaches of achieving a crushing victory and a negotiated peace could not be mixed. ‘A crushing peace has a certain logic in it’, argued the editor of the \textit{Nation}, while a ‘peace of conciliation’ rested on a ‘hopeful and constructive logic’.\textsuperscript{412} However, a mixture of the two approaches would ‘rest on no logic whatever.’\textsuperscript{413} The key in deciding which approach was best depended upon whether a ‘league of nations’ was feasible. Morel argued that if there was no hope for a ‘league’, then there was no hope for the future:

There is no guarantee at that moment of any more hopeful future for Europe, [for] it is almost inevitable that the old competition in armaments will be renewed and with it a trade war infinitely more menacing to peace than anything in the past. ....To delay our assent is in effect to refuse a League of Peace. That is why it is urgent to form at once a British Branch of the League to Enforce Peace. The assent of public opinion (which is, in fact, morally prepared already) must be organized and concentrated. It must be formed behind Lord Grey so that the one question which really matters shall be set for a definite answer at the settlement.\textsuperscript{414}

\textsuperscript{410} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{411} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{413} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{414} Ibid.
Similarly, W. H. Dickinson, a Liberal M. P., weighed into the discussion about the necessity for a League. Dickinson explained to the readers of the *Nation* that the ‘league of nations’ idea had originated in Britain, and had predated (and indeed influenced) the American model which had been enunciated by President Wilson since May 1916. In the popular mind, it was thought that the ‘league’ idea was American in origin. Dickinson corrected this popular misconception by revealing that the movement had started in Britain in late 1914 with the formation of a committee headed by the high profile Liberal peer, Lord Bryce, which was known as the Bryce Committee. Though Dickinson welcomed the recent high profile that the idea of a League had achieved due to President Wilson’s sponsorship, he claimed that the British scheme had gone much further than that put forward by the American L. T. E. P. However, regardless of who took the credit for the ‘league’, Dickinson believed that it was the duty of those at home to ensure the formation of a ‘league of nations’ so that the sacrifices of the soldiers at the front should not be in vain. Campaigning for a League would,

hearten those who are fighting for us to know that whilst they are striving for victory those at home are preparing a way to make that victory achieve its noblest end, namely, a federation of nations so strong and so wisely held together that reason and justice may, at last, have some chance of restraining the brute force which two years ago plunged Europe into the horrors of the present war.

It is important to note here that there are many who would want to claim parentage of the ‘league of nations’ idea. In his study of the League of Nations movement in Britain, Henry Winkler has noted that the desire for peace by collective organisation goes back to the fourteenth century with almost every major war in history producing some proposal to avert future wars. From the nineteenth century

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416 Ibid.
417 Winkler, *The League of Nations Movement in Great Britain*, p. 3.
the Concert of Europe led to the call for regular conferences to deal with significant
international issues. The Congo Conference of 1885 and the Algeciras Conference of
1905-06 were two such conferences that showed that international disputes could be
settled peacefully. Similarly, the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 were a source
of hope that collective action to deal with international problems was possible.418 The
International Court of Arbitration that grew out of the First Hague Conference was
particularly promising. By 1914, thinking about a ‘league’ in Britain reached a level
of sophistication. Winkler has identified a number strains of thought about a ‘league’
in Britain coming from the Fabians, the Bryce Group and the U. D. C.419 However, an
important point for this study is that these were not mutually exclusive groups. Quite a
few of the Radicals attended meetings run by each of these groups.420 Radicals also
gave positive reviews to books on the ‘league’ theme written by people from the
different groups. For instance, on 11 September 1916, C. P. Trevelyan wrote a
from the Fabian perspective.421 The Radicals were also in constant touch with people
in Europe, most notably in the Netherlands, who had similar views about a ‘league’.
Not only was there interaction between the various groups in Britain promoting a
‘league’ and a progressive internationalist agenda but there was also a cross-
fertilisation with groups in both Europe and America.422

418 Ibid.
419 Ibid., pp. 6-27.
420 On 22-25 May 1915 the G. Lowes Dickinson and J. A. Hobson attended a Fabian meeting to hear a
report by the Fabian, Leonard S. Woolf, on the methods of securing international peace. Ibid., pp. 7-8.
also given similar positive reviews on John Hobson’s book, *Towards International Government* and H.
1915.
422 The Radicals had constant contact with the Netherlands-based Central Organisation for a Durable
Peace which had been founded in 1915 by the Dutch Organisation, Nederlandsche Anti-Oorlog Raad.
For example, B. De Jong van Beek en Donk wrote to acknowledge the receipt of nine pamphlets from
the U. D. C., one of these written by E. D. Morel titled, ‘Why We Should State Terms of Settlement’.
B. De Jong van Beek en Donk to H. Richardson, 14 April 1915, Richardson Papers, Box 1.
Chapter 1: The Battle of Ideas – August 1914 to November 1916

In the first week of November, the British Radical publicists turned their eyes to the American presidential elections. Massingham and the Radical publicists had unequivocally placed their hopes in a Wilson victory: ‘Mr. Wilson is a genuine believer, not only in the desirability, but in the feasibility, of international agreements as a basis of security.’ The Radical publicists believed there were real grounds for hope that Wilson was planning a dramatic move to intervene and end the war by mediation in the future. In the following week’s edition of the Nation, Massingham was clearly relieved when a Wilson victory was announced. Further hopeful signs were noted in the 18 November edition of the Nation, especially the German Chancellor’s ground-breaking speech to the main Committee of the Reichstag on 9 November 1916. Now Bethmann-Hollweg declared that Germany would associate itself with ‘an after-war demand for international agreements and would come into an international system.’ The Radical publicists read this statement as code for the Chancellor’s support of a ‘league a nations’. With Wilson re-elected, and a hopeful atmosphere emerging, discussion in the Nation focused on how the League should function and particularly how or whether the proposed League should use force.

423 Nation, ‘Wilson or Hughes?’, 4 Nov. 1916. The Nation’s editor had high praise for how Wilson had developed since taking office. ‘For though Mr. Wilson did not enter high politics as a constructive Radical, he has shown an aptitude for seizing and applying ideas and qualities of sensibility and imagination which belong to great statecraft. And America, as we recognize, is, willy-nilly, entering upon a new career, in which this character of statecraft will be required from those who are to guide her destinies.’

424 Nation, Events of the Week, 11 Nov. 1916.


427 Nation, Events of the Week, 18 Nov. 1916. For excerpts from Bethmann-Hollweg’s speech in which he announced his acceptance of an international organisation, see Common Sense, ‘German Advances Towards Peace’, 18 Nov. 1916.

428 See, F. W. Pethick Lawrence’s concern that, ‘there is a danger that a League on a basis of armed force would eventually become a league of tyranny against which subject nations would batter themselves in vain.’ Nation, 11 Nov. 1916. This was taken up in the following issue by W. S. Rowntree, who said that, the League’ possession of the sanction of force would lead to moral sanctions that would render great armaments unnecessary. Nation, W. S. Rowntree, Letters to the Editor, 18 Nov. 1916. H. N. Brailsford also argued that the League must be able to use force. However, he argued that
By the end of November 1916, the Radical publicists were far more united than they had been at any time since the beginning of the war over what the future direction needed to be. The Radical publicists were adamant that there needed to be a negotiated peace as soon as practicable, and they hoped that the catalyst for this would come from an offer to mediate from Woodrow Wilson, for they placed only dim hope that the Liberal heavyweights, Asquith and Grey, would advocate negotiating with the enemy. However, though they looked optimistically across the Atlantic for a sign, domestic events were not encouraging. A number of U. D. C. meetings in 1915 and 1916 had been broken up by mobs.429 What was worse was that this was part of a carefully orchestrated campaign by the Daily Express newspaper and the Anti-German Union. As a result, some planned U. D. C. meetings had been cancelled under pressure from police.430 The Radical publicists believed that this sort of persecution would only get worse if the war continued. However, for many in Britain’s ruling elite, it was too soon to talk of a mediated peace. The desire to punish Germany was still enormously strong among many Conservatives, and senior Liberals. In their view, the Germans had still not suffered significant reverses for them to feel inclined to offer to negotiate, particularly now that Roumania’s entry to the war had not dented Germany’s military machine.431 In the 4 December issue of the Nation, Arthur Ponsonby desperately countered this belief that Germany had not suffered enough:

the League need not be all-negative. Nations would want to be part of it for the positive economic and security benefits it will bestow. ‘Let the Executive (subject to due safeguards and rights of appeal) have the power to expel a disloyal Member-State, and let expulsion involve the loss of privileges. With such a sanction the League would rarely, if ever, be required to use force. No civilized nation could afford to stay outside it, and to step outside and challenge expulsion would mean economic suicide.’ Nation, H. N. Brailsford, ‘The League of Nations’, 25 Nov. 1916.
429 For example, a U. D. C. meeting at the Memorial Hall in London on 29 November 1915 was broken up by soldiers, some of whom were Australian. Swartz, The Union of Democratic Control, pp. 110-111.
431 Nation, ‘Roumania draws most of our attention’, 25 Nov. 1916.
‘To want to punish your enemy while a war is raging is a very natural sentiment, but
for a statesman to adopt such an attitude in formulating proposals intended to lead to a
lasting settlement is not only mischievous but fatal." However, despite Ponsonby
and the Radical publicists conviction that a negotiated peace was far more likely to be
conclusive than a dictated peace, they also came to the conclusion that only the
recently re-elected American President had the political authority to force the issue
over mediation.

The prospect of peace by Christmas 1916 seemed a distinct possibility. The
failure of the military offensives, speeches from Asquith and Grey which had
included vague references to a league of nations, Bethmann-Hollweg’s intriguing
endorsement of a post-war ‘league’, the accession to the throne of Emperor Karl of
Austria, and most importantly, President Wilson’s re-election, all gave grounds for
hope that an end to the war may be within sight. On the other hand, the Radical
publicists noted with disquiet the political machinations of Lloyd George. As far as
the Radical publicists were concerned, Lloyd George’s assumption of the Prime
Ministership threw a wild card into the political game. How the wily advocate of the
‘fight to the finish’ and the ‘knock-out blow’ would respond to any hopeful
indications of a negotiated peace was an unknown. For this reason, the Radical

433 For information on the strategic picture see Turner, British Politics and the Great War (London,
434 Common Sense, ‘German Advances Towards Peace’, 18 Nov. 1916. Francis Hirst observed that:
‘The question of the duration of the war and of the possibility of its termination by neutral mediation
has been actively discussed in the American press ever since the German Chancellor’s speech and Mr.
Asquith’s Guildhall utterances.’ Common Sense, News from Abroad, 25 Nov. 1916. Hirst also
observed comments in some German newspapers of a ‘striking advance in democratic control’ in
435 Francis Hirst gave a favourable description of the new Emperor Karl, who ascended the throne on
1916.
436 The Washington correspondent for the Times suggested that the strong pacifist showing in the
election might encourage the President to indulge in what is ‘almost a passion for him’, namely, his
desire to end the war. Reported in Common Sense, ‘President Wilson’s Peace Policy’, 25 Nov. 1916. In
addition, the New York Times reported that large financial interests were putting enormous pressure on
publicists’ hope for neutral mediation and negotiated settlement by the end of 1916 rested squarely on the much hoped-for intervention of the American President.

For our part, we hold that the only guarantee against future aggression which is worth considering is the creation of a League of Nations for the enforcement of peace, with its corollaries, a general reduction in armaments, and some modification of the system of alliances.

H. W. Massingham, December 1916.\textsuperscript{437}

The prospects of an imminent peace burned brightly for the British Radical publicists in the last month of 1916. They had every reason to expect that the widespread revulsion at the futile mechanised slaughter on the Western Front would cause the leaders of the warring nations to call a halt to hostilities and start negotiations. Furthermore, as we have seen, speeches by Prime Minster Asquith and Foreign Minister Grey that were friendly to the idea of a ‘league of nations’, coupled with Bethmann-Hollweg’s 9 November declaration of Germany’s intention to be part of a post-war ‘league of nations’, gave promise that this might be an opportune time for the intervention of the world’s most powerful neutral nation, the United States. Within the space of two weeks there were three sensational developments: Lloyd George became the new British Prime Minister; Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg made a dramatic peace offer; and President Wilson issued the American Peace Note. These events set in motion a series of developments that were to have profound implications on the duration, nature, and ultimately, the outcome of the First World War. At the time, it was not clear to the Radical publicists where the tangle of events, which occurred over the following few months, would lead. On the whole, though, the Radical publicists were extremely hopeful that the prospect of the intervention of the

\textsuperscript{437} Nation, Events of the Week, 23 Dec. 1916.
United States, preferably as a neutral, but possibly as a belligerent, offered the best chance for an early and satisfactory peace. The high point for the Radical publicists was the President’s so-called ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech. This was an affirmation of all the Radical publicists’ convictions about the desirability of an early negotiated peace and the building of a new world order with a ‘league of nations’ as the centerpiece. However, as a new year dawned, it became apparent that, despite the military stalemate, there were immensely powerful forces within each belligerent nation that were determined to keep the war going. In Britain these forces gathered under the banners of ‘fight to the finish’, otherwise known as the ‘knock-out blow’. The struggle between these two rival ideas became deadlocked over February and into March 1917. However, the Russian Revolution immediately transformed everything. The Radical publicists were overjoyed by this momentous event. They hoped that the combined forces of the American and Russian democracies could achieve a ‘peace without victory’.

On 2 December 1916, Henry Massingham was encouraged by news of Lord Grey’s favourable remarks regarding a post-war ‘league of nations’ in a telegram to American ex-President William Taft, then head of the League to Enforce Peace. ‘This is most important, for it shows that Lord Grey contemplates a true international settlement, and will therefore frame a peace in harmony with it.’\(^{438}\) However, whether this indicated that the British Foreign Minister was now close to considering a negotiated peace shall never be known, as Grey’s career as Foreign Minister was terminated three days later.\(^{439}\) Meanwhile, the recently re-elected President, Woodrow Wilson, turned his thoughts to mediation. Within days of his election victory Wilson

\(^{438}\) *Nation*, Events of the Week, 2 Dec. 1916.  
\(^{439}\) Asquith and his ministers resigned on 5 December 1916. The Lloyd George coalition government was formed on 6 December 1916. See below.

had told Colonel House of his desire to write a note to the belligerents demanding that the war be ended. This was despite the fact that one reason for Wilson’s success at the polls was that he had kept America out of the war thus far. Pacifist sentiment, particularly in the Democratic Party, was summed up in the phrase, ‘he kept us out of the war’. Though Wilson did not use the phrase, he had not objected to it. Wilson’s victory was also very much due to the fact that he had courted the pacifist and progressive vote. The President’s economic and social reforms had done much to endear him to them. Considering the slender margin of his victory, it is no exaggeration to say that without the support of progressives and peace activists, Woodrow Wilson would not have won the election of November 1916. In this regard, the endorsement of Jane Addams had been critical to Wilson clinching the progressive vote. It was perhaps one reason that she was invited to dinner at the White House

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440 The President told House on 14 November that he planned to demand that the war be ended in order to avert the need for U. S. intervention. Despite House’s protests, Wilson announced the following morning that his mind was made up. Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era: 1910-1917 (New York, 1963), p. 256. On Colonel House’s reaction to this idea, John Thompson explains that he was not keen on the idea. ‘The situation was quite different from the one he had envisaged a year before. Then he had planned that the United States, in secret session with the Allies, would force Germany to accede to a moderate settlement. Now an American initiative would be welcomed in Germany and resisted by the Allies.’ John A. Thompson, Woodrow Wilson: Profiles in Power (London, 2002), p. 130.

441 This slogan dovetailed nicely with Wilson making the ‘league of nations’ a central plank of his election campaign.


443 In addition, the strong campaigning on his behalf by ex-Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, was a factor. Ibid., p. 280.

444 The passing of the Adamson Act was the climax to Wilson’s social reforms. This had separated progressive from conservatives more than any other issue and leading American Socialist party members acknowledged Wilson’s accomplishment. His reforms had earned him the support of many high profile progressives and socialists. At the Democratic National Committee, Jane Addams publicly announced that she would be voting for Wilson. For further detail, see Knock, To End All Wars, pp. 89-94.

445 In 1914, Jane Addams was the most famous American woman. The historian Jean Bethke Elshtain has pointed out that Jane Addam’s praises had been sung in every quarter. She had been attached to every major social reform in the United States since 1890. In 1912, she had served as delegate to the Progressive party’s convention and had seconded the nomination of Theodore Roosevelt for president. At the beginning of the war, she had spearheaded the formation of the Women’s Peace Party. Jean Bethke Elshtain, Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy (New York, 2001), pp. 34-35.
Chapter 2: ‘Peace Without Victory’ versus the ‘Knock-out Blow’:
December 1916 – March 1917

on Tuesday 12 December.\footnote{Addams’ ‘Invitation to State Dinner’, Tuesday 12 Dec. 1916. Addams Papers, 10. Since her endorsement of Woodrow Wilson in the election campaign Addams found she had increased influence at the White House. This influence she was clearly not afraid to use as indicated by a letter to Colonel House three days before her dinner at the White House. She sent a letter of introduction to Colonel House for an American woman, married to a German, who had lived for many years in Berlin. This woman was a friend of Graf Montgelas, a member of the Foreign Office. ‘She has recently seen him as well as Dr. Zimmermann, now Minister of Foreign Affairs and has some more information from them which she is anxious to transmit to President Wilson. Please give her an interview. Mrs. Pringsheim was hospitable to American women of the Hague Conference when we were in Berlin.’ Jane Addams to Colonel House, 9 Dec. 1916, Addams Papers.} The other reason Jane Addams was asked to dine with the President and his family was the intense lobbying of the President by many of the peace activists who had worked so hard for his re-election. Perhaps it was Wilson’s aim to assure the American peace activists that they could rely on him to do his utmost to end the War.\footnote{Two days earlier, on 10 December, Jane Addams spoke at a large rally of the Woman’s Peace Party, as did Professor Emily Greene Balch and Lillian Wald (Chairman of the American Union Against Militarism – A. U. A. M.). Resolutions passed were: opposition to military training in schools; the convening a Third Hague Conference; opposition to a military parade at the upcoming inauguration ceremony; and an endorsement of the World Court League. Most importantly, all were resolved that President Wilson should issue a public peace initiative as soon as possible. In addition, $5000 in donations was raised at the meeting for the work of the Woman’s Peace Party. World, ‘$5000 to Oppose War’, 10 December 1916. This article was found as a clipping in the papers of Lillian Wald. Wald Papers, Reel 102 and Folder 2.9, Box 88.}

It is not clear whether, on the night that Jane Addams dined at the White House, the President confided to her that he had been drafting a peace note. It is unlikely, since Wilson had always tended to play his cards close to his chest in his conversations with peace activists.\footnote{For information on these contacts, see Louis P. Lochner, Always the Unexpected: A Book of Reminiscences (New York, 1956), pp. 54-56.} What is certain though is that Wilson, House and Lansing had been debating the proposed peace message earlier that day. This had led to significant changes to the draft.\footnote{Arthur Link asserted that the draft of 12 December, which was later submitted to Lansing on 17 December, was greatly inferior to the President’s first completed draft of 25 November. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, pp. 257 & 260.} The President may have been in an ebullient mood at dinner as he thought to himself about the dramatic act he was about to take.

There was spirited discussion about peace mediation that evening, as indicated in a
subsequent letter from Stockton Axson to Addams. However, Wilson was unaware at that time that he was about to be upstaged by the German Chancellor. Bethmann-Hollweg issued his now-famous Peace Note. It is not clear whether Addams heard of the German Note that night or the next day.

‘A sharp break in the history of the war’, made in a ‘blaze of publicity, with the world as its stage’, was how the Nation greeted the German Peace Note of 12 December 1916. The Nation observed that if the Entente agreed to an exchange of terms then this would be a decision in favour of a negotiated peace. Massingham had attempted to capture the mood in the streets of Berlin on 12 December as the German Chancellor gave his speech to the emergency session of the Reichstag: ‘All Berlin thronged to the streets in eager excitement. The step was obviously taken in this dramatic way because the Chancellor wanted to convince the German people that he

450 Axson mentioned that Addams spoke on peace prospects that night in the White House. He also heaped praise on Addams and her fellow women peace activists: ‘You women are strong in the position that your cause is so sane and so righteousness, as the thing you are combating so wild and preposterous…. You women have the courage and the faith. It was a pleasure to meet you at the White House. You are a potent agent of good.’ What Addams was apparently combating, since the dinner on the 12 December, was the idea abroad that the German Note was a trick and a piece of shrewd diplomacy. Stockton Axson to Jane Addams, 4 Jan. 1917, Addams Papers, 10.

451 Whether the news about the German Note had reached the White House that night is not clear. However, Stockton Axson, the President’s brother-in-law, who was also at the White House dinner, said in a letter to Addams that he did not hear of the German Note until the next day. 4 Jan. 1917, Addams Papers, 10.

452 Nation, Events of the Week, 16 December 1916.


is doing the utmost to obtain peace.’ Massingham was alert to the argument, which would be mounted against the German Note by those advocating a ‘fight to the finish’. He conceded that the form and manner of the Note may be ‘graceless and even vulgar’ but urged that it be taken seriously, and questioned whether fighting on for another six to twelve months could secure better terms than an immediate peace. The editor argued against outright rejection because the neutrals would then take the view that Britain was fighting on merely to secure one or more of the aims of the Allies. He envisaged that the Allies’ first step would be to wait for the German terms, draft counter-terms, followed by some bargaining. If Germany repudiated all of her annexationist claims, this would be ‘the test of her sincerity in promising to adhere to a League of Nations’. Massingham argued that if the German peace offer was to be rejected then this should only occur after a full discussion by all of the Allied government. Further, if there was to be a rejection, then it must be a reasoned one, and be accompanied by the Allies’ counter-claims. In the 23 December edition of the *Nation*, Massingham made a plea that something be made of the German Note despite its lack of specific aims:

> Europe has to discover a way of international living superior to that which exposed it to the frightful shock of August 1914. This may not yet be the conscious view of European statesmanship. But it is, we are persuaded, the line of movement along which travel the minds of millions of the sufferers and actors in the war, as compared with the spectators or the critics of it. In this case, a spiritual League of Nations is being imperceptibly formed; and the meaning and the end of the war are being more and more clearly perceived.

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457 Ibid.
458 *Nation*, Events of the Week, 16 Dec. 1916.
Meanwhile, Lord Loreburn expressed his hope to Francis Hirst that the British Government would reply to the German peace proposal by asking for their terms. Therefore, he argued that the Government:

ought to say, tell us what you mean, we cannot negotiate in the mire. When we know what you propose we will tell you what we think of it. Above all, the opportunity should be taken of asking what they mean. That is my view and I think it is the best way of reaching peace, the one thing to be wished.⁴⁶⁰

‘A stupendous sensation’, thundered the headlines in Common Sense on 16 December. Loreburn may not have gone as far as Hirst. Hirst tried to convey the sense that the Peace Note was consistent with recent trends by Bethmann-Hollweg. The editor suggested that the Reichstag speech was historically significant.⁴⁶¹ Also noteworthy, according to Hirst were the German Chancellor’s previous attempts at peace diplomacy:

Various opportunities, before and after the Verdun failure, before and after the great Push, before and during the Rumanian war, have been pursued unavailingly by German diplomacy. More than once the German Chancellor has made what could only be interpreted as peace speeches. Now a peace proposal is issued with all formality.⁴⁶²

The Radical publicists were concerned about the charge that was made in the Tory press that the German Peace Note failed to include specific terms. In answer to this charge Common Sense predicted that the German Government would probably send a second note with precise terms.⁴⁶³

One source of Hirst’s strong convictions on the need for a negotiated peace was a regular flow of correspondence from soldiers at the front. In December a letter from a lieutenant in the infantry expressed his views on the German Peace Note. The

⁴⁶¹ Common Sense, News From Abroad, 16 Dec. 1916.
⁴⁶³ This information reportedly came from Bernstoff, German ambassador to the United States. Common Sense, ‘German Peace Comment’, 23 Dec. 1916.
lieutenant, recently invalided in the Somme Offensive, complained about the vindictiveness towards the German Note in Britain. He accused the public of having no conception of the horror of life at the front and being totally out of touch with the sentiments in the Army. He argued that, for the sake of the soldiers, the German offer should be given reasonable consideration:

Then some definite assertions ought to be made by a responsible statesman as to our concise aims; and vague utterances such as the ‘crushing of Prussian militarism’ should give place to more substantial statements.464

The lieutenant wrote that the Allies had said Germany must offer peace. Once she had, the Government needed to consider peace before it finally committed to further untold sacrifice of lives and resources. Furthermore, the lieutenant argued, Germany had said she would join a ‘league of nations’, as had Grey. ‘Surely that in itself constitutes some guarantee for the future’, concluded the lieutenant.465

‘Let the People Unite To End the Carnage.’ There was little surprise with the Labour Leader’s headlines on the Bethmann-Hollweg’s peace initiative:

Germany has proposed negotiations for Peace. That is the outstanding fact of the moment. Mr Lloyd George may deny that there are any proposals of peace. All the War Councils of the Allies specially created for the purpose may join in their declarations that there are no proposals of peace. It is certain that not only the belligerent Powers, but all Europe, and the whole world NEEDS peace.466

Meanwhile, the U. D. C. had been favourably disposed to peace negotiations before Bethmann-Hollweg’s initiative. The Radical M. P., Philip Morrell, wrote in the U. D. C. journal, of his belief that Britain could achieve its objects via a negotiated peace. In Morrell’s view, the German government was ready and willing, and Bethmann-Hollweg’s recent speeches were a basis for discussion. Like, Massingham and Hirst,

465 Ibid.
he also felt that the German people were ready for peace. To the view, espoused by the proponents of a ‘fight to the finish’, that Germany had not yet been punished enough, Morrell urged his readers to think about those young men who would have to be sacrificed in the future, not only of those who had died so far.\textsuperscript{467} A month later, in the next issue of the \textit{U. D. C.}, the editor, E. D. Morel, believed that the Allied governments’ decision to treat the German peace offer as a ‘trap’, and ‘intrigue’, or a ‘noose’ into which the guileless Allied diplomats were being invited to place their necks, was a grave tactical error. The Allied leaders’ reasoning that enemy countries were at their last gasp was faulty, Morel asserted:

\begin{quote}
There is no evidence sufficient to warrant the belief that the Enemy Governments are on their last legs, either militarily or economically. The publicists who spread this belief have been proved wrong over and over again – wrong on every particular and on every head, from manpower to munitions and food supply.\textsuperscript{468} Again, the views of the U. D. C. impressed their fellow travellers on the other side of the Atlantic.
\end{quote}

Radical opinion was, at this time, more unified than it had been since July 1914. The \textit{Nation}, \textit{Common Sense}, the \textit{Labour Leader} and even the \textit{Daily News} and the \textit{Manchester Guardian} had come out in favour of peace negotiations being commenced - or at least explored - on the basis of the German Peace Note of 12 December. The fact that both the \textit{Manchester Guardian} and the \textit{Daily News} were in favour of taking up peace negotiations is significant. Both papers had opted to back British intervention in the war in August 1914. In fact, in the United States, the radical American Union Against Militarism (A. U. A. M.), was so impressed with C. P. Scott’s paper’s coverage of the German Peace Note that the Committee decided to send a telegram to the \textit{Manchester Guardian}, expressing their approval of its attitude.

towards the proposal that peace be discussed. A renewed sense of unity and common purpose returned to the Radical publicists.

Meanwhile, Colonel House suggested to the Radical M. P., Whitehouse, who was visiting America at the time, that the Radicals try to prepare British public opinion for Wilson’s note. The Radicals continued to offer encouragement and advice to Wilson. Whitehouse himself sent several memos and C. P. Trevelyan told Wilson that many people were ‘yearning for a great solution’.

Buckler informed Wilson on 24 November that Massingham, the owner and editor of the Nation, had now come around to peace by negotiation. Finally, the American President decided to act.

President Wilson’s Peace Note of 18 December 1916 flashed like a lightning bolt across the headlines of the world press. It seemed that the President of potentially the most powerful nation on earth had taken up the agenda of the Radical publicists and now sought to implement their vision for a negotiated peace and a new world order. The publication of the American Peace Note occurred barely one week after the German Chancellor’s dramatic peace offer. As expected, the Radical publicists were unified in their praise for the President’s bold peace initiative. Their hopes soared that a negotiated peace was nearer than it had been since the beginning of the war. Leaders of the Entente, who were opposed to a negotiated peace, were able

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469 Note those present at the meeting included Lillian Wald, Crystal Eastman, and Emily Balch – each of them being prominent peace activists who, along with Jane Addams, consistently lobbied Woodrow Wilson to act for peace. Minutes of the American Union Against Militarism, 15 Dec. 1916, Pinchot Papers, Box 24, Folder 1.

470 Martin, Peace Without Victory, p. 120.

471 A. Havighurst, Radical Journalist: H.W. Massingham (London, 1974), p. 245. Not all Radicals urged that Wilson remain neutral. Norman Angell, now living in America, urged Wilson to enter the war arguing that neutrality was unsound if he really believed in collective security. Unless the United States entered the war to end aggression, Angell argued, there would be a punitive peace and the seeds sown for another world war in the future.

472 For a full text of the American Peace Note, see ‘President Wilson’s Note to the Belligerents, December 18, 1916 in Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims (London, 1919), pp. 4-6.
to dismiss the preceding German peace initiative with little trouble. However, the ‘fight to the finish’ political leaders faced a much more daunting task in fending off the American Note. The Radical publicists, on the other hand, were overjoyed at the President’s intervention. The hope that had emerged in the early weeks of the War, that American intervention could play a part in ending the slaughter and help usher in a new era based on a ‘league of nations’, had now blossomed. Woodrow Wilson, a progressive liberal internationalist President, with this action, had embarked on a mission to mediate an end to the war and to alter forever international relations for the better. Woodrow Wilson’s bold attempt to kick-start mediation was not an impulsive decision. Rather, it was a product of his own thinking over the previous year, combined with persistent lobbying by both Radicals in Britain and peace activists in America.

As stated above, Woodrow Wilson began contemplating his peace proposal within a few days of his re-election. He set to work on it soon after his conference with House on 14-15 November and completed the first draft by 26 November. Many Radical publicists gave both encouragement and suggestions about what the Note should contain. In response to a letter by another Radical, Noel Buxton, Colonel House assured him,

we are beginning to take up the loose threads now that the campaign is over and we shall be able to pay more attention to those, in which we are all so deeply concerned.

On 2 December, Wilson got a copy of a soon to be published letter by Charles Trevelyan, another of the founding members of the U. D. C., entitled, ‘An Open Letter to Americans’. Trevelyan advised the President:

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However much you try to influence Prime Ministers and Chancellors, it is far more important that your great, sane policy should be heard and understood by peoples. I am certain you can evoke a spirit that will make mediation possible.475

On reading Trevelyan’s letter, Wilson commented to House that Trevelyan’s letter was most impressive and that ‘the time is near at hand for something.’476 However, neither Colonel House nor Secretary of State Lansing were keen on the President’s proposed peace move. House feared that if Germany accepted the peace proposals and Britain rejected them then the United States would drift into war with the Allies. Wilson was not deterred, though he was forced to delay the publication of his Peace Note due to a week-long illness and the international outcry over recent German human rights violations in Belgium.477

President Wilson issued his American Peace Note on 18 December 1916.478 The American President called for the belligerent nations to state their peace terms. The Note stated that the objectives for which both sides proclaimed they were fighting were virtually the same, in that they both sought to establish security for all, including small nations. Insofar as the belligerents were sincere about these aims, the President offered the services of the United States to assist in the achievement of these ends when the war had ceased. He explained in the Note that he felt duty-bound to intervene because the whole world had now become affected and the situation of neutrals was now intolerable. Further, the conflict threatened to proceed towards

477 Esposito, The Legacy of Woodrow Wilson, p. 75. Esposito also made the point that though House did not prevent Wilson from issuing the Peace Note he did persuade him not to attach the prologue with the Note. Esposito called this one of the worse disservices to the President. Esposito said that ‘although it never saw the light of day, it is one of the most evocative and provocative works to come from Wilson’s pen.’ In the prologue he argued that the bitter lesson learned from the horrors of the ‘mechanical game of slaughter’ in the trenches would provide a basis for a just and lasting peace. Ibid. This was totally in line with the argument used by the Radical publicists.
478 The Note was not published in the British press until 22 December 1916. See The Times, 22 Dec. 1916.
undefined ends by slow attrition until one side was totally exhausted. Such an outcome would mean it would be less likely that resentment and hatred would be cooled, and therefore, there would be less hope of a genuine recovery after the war and less hope that a willing concert of nations could be formed.\textsuperscript{479} Once again, the Radical publicists demonstrated a unity not seen since the days of July 1914. \textit{Common Sense} reacted with ‘joy and thankfulness’ at the ‘prospect of a speedy peace now opened to the world by President Wilson’s offer of mediation.’\textsuperscript{480} Hirst said that Wilson knew that all the peoples needed peace, that bankruptcy and famine are approaching, that neutral rights are invaded. And so, he suggested that the parties should define their aims more clearly.\textsuperscript{481}

E. D. Morel called the President’s initiative ‘the act of a great Democrat’ who defended humanity against the ‘hired penman of national unreason’, that is, the \textit{Times} and the rest of the ‘pro-war press’.\textsuperscript{482} The \textit{Nation} noted with satisfaction that a ‘powerful volume of sentiment in favour of a League of Nations, with American as the initiator and peacemaker, has been taking hold of the imagination of the more intelligent classes.’\textsuperscript{483} Massingham called on the Allied governments to reply to Germany and for Germany to reply to Wilson.\textsuperscript{484}

The Radical publicists were soon aware that the dramatic developments of mid-December 1916 had so far failed to bear fruit. In the last week of 1916 the Radical publicists poured all their efforts into mustering support for the President’s Peace Note. F. W. Hirst was most concerned at the effect that the ‘pro-war press’ was

\textsuperscript{480} \textit{Common Sense}, ‘Peace In Sight’, 23 Dec. 1916.
\textsuperscript{482} \textit{Labour Leader}, E. D. Morel, ‘President Wilson’s Message and the \textit{Times}’, 28 December 1916.
\textsuperscript{484} Ibid. Also, \textit{Nation}, ‘America’s Quo Vadis’, 30 Dec. 1916.
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having on the reception of the American peace offer. On 23 December, Hirst made this cynical observation of the press:

Whatever turns the fortune of the war took; the moral drawn by the official Press was the same. If the war went favourably, continue and you will reap a complete victory. If unfavourably, continue until fortune changes. If conditions, as they usually did, pointed to stalemate, only fools could talk of ending the war without a military decision.  

The only sure result of this policy of the ‘pro-war press’, Hirst said, were ‘financial exhaustion and a horror of war permeating the whole manhood of every country’.  

American peace activists were similarly concerned that the initiative was being lost. Also on 23 December, Rebecca Shelley sounded a note of concern that a resolution in Congress in support of the American Peace Note had not been passed. On 26 December, Massingham wrote to Walter Runciman, a moderate Liberal, lamenting the failure of the Liberal ex-ministers who had just lost office upon the fall of Asquith to say any word of encouragement to Wilson’s Peace Note. Indeed, Reginald McKenna disappointed Massingham in particular because of a truculent speech reported in the Times. He warned Runciman that ‘unless the Liberal party can develop a policy, Lloyd George will smother it’, and that ‘Liberalism must either lead this movement or expire in inaction.’ Publicly, Massingham expressed his annoyance at how the American Note had been ‘stupidly received’ in the press, while recognising the inadequacy of the German reply to the American note. The German reply to Wilson’s peace offer came quickly. It thanked Wilson for his offer

486 Ibid.
487 Rebecca Shelley to Lola Maverick Lloyd, 23 Dec. 1916, Schwimmer-Lloyd Papers, Series O, Lola Maverick Lloyd, Box 04. Shelley also mentioned with approval, Bertrand Russell’s letter to the President.
488 The Times reported a speech made by Reginald McKenna, Asquith’s former Chancellor of the Exchequer at Pontypool. McKenna refused to offer any opinion on the American Note. He decided that the successful prosecution of the war was the nation’s ‘definite and unshakeable resolve.’ Times, 23 Dec. 1916.
490 Ibid.
but ignored his plea for a statement of terms. Rather the Germans proposed an immediate meeting of delegates of the belligerents in some neutral place, thus leaving out the Americans from participation in any such conference. Cooperation with America in preventing future wars could occur after the war was over, in the German view. Massingham objected to the German response and protested that ‘the creation of a League of Nations must not be postponed until after the peace.’ Rather, it must be the ‘first article of settlement’ of the current war.\textsuperscript{491} However, it appeared that, as New Year approached, the momentum for peace was slowing. At first, the Entente governments greeted both the German and American peace notes with an ominous silence, while the pro-War reactionary press repeated the mantra that negotiations to end the war could not be proceeded with at this stage. In his first speech as Prime Minister, Lloyd George told the Commons on 19 December that the German Peace Note could not possibly serve as the basis of negotiations. Then, on 30 December, the Entente powers issued a joint note rejecting the German offer. A midnight peace demonstration was held in Washington D. C. on New Year’s Eve to ‘voice America’s hope for peace’,\textsuperscript{492} that at the dawn of the New Year, a manifesto of good will be sent to the ‘peoples of all nations.’\textsuperscript{493} The demonstrators felt that at this ‘hour of crisis’\textsuperscript{494} in world history, the people of America should ‘speak for peace’.\textsuperscript{495} As the American peace activist, Lola Maverick Lloyd commented on New Year’s Eve: ‘This was the high point of hope. From then on the tide ran the other way with increasing speed.’\textsuperscript{496}

\textsuperscript{491} \textit{Nation}, Events of the Week, 30 Dec. 1916.
\textsuperscript{492} ‘New Year’s Eve Demonstration’, A Flyer, n. d., Andrews Papers, A-95, Box 30, Folder 363.
\textsuperscript{493} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{494} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{495} Ibid.
The attitude of the new Lloyd George Government was absolutely crucial if peace negotiations were to be commenced on the basis of the German and American peace notes. However, following the heels of the German Peace Note, Wilson’s Peace Note was greeted with dismay and even anger by the Allied governments. In London, according to American Ambassador W. H. Page, James Bryce was ‘profoundly depressed’, Asquith could not discuss the Note with anyone, and the King wept.\textsuperscript{497} The Allied Press accused Wilson of working with the Central Powers. The only people who were pleased with the Note were the U.D.C., according to Ambassador Page.\textsuperscript{498} After the terse Allied reply to the German Note on 30 December,\textsuperscript{499} the Allies decided to reply to Wilson’s Note with greater astuteness, by compiling a statement of terms. The British were the most co-operative, partly due to urging by the Radicals\textsuperscript{500} that Britain should make a positive reply, but also because of her financial indebtedness to the United States. Finally, on 10 January 1917 the Allied governments issued their joint statement of terms as their reply to Wilson’s Peace Note. This was a cleverly worded statement in which the Allies represented their cause as a crusade for freedom for Belgium and various national groups such as the Poles, and declared their support for a ‘league of nations’. However, the Allied statement did not admit the French desire to reclaim all of Alsace-Lorraine, was silent on Russian and Italian territorial ambitions, made no mention of the fate of captured

\textsuperscript{497} Page to Lansing, 22 Dec, 1916. Quoted in Knock, \textit{To End All Wars}, p. 110.  
\textsuperscript{498} Ibid., p. 110.  
\textsuperscript{500} Martin, \textit{Peace Without Victory}, p. 121.
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German colonies, and made no repudiation of the protectionist Paris Resolutions of June 1916.\(^{501}\)

Although the diplomacy of peace was at last front-page news, the Radical publicists noted with disquiet the political machinations of Lloyd George, the advocate of a ‘fight to the finish’.\(^{502}\) In retrospect, out of the three dramatic events that occurred in December 1916, the German and American peace overtures and the coming to power of the Lloyd George government, it was the latter that consequently had the most impact on the course of the First World War. Just what Lloyd George’s influence would be in the area of peace diplomacy was not known when he assumed the mantle of Prime Minister on 9 December 1916 and for some Radicals, Lloyd George’s exact position remained unclear during the rest of December. Clearly the Radical publicists were angered by his coup and the manner in which he ousted Prime Minister Asquith and the May Coalition. Though the Radical publicists had little love left for the Asquith government, resenting particularly the way it had taken Britain into the War and the way it had proceeded to whittle away Liberal ideals, they were divided over whether Lloyd George’s assumption of the Prime Ministership was a good thing or not. Catherine Marshall, for instance, ‘rejoiced in the break-up of the Coalition Government, even though it meant the instalment in power of the

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\(^{502}\) Hirst lamented the rise of Lloyd George to the position of Prime Minister and the potential effect of his opposition to an American-mediated peace. ‘But for Mr. Lloyd George and his friends we might have had an armistice at Christmas and an honourable peace on a firm basis before the end of winter.’ Hirst also criticised what he called the ‘unlimited Army policy of Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Northcliffe, who proclaim themselves the saviours of the country because the Knock-Out interview has prevented peace.’ *Common Sense*, ‘The Policy of the Coalition’, 9 Dec. 1916. For a study of how Lloyd George became Prime Minister, see J. McEwen, ‘The Struggle for Mastery in Britain: Lloyd George versus Asquith, December 1916’, *Journal of British Studies*, XVIII, (1978), pp. 131-156. Also, Michael Fry, ‘Political Change in Britain, August 1914 to December 1916: Lloyd George Replaces Asquith: The Issue Underlying the Drama’, *The Historical Journal*, 31, 3, (1988), pp. 609-627.
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Northcliffe influence. She argued that Lloyd George should be given the benefit of the doubt and that they should take a wait-and-see attitude to the fresh Government. Therefore, Marshall felt that ‘pacifists should not be too eager to rush into public activity at this moment – at any rate not till a little time has been allowed to see whether other forces will not develop along the lines we want.’ Massingham called Lloyd George ‘ruthlessly ambitious,’ though he conceded that he did have appeal to the masses. However, now that Radical Liberalism was totally excluded from power, it was argued that Disraeli’s ‘leap in the dark’ was ‘nothing compared with this cataclysm.’ Hirst was no easier on the new Prime Minister. He placed the blame for failure to achieve peace before December 1916 on Lloyd George’s ‘knock-out-blow’ interview to the American journalist, Roy Howard, in September. Massingham was convinced that Lloyd George’s statements at that time had been calculated to snuff out any attempts at neutral mediation in the autumn of 1916:

But for Mr. Lloyd George and his friends we might have had an armistice at Christmas and an honourable peace on a firm basis before the end of winter.

Though the Radical publicists viewed Lloyd George with both suspicion and disdain, they also thought that the opportunistic streak in him might yet cause him to take on the role of peacemaker. To Morgan Jones, for instance, Lloyd George was ‘a little

504 Ibid.
505 Ibid. It is interesting that, the night she wrote this letter, President Wilson’s Peace Note appeared in the press. Brailsford did not reply to this letter for a few weeks as he was engaged in writing his book on the League of Nations, but when his reply was made, it was extremely critical on Marshall’s views on both Lloyd George and about pacifists keeping quite. H. N. Brailsford to Catherine Marshall, 15 Jan. 1917, Marshall Papers, D/MAR/4/13.
507 Nation, Events of the Week, 9 Dec. 1916.
508 Nation, ‘The Policy of the Coalition’, 9 Dec. 1916. In addition, Merriman also expressed his disapproval of Lloyd George: ‘Everything seems to crumble away. Surely old England must have reached the very nadir in this Lloyd George combination.’ Merriman to Hirst, 1 Jan. 1917, Hirst Papers.
scoundrel’, but that did not mean that the chances of him securing a negotiated peace should be ruled out:

I fancy he is clever enough to try to arrange peace even though he may be bellowing ever so loudly about organisation for war. Does he want peace do you think? I fancy he does.”

Whatever the Radical publicists thought of Lloyd George personally, and no matter how they felt about his support for conscription, his betrayal of Asquith or his newfound aristocratic friends, they knew that achieving a negotiated peace would depend very much on the new Prime Minister.

As early as 15 December, Lord Loreburn told Hirst that he hoped the Government would not turn down the German proposal. On Lloyd George he articulated the views of many Radicals:

But if he will bring peace, as I think he may, I would forgive him his share in upsetting the old coach with its strained and broken-minded team. I for one will support the new Government if they aim at an honourable peace and would support the devil himself if he would for once go straight and try to end this horror on honourable terms, but I will never support any of the men who called themselves Liberals and made this imbroglio for us.

Philip Snowden was relieved at hearing that Lloyd George was leaving the door ajar for a negotiated peace, by at least asking Germany for its peace terms. However, Massingham expressed a note of concern in hearing Lloyd George use the vague formula that the Allied terms would involve ‘complete restitution, full reparation and effectual guarantees’:


510 Lord Loreburn to F. W. Hirst, 15 Dec. 1916, Hirst Papers, Aug.–Dec. 1916. One month later Loreburn continued to express relief at the end of the Asquith Cabinet; ‘My belief is that the organised hypocrisy that pretended to be Liberalism is at an end’ and ‘we are cornered by the unspeakable folly of the men who got us into this.’ He still strongly believed there should be a negotiated peace a month later and continued to hope that Lloyd George might bring it about. He questioned Hirst on his faith in the value of public opinion, and told Hirst that democracy is only reliable ‘when it is informed truly of the facts.’ See Lord Loreburn to F. W. Hirst, 13 Jan. 1917, Hirst Papers.

For our part, we hold that the only guarantee against future aggression which is worth considering is the creation of a League of Nations for the enforcement of peace, with its corollaries, a general reduction in armaments, and some modification of the system of alliances.  

Privately, Massingham encouraged Lloyd George to act positively towards the German and American peace offers: ‘If you feel yourself able to support the American offer of mediation, you will have no more loyal supporter than myself. I myself think it is the best news since Bethlehem. God has put this [opportunity for peace] in your hands. May you use it!’ Meanwhile, Francis Hirst felt that perhaps Lloyd George’s opportunism would prompt him to act for peace: ‘Lloyd George has scented the popularity of peace and means to try to thrust himself forward as the peace maker.’ Even though Hirst believed that any of Lloyd George’s professions of commitment to an ultimate peace were to be regarded with suspicion, he thought that opinion and events were ‘moving fast towards peace.’ In fact, as Entente leaders met to draft a reply to President Wilson’s Peace Note, Hirst detected some expectation among business firms in the city of London that the War would soon end. There was a similar optimism regarding the imminent Allied Reply to President Wilson’s Note among many American peace activists in early January 1917. Rebecca Shelley wrote to a colleague:

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511 Nation, Events of the Week, 23 Dec. 1916.
513 F. W. Hirst to Margaret Hirst, 1 Jan. 1917, Hirst Papers, Letters to Margaret Hirst 1896-1949.
514 At dinner with John Burns, ex-member of Cabinet who had resigned in August 1914, he found that they were both of one mind on this aspect of Lloyd George. F. W. Hirst to Margaret Hirst, 4 Jan. 1917, Hirst Papers, Letters to Margaret Hirst 1896-1949.
515 ‘Everyone was saying yesterday that Lloyd George was in Rome and I believe it is so. The city, I am told, is working on the basis of the war probably lasting about three months longer.’ F. W. Hirst to Margaret Hirst, 5 Jan. 1917, Hirst Papers, Letters to Margaret Hirst 1896-1949. An exception to this optimistic mood among Radicals at this time was Bertrand Russell. In a letter to Catherine Marshall, he expressed his pessimism about the likelihood of Lloyd George acting for peace: ‘It is clear that Lloyd George must have a great offensive before we can be allowed to have peace; he knows, of course, that it will make no difference to him personally.’ On President Wilson, however, he was hopeful: ‘I quite agree about writing to support Wilson.’ Bertrand Russell to Catherine Marshall, 3 Jan. 1917, Marshall Papers, D/MAR/4/15.
I rejoice with you that peace negotiations have begun. I have felt some uneasiness since our meeting in New York for fear you would think I was not in sympathy with opening peace negotiations. I was only doubtful whether the calling of a neutral conference was the most important thing to work for. As it proved so far, the neutral conference was not the practical means of opening peace negotiation. I heartily sympathise with the attitude of the President and with all your work.  

As far as the Radical publicists were concerned, the response of the Allied governments to the two peace initiatives was the critical development if diplomacy was to launch the process of a negotiated peace. Despite Radical pleas, both privately and in the Radical press, the Allied Reply of December to the German Note amounted to an outright rejection. Following the lead of the Tory press, the collective reply of the Allied governments was extremely hostile. Philip Snowden despaired of the ‘puerile, undignified and evasive’ Allied reply to the German government:

The reply to the German Note closes the door to peace negotiations at the present. The Central Powers cannot be expected to follow up with further approaches. The Allied Note makes no request for a further reply. It is couched in language which is obviously meant to put an end to the suggestion of peace at present.

Hirst speculated on the role played by Russia in drafting the Allied Reply. The Radical publicists’ concern about the Allies’ rejection of the German Note was more than balanced, however, by the hope that Wilson’s Peace Note would yet bear fruit.

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516 Rebecca Shelley to F. F. Andrews, 3 Jan. 1917, Andrews Papers, Box A-96, Folder 363. The American Neutral Conference Committee planned a conference, a nation-wide speaking tour and mass meetings throughout the country, in a ‘direct attempt to hasten the end of the war, and to support President Wilson’s efforts.’ Rebecca Shelly to Lillian Wald, 7 Jan. 1917, Wald Papers, Reel 103 or Box 89, Folder 2.4. Emily G. Balch also urged support for the President. She stated that the peace activists were aiming at gathering ‘a great mass of public opinion to support the President at this critical hour when he is trying to restore peace to the world.’ Emily G. Balch to F. F. Andrews, 10 Jan. 1917, Andrews Papers, A-95, Box 30, Folder 363.

517 See David Stevenson, The First World War, p. 105; Knock, To End All Wars, p. 110.

518 Labour Leader, Philip Snowden, Review of the Week, 1 Jan. 1917.

519 Hirst believed that Russia’s major war aim of securing Constantinople and the Straits may have had an influence on the Allied reply to Germany: ‘Although the claims of Russia to Constantinople were not advanced in the Allies’ Note, it will be remembered that the Russian Government alone among the belligerents has already formulated its own terms.’ However, he said, ‘no British statesman has yet expressed himself on the subject of the future of Constantinople and the Dardanelles.’ Common Sense, ‘The Allies’ Reply to the German Peace Note’, 6 Jan. 1917. The Russian claim to Constantinople, in the secret Straits Agreement of March 1915, was published in December 1916. See Stevenson, The First World War, p. 137.
Massingham thought that Germany would likely set up peace talks with the United States on terms.\footnote{Nation, Events of the Week, 6 Jan. 1917.} As the Radical publicists now turned their attention to the Allied reply to the American Note, they were unnerved, but perhaps also a little amused by the inflammatory comments of the Australian Prime Minister, on a visit to England fresh from the defeat of his referendum on conscription.\footnote{The Radical publicists had hailed this defeat as an indication that the tide had turned against reaction.} Hughes was not embarrassed to articulate his vision along ‘knock-out-blow’ lines:

This war is not as other wars. It is not only a war for national existence; it is a war for commercial and industrial, as well as national supremacy. This point cannot be too strongly emphasised. Germany’s military power must be utterly crushed. We must smash Germany, not only in the military, but the economic sphere. And to that end we ourselves must be born again, i.e. born out of Free Trade into Protection.

The war has done great things for the Empire. Among other things it has saved us. It has saved us from moral, aye, and physical degeneration and decay.\footnote{Common Sense, ‘The Message of Mr. Hughes’, 6 Jan. 1917.}

The views of the Australian Prime Minister represented just about everything to which the Radical publicists were opposed. They hoped that the other politician of Welsh origin, Lloyd George, would have the foresight to see that it was in everyone’s interests to end the slaughter now. Furthermore, they hoped that this new British Government would then proceed to build a peace based on the principles for which the Radical publicists had been advocating since 1914, and championed by the President of the United States.

The unity that the Radical publicists had demonstrated in their reactions to the German and American notes was short-lived. Similarly, the initial reaction of the Radical publicists to the Allied reply to the American Peace Note was positive but
soon the fault line of division in the ranks of the Radicals emerged as the ambiguity of the Allied Reply became apparent. The Radical publicists had been expecting acrudely worded statement about fighting to the bitter end. Instead, the Allied Reply was cloaked in idealist phrases, proclaiming that the Allies were fighting for worthy causes such as the rights of small nations and oppressed peoples.\(^{523}\) However, the Radical publicists’ consensus on the merits of the Reply did not survive closer scrutiny of the document over the following weeks. On closer inspection, the Radicals became as deeply divided as before. \textit{Common Sense} saw the Allied Reply as ‘a vast improvement on the vague phraseology about the destruction of Prussian militarism which led to much misrepresentation.’\(^{524}\) However, \textit{Common Sense} also gave prominence to a speech by ex-Chancellor, Lord Buckmaster who called for all peace proposals to be ‘made at the earliest possible moment.’\(^{525}\) Likewise, American peace activists responded positively to the Allied Reply:

\begin{quote}
I must confess it is much better than expected – chiefly on account of its omissions and ambiguities. It can be interpreted moderately or extremely. Some [people] think that the section dealing with the nationalities of Austria-Hungary and also that one dealing with Constantinople, are so dangerous that they should be publicly attacked.\(^{526}\)
\end{quote}

However, Massingham noticed the same aspect as Shelley did, namely the ambiguity of the Allied Reply. Despite a somewhat positive review of the Reply, Massingham

\footnotesize\begin{itemize}
\item \(^{524}\) \textit{Common Sense}, ‘More Peace Notes’, 20 Jan. 1917.
\item \(^{525}\) \textit{Common Sense}, ‘An Ex-Chancellor of Peace’, 13 Jan. 1917.
\item \(^{526}\) Rebecca Shelley to Caroline Cumming, Jan. 1917, Shelley Papers, AA2, Box 1. Shelley was still hopeful about the momentum for peace. She wrote: ‘One does feel that things must go on moving now, that there will be another German pronouncement and so on. But I am afraid there will be a good deal more horrible slaughter before the final end is put to it.’ Julia Grace Wales also viewed the Entente statement of terms with great satisfaction. Wales to Family, 17-29 Jan. 1917, Wales Papers, M90-219.
\end{itemize}
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described it as having a ‘certain amount of ambiguity about it.’ So, for the Nation’s editor, the proof of the pudding would be in the eating:

The test, therefore of the Note is whether or no it provides a true basis and opening for a system of international control; whether it is a mere statement of victor’s terms, based on a traffic of territories, or whether it is a just and prudent conception of statesmanship. If the latter, there is no reason why the war should not end in six months, and in an enduring peace. If the former, it may go on for years.

Noel Buxton agreed. He drew attention to one sentence in the Allied note that implied the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This, he argued, could only be achieved by military defeat of the Austrians. However, the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire without the parallel liberation of minorities in the Russian Empire would destroy the balance of power and would involve an indefinite extension of the war. Snowden also sounded a note of concern:

There is the wearisome reiteration of the nonsense about the dangers of an inconclusive peace, and the necessity for completely destroying the military power of Germany in order that the military power of Russia and her present Allies may have no obstacle to their ambitions.

Snowden despaired at what would be the fruits of this attitude, an indefinite continuation of the War: ‘The alternative offered to the proposal to gain the objects of the war by negotiation is the continuance of the slaughter until the Central Powers are completely crushed.’ Even in the most left-leaning Radical papers the response to the Allied Reply was mixed, being positive initially, but then suspicious of the ambiguity of the phrasing of the Reply. However, on the ‘right’ side of the spectrum

528 Ibid.
of Radical papers, it is noteworthy that both the *Daily News* and *Manchester Guardian* accepted the Allied Reply at face value.\(^{532}\)

Henry Brailsford was the most uncomfortable with the unfolding scenario presented by the Allied Reply. Privately, he collected his thoughts on the subject of the Lloyd George Government and the prospect of peace and penned a lengthy letter to Catherine Marshall. Contrary to his Radical publicist colleagues, Brailsford saw little cause for optimism. On Lloyd George, Brailsford had this to say:

I don’t think his mind at all likely to move on to any vision of a good peace. Even if he learns by six months trial that he can’t ‘knock-out’ Germany. He won’t like the League of Nations idea, simply because Wilson will be its architect, and the credit of it in history will not go to L. G.. I see him keeping a ‘torpedo’ handy for it – a handy, subtle, underwater invisible torpedo; of the kind that killed the Conciliation Bill. His notion of a sort of rival idealistic cry is obviously Imperial Federation.\(^{533}\)

Brailsford felt that the Allied Reply had now committed the Entente to indemnities, Alsace-Lorraine, the dismemberment of Austria, and the expulsion of the Turks from Europe. ‘Could we ask more if we were dictating in Berlin?’ Brailsford questioned. However, what really troubled Brailsford was the insipid response to the Allied Reply in much of the Radical press, particularly the *Daily News*. He complained that A. G.

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532 Alfred Gardiner’s *Daily News* approved of the Allied Reply, citing its clarity and disavowal of any desire to destroy Germany. *Daily News*, ‘Holy Wrath and Potatoes’, 15 Jan. 1917. *Manchester Guardian*, ‘The Allies’ Reply’, Summary of News, 12 Jan. 1917. Scott viewed the terms in the Allied reply as maximum terms and believed that it would ‘pass muster’ in comparison with the compared to the German reply and, most importantly, would please Wilson. Speculation about the confidential communication of German terms to the President Wilson was discussed in the same issue. *Manchester Guardian*, ‘The Two Replies’ and ‘The German Terms’, Summary of News, 13 Jan. 1917. C. P. Scott elaborated further on his approval of the Allied Reply in an analysis of Foreign Minister Balfour’s explanatory note that followed the Reply. Balfour mentioned the Allies’ desire to establish a ‘League of Peace’, which Scott said was also his newspaper’s view. However, Scott believed the ‘success of the Allies is, in our view, the condition precedent to a successful League of Nations.’ In addition, Scott believed that the political boundaries of Europe needed to change to coincide with ‘national aspirations’. Therefore, for Scott, there could be no settlement based on the *status quo ante bellum*. However, Scott acknowledged that to ‘achieve such a redistribution of European frontiers is a task to tax the highest statesmanship. But it will be conceded that the terms put forward by the Allies are all aimed in that direction.’ *Manchester Guardian*, ‘Mr. Balfour’s Note’, 18 Jan. 1917.

Gardiner of the Daily News had entered only a very timid note of reservation about the Allied Reply. Brailsford thought the mild interpretation that Gardiner put on phrases in the Allied Reply a bit forced, for example that the ‘liberation of the Czechs from foreign domination did not necessarily mean dismemberment’ of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. ‘The plain meaning is dismemberment’, argued Brailsford. Brailsford had clearly lost patience with the journalism of his Radical colleagues of the Daily News:

The Daily News line of pretending that any of this is comparatively innocent seems to me mere ostrich cowardice. I think the only line is to say, ‘this is pure conquest. It’s bad statesmanship anyhow, and it means years of war. We can’t realise it and we wouldn’t if we could.’ To talk of a League of Nations on top of this policy of conquest is pure hypocrisy. That, of course, is just how the Georgian torpedo will work.534

Brailsford felt compelled to expose the woolly thinking of his fellow Radical colleagues and the rank hypocrisy of the Lloyd George coalition: ‘We ought to attempt some destructive work – I mean to make woolly-minded people understand what an outrageous program of conquest this is.’535 It is this zeal for the campaign for a negotiated peace, which led him to finish his letter to his friend, Catherine Marshall, with a mild reproach for her involvement in the No-Conscription Fellowship. ‘I sympathise with the human call there, but politically I am sure that movement was a blind alley which won’t bring us even infinitesimally nearer to peace. I wish your energies were to spare for a broader effort of education and agitation.’536 Brailsford despaired at the distractions and divisions among his Radical colleagues. He was clearly frustrated that the energies of fellow Radicals were either wasted on vain hopes that Lloyd George would come good or on ‘blind alleys’ such as opposing

534 Ibid.
535 Ibid.
536 Ibid.
conscription and helping conscientious objectors. Brailsford set his sights on ending the war as soon as possible. For Brailsford, all hope for the future hinged on this.

After reflecting on the Allied Reply, Francis Hirst also expressed grave concerns about the direction in which things were going. He wrote to C. P. Scott on 20 January and asked if he would include a letter in the *Manchester Guardian* that he had drafted. His letter contained the following plea:

> To prolong the War after its primary objects can be achieved, until it ends in general financial ruin and almost universal famine, is not I submit a mark of far-sighted patriotism or high statesmanship. Surely if a satisfactory peace were obtainable now procrastination would be a blunder and a crime.  

Hirst also reiterated the concerns of much of his writing, that is, the financial implications of a continuance of the War. ‘An indefinite prolongation of the war imperils the financial position of our allies and the immense loans we have made to them.’ Arguing that reparations would pay for Britain’s debts after the war was nonsense, said Hirst:

> No serious person expects that by reducing one’s enemies to complete bankruptcy we shall be able to pay our war debt or obtain financial compensation for Belgium or Servia. The amount to repair increases every day and the power to repair diminishes as rapidly.

However, more importantly, as Hirst insisted, ‘no reparation was possible for life and limb.’ In Hirst’s opinion, it was obvious that Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey were ready for peace. Hirst concluded by saying that even though the privations being experienced by Germany were undoubtedly severe, it did not follow that their situation would deteriorate more rapidly than Britain’s. As far as Hirst was

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537 F. W. Hirst to C. P. Scott, 20 Jan. 1917, Hirst Papers.
538 Ibid.
539 Ibid.
540 Ibid.
541 Argument such as: the Central Powers have not declared their terms; Germany has not been punished yet; and that Britain needs to regain its prestige by having some significant military victories. Ibid.
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centered, Britain was in as good a position as she would ever be to obtain a reasonable peace.\textsuperscript{542}

By mid-January 1917, the momentum for peace, so promisingly pushed forward by the diplomatic initiatives of December 1916, had slowed appreciably. Vague phrases from the Lloyd George government and the refusal of the German government to make any public declaration of war aims in response to Wilson, had dented the confidence of many peace activists.\textsuperscript{543} All attention now focused on the American President. Prominent Radical publicist, E. D. Morel summed up the situation at that time. He reminded the readers of the \textit{U. D. C.} journal of the advance that had been made in promoting the U. D. C.’s ideas. The public now had a program before them, guaranteed to ensure a lasting peace. However, the eventual triumph of the U. D. C.’s agenda now depended on a settlement by negotiation. The U. D. C. message had spread globally and organisations had sprung up everywhere to promote the aims of progressive internationalism. Most importantly, Morel reminded his readers that the President of the United States now championed the demand of the people for frankness in war aims:

\begin{quote}
Today the first citizen of the greatest and most powerful Democracy in the world makes himself interpreter of that demand in a message to the Belligerent Governments, a message which invites the Belligerent Governments to disclose their real aims to their suffering peoples and the world. Today the dawn of a Negotiated Peace - the only Peace which can preserve the peoples from utter destruction - appears upon a horizon stained blood-red with the follies of contemporary rulers and politicians. Clouds still obscure its rise. But they cannot stay it. For the peoples have seen the promise in the sky and will now insist upon its consummation. President Wilson has sounded the death-knell of the war.\textsuperscript{544}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{542} Ibid.


By the third week in January 1917, the Radical publicists realised that success in achieving a negotiated peace now depended, largely, on the skill of President Wilson’s diplomacy. They realised that the forces marshalled against a negotiated peace were as strong and ever. Therefore, President Wilson needed encouragement and assistance in the task that lay before him. There were numerous open letters of encouragement addressed to President Wilson published at this time from those interested in a negotiated peace. Francis Johnson’s letter to the President, on behalf of the I. L. P, indicated the esteem in which Woodrow Wilson was held, even by people in the Labour movement:

My council earnestly hopes that you will continue your great effort to bring the Belligerent Nations together, and they pray that a speedy success will reward you. You have already, by your Note, rendered the greatest service to humanity, and by the continuance of your efforts in this direction you will earn the undying gratitude to this and succeeding generations.545

By this time the Liberals now looked to President Wilson as their *de facto* leader. This was partly due to the American President’s appeal but also due to the bankruptcy of the British Liberal Party, in the estimation of its Radical critics. The historian, Marvin Swartz, explained the relationship thus:

Liberals who desired moderate war aims had to look abroad for a Liberal leader. The Union’s [the U. D. C.’s] leaders encouraged this support of Wilson as a means of breaking down the adherence to the all-out war effort of the British government.546

However, Woodrow Wilson’s next foray into the world stage gave the Radical publicists even more reason to feel hopeful about a negotiated settlement.

The contribution of English Radicals again proved to be a significant ingredient in President Wilson’s calculations regarding his next step. On 16

546 Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control*, p. 130.
December, Colonel House asked Josiah Wedgwood, an Asquithian Liberal who was in the United States at the time to draft some terms for Wilson’s next planned peace move. While waiting for the Allied reply to his peace note, Wilson had decided to draw up his own terms in a speech advocating a negotiated settlement to the war, a speech that would serve as a rallying point for the Liberals. This was exactly the tactic that the Radicals had been urging. On 3 January, Wilson discussed his planned ‘peace without victory’ speech with House. On 11 January, after Wilson had completed his draft for the speech, House brought in letters from Britain from Lord Bryce, the Liberal elder statesman, Noel Buxton, the Radical, and William Buckler. These letters apparently confirmed Wilson in his thinking and he decided against softening his draft speech as his Secretary of State, Lansing, had requested.

President Wilson’s ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech of 22 January 1917 was a detailed manifesto for Liberal internationalism. Wilson announced that the cornerstone of a coming peace would be the formation of a ‘league of nations’. The structural causes of the European conflict were analysed in detail, but the most controversial part of his speech was his advocacy of a negotiated peace as being the best way to end the war. To highlight his proposal Wilson coined the phrase ‘a peace without victory’, a victory where neither side would crush or humiliate the other.

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547 Wedgwood was elected to Parliament in 1906 as a Liberal. In 1919, he joined the Labour Party. For a biography, see Anthony Burton, *Wedgwood* (London, 1976).
548 Martin, *Peace Without Victory*, p. 121
550 Ibid., p. 111
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This was indeed revolutionary. ‘Peace without victory’ ran counter to everything the belligerent governments had been fighting for, and especially the ‘knock-out-blow’ policy of Lloyd George. The difference now was that the war aims of the belligerent powers were no longer only the subject of confidential diplomatic discussions, but were now open to full-scale public debate, whether the governments liked it or not.

Wilson’s ‘Peace Without Victory’ address was a complete endorsement of the principles long advocated by the British Radical M. P.s, the U. D. C. and the Radical publicists. In fact, the speech was carefully tailored to appeal to the Radicals. However, the speech had far wider appeal. At the Labour Party conference there was so much spontaneous cheering, when Wilson’s speech was mentioned, that the speaker could not go on. Philip Snowden was buoyed up by the President’s address:

He states what we have so constantly maintained, that a peace dictated by the military power of either of the groups would be accepted in humiliation, would leave a sting, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest only as upon a quicksand. Such an emphatic declaration as this one is the most powerful condemnations of war which has yet been uttered.

Snowden noted that, at the Labour Party conference, there were emergency resolutions passed, ‘with practical unanimity’, endorsing Wilson’s ‘league of nations’ policy and condemnation of an economic war after the war’s end. Snowden was convinced that public opinion was ‘favourable to President Wilson, and is praying that he will continue his magnificent efforts to bring the war to an end.’

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552 Ibid., p. 112.
553 Martin, Peace Without Victory, p. 125
556 Snowden claimed that whenever the people were left to decide things for themselves, they were in favour of ending the War through negotiation on just and honourable terms. He complained that the widely circulated newspapers in Great Britain did not represent public opinion. Philip Snowden, ‘Note by Mr. Philip Snowden M. P., on Reception of President Wilson’s Overtures by the British Labour Movement’, 31 Jan.1917, Marshall Papers, D/MAR/4/15.
Lansbury of the *Herald*, also representative of views in the labour movement, was ecstatic that the American President advocated ‘peace without overwhelming and overweening triumph, peace concerted and not dictated, peace without rancour and hatred and the seeds of future war.’

Henry Massingham was also exultant. The *Nation* described Wilson as a ‘great statesman’ and asserted that his speech outlined the only way out of the war. Hirst was full of praise in *Common Sense*. Woodrow Wilson represented the ‘best in the American democracy as no man has done since Abraham Lincoln, and, for his position in the world to-day we can find no parallel in the past. If the pen is mightier than the sword, it is surely in such words as these.’

Hirst’s correspondence with Liberal M. P.s, business friends, and new acquaintances in the labour movement, indicated a growing faith that Wilson’s latest intervention was transforming public opinion and was likely to break the diplomatic deadlock. To Catherine Marshall, Hirst confessed that he ‘longs for the day when the British government can declare that it welcomes the mediation of President Wilson.’

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559 *Common Sense*, ‘President Wilson’s Speech’, 27 Jan. 1917.
560 Liberal M. P. Percy Molteno wrote: ‘We ought to concentrate on the acceptance of Wilson’s offer to help bring about peace.’ Molteno to Hirst, 29 Jan. 1917. On 31 January, J. Edward Hodgkin wrote: ‘It is my firm conviction that a very decided change is coming over the country, … I believe a strong neutral move for armistice and negotiation would be welcomed by the mass of the people, though the daily press would of course decry it.’ J. Edward Hodgkin [Royal Automobile Club], to F. W. Hirst, 31 Jan. 1917, Marshall Papers, D/MAR/4/15. The Lib-Lab M. P. Thomas Burt wrote: ‘I agree with Wilson’s proposals.’ A few days later Burt was less optimistic due to Germany’s resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, but he still favoured a negotiated peace, yet Hirst put a powerful case to him for negotiation now. Burt replied in agreement: ‘I cannot believe that diplomacy can do anything effective for peace at the present time. We should, however, I agree, seize any opportunity that offers itself to bring this war to a satisfactory end.’ Thomas Burt to F. W. Hirst, 5, 10 and 13 Feb. 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917.
561 Hirst also quoted a banker friend’s letter to Marshall that he interpreted as meaning that business people in London believe reasonable peace terms were now possible and that further military effort would not gain much more. In addition, he reported that both Lord Morley and Lore Loreburn were ‘very much in favour of U. S. mediation’ and were ‘doing what they can to advance.’ F. W. Hirst to Catherine Marshall, 1 Feb. 1917, Marshall Papers, D/MAR/4/16.
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*Daily News* called Wilson’s speech to the Senate a ‘remarkable speech’,\(^{562}\) while C. P. Scott, in the *Manchester Guardian*, stated that Wilson’s terms ‘are our terms, or if they are not, they ought to be.’\(^{563}\) Wilson’s ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech had won wholehearted praise from the Radical press. However, the Asquithian *Westminster Gazette* sounded a note of criticism,\(^{564}\) and the pro-Lloyd George *Chronicle* thought the phrase was ‘not one that many Englishmen would want to hear.’\(^{565}\)

The praise in the United States was glowing, with some editors even comparing his address to the American Declaration of Independence or the Gettysburg Address. This was the first time that a world statesman had delivered such a stinging critique of European imperialism and militarism. ‘Thus Wilson had spoken to every major issue and had offered an answer to every important question the war had raised, or would raise.’\(^{566}\) Reaction to the ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech, by American peace activists, was also overwhelmingly positive. In a letter to Jane Addams, Ida Tarbell gave her opinion on Wilson’s initiative: ‘I hope you are as thankful for the President’s message as I am. It seems to me the highest call that this country has had from any man since Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. It is the most powerful expression of the idea of universal peace which the world has heard.’\(^{567}\) An

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\(^{564}\) Winkler, *The League of Nations Movement in Great Britain*, p. 141. The *Saturday Westminster Gazette* was qualified in its praise. After giving a very detailed summary of Wilson’s speech objections were then stated: ‘If the Americans had been fighting an unscrupulous foe for two and half years would they like a third party to say they must end the war without winning it? Was Lincoln at any time willing to end his war without winning it, and what was his attitude to European intervention in the Civil War?’ *Saturday Westminster Gazette*, ‘The Week’, 27 Jan. 1917.


\(^{566}\) Ibid., p. 115.

\(^{567}\) Ida Tarbell to Jane Addams, 26 Jan. 1917, Addams Papers, 10.
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historian and peace activist at the time, William Hull, was impressed by the historic nature of the speech:

The President’s message of the day before yesterday to the Senate has in it possibilities of becoming the most important state paper which I have met with in the history of the world. It contains twelve propositions any of which is truly magnificent from the point of view of international statesmanship.

Fraught with possibilities of the highest welfare to the human race, humanity may well hang breathless on its fate, and every lover of mankind is challenged to accord it its ardent support.

Addams saw the President’s speech as part of other positive developments: ‘Isn’t it wonderful the way our cause is moving lately?’ On the same day, obviously in an elated frame of mind, Jane Addams sent a telegram to Woodrow Wilson and expressed her gratitude for his

brilliant statement of the hopes of modern internationalists and that you have placed before the world well considered standards by which the warring nations must ultimately test their claims and be judged by neutrals.

In addition, Addams said that Wilson’s timing was propitious as ‘certain liberal elements’ in both Britain and Germany were being hard-pressed by those who wanted the war to keep going. To these groups it was ‘as if you have held out a cup of cold water.’ Also, the American Neutral Conference Committee sent a telegram to the President praising his speech. However, the American peace activists were

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568 William Hull was a distinguished professor of history and political science at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania. Hull was well known for his teaching and writings on internationalism, peace, and disarmament.


570 Women in Finland and Scandinavia had just formed an International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace (I. C. W. P. P.), and Louis Lochner brought good news from his work over 1916 in Europe with the Neutral Committee for a Continuous Peace. Jane Addams to Emily G. Balch, 23 Jan. 1917, Addams Papers, 10. Addams expressed much the same to Lochner himself. See Jane Addams to Louis Lochner, 23 Jan. 1917, Addams Papers, 10.

571 Ibid.

572 Ibid.

573 American Neutral Conference Committee to President Woodrow Wilson, 23 Jan. 1917, Addams Papers, 10. In response, the President sent a printed letter of support to all those who had sent messages of support. Printed ‘Letter of Thanks’ from President Wilson, undated, Addams Papers, 10.
concerned at the criticism of the President’s speech by the British Government. This was indicated by Lillian Holt’s letter to Addams in which she described President Wilson’s speech as ‘wonderful’ but despaired at Bonar Law’s reply.\(^{574}\) Similarly, David Starr Jordan saw cause for optimism on 30 January 1917:

> The struggle of the future is between democracy and its opponents, and to break the traditional hold of the favoured castes over war aims diplomacy. I think that the President’s letter and speech has opened the door to peace so widely that it cannot be closed and after peace comes then begins the struggle. I shall not go to Europe now until some sort of a truce is called.\(^{575}\)

However, the following day, Jordan had reason to be concerned about the attitude of the British government:

> I wish there were some way in which the democratic leaders in Great Britain (instead of Lord Cecil, Lord Northcliffe or Horatio Bottomley) could appeal to the democratic elements in Germany. I do not know what can be done officially but I do know that the pan-Germanists have been driven from power in Germany and that what holds that nation together now is the general fear of disruption if they yield any point to the Allies.\(^{576}\)

The mainstream British press were quite another matter, however. The ‘patriotic’ Allied press was quite hostile towards Wilson’s speech and the same could be said of the Allied governments. In fact, the attacks by the Allied governments and the Allied press depressed Wilson.\(^{577}\) On the other hand, the German press noted Wilson’s impartiality but doubted that Wilson’s terms were workable in the light of the Allies uncompromising war aims of 10 January.\(^{578}\)

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574 Lillian S. Holt to Jane Addams, 25 Jan. 1917, Addams papers, 10. In a speech at Bristol on 24 January, Bonar Law argued that Britain needed ‘stronger guarantees’ for future peace than those any league of nations might achieve. Britain required victory. In a phrase that won much applause, he claimed that ‘what President Wilson is longing for we are fighting for.’ *Times*, 25 January 1917.

575 David Starr Jordan to Guerard, 30 Jan. 1917, Guerard Box 1, Folder 6.

576 Ibid.

577 Ibid.


Knock, *To End All Wars*, p. 114. See Knock’s assessment of the Peace Without Victory speech. Ibid., p. 115.
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President Wilson’s ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech marked a high point in the war for the Radical publicists. They had never been more pleased or united in their view of Woodrow Wilson than they were at this time. For the Radical publicists, the ‘Peace Without Victory’ address represented the yardstick against which all other ideas about ending the war and securing the peace would be measured for the rest of the war. However, the German decision to embark on a policy of unrestricted warfare, a decision communicated to Wilson on 31 January, halted the momentum for peace that had been building since the previous summer. The German action also came as an extreme shock to all those who had been campaigning for a negotiated peace in Britain and America. Perhaps no one was more shocked than President Wilson himself. He had ‘stuck his neck out’ for ending the war through negotiation, and though this stance won him the deepest praise from British and American peace activists, it earned him the opprobrium of the Allied governments and the mainstream press in Allied countries. Woodrow Wilson was to some extent publicly humiliated by Germany’s ham-fisted diplomacy and he was now adrift without a viable policy. On 3 February 1917, however, he did take a decisive step: diplomatic relations with Germany were broken. While the British and American press, as well as many Congressmen, called for war on Germany, the President kept his counsel and looked for a way of avoiding war while still pursuing the fading possibility of a negotiated settlement.579 Again, the Radical publicists were faced with a dilemma. This new turn in the war pushed the idea of a negotiated peace into the background. While many peace activists maintained the campaign for an early end to the war, others became

resigned to the prospect of American intervention in the War as a belligerent rather than as a neutral.

The Radical publicists were by no means unanimous in their reaction to the prospect of American belligerency. As a group, their preferred option was that the war end through American mediation. However, once American intervention took on the air of inevitability, the Radical publicists took an optimistic view that America’s entry into the War would bring definite benefits. However, there were notable exceptions to this pro-U. S. entry view. Some Radical publicists looked at the prospect of American belligerency with trepidation and found themselves more in sympathy with the American peace activists who were totally opposed to their country going to war.

The Radical newspapers which had opted to support British intervention in August 1914 were, not surprisingly, enthusiastically supportive of the prospect of American belligerency. Their editors had few problems supporting the call to arms for America. The Star was unquestioning of all the atrocities that the Germans were accused of committing on the high seas, and praised President Wilson for breaking off diplomatic relations with Germany.\textsuperscript{580} The Star was also full of praise for Wilson’s character and welcomed the ‘moral force which President Wilson’s action gives the demand of the Allies, and the courage which it will give the trembling neutrals shivering on the edge of the pit’.\textsuperscript{581} C. P. Scott’s Manchester Guardian argued that it would be very difficult for the United States to stay out of the war. Furthermore, if the U. S. did come into the war it would put Germany at war with the ‘civilised world’, and the ‘civilised world would be bound to win’.\textsuperscript{582} Furthermore, ‘whatever the political or military result, Germany’s latest act will complete her moral isolation in

\textsuperscript{581} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{582} Manchester Guardian, ‘If America Came In’, 2 Feb. 1917.
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the world.\textsuperscript{583} Scott assumed that American belligerence would mean an end to the ‘peace without victory’ approach to ending the war and that America would now require ‘securities against any second outbreak of the same kind.’\textsuperscript{584}

Henry Massingham had no doubt about the significance of Germany’s decision to pursue a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare. The \textit{Nation} portrayed American entry into the war as inevitable and saw this in positive terms: ‘With the entry of America, the balance sets definitely to the side of Democracy. Henceforward, Western democracy is safe, and its ideas must definitely permeate the central and the Eastern European world.’\textsuperscript{585} Furthermore, the \textit{Nation} believed that Wilson would have a ‘moderating effect on the settlement’ and the settlement would be ‘enhanced’. He believed that Wilson would oppose peace by dictation and the United States would not enter the war for any selfish cause.\textsuperscript{586} The \textit{Nation}’s coverage of the German-American crisis in February manifested an absolute faith in the actions and words of the American President. Wilson was portrayed by the \textit{Nation} as leading and steering the progressive movement: ‘The President has seized the progressive movement in America, snatched it from Bryan’s sentimentalism, intellectualised it, interpreted it to itself, and given it work to do.’\textsuperscript{587} Massingham was convinced that America would exert a moderating influence on the War and, most significantly, ‘will aim at a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{583} \textit{Manchester Guardian}, ‘Towards Outlawry’, 3 Feb. 1917.
\item \textsuperscript{584} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{585} \textit{Nation}, ‘Enter America’, 10 Feb. 1917.
\item \textsuperscript{586} \textit{Nation}, ‘The Last Neutral’, 10 Feb. 1917.
\item \textsuperscript{587} \textit{Nation}, London Diary, 10 Feb. 1917. Note that William Jennings Bryan was a Christian pacifist and a powerful leader within the Democratic Party. Bryan had been a candidate for the Democratic nomination in the 1912 presidential election. Wilson appointed Bryan as his Secretary of State on becoming President. He had been the major link between the administration and the American peace movement until he resigned in June 1915 over President Wilson’s handling of the Lusitania crisis. Knock, \textit{To End All Wars}, pp. 21-23. For recent biographies see Kendrick Clements, \textit{William Jennings Bryan: Missionary Isolationist} (Knoxville, 1982) and Donald K. Springen, \textit{William Jennings Bryan: Orator of Small-Town America} (New York, 1991).
\end{itemize}
moderate and an early peace. These were most extraordinary assumptions to make. Firstly, for the United States to ensure a moderate peace upon the termination of the war would require tremendous coercive power. At this point the only thing that could be used to exert an influence was the Entente’s financial indebtedness to America. This was no small thing, but would it outweigh the massive sacrifices of human life by the Entente powers? Secondly, what guarantee was there that once in the war the United States would aim at an ‘early peace’? It is interesting that Massingham assumed Wilson would retain his ‘peace without victory’ convictions after entering war, while Alfred Gardiner assumed he would ditch this principle and go all out for military victory. Though both publicists spoke with certainty, there was no way of really knowing at this time just what Wilson’s approach would be once committed to war. Not even Wilson’s closest advisers really knew what American intervention would ultimately mean. Even the nature of a military commitment was undecided, with some advisers to Wilson assuming the deployment of a large military force to Europe, while others assumed that the American contribution would be limited to economic resources and that no U. S. soldiers would be sent to Europe.

Massingham continued his high praise of the American President in the issue of 24 February, portraying Wilson as a man of destiny:

It is one of the few happy accidents of these times that the political office which by its constitutional function carries more of real power than the headship of any other State whatsoever, and to which the circumstances of the war have given an unparalleled world-influence as well, should be filled by an intellectual Liberal whose mind is flexible enough to grasp the outstanding truth of the war: that if the ideals of national democracy, which represent the Allied cause, are to live at all, they must grow into ideas of international democracy. These four years

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588 Ibid.
are an opportunity, unparalleled in modern history, not only for Mr. Wilson, but for Europe.\(^{590}\)

Massingham’s faith in Wilson knew no bounds. This can only be explained by the fact that he was the only statesman at the time who, in Radical eyes, had not been discredited by duplicitous behaviour and hypocrisy. Wilson represented everything that a person in the Radical Liberal tradition would find appealing and in this he was a total contrast to Asquith and Grey. However, not all the Radical publicists were as uninhibited as Massingham in declaring their faith in the President.

*Common Sense* was also full of praise for Wilson. Hirst wrote that, ‘there is no figure in American public life that has shown more perseverance, determination and fearlessness.’\(^{591}\) Hirst contrasted Wilson’s admirable moderation with the ‘fight to the finish’ attitude that continued to hold sway in the corridors of power in England:

> Anyhow, the average elderly middle-class Englishman feels happy in his strength when, over a glass of port after a good dinner, by a warm fire, he declares his unalterable opinion that this is a Fight to the Finish.\(^{592}\)

Like Massingham, Hirst believed that the President had all the necessary credentials to achieve his aims: ‘His keen knowledge of human nature, [and] his fearlessness of the truth have been the exasperation of his political opponents and brought him almost the unanimous support of his countrymen, regardless of party affiliations.’ Nevertheless, Hirst had faith that the Americans would continue to seek peace.\(^{593}\) It is vital to note that, like Massingham, Hirst assumed Wilson would still seek an early peace by diplomatic means once America had entered the War. However, Hirst deviated from Massingham and his fellow Radicals in demonstrating some empathy

\(^{590}\) *Nation*, ‘When America Comes In, Politics and Affairs*, 24 Feb. 1917. Also, on 16 February Massingham thought Wilson’s latest speech was ‘the best ever he has delivered.’ *Nation*, A London Diary, 16 Feb. 1917.

\(^{591}\) *Common Sense*, ‘The President’s Plans’, 3 Feb. 1917.

\(^{592}\) *Common Sense*, ‘The Fight to the Finish’, 3 Feb. 1917.

\(^{593}\) Ibid.
with the Germans in their decision to resume unrestricted submarine warfare.594 Hirst, alone among the Radical publicists, noted that even prominent socialists in Germany depicted the resumption of the submarine war as a response to the Allies’ prompt rejection of the German peace offer.595

A week after Germany’s escalation of maritime war, the Labour Leader did not appear to express the same level of outrage against the German gambit, nor to express the same faith in the effect that America’s entry would have on the conduct, character and duration of the War. A feature article from E. D. Morel put the case once again for peace by negotiation, notwithstanding the latest escalation of the conflict. Indeed, Morel added a rider to his article that it was written before the latest German move.596 However, it is interesting that Morel did not want the German action to divert him from his main task, his argument against the new Spring offensives, despite the fact that the rest of the press was consumed by the high drama of the submarine issue. In a well-researched article, filled with historical detail, Morel made his case that each belligerent power had been and was still driven by the ‘lust’ for conquest both before and during the war. Morel deplored how history had been twisted to justify British Government policy:

What I have recorded in these two articles is history. What our unfortunate people are given today, and what they have been given for the past two years, is a falsification of history on a scale, and with an unblushing

595 Hirst observed that the Socialist Majority voted for credit but expected their government to be always prepared to enter into peace negotiations to guarantee a lasting peace. He noted that the ‘Extremists’ had been making ‘another attack of the German Chancellor but apparently his position is still strong. Public opinion in Germany wants peace and thinks that the Chancellor is more likely to get it than anyone else is. The main difficulty is that the German Government dare not publish the terms which it would accept if the Allies were ready to negotiate.’ Hirst reported that Scheidemann had said that Germany was waging a war of defence and that the Allies’ rejection of the peace conference proposal had forced Germany to intensify the submarine campaign. Common Sense, ‘Germany’s Finance and Peace Policy’, 3 Mar. 1917.
596 Morel acknowledged that his article was written before the last German move, which he considered ‘one of the most conspicuous of the many follies which Germany has committed since the war.’ Labour Leader, E. D. Morel, ‘Why Must the Springtime Be Red?: The Coming Slaughter and Its Attempted Justification – Part II’, 8 Feb. 1917.
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effrontery, surely without parallel in our annals or in the annals of any people.

Falsehoods can never, in the long run, help any national cause. It is because I believe, with growing intensity of conviction that a national policy, based on the murder of truth, must conduct the nation which tolerates it into the gravest national perils, that I denounce once again the injustices to the British people which those responsible for it are guilty.

To lead a nation into perilous, and, it may be, disastrous courses by falsifying history is the greatest crime that statesmen can commit. It is but an aggravation of that crime that they should use as their accomplices for the delusion of the people a press which has lost all sense of its responsibility to the nations and has sunk to the level of a mere commercial undertaking.\textsuperscript{597}

For Morel, Germany’s escalation of the war at sea did not change his argument. The war was unjust and founded upon lies; it must be ended by negotiation. This explains why he felt no need to put this article aside and write a new one on unrestricted submarine warfare. However, from newspaper accounts in February and early March 1917 it is clear that Hirst and Morel were in a minority; the majority of Radical publicists saw that the German submarine campaign, and the resulting likelihood of U. S. intervention, transformed everything.

Within days a number of Radical and Liberal editors began writing about American intervention in the War – and the prolongation of the war - as if these developments were now inevitable.\textsuperscript{598} However, President Wilson did not hold this view. On 2 February, Wilson told his Cabinet that he did not wish to see either side

\textsuperscript{597} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{598} For example, the \textit{Westminster Gazette} saw that ‘America especially is right, in laying plans for the future on the assumption that the war will be prolonged,’ because if the U.S. compromised now there could at any time in the future be a renewal of ‘sea-warfare conducted by a small number of trained seamen in a thousand submarines.’ \textit{Westminster Gazette}, ‘America and the War’, 8 May 1917. Also, the \textit{Westminster Gazette} argued the familiar Asquithian line that a lasting peace could not be guaranteed ‘so long as Prussian autocracy remains unchanged.’ \textit{Westminster Gazette}, ‘Democracy and War’, 7 May 1917. When the U.S. broke off diplomatic relations the \textit{Star} speculated that it was only a matter of time before the U. S. entered the war. The \textit{Star} observed that ‘no friend of Peace could enter into war with hands more unspotted than those of the President,’ and welcomed ‘the moral force which President Wilson’s action gives to the demands of the Allies and the courage which it gives to the trembling neutrals shivering on the edge of the pit.’ \textit{Star}, ‘Hail Columbia’, 5 Feb. 1917.
win, but reluctantly, and possibly due to pressure from his cabinet, Wilson broke off diplomatic relations with Germany the next day. However, Wilson wanted to leave the door ‘wide open’ for peace. Wilson still tried to avoid the war by attempting to win over Austria-Hungary with a British promise not to dismember it, and by following a policy of ‘armed neutrality’ for the United States. On 7-9 February Wilson wrote the *Bases of Peace*, which was his last plan for a settlement written from the standpoint of a neutral. Wilson added two new elements to his platform in the *Bases of Peace*. Firstly, he announced that he would accept territorial changes after the war as long as they were reasonable and could be expected to remain permanently. Significantly, Wilson added a clause stating that there should be no economic war after the war’s end, which brought him even further in line with Radical thinking.

While Radical publicists analysed the current situation, I. L. P. and Radical M. P.’s engaged in a great debate in the Commons, on 20 February 1917, on the issue of war aims and a negotiated peace. Before this debate, H. B. Lees-Smith reported what he saw as a changed mood in Parliament. He claimed that the ‘knock-out blow’

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600 The Senate approved of breaking off relations with Germany by 78 votes to 5. *Saturday Westminster Gazette*, 10 Feb. 1917. For a detailed assessment of Wilson’s reluctance to be rushed into a fateful step, and the debate in the Cabinet on a diplomatic rupture with Germany, see Link, *Campaigns for Progressivism and Peace*, pp. 290-301.
602 On the approach to Britain to repudiate the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary as a war aim, see Link, *Campaigns for Progressivism and Peace*, pp. 314-317.
603 On the decision for Armed Neutrality, Ibid., Ch. VIII.
605 This had, in fact, already become the fifth Cardinal Point of the U. D. C. which stated that, ‘the European conflict shall not be continued by economic war after the military operations have ceased, and the British policy shall be directed towards promoting the fullest commercial intercourse between nations and the preservation and extension of the principle of the open door.’ This was passed by the U. D. C. General Council on 2 May 1916. Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control*, p. 78.
606 *House of Commons Debates*, 90, 1179-1299. Hereafter, H. of C. Debs. will be used as the abbreviation of *House of Commons Debates*. 
assumption had now been tacitly abandoned. He believed that a majority of M. P.’s would accept a ‘good peace’ without ‘troubling about a military victory.’\textsuperscript{607} Most significantly, though, he claimed that a definite move for negotiations would win widespread support in the Parliament. However, Lees-Smith acknowledged that without Government support nothing would happen:

The situation can best be summed up as saying that there is a great latent support for President Wilson’s proposals. It would, however, be misleading not to point out that this support would not mature into a formidable force as long as it is opposed by the Government, at any rate until after the next offensive. The fact, however, which is clear that at any moment, is that if the Government decides on peace negotiations it will receive practically unanimous support in Parliament.\textsuperscript{608}

Radical M. P.’s and publicists alike, realised that all hinged on the Lloyd George government’s attitude to a negotiated peace. They urged the removal of ambiguities and the concealed imperialist aims from the Allied war aims as outlined in the 10 January Allied Reply to the American Peace Note. The \textit{Labour Leader} called these debates in the Commons the ‘Great Peace Debates’ and included the speeches of Ponsonby, Trevelyan, Snowden, MacDonald and Lambert in the 1 March issue.\textsuperscript{609} Summarising the lines of the debate, Ramsay MacDonald concluded an article, a few days later, with the observation that the grandiose objectives outlined in the Allied Reply offered no solution and that in the end peace would have to be negotiated.\textsuperscript{610} Arthur Ponsonby agreed. Ponsonby listed all the territory captured by the Allies thus far ‘for which such special and heavy sacrifices have been made and which strategically and economically is a prize we are, it appears, not likely to relinquish.’\textsuperscript{611}

Any suspicion that the Allies were fighting for the retention of these gains would

\textsuperscript{608} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{610} \textit{Labour Leader}, ‘The Position Title’, 3 March 1917.
have made the Allies’ disinterested motives appear hollow and false.\textsuperscript{612} The stand taken by the Radical M. P.’s and publicists did not go unnoticed across the other side of the Atlantic, as indicated in a letter Massingham received from Colonel House on 25 February:

I wish you to tell Mr. Noel Buxton and Mr. A. G. Gardiner and other friends like them how much their support heartens us here. One cannot lose hope for the future when such men as these maintain their equilibrium under such trying circumstances.\textsuperscript{613}

Radical publicists received a lot of feedback from soldiers about the prospects of a negotiated peace. H. B. Lees-Smith\textsuperscript{614} argued that the soldiers were far milder towards the enemy than many on the home front:

There is a clear divorce of sentiment between the soldiers at the front and civilians at home. At the front there is not the same hatred of the Germans and the clamour of the newspapers leaves the soldiers cold. They have a great contempt of the cheap and easy patriotism of the ‘stay-at-homes’, which they suspect would ooze out of their toes after once ‘going over the top’.\textsuperscript{615}

Lees-Smith made it clear, in a note to Catherine Marshall, that the soldiers were not willing to fight for aims implied in the Allied Reply of 10 January, but would give nearly unanimous support for a peace based on the principle of ‘live and let live.’\textsuperscript{616} Hirst’s friend, G. S. Pawle, told Francis Hirst something similar. Pawle was disgusted by how freely those back home squandered the youth of the country on the battlefields of France. He yearned for it all to end:

This miserable disgraceful war which must go on until everybody is exhausted. What I want is some practical plan for stopping this utterly unreasonable slaughter of young lives. The present plan of old men sitting

\textsuperscript{613} E. M House to H. W. Massingham, 25 Feb. 1917, Massingham Papers, MC 41/93/6.
\textsuperscript{614} H. B. Lees-Smith, a member of the I. L. P. and Labour member of the British Parliament.
\textsuperscript{616} Ibid.
Chapter 2: ‘Peace Without Victory’ versus the ‘Knock-out Blow’:
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at home and egging on young men to fight I have denounced for years past: it is against the whole theory of the survival of the fittest.\textsuperscript{617}

Meanwhile, at the beginning of February, the prospect of American participation in the war began to divide progressive groups in the United States. However, those who had been activists for a negotiated peace up to this time ran a highly vocal and well-organised campaign to convince the President to keep the United States out of the war. The only intervention these groups wanted was that of mediation and of guaranteeing the post-war settlement through participation in a ‘league of nations’. American peace activists initially had faith that Wilson would keep their nation out of the war. This gradually changed by the beginning of March when it began to be apparent that Wilson was considering taking the United States into the war. A letter from Garrison Villard to Jane Addams on 15 February is indicative of this faith that Wilson would do the right thing by America’s peace activists:

We have to rely more than all else upon the President who will keep us out of war if that were humanly possible. Our Evening Post stands almost alone for peace. The attitude of the majority of suffragists in following the leaders in preparing for war is very sad.\textsuperscript{618}

The idea of ‘Armed Neutrality’, being pursued by the Wilson Administration during February 1917, worried the peace activists.\textsuperscript{619} Americans opposed to intervention mobilised all their forces. The Woman’s Peace Party urged its members to wire congressmen to support a resolution that there should be a referendum on the issue of peace or war.\textsuperscript{620} The A. U. A. M. leaders sent a letter to the President that outlined

\textsuperscript{617} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{618} Garrison Villard to Jane Addams, 15 Feb. 1917, Addams Papers, 10.
\textsuperscript{619} Alice Thacer Post to Jane Addams, 7 Feb. 1917, Addams Papers, 10.
\textsuperscript{620} ‘Woman’s Peace Party of New York City’, Letter to Members, 9 Feb. 1917, Morgan Papers. In addition, the Emergency Peace Committee was formed at the national office of the W. P. P. to plan mass meetings. ‘The Woman’s Peace Party’, Letter to Members, 9 Feb. 1917, Wald Papers, Reel 038 (Box 36, Folder 1.1).
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how armed neutrality could work. The organisation argued that this would enable America to stay open to the possibility of negotiation.\textsuperscript{621} The Emergency Peace Federation sent a letter to the President expressing concerns over the decision to arm merchant ships, viewing it as a ‘dangerous step to war.’\textsuperscript{622} On 28 February, the President received a delegation from William Hull, Jane Addams, Emily G. Balch and Joseph D. Cannon. They represented a conference of delegates from 22 leading peace societies that had been held in New York on 22 and 23 February. The delegation had a one-hour interview with the President. Addams put the case that the United States must not be precipitated into war by the ‘hypermationalism’ that had forced the European belligerents into war, because of America’s unique ‘cosmopolitan character.’\textsuperscript{623} Due to the confidential nature of the discussion the delegation did not, at the time, repeat publicly what the President had said in response to their pleas for peace. However, Hull jotted down a few notes on what the President said. Wilson declared that he cared nothing for the munitions manufacturers or special interests. He said that Germany had the power to force war on the United States, which was why he was trying to get the bill through Congress to arm merchant ships. The President declared himself for proper terms, proper future guarantees and announced ‘I am absolutely for peace. Even with Zimmermann and Junkers.’\textsuperscript{624} This last sentence is quite astounding. The Zimmermann Telegram, known to the President on 25 February but not published in the American press until 1 March, does not

\textsuperscript{621} A. U. A. M. to President Woodrow Wilson, ‘Memorandum Concerning Proposed Armed Neutrality’, 28 Feb. 1917, Wald Papers, Reel 102 (Folder 2.5, Box 88). Paul Kellogg sent a similar note to the President. See Paul Kellogg to President Woodrow Wilson, 28 Feb. 1917, Wald Papers, Reel 103 (Box 89, Folder 2).

\textsuperscript{622} Emergency Peace Federation to President Woodrow Wilson, 8 Mar. 1917, Morgan Papers. This letter was then sent to members. Lella Faye Secor to Members, 14 March 1917, Morgan Papers.

\textsuperscript{623} ‘A Visit to the President’, 28 Feb. 1917. Hull Papers.

\textsuperscript{624} Ibid.
appear to have been the decisive factor to incline Wilson towards intervention. However, Addams recalled what might have been one of the major factors in Wilson’s mind prompting his decision for war. Wilson said that only by participating in the war would he be able to have a seat at the peace conference. If the United States remained a neutral, then it would only be able to ‘call through a crack in the door.’ At the end of February, President Wilson was still determined to stay neutral and the only sort of intervention he desired was to be a mediator. Despite Wilson’s reassurances to the delegation, peace activists continued campaigning. Some drew encouragement from their activism, while others were beginning to feel that the tide might be running against them.

However, anti-war American peace activists were up against increasing pressure in America for entry into the war. On 25 February, the Laconia, a British liner, was sunk with the loss of two American lives. Then the Zimmermann Telegram, originally dated 19 January 1917, in which Germany promised to help Mexico if war broke out, was published, as we have seen, in blazing headlines on 1 March. When in mid-March the City of Memphis, the Illinois and the Vigilancia, all U.S. merchant ships, were sunk by German submarines, the Cabinet of 20 March 1917 recommended to Wilson that he declare war. Wilson his war message to

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625 On the Zimmermannn Telegram and its impact on Wilson, see Link, *Campaigns for Progressivism and Peace*, pp. 342-354.
628 William Hull followed up his meeting with President Wilson with a telegram representing the views of the citizens of Swarthmore, which urged the President to ‘resort only to peaceful means of settling our existing difficulties with Germany and England. We respectfully urge you to consider the plan of creating a joint commission of enquiry and conciliation with Germany and England respectively which may be able to establish at least a modus vivendi perhaps on the basis of the Declaration of London, until the end of the present war. We tender you our loyal, unflinching support in your noble efforts to find a peaceful solution.’ William Hull and Paul M. Pearson, ‘Draft Telegram to President Wilson, 3 Mar. 1917, Hull Papers, 5.
629 Lochner reported an encouraging mass meeting at Carnegie Hall. ‘The auditorium was jammed to the roof. We got $4000.’ Louis Lochner to William Hull, 10 Mar. 1917, Hull Papers, 5.
630 See Lola Maverick Lloyd to Rosika Schwimmer, 7 Mar. 1917, Schwimmer-Lloyd Papers, Box A86.
Congress on 2 April. The Senate voted for war on 4 April, and the House of Representatives followed on 6 April, Good Friday.\textsuperscript{632}

While the Radical publicists pondered the implications of imminent American entry, and American peace activists did everything in their power to prevent this happening, an event occurred of truly shattering proportions. After three days of street fighting in Petrograd, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia abdicated on 15 March. The March Revolution in Russia came to be invested with just as much, if not more, significance by the Radical publicists than the prospect of American mediation or American entry. The Radical publicists began to form the opinion that if America alone could not be the circuit breaker to bring about a negotiated peace, then perhaps combined with a transformed and democratic Russia, she could do so. To Wilson, the fall of Russia’s autocratic Tsar may have made the Allied side more palatable, but it did not reverse Wilson’s opinion of the Allies.\textsuperscript{633}

Today, reading the Radical publicists’ responses to the Russian Revolution, it is hard to appreciate the significance they attached to this event. It was as if they had been at war with Tsarist Russia and now the war was won. ‘The greatest tyranny in the world has fallen’,\textsuperscript{634} is how the \textit{Nation} greeted the news of the Russian Revolution. The revolution in Russia of March 1917 changed everything for the Radical publicists. Henry Massingham hailed the Revolution: ‘The glorious news of

\textsuperscript{632} It is interesting that one of the fifty who voted ‘no’ was Jeanette Rankin from Montana who was the first woman to sit in the House of Representatives. Fleming, \textit{The Illusion of Victory}, p. 41.

\textsuperscript{633} On entry into the war Wilson made the United States a wartime ‘associate’ rather than an ally. Wilson told House, after being shown copies of the Allies’ secret treaties by Balfour, that ‘England and France have \textit{not} the same views \textit{with regard to peace that we have} by any means.’ However, Wilson felt that after Germany’s defeat he could ‘force them to our way of thinking, because by that time they will, among other things, be financially in our hands’. Wilson to House, July 21, 1917, \textit{PWW}, XLIII, 238 (original emphasis). Also, Knock asserted that ‘both Wilson and the Allied governments knew full well that a day of reckoning was inevitable.’ Knock, \textit{To End All Wars}, p. 138.

\textsuperscript{634} \textit{Nation}, Events of the Week, 17 March 1917.
the successful Russian Revolution will send a thrill of joy through democratic Europe, and will make men feel that life is worth living.\textsuperscript{635} Massingham described this as a victory for Liberalism and asserted that association with the Tsar had been ‘a curse and an incubus.’\textsuperscript{636} Furthermore, the Russian Revolution was viewed as a ‘great miracle’ and ‘the virtual solution of the problems of the war,’ because ‘when America comes in’\textsuperscript{637} she will join the Entente in a moral united front of Liberal powers.\textsuperscript{638} Massingham and the \textit{Nation’s} ecstatic response eclipsed even their earlier responses to the prospect of American mediation.

It was common for Radicals to be exultant over developments in Russia. In Francis Hirst’s letterbox for example, was one typical letter, from Percy Molteno, the Radical M. P. He wrote to Hirst that any ‘competent statesman’ could use the Russian Revolution to bring about a peace.\textsuperscript{639} Hirst had reason to harbour private doubts. He had been warned about the imminent revolution in Russia in a flow of correspondence from his friend Harold Grenfell, naval attaché in the British Embassy in Petrograd.\textsuperscript{640} Grenfell was pessimistic about the prospect that the Revolution would cause a positive change in the War. He warned Hirst about getting his hopes up regarding Russia because the Allied leaders would care little for the ideals of the revolutionaries:

\begin{quote}
The dry officer mind will come in and spoil this, one of the few really gorgeous opportunities for a sudden and great advance and improvement of humanity that the ages have ever thrown up. Besides how could, how can, our rulers honestly welcome this movement to liberty, with their record of what they have done for us in the opposite direction these last 30
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{635} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{636} \textit{Nation}, A London Diary, 17 March 1917.
\item \textsuperscript{637} Ibid., and \textit{Nation}, ‘The Holy Alliance’, 17 March 1917.
\item \textsuperscript{638} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{639} ‘The Russian Revolution in regard to the War has not been digested yet but it must modify Germany’s fears and a competent statesman here has the materials for the making [of] a peace [if] what stands in the way is the desire here for a Victory and the German retreat encourages that.’ P. A. Molteno to F. W. Hirst, 11 April 1917, Hirst Papers.
\item \textsuperscript{640} Harold Grenfell to F. W. Hirst, 25 Feb. and 20 Mar. 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917.
\end{itemize}
months? They regard it, you will see, only in terms of how it will affect the War – and this emotional, intellectually sensitive and naturally extremely intelligent people will feel and recognise the essential selfishness of our attitude, with what chilling and in every way unfortunate results, you yourself can guess!\footnote{Harold Grenfell to F. W. Hirst, 20 Mar. 1917, Hirst Papers.}

Nevertheless, in \textit{Common Sense} Hirst barely concealed his enthusiasm for the transformation of Russia ‘from the least to the most-free country in Europe,’ \footnote{\textit{Common Sense}, ‘Russian Revolution: Suspension of the Duma’, 24 March 1917.} Like Massingham, Hirst dared to hope that Russia might play a part in the Liberal settlement of the war. A letter Hirst received from a soldier friend also reflected deep joy at the news from Russia: ‘I felt drunk with joy when the news came. Russia could end the war now, and may do so – in spite of what our Northcliffe papers say. For the first time in two and a half years I feel a gleam of happiness dawning over this dark earth.’\footnote{D. G. [by Caesar’s Camp, Wimbledon Common] to F. W. Hirst, 25 Mar. 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917.}

Even those Radical publicists who often allied themselves with the Government line gave very positive assessments of the Russian Revolution and its implications for civil liberties in Britain. The \textit{Manchester Guardian} editor, C. P. Scott, wrote enthusiastically to L. T. Hobhouse on 25 March:

\begin{quote}
Don’t you feel the Russian Revolution rather stirring in your bones and making the growing invasion of personal liberty here more intolerable? The coldness with which this tremendous movement of political and spiritual emancipation was received by a great portion of our press, and society – bitterly felt by Russian residents here – seems to show how far we have drifted from the tradition of liberty. I feel that perhaps we have not fought hard enough against the real persecution of the conscientious objectors.\footnote{Wilson (ed.), \textit{The Political Diaries of C. P. Scott}, p. 272.}
\end{quote}

A. G. Gardiner, editor of the \textit{Daily News} was equally, if not more, enthusiastic than Scott, though he saw more immediately the wider implications. On 17 March, Gardiner compared the events in Russia with the storming of the Bastille and...
proclaimed, ‘Russia is free.’ He then went on to explain why he had previously muted his criticisms of the Tsarist government ‘for the sake of the alliance.’ On 22 March he welcomed the victory of ‘spirit of liberty’ in Russia. In his diary, Gardiner called the Russian Revolution the ‘greatest blow struck for freedom in the last 130 years.’ Gardiner believed that ‘if Russia is free, the world is set free. With Russia on our side, the victory of liberal ideas, those which unite the democracies of the Atlantic, is assured. It changes the very form of the war.’

Even Robert Donald, editor of the Daily Chronicle, was supportive of the revolutionary Government in Russia. However, for this he earned a rebuke from former First Sea Lord, Sir John Fisher who was amazed at Donald’s statements so passionately in praise of the Russian Revolution. Fisher’s only thoughts were that hopefully Germany would descend into revolution next:

I’ve struggled to respond to your desire for a rousing telegram to the Russian people, but I couldn’t evolve anything good enough beyond, STICK TO IT!! AND THE HOHENZOLLERN WILL GO NEXT AND SO END THE WAR!

I tell you solemnly that if every newspaper …. would with one voice say to German people that: WE WILL NEVER MAKE PEACE WITH A HOHENZOLLERN. The German people would THEN have a revolution much easier than the Russian!

It was not surprising that Fisher, an unwavering ‘never ender’ should show no enthusiasm for a development in Russia that might imperil the military fortunes of the Entente. But the reactions of some other prominent Liberals could surprise. For example, a week after the revolution in Petrograd, Catherine Marshall was busy assisting in the organisation of the public meeting to welcome the Russian

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646 Ibid. Note that Gardiner, had been vocal in condemnation of Russia at the end July 1914, but then changed tack with the British declaration of war. See Daily News, ‘Our Duty’, 31 July 1914.
647 A. G. Gardiner, Typed Diary Extract, April 1917, Gardiner Papers, 3/5, Diary.
648 Lord John Fisher to Robert Donald, 29 Mar. 1917, Lords, Box 188, Folder D/4, Item 17. (original emphasis).

Revolution; visited by Lord Bryce, she found him reluctant to agree to the themes chosen by the organisers, namely to link the triumph of civil liberty in Russia with the on-going campaign for the preservation of civil liberty and opposition to conscription in Britain.\(^{649}\)

The meeting to welcome the Russian Revolution was at the centre of the Labour Leaders’s rhapsodic response to the birth of the new Russia. The issue of 29 March reported that a great mass meeting, at Albert Hall on Saturday 31 March, would be held to congratulate the people of Russia.\(^ {650}\) Among the advertised speakers was the editor of the Herald, George Lansbury.\(^ {651}\) The Labour Leader also reported Ramsay MacDonald’s public speeches. MacDonald said that Russia had given them ‘new hope’ and ‘a message of deliverance for the whole of mankind.’\(^ {652}\) However, Morel’s article in the Labour Leader, on 5 April, warned, in a similar way to Harold Grenfell, that people were trying to exploit the Russian Revolution for ‘knock-out blow’ purposes. Lloyd George’s recent statement that more ‘vigour’ was needed was a case in point.\(^ {653}\) As the Russian Provisional Government neared the end of its first month in office, Philip Snowden highlighted what was to become one of the major themes of the Radical publicists’ writings for the rest of 1917. Snowden argued that, if Russia’s new democracy was to be consolidated and the foreign policy of Russia and

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\(^{649}\) Lord Bryce had come to see Catherine Marshall in the morning about a meeting being planned to honour the Russian Revolution. He was not in favour of linking Russia with civil liberties. Catherine Marshall to Lord Parmoor, 22 March 1917, Marshall Papers, D/MAR/4/17.


\(^{651}\) The speakers were Israel Zangwill, W. C. Anderson M. P., Commander Wedgwood M. P., Dr. Lynch M. P., Robert Smillie, Robert Williams, and Maude Royden. Labour Leader, ‘Russia Free’, 29 Mar. 1917.

\(^{652}\) Labour Leader, Ramsay MacDonald, ‘Mr. MacDonald at Glasgow’, 19 April 1917.

the Allies to be harmonised, what was required was a new statement of Allied war
aims.654

To recapitulate the key developments of the winter of 1916-1917, it is clear that by this time ideas developed by the British Radical publicists – ideas daringly subversive of the conventional wisdom of warfare – were beginning to dominate international political discussion of the war. Since August 1914, British publicists had been absolutely committed to a project of immense significance: to develop new international mechanisms to achieve and then guarantee a just and lasting peace. The U. D. C., a majority of Radical publicists, and numerous other organisations and individuals, had articulated these ideas. The chief proposal was that a form of collective security be established to prevent a recurrence of war in the future. The idea of a ‘league of nations’ had blossomed on both sides of the Atlantic. President Wilson’s decision to commit the United States to post-war membership of the League and to make this the major plank of his 1916 campaign had placed the ‘league of nations’ at the centre of the political and diplomatic debate in the autumn of 1916. As we have seen, Bethmann-Hollweg’s acceptance of a post-war League in November, followed by the German and American peace notes in December had raised the hopes of many that peace was near. Radicals everywhere were heartened too by Woodrow Wilson’s ‘Peace without Victory’ speech of 22 January 1917. In this address, the President outlined systematically the progressive internationalist approach to world order, a new vision that was identical to the Radical publicists’ viewpoint. However, with Germany’s decision to resume unrestricted submarine warfare in February 1917, it seemed the President’s attempts to mediate an end to the war were doomed. This

greatly worried American peace activists who felt that progressive internationalists
would be under threat if America went to war. However, British Radical publicists
were less concerned about the prospect of America entering the war as a belligerent.
By this time British Radical publicists had developed such trust in the American
President that most felt that, as a belligerent, Wilson would seek an early end to the
war as well as a just peace. Then, while the United States stood on the brink of war,
the sensational news of the revolution and birth of the new democratic Russia had
provided fresh inspiration for all those who toiled to resolve the disaster of the war
now in its thirty-fourth month.
Chapter 3: Woodrow Wilson, Russia, and the Peace Offensives: April 1917 - August 1917

There is a real danger that America’s entry into the war may prolong rather than shorten the war. The war fever seems to have attacked many Americans very badly, and it will take some time for the illness to exhaust itself. Vested interests have had their appetites stimulated by the prospect of financial gain.

Philip Snowden, June 1917.\(^\text{655}\)

The effect upon Europe of America’s entry into the war has been to strengthen aggressive Jingoism and to set back the moral and political movements that had become strong in consequence of the Russian revolution.

Ramsay MacDonald, August 1917.\(^\text{656}\)

By 1917, the Radical publicists had such faith in President Wilson that most of them welcomed American entry into the war, not because it would enable the Allies to crush Germany, but because they believed that Wilson would insist on the reformulation of Allied war aims and propose an acceptable negotiated peace at the earliest possible opportunity. The Radical publicists, as we have seen, also welcomed the Russian Revolution that had brought forth a democratic Russia, and especially praised the Revolution’s willingness to jettison the Tsar’s imperialistic ambitions. The changed circumstances regarding the United States and Russia, along with the impressive growth in anti-war sentiment in every belligerent nation, gave the Radical publicists every reason to be hopeful of an end to the war by the end of 1917. The Radical publicists came to the realisation that extremist forces within each belligerent

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nation would fight tenaciously to continue with the war despite the heavy toll of human life and the uncertain post-war prospects for a financially and economically devastated Europe. The Radical publicists saw it as their duty, more than ever, to mobilise public opinion and attempt to influence the political leadership to consider a negotiated peace and a just settlement. In this task, the Radical publicists thought they had a powerful ally in Woodrow Wilson. However, they were to be sorely disappointed. Woodrow Wilson’s lukewarm, and sometimes hostile, attitude to the various opportunities for a negotiated peace that presented themselves during the course of 1917 left the Radical publicists disheartened and perplexed. Both the Allied leaders and the American President sidestepped the Russian requests for a conference to revise war aims, the Reichstag Peace Resolution, the Stockholm Conference and the Papal Peace Note and the Central Powers’ replies to the Papal Note. The Radical publicists were surprised at Woodrow Wilson’s ambivalence towards and even outright opposition to each of these chances to consider a negotiated peace. They were mystified by President Wilson’s rejection of peace initiatives based on the very principles espoused in his ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech of January. The Radical publicists struggled to come to terms with the fact that their ideological kinsman had changed his agenda since entering the war as a belligerent. As a result, the Radical publicists were faced with the dilemma either of simply trusting that Wilson’s strategy would eventually get a just peace or of ‘going it alone’ and attempting to place maximum pressure on the British government to bring about a change in policy. Some Radical publicists opted to accept assurances by Wilson and the British government that the war would soon be won, while others fought on to bring pressure to end the war on favourable terms immediately.
Chapter 3: Woodrow Wilson, Russia, and the Peace Offensives: April 1917 – August 1917

President Wilson’s War Message of 2 April 1917 had an electric effect on the press and people of the Allied nations. The President explained the reasons why his policy of Armed Neutrality, introduced to Congress on 26 February, was now impracticable. He argued that this policy would eventually draw the nation into war anyway, but without the rights of a belligerent. The President repeated three times in his address that although the nations would soon be at war with Germany, the United States had ‘no quarrel with the German people.’657 This exact phrase had been used by the Radical publicist, Alfred Gardiner in the Daily News, four days into the war.658 Moreover, Wilson outlined the practical ramifications of entering the conflict. The navy would be equipped to deal with the submarine menace, the army would be expanded by at least 500,000 men (chosen preferably by conscription), the Government would be granted credit, and the Allied nations already at war would be amply supplied.659 Further, the President also made a commitment to set up a ‘concert of purpose’, code for a ‘league of nations’, to ensure the observance of democratic principles.660 A most intriguing aspect of his War Message was Wilson’s invoking of the Russian Revolution as a cause of hope:

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658 ‘Let us be quite clear in our minds as to the real enemy. We have no quarrel with the German people…. No, it is not the people with whom we are at war. It is the tyranny which has held them in its vice – the tyranny of personal government, armed with the mailed fist, the tyranny of a despotic rule countersigned by the Krupps.’ Daily News, A. G. Gardiner, ‘The War and the Spirit of the Nation’, 8 Aug. 1914. It is interesting to note Irene Cooper Willis’ comment on the use of this phrase. This was ‘remarkable for showing, at an early date, the ideal war aims in almost as perfect a state of development as that afterwards reached, even in the speeches of President Wilson.’ However, as described in the first chapter of this thesis, she did not approve of this distinction between the German rulers and German people as it was part of the ‘holy war’ rhetoric that she argued was the ‘offspring of a forced union between abhorrence of, and submission to, the war.’ Cooper Willis, England’s Holy War, p. 88. Thomas Fleming has pointed out that one reason for using this phrase was Colonel House’s suggestion that this as a way of ‘building a backfire against the German government in the minds of its own people.’ Another reason was the need to placate German-Americans, something that it failed to do, according to Fleming. Thomas Fleming, The Illusion of Victory, p. 81.
659 Wilson, The Selected Addresses, pp. 191-192.
660 Ibid.
Does not every American feel that assurance has been added to our hope for the future peace of the world by the wonderful and heartening things that have been happening within the last few weeks in Russia? ... [the] Russian people have been added in all their naïve majesty and might to the forces that are fighting for freedom in the world, for justice, and for peace. Here is a fit partner for a League of Honour.  

In retrospect, this begs the question of whether Woodrow Wilson would have committed the United States to war if the Tsarist regime had stayed in power. What is certain, however, is that the emergence of a democratic government in Russia enabled the American President to clothe his reasons for going to war in democratic and idealistic garb. The fall of the Tsarist Government removed an impediment to Wilson’s proclamation of a higher purpose for going to war.

Of course, the other factor that had prevented Wilson from going to war earlier, briefly touched on above, was his genuine desire to keep the possibility open of a mediated peace. On 8 February, Wilson had sent a note to the British that proposed a peace conference and a peace proposal to Austria. Lloyd George, who could not consider a peace proposal to Austria without Italy’s agreement, rejected this. Lloyd George knew very well that Italian claims on Austrian territory could only be realised through a decisive Allied victory, and certainly would not eventuate as part of a negotiated peace. In his 11 February reply to Wilson’s latest offer to mediate, Lloyd George urged the American President to come into the war, ‘not so much for help with the war as for help with the peace.’ Lloyd George told his ambassador to convey to Wilson that ‘he must help make peace if the peace made at

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661 Ibid.
662 Thomas Knock proposed that someone like Wilson could only go to war with such a higher purpose identified as the chief purpose. See Knock, To End All Wars, pp. 120-121.
663 Wilson to Walter Hines Page, 8 February 1917. This had included Wilson’s observation that ‘the effort of this Government will be constantly for peace even should it become itself involved [in the war], although those efforts would not in the least weaken or slacken its vigorous action in such a case.’ PWW, Vol. 41, pp. 158-159.
the conference is to be worth keeping. American participation would enable him to be there and the effect of his participation would shorten the war, might even end it very quickly. This factor obviously weighed heavily on Wilson’s mind for the rest of the month, and perhaps explains his comment to Addams on 28 February, mentioned above. The historian, Thomas Knock, has placed Wilson’s desire to be at the peace conference as the major reason for American entry in the First World War:

He did not choose war because he regarded the Allied cause as altogether just and the Central Powers’ cause as altogether unjust. Rather, he believed that American belligerency would insure his place at the peace conference at the end of the war and thereby guarantee liberal settlement and American participation in a league of nations.

Nevertheless, it is significant that this reason for going to war was absent from the President’s War Message.

It should be noted that there has been vigorous historical debate about Woodrow Wilson’s true motivation for going to war three recent contributions are notable. Most recently, John Thompson proposes that the reason for Wilson’s reluctance to go to war had been due to the strength of the non-interventionist sentiment that had been demonstrated at the November 1916 election. But equally, Thompson argues, it was political considerations that convinced Wilson to act for belligerency. To back down from the Sussex ultimatum would have opened him up to tremendous domestic political attack. The Zimmermann Telegram, along with the German Admiralty’s announcement in early March that the state of grace for neutral ships had expired, followed by the sinking of three American merchant vessels, were the deciding factors. Thompson calls this the end of the road for ‘peace with honour’.  

665 Ibid., pp. 213-214.  
666 Knock, To End All Wars, p. 118. Thompson, in his recent biography of Woodrow Wilson differed with Knock on this point: ‘There is neither any evidence nor any reason for believing that a personal commitment to establishing a league of nations played any significant part in leading Wilson to ask Congress for a declaration of war.’ Thompson, Woodrow Wilson, p. 151.
By 20 March, Wilson had made up his mind, and by 27 March, saw no alternative to war. His final concern was to find a way that would command broad support. It was Lansing who urged Wilson to use the opportunity of the Russian Revolution as justification for a war of democracy against autocracy. The crusade for democracy emerges as a rhetorical convenience. In another re-evaluation of Wilson’s presidency, David Esposito, however, offers a different assessment. For Esposito, the Russian Revolution did not simply make it convenient for Wilson to portray the War in idealistic terms. Esposito argues that for Wilson the Russian Revolution was ‘the seminal event of the Great War.’ This was because it ‘cleansed the stain of autocracy from the Entente alliance’ and because ‘Liberal Russia’ could be expected to endorse a Wilson-dominated settlement. Esposito sums it up this way: ‘He [Wilson] could now see that history was moving in America’s direction. Germany was not America’s historical enemy, but rather the enemy of History.’

In the most recent detailed study of America in the Great War, Thomas Fleming proposes that Wilson was motivated by more base desires than those suggested above. He argues that Wilson was more concerned about the imminent British financial collapse and French military collapse. The impact of a British financial collapse would have been disastrous for the American economy. This was the motivation for releasing the Zimmermann Telegram. Not only had Wilson been blind to these economic realities until it was too late, but also, Fleming insists, he was heavily influenced by British propaganda emanating from Wellington House.

Thompson, *Woodrow Wilson*, pp. 147-149.


Ibid. Esposito also cites Balfour as telling his colleagues that without the Zimmermann Telegram and the Russian Revolution Wilson would have found it hard to take the final step to war. Ibid.

Wellington House had been formed in September 1914 by the Foreign Office as a War Propaganda Bureau. It became the main outlet for books, pamphlets and other types of British propaganda. A significant amount of the effort of Wellington House propaganda was directed specifically at influencing opinion in America. After being outmanoeuvred over the previous few months on peace mediation, Wilson took the ‘bait’ of Lloyd George’s suggestion that for Wilson to have a say at the peace conference he would have to participate in the war.

On the War Message itself, Fleming asserts that the praise Wilson has since earned from historians has been unwarranted. The idea of the war not being against the German people was absurd, according to Fleming. So too, was Wilson’s use of second-hand and idealistic phrases such as a war to ‘make the world safe for democracy.’ These ideas were ‘already clichés in the speeches of British politicians and the propaganda of Wellington House.’ In terms of oratory, Fleming suggests that it was a brilliant speech. However, Wilson’s skill at delivering this speech has obscured harsh realities that would cause instability later.

There was no doubt at the time that Wilson’s formidable speech-making skills were on display in his 2 April War Message. The speech was brimming with stirring, emotional and idealistic language:

The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We must have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but the champions of mankind. We shall

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671 See Peterson, Propaganda For War, pp. 16-20.
672 Ibid., pp. 74-75. Peterson also asserted that the propaganda from Wellington House was ‘responsible to a large degree for American entrance to the war.’ Peterson, Propaganda For War, pp. 326-327.
673 Ibid., p. 78.
674 Ibid.
675 Ibid., p. 81.
676 Ibid., p. 83.
be satisfied when those rights have been made secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them.\(^{677}\)

That the Radical publicists were mightily impressed with the American President’s speech is obvious from their public statements. The *Nation* proclaimed that the speech ranked with his former ‘peace without victory’ address as one of the ‘greatest State documents which the war has called forth.’\(^{678}\) Furthermore, Wilson had declared himself as pro-democracy, pro-League and for a liberated Germany.\(^{679}\) Like many Radical publicists, Massingham was thrilled by the American President, based on his perception of his performance as a world statesman since May 1916. This proven track record demonstrated that Woodrow Wilson was genuinely committed to progressive ideals. Massingham delighted in taking a swipe at the pro-war editors who had criticised Wilson in the past:

> Yesterday Mr. Wilson was the most criticised of living statesmen: today he is the most applauded. Yet the only change is in his critics: his policy has been developed with a sureness and consistency that have defied even the changeableness of war, and kept him on a level of moral and intellectual force in which none of his contemporaries have even tried to stand with him.\(^{680}\)

E. D. Morel was also quick to point out hypocrisy of the mainstream press. He found it amusing to read the Press’s hearty endorsement of Wilson’s denunciation of German autocracy when for years they had remained silent about the ‘far more complete and greatly more sinister Autocracy of Russia.’\(^{681}\) Like Massingham, Morel was impressed with the President’s statesmanship:

> The atmosphere was never so favourable for the exercise of statesmanship of the moral order – such statesmanship as President Wilson's famous address to the Senate in January 23\(^{rd}\) [sic] last revealed to be still existent in this world of Governments dragged downwards by their commitments

\(^{677}\) Wilson, *The Selected Addresses*, p. 195.  
\(^{678}\) *Nation*, Events of the Week, 5 Apr. 1917.  
\(^{679}\) Ibid.  
\(^{680}\) *Nation*, A London Diary, 5 Apr. 1917.  
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of speech, their falsification of history and anxieties for their own position: and of peoples for the most part passionately desiring the cessation of this terrible and senseless slaughter and suffering.  

Morel appreciated the truly historic nature of Wilson’s War Message. He realised it was an historic shift of world power to America and an exercise in real power on Wilson’s part. Most of all though, Morel was very hopeful of the transforming effect upon the eventual peace settlement of Russia and America combined:

If the Russian Revolution must tend to transform the internal politics and relationships of European States, America’s intervention in Europe’s war must eventually stamp upon the policies of Europe the impress of a real internationalisation, and catholicise the outlook, the activities, nay the whole future conditions of civilised mankind. It is the promise of a dawn of a new era which must eventually fling its beams upon a world where the sanctities of life are more secure, and justice for the great mass of mankind is something else than a text for pulpit disquisitions and political rhetoric.  

Many Radical publicists enthusiastically subscribed to sentiments and hopes such as those expressed by Morel. However, Morel touched on two aspects of Wilson’s War Message that made him uneasy. The first was Wilson’s attempt to appeal directly to the German people. He feared that this appeal might ‘imperil the lofty and disinterested motives’ in his war speech. Secondly, Morel raised the question that would nag the Radical publicists for the next few years. As a consequence of American intervention, would the war be unduly protracted?  

Of all President Wilson’s speeches during the Great War, his 2 April speech was the only one that won unanimous support in the British press. This wide support was forthcoming because the speech could be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, on the military side, the speech signalled that America’s intervention would relieve the

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682 Ibid.
683 Ibid.
684 Ibid.
685 Ibid.
submarine blockade, prevent Allied financial collapse and turn the tide at the front.\textsuperscript{686}

Secondly, in a more ideological interpretation, Wilson’s war declaration signalled that America’s intervention would transform both the nature of the war and the nature of the subsequent peace. The Radical publicists could subscribe to both interpretations, while the mainstream press could only subscribe to the first interpretation. It is no surprise that the Radical editors, C. P. Scott, A. G. Gardiner and T. P. O’Connor, who had quickly come to support British intervention in August 1914, now supported American intervention in the Great War. What made April 1917 different from August 1914 for these editors was that they could now support the war more wholeheartedly because of their deep trust in the leadership of the American President. In August 1914 they had been distrustful of the leadership of Asquith and Grey.\textsuperscript{687} The other significant difference was that, not only had the bogey of Russian autocracy been removed, but also it had been replaced by a democratic Russia that would now work with a democratic America to transform war aims and bring about a just and lasting peace.\textsuperscript{688} This point was highlighted by one telling incident, the *Star*’s

\textsuperscript{686} On relieving the submarine blockade, Alfred Gardiner expressed the universal hope that German ships now in American ports would be made available for transporting goods to Britain. See *Daily News*, ‘The Voice of America’, Editorial, 4 Apr. 1917.

\textsuperscript{687} It is interesting to note Gardiner’s reflections in April 1917 on the support he gave to British intervention in August 1914. He had come to the conclusion, which Massingham reached earlier, that ‘war and Liberalism are historic foes. The spirit engendered by any war is fatal to the humanities. All the worse passions of men, especially the men who stay at home and write about war, then have their hour of tropical growth. They become a sort of base counterfeit of patriotism, and in the feverish atmosphere of suspicion, hate and disquiet that envelopes the public mind is opportunity of the loudest voice and the most unreflecting appeal.’ Gardiner felt that the ideals of British intervention were good ‘but the vision faded.’ As the war progressed ‘the ideals were lost’ and ‘Liberalism, we were told by the *Morning Post*, had been thrown on the rubbish heap.’ Furthermore, ‘a noisy gutter press egged on the mob to scoff at Parliament.’ However, Wilson’s action over the previous few months had ‘revived the soul of English Liberalism.’ One is left to wonder then, if Gardiner would have acted differently in August 1914 if he knew where events would take his country. A. G. Gardiner, Typed Diary Extract, April 1917, Gardiner Papers, 3/5, Diary.

\textsuperscript{688} Gardiner reflected in his diary that ‘the Russian Revolution itself is hardly a greater event than the speech in Washington which has made this Easter forever memorable. Its effect on men was like the lifting of a shadow – like the call of a trumpet to great deeds…. It was in that speech President Wilson spoke for the general heart of man, nailed on the mast of the world the forgotten ideals with which we began the struggle, repudiated the eternal hates and revenges that would make this world a hell for our children, pointed with the finger of embattled freedom at the blood-stained system that has dragged
criticism of the Lloyd George Cabinet’s congratulatory message to the American President on his declaration of war on Germany on 6 April 1917. The editor of the Star, T. P. O’Connor, objected that the message was sent to Wilson on behalf of the new ‘Imperial War Cabinet’. He did not like the word ‘imperial’ because ‘this war is for the liberation of democracies all over the world. It is not an imperialistic war.’

This incident signalled a more general truth: that those Radical publicists who had gone against their instinctive liberal consciences and supported the Government’s war policies now expected better of their leaders. Another area in which this was also relevant was press freedom. O’Connor urged Lloyd George to practice what he preached and in the spirit of a war for freedom to lift the export ban that had been only recently placed on the Nation. The editor accused Lloyd George of adding ‘British Liberalism to its list of prohibited exports.’

Alfred Gardiner also praised Wilson’s War Message, being comfortable with both the military and ideological aid Wilson promised to render. Gardiner displayed the soaring hope in Wilson that characterised most of the Radical publicists:

We ourselves have never doubted the wisdom of President Wilson’s policy, nor the ultimate goal of that policy. We have never doubted it because, while allowing for the difficulties of the course he had to steer – difficulties consisting of the American doctrines of isolationism and the avoidance of alliances, of a heterogenous people, and of a great German element in the population – we have been confident of the man, and we

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Europe to ruin, pronounced the doom of the despots in every land, and gave humanity the vision of a world society based on liberty, justice and eternal right.’ Ibid.

Ibid. It is interesting that, even though the Radical publicists often expressed their differences heatedly, they always came to each other’s defence when under attack from reactionary forces. Francis Hirst also highlighted the contradiction between Wilson’s emphasis on maintaining freedom of opinion with Lloyd George’s ban on the export of the Nation. George Lansbury’s Herald also joined in the defence of the Nation. ‘The powers that be – lovers of truth, justice, freedom, impassioned haters of Prussianism, and so on – have forbidden the circulation of the Nation abroad. Even in the Allied nations, people are to be prevented from studying this excellent weekly review. Thus is Mr. Massingham’s long and brilliant service to Democracy and Liberalism rewarded in the days of an avowedly Liberal Prime Minister…. We whom the Lloyd Georgites delight to ban – and honour, though they do not know it – are becoming quite a respectable crowd.’ Herald, ‘Suppressing the Nation’, The Way of the World, 14 April 1917.
have felt assured that as the war proceeded Germany would make the coalition unavoidable.  

Gardiner made the point, however, that it was not simply for the material contribution to the Allies that he so wholeheartedly praised Wilson’s speech. Rather, he praised the ‘great utterance’ because at last the world heard ‘the authentic voice of humanity stating the issue, pronouncing the judgement, awakening the conscience of the world to the mighty things at stake.’  

Finally, the Daily News editor highlighted the link that Wilson made in his speech with Russia: ‘the democracy of America clasps the hand of the democracy of Russia,’ wrote Gardiner, and he prophesied that ‘by the light of this prodigious union we see the issue of the war emerge with a grand simplicity of outline.’

However, as Thompson has noted, one reason for such unanimity of support for the War Message was that it had something in it for everyone. Different groups emphasised the parts that they liked. The obverse of this though, was that they criticised those aspects of the speech with which they did not agree. The right-wing press, for example, did not agree with the distinction Wilson made between the German people and the German government, and even the Asquithian Liberal Westminster Gazette quibbled over this. Morel, as shown above, questioned this distinction too, though for different reasons. Those Radical publicists further to the

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692 Ibid.
693 Ibid.
694 Thompson argues that there was something for everyone in the War Speech. ‘His war message contained something for most of the main elements in American opinion – the stress on the attacks on American rights and the hostility of the German government for isolationists such as Senator William Borah; the portrayal of the war as one of democracy against autocracy for pro-Allied interventionists; the insistence on the continuity of his thinking with his January address to the Senate for progressive idealists.’ The Radical publicists and American peace activists fell into this last group. Thompson argues that the speech was an exercise in consensus building, ‘rather than a unique insight into his own motivation.’ Thompson, Woodrow Wilson, p. 151.
695 ‘President Wilson still clings to the belief that the German people can be distinguished from their rulers, but he is uncompromising in his denunciation of Kaiserdom, and pledges his people to fight for its destruction.’ Saturday Westminster Gazette, The Week, 7 April 1917.
left were more likely to add some notes of criticism to their praise of the President’s pronouncement. One example was *Common Sense*, which trumpeted the speech as a watershed in diplomacy and civil liberties: ‘The President is no obscurantist or secret diplomatist. There must be no suppression of opinion, no intrigue henceforth in this war.’\(^696\) Many who wrote in *Common Sense* on the topic were full of praise and had few problems with the War Message. All agreed that the combination of Russia and America would change the character of the war and make an early peace more likely.\(^697\) Just over a week after the War Message, Hirst was still upbeat about the noble ideals Wilson had promulgated on 2 April as well as the prospect of the combination of America and Russia. The latter had just been given some weight by the Russian Provisional government’s repudiation of imperialism on 10 April.\(^698\) After a week’s reflection, Hirst raised some concerns. There was no mention in Wilson’s speech about what his policy was regarding peace terms. These worries were added to what Hirst perceived as the lack of emphasis in British commentary on the ‘Peace without Victory’ principles of Wilson’s 22 January speech which Wilson had reaffirmed in his 2 April speech. This was typical of the way that he was often misinterpreted ‘on this side of the Atlantic.’\(^699\) Meanwhile, *Common Sense* also drew attention to Mr. King’s question in the House of Commons to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs about whether the United States had accepted the Allied Reply of 10 January as also being the policy of the United States, and also, whether the United

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\(^696\) *Common Sense*, ‘President Wilson Declares War on the German Government’, 7 April 1917.

\(^697\) *Common Sense*, For example, see ‘Commander Wedgwood on Peace’, 14 April 1917.

\(^698\) ‘The Government deems it to be its right and duty to declare now that Free Russia does not aim at dominating other nations, at depriving them of their national patrimony, or at occupying by force, foreign territories; but that its object is to establish a durable peace on the basis of the rights of nations to decide their own destiny.’ For a full text of Prince Lvoff’s statement, see *Documents Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims*, pp. 43-44. Hirst’s comment was positive: ‘the Russian Government has taken a stand on the same ground as President Wilson, both as regards imperialism and freedom of opinion.’ *Common Sense*, ‘America’s War Aims’, 14 April 1917.

\(^699\) Ibid.
States had given formal adhesion to the Pact of London of September 1914, under which Britain, France and Russia had promised to make no separate peace. Lord Robert Cecil ducked the first part of the question by asserting that the position of the United States in the war was clearly explained in President Wilson’s ‘various statements which have been published.’ Only with respect to the Pact of London was Cecil clear, noting that the answer to the last part of the question was, ‘in the negative.’\textsuperscript{700} The broader issue of the harmonisation of American and Entente war aims, therefore, remained shrouded in mystery. This was the first hint that American entry might not end the ambiguity about war aims that had frustrated the Radical publicists thus far.

Further to the left, and especially in the ranks of the I. L. P., praise of the War Message was accompanied by rather more pointed expressions of concern. Philip Snowden did not think very much of the War Message and described it as ‘a clever piece of special pleading.’\textsuperscript{701} The \textit{Herald} believed that Wilson’s plan to depose the Hohenzollerns\textsuperscript{702} would involve an ‘extremist peace’, and he preferred to be sustained by Wilson’s previous ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech.\textsuperscript{703} Even though it was not totally to his liking, George Lansbury still talked up the positive aspects of the War Message. Like Hirst, he highlighted Prince Lvoff’s recent statement renouncing imperialist war aims, placing quotations from his statement above Wilson’s statement about making the world ‘safe for democracy’ to serve as epigraphs at the top of his editorial. Lansbury too highlighted the Radical expectation that American entry would

\textsuperscript{700} \textit{Common Sense}, ‘America and the Pact of London’, 14 April 1917.
\textsuperscript{701} \textit{Labour Leader}, Philip Snowden, ‘The Entry of America’, 12 April 1917.
\textsuperscript{702} This refers to President Wilson’s drawing a distinction between the German people and its leadership.
\textsuperscript{703} \textit{Herald}, ‘Autocracy and Militarism’, 14 April 1917.
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involve the revision of Allied war aims. He was quite excited by this prospect. Meanwhile, F. W. Jowett, the I. L. P. Chairman, was reported in Labour Leader, as saying that the war could be ended immediately if the Allies adopted the same declaration regarding the war, as Wilson had adopted. However, he warned that, now that the United States had joined, there was a danger that the Lloyd George Government and its ‘war-mad supporters’ in the press may pursue ‘annexation and dismemberment’, and ‘plunge the nation deeper into disaster than ever.’ The Radical publicists were determined to prevent the pro-war forces from derailing the opportunity for a revision of war aims that had been presented by American entry and the Russian Revolution. From 6 April 1917 the Radical publicists were eagerly expectant of combined American and Russian initiatives to achieve a negotiated end to the Great War by mid-1917.

From the British Embassy in Petrograd, Harold Grenfell again wrote to his friend Hirst. Though he had been cheered a little by the arrival of supportive messages for Russia’s new Provisional Government from Massingham, Snowden and Gardiner, his overall mood was one of despondency. He was concerned about the depressing response to the new Russian government by the British government and mainstream press, which were unable to ‘grasp the magnificence of this leap forward into liberty or to realise that, as an event, it is of infinitely greater world significance than this stupid conflict of stupid people’. Furthermore, he could not believe the folly and ignorance of a Times article which expressed sympathy with the Tsar because of his

705 Labour Leader, F. W. Jowett, ‘Chairman’s Address’, 12 April 1917.
706 Harold Grenfell to F. W. Hirst, 28 April 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917.
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‘2½ years faithful (!!!) service to the Allied cause.’ Far worse was that Lloyd George repeated this ‘idiocy’ in his message to Prince Lvoff. These sorts of thoughtless actions had ‘produced anger, resentment and comments about England’s selfishness.’ Worse still, the situation of the Russian army was tenuous and it was not certain that it would be able to prosecute the war. ‘Whether its power to do so has been impaired by the Revolution is too early yet to decide.’ What was clear though, according to Grenfell, was that if the Revolution had not occurred at this time then Russia would have ‘dropped out of the war by Spring.’

Meanwhile, at home, the Radical publicists attempted to drum up support for the beleaguered leaders of the Provisional government. Ramsay MacDonald declared in the Labour Leader that Russia had given all peace activists new hope and a ‘message of deliverance for the whole of Europe and for all mankind.’ Philip Snowden called attention to the fact that Russia now had different aims to those in the Allied Reply of 10 January. Hence, a new statement of Allied war aims was needed. Meanwhile, he also saw hopeful signs of an Austrian peace move underway. Hirst also noted the communications between the Austrian and Russian governments, though he expressed the hope that the new Russian government would adhere to the Pact of London and not negotiate a ‘separate’ peace. It was clear to the Radical publicists that the Russian Revolution not only gave a boost to progressive forces in Europe but also opened up opportunities for an early peace. However, a general peace was the only one favoured by the Radical publicists.

707 Ibid.
708 Ibid.
709 Ibid.
710 Ibid.
711 Labour Leader, ‘MacDonald at Glasgow’, 19 April 1917.
713 Also, on the issue of nationalities in the Austro-Hungarian empire, Hirst favoured more independence and some form of federalism to ‘solve some of the thorniest problems of the settlement and be a blessing to Europe.’ Common Sense, ‘Austrian Peace Move’, 21 April 1917.
In the month following America’s entry, the Radical publicists talked up the prospects of an early-negotiated peace. The *U. D. C.*, published a lengthy article which detailed six reasons for a negotiated peace,714 while Hirst reminded his readers of the lost opportunities for peace of the previous few months and speculated about the building of the foundation for a new era of international cooperation after the War.715 In pointing the way to the future, Hirst seized on the ideas for a settlement from a book, which he did not give then name of, that was at the time being written by Professor Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University, New York.716 Butler proposed a third Hague Conference, an international Court of Justice and ‘something like an international Parliament or Congress.’717 Meanwhile, Lord Loreburn took the pessimistic approach in his private correspondence with Hirst, with a strong warning that all would ‘end in ruin and chaos everywhere’718 unless an early peace was negotiated. Loreburn reasoned that the best hope for peace lay with America: ‘My hope is that our own ministers will see the need and seize the chance of ending the war which is sure to be an outcome of the U. S. A. coming in.’719 The call for an early end to the war came from many quarters. Lord Courtney called the war a ‘terrible blunder’ and looked for the possibility of restoring peace by negotiation.720 The National Peace Council721 recorded its protest against the continuance of the war for aggressive ends, the callous and calculated further sacrifice of millions of young and

716 Professor Nicholas Murray Butler, with whom Hirst had cooperated in the past, was a director of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace from its creation in 1910. See Marchand, *American Peace Movement*, p. 120.
717 Hirst highly recommended Butler as ‘an American with a remarkable grasp of European politics.’ He informed his readers that Nicholas Murray Butler wrote the articles that had appeared in his paper last November and December, under the pseudonym of ‘Cosmos’. Ibid.
718 Lord Loreburn to F. W. Hirst, 9 April 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917.
719 Ibid.
720 Lord Courtney to Professor Arnold, April 1917 [No day], Courtney Papers, XII.
721 The National Peace Council was founded in 1904. Swartz described it as ‘the most important of the [pre-war] peace organisations.’ Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control*, pp. 11-12. Some prominent members were Charles Trevelyan, Arthur Ponsonby, Norman Angell and Catherine Marshall.
vigorously lives on a doubtful chance of securing a final military victory, and the policy of discounting and decrying all proposals for negotiations.\textsuperscript{722}\ Furthermore, the Council asserted that there was an increasing body of public opinion demanding peace and urged that ‘negotiations necessary for a discussion of peace conditions be entered forthwith,’ and deplored the idea of a ‘trade war to follow the war of the trenches.’\textsuperscript{723}\ Pursuing the negotiated peace theme, Hirst gave a high profile in the 12 May edition of \textit{Common Sense} to an interview with Noel Buxton, the Radical M. P. Buxton recounted that on a recent trip to the United States he met high officials in Washington who claimed that Germany would have been willing to settle for lesser terms than what they had formulated, ‘rather than go on with the war.’\textsuperscript{724}\ However, they did not see any desire on the part of the Allies for negotiation: ‘Neither our Government nor the press held out any hope that suggestions of peace would obtain a hearing. Our attitude invariably strengthened the German Jingoes at the expense of the moderates.’\textsuperscript{725}\ He conveyed his view that the extremists in Germany have been given extra authority ‘since we have put our extremists [the Lloyd George Government] in power,’ while the Allied Reply of 10 January ‘was so craftily worded as to be capable of diverse interpretations.’\textsuperscript{726}\ Holding little faith in open diplomacy, Buxton proposed that secret peace feelers be put out to Germany, followed by a confidential discussion of terms. Announcing terms publicly during peace negotiations, Buxton argued, would merely ‘play into the hands of those persons in the opposite camp who are opposed to negotiations altogether.’\textsuperscript{727}\ However, once peace came ‘the Junkers,
whose influence is now so seriously threatened would be completely destroyed.'\textsuperscript{728}

However, if there were a vindictive peace then the ‘Junkers’ would be quickly rehabilitated and become leaders again. Quite prophetically, as events later showed, Buxton argued that a ‘knock-out blow’ victory would not make a durable settlement:

Vindictive terms would produce a state of mind exactly the opposite to what we want. Instead of concluding that militarism was a failure, the German people would be convinced that the fault of their country was in not being prepared enough.\textsuperscript{729}

Meanwhile, the Radical publicists applauded a meeting on the proposal for a ‘league of nations’, at which there was some common ground with the Government became apparent. The meeting of Monday 14 May 1917 was called by the League of Nations Society, to support the concept of a ‘league of nations.’\textsuperscript{730} Lansbury observed that the meeting indicated ‘a better understanding of the feeling of all the peoples of the earth than has yet been shown by the British ruling class.’\textsuperscript{731} This was due to a ‘remarkable speech by General Smuts’ in which he held that ‘the war was caused by human stupidity, human greed and suspicion.’\textsuperscript{732} Henry Massingham, along with Lord Buckmaster, Lord Hugh Cecil, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Auerin Williams and Andrew Fisher,\textsuperscript{733} attended the meeting, while Lord Bryce was chairman.\textsuperscript{734} Massingham approved of General Smut’s ‘good speech’ against fatalism in war, and Lord Hugh Cecil’s ‘fine pronouncements’.\textsuperscript{735}

\textsuperscript{728} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{729} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{730} Lansbury also found this meeting encouraging. \textit{Herald}, ‘The League of Nations’, 19 May 1917.
\textsuperscript{731} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{732} Ibid. General J. C. Smuts, the South African Defence Minister, was soon to become a member of the War Cabinet. See French, \textit{The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition}, p. 17. The \textit{Labour Leader} was also most impressed with the speeches of Smuts and Cecil. See \textit{Labour Leader}, ‘General Smuts on the League of Nations’, 17 May 1917.
\textsuperscript{733} Andrew Fisher was High Commissioner in London from 1916-1921. He had been Prime Minister of Australia three times (1908–09, 1910–13, 1914–15).
\textsuperscript{734} Common Sense, ‘The League of Nations Meeting’, 19 May 1917.
\textsuperscript{735} \textit{Nation}, A London Diary, 19 May 1917.
In the following week’s issue of Common Sense, Hirst reiterated Buxton’s concern about the ‘knock-out blow’ and the ‘crush Prussian militarism’ thinking that continued to dominate domestic politics. Hirst suggested that, so far, the initiative for negotiation had come from the Central Powers while the Allies had ‘refused to negotiate; or rather, they have laid down terms for negotiation which would hardly be accepted until Berlin and Vienna had been occupied.’\(^736\) He cited a neutral correspondent who had recently passed through Germany: ‘the Governments of the Central Powers are ready to go a long way to meet the Allies in the matter of terms.’\(^737\) Ever hopeful, Hirst thought the Russian Revolution had led to an outbreak of republican sentiment in the Reichstag, which was frightening the ‘Tory squirearchy of Prussia.’\(^738\) Furthermore, Hirst believed that Bethmann-Hollweg was still aiming at peace and that it was ‘well known that he was against the declaration of war, and that may, perhaps explain why he alone of all the Prime Ministers of the belligerents still remains in office.’\(^739\) Hirst explained that Bethmann-Hollweg had to be careful in suggesting terms because the Pan-Germans would say he was ‘squealing for peace.’\(^740\) But if the Chancellor’s speech from the previous Tuesday was carefully read it would indicate that ‘the Chancellor is ready to give a good deal in return for a peace’ as long as Germany is left with ‘freedom for commercial development and opportunity for economic recuperation.’\(^741\) Despite Hirst’s concern about the Allied governments’ poor response to peace overtures from the Central Powers, he sensed that in this Spring of 1917 there was a lull in the fighting and diplomacy and that

\[^{736}\textit{Common Sense}, ‘Diplomacy and Revolution’, 19 May 1917.\]
\[^{737}\textit{Ibid.}\]
\[^{738}\textit{Ibid.}\]
\[^{739}\textit{Ibid.}\]
\[^{740}\textit{Ibid.}\]
\[^{741}\textit{Ibid.}\]
‘peace is in the air’. However, Hirst received another letter from his friend, Harold Grenfell in Russia, which indicated that time was not on their side, as far as the deteriorating situation in Russia was concerned. He warned that people in Britain who thought of nothing other than ‘give us this day our daily war’ would turn the new Russian government against the Allied cause. As Grenfell explained further:

The peace party in this country is going to predominate – if only because to many already – to many more very soon – it is clear that peace is necessary to convert their recent internal victory. The sooner that our rulers swallow, and digest this highly unpleasant fact, the better for everybody! Kerensky has been the saviour of the position here. Should he leave the Government, look for trouble at once.

This dismal prognosis of the situation in Russia was even more reason for the Radical publicists to wholeheartedly pursue the issues of a negotiated peace and a just and stable settlement.

Lansbury’s *Herald* added its voice to the Radical publicists’ demands that there must be ‘no crushing of any people, no annexations’, and ‘no degrading indemnities’. Furthermore, it backed Lord Buckmaster’s view that Germany must be a member of the League of Nations and suggested that a League must be established immediately, not after the war. What was most interesting about this edition of the *Herald*, was the faith that this socialist paper placed in Woodrow Wilson:

The American entry into the war, regrettable as any addition to the number of belligerent races must be, cannot fail to modify the war aims of the Alliance if only because of the speeches which President Wilson made before and on the eve of the entry of the Western Republic.

Lansbury held out hope that Woodrow Wilson would force a revision of Allied war aims. His optimism was boosted by another dramatic declaration which emanated

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742 Ibid.
743 Harold Grenfell to F. W. Hirst, 23 May 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917.
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from Russia. On 15 May 1917, the Petrograd Soviet called on the warring governments to make peace ‘without annexations or indemnities on the basis of the self-determination of peoples’. This ‘Petrograd Formula’ and its associated slogan of, ‘a peace without annexations and indemnities’ was really a paraphrase of Wilson’s ‘peace without victory’. For most of the Radical publicists, the British Government’s prevarication about war aims contrasted poorly with the forthright way in which the Russians proclaimed their determination to purify their war aims.

The contrast between the British and Russian views on war aims was the focus of speeches by I. L. P. and Radical M. P.’s in Parliament during the third week of May. Philip Snowden led the charge, as he called on the British government to issue a similar decree to the Russian denunciation of annexations, and most importantly, to join with the Allies in restating the Allied terms in conformity with the Russian declaration. Snowden questioned the Government as to whether it still regarded the treaties it had made with Russia as binding. He said the Russian ‘no annexations’ declaration placed Russia in alignment, not only with President Wilson’s declarations, but also with socialists in each belligerent country. The Labour Leader gave prominence to this ‘Peace Terms’ debate in the Commons, which also featured Charles Trevelyan, Ramsay MacDonald, Philip Morrell, Commander Wedgwood, H. B. Lees-Smith, and William Harvey. However, not all the Radical publicists were pleased with this debate. In the Thursday edition of the

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745 Martin, *Peace Without Victory*, p. 134. In April 1917, the All-Russian Conference of Soviets pledged to back the Provisional government in continuing the war but on condition that an appeal be made to the peoples of the world to pressure their leaders to give up imperialistic and annexationist aims. Furthermore, they urged the Provisional government to negotiate with the Allied leadership to this end. See Martin, *Peace Without Victory*, p. 134, and Stevenson, *The First World War and International Politics*, p. 149.

746 Knock, *To End All Wars*, p. 138. The Second Provisional Government accepted the Petrograd Formula three days later.

747 *Common Sense*, ‘Mr. Snowden on War Aims’, 19 May 1917.

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*Daily News*, Alfred Gardiner attacked Philip Snowden for suggesting that there was a gulf between British and Russian ‘sentiment’ about the war. Using his now familiar ‘holy war’ rhetoric, Gardiner asserted that the ‘march of democracy’ was the ‘cardinal fact of the war.’ Britain, he argued, shared in this democratic spirit, while the German militarists such as Bethmann-Hollweg only wanted a ‘German Peace’. Gardiner suggested: ‘We shall no more see after the war the fate of millions left to be the pastime of any little leisured minority.’ Rather, the editor argued that the democratic spirit that would govern the new world at the end of the war ‘will be one’ and no power will be able to withstand it. The following week, Snowden lashed out at Gardiner and C. P. Scott, who had made similar criticisms of his parliamentary speech. Snowden’s anger at the ‘holy war’ rhetoric that these two Radical editors had peddled to the public since August 1914 boiled over in a bitter response:

The way in which such organs as the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily News* treated those who initiated the debate is significant and sinister. The bitter attacks they made upon us arise from the fact that they know our advocacy of peace is gaining adherents, rapidly, and that before long the Government will have to surrender to the popular demand to end the war…. Attacks upon those who have consistently opposed the diplomacy of the war come offensively from such a person as the Editor of the *Daily News*, who when he found the war was popular, turned his back upon all he had been preaching for years, and joined with the Jingo crowd in misleading the public as to its real genesis and character. It does not lie in the mouth of such a man to accuse of intellectual dishonesty those who have remained faithful to the principles they held before the war.

What was significant in Snowden’s attack on the two wayward Radical editors is the assumption that the momentum in diplomacy and public opinion had shifted towards those advocating a revision of war aims. Snowden’s outburst also revealed the stark fault-line that had opened up in the ranks of the Radical publicists ever since the decision for British intervention in August 1914. Those like Hirst, Morel and

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750 Ibid.
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Snowden, who had stood firm in 1914 and had resisted the temptations of the Jingoes felt themselves to be morally superior to those editors who had joined the pro-war frenzy. Moreover, they felt that with the strong commitment of both President Wilson and the Russian government to progressive war aims, they stood on solid ground. However, the ground soon began to shift.

Throughout April and May the Radical publicists felt some unease at the comparative silence of President Wilson compared to his intense pre-war ‘public education’ program between May 1916 and January 1917. They could only speculate on the reasons for Wilson’s silence.752 Progressive internationalists in both America and Britain put demands on Wilson for a revision of war aims. It soon became apparent to the Radical publicists that Woodrow Wilson did not share their views about Russia. In his ‘Message to Russia’ speech of 26 May 1917,753 President Wilson claimed that the German government was seeking to obtain pledges that the war would end in the restoration of the status quo ante. However, the President put paid to this idea by observing that the war grew out of the ‘status quo.’ Rather, Wilson proposed that ‘the status must be altered in such a fashion as to prevent any such hideous thing from ever happening again.’754 Furthermore, the Allies needed to stand united against the forces of autocracy, or be overcome. ‘The day has come to conquer

752 Lord Esher recounted that according to Henry Morgenthau, one of the principal supporters of President Wilson in the 1916 Election campaign, the President told him that America would not take the lead in making peace proposals. Furthermore, Morgenthau was instructed by the President to make this known to people he may meet during his upcoming trip to Europe. Wilson’s reasoning was that America had come late into the war and therefore would not take the lead in making peace proposals. ‘Any suggestion that the Allies are ready to enter a conference must come from one of the nations which has suffered longer and more severely.’ Oliver Viscount Esher, Journals and Letters of Reginald Viscount Esher, Vol. 4 (London, 1938), p. 135.
753 Sent in the form of a cablegram. Selected Addresses and Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson, pp. 206-208.
754 Ibid.
or submit.' Only when they achieved victory over Germany could the Allies be generous. This was impressive rhetoric. However, it was not just the Russians who were advocating a peace on the basis of the status quo ante. The Radical publicists, who had wholeheartedly backed the Petrograd Formula, had the wind knocked out of them by this speech. Then, their woes were further compounded by Wilson’s refusal of passports to Stockholm on 23 May. The proposal for an international socialist conference to be held in Stockholm was the brainchild of Dutch and Scandinavian socialists. On 22 April, Huysmans, the secretary of the International Socialist Bureau (I. S. B.), sent out invitations for an international socialist conference to be held in Stockholm. President Wilson decided to deny passports to American socialists who wanted to attend the Stockholm Conference. At a time when events had given rise to high hopes, the American President was not only undermining the American socialists’ efforts, but also the efforts of the new Russian government to secure an honourable general settlement to ensure the survival of democracy in their country.

This disturbing development from America galvanised the Radical publicists. The U.D.C. Executive Committee sent a letter to Wilson on 29 May that was signed by Angell, Hobson, Morel, Trevelyan and MacDonald. These men urged Wilson to give public backing to the Petrograd formula because it was ‘so in accord with your

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755 Ibid.
756 Ibid.
757 The decision was made on the evening of 23 May 1917. This was reported in an article in Common Sense that discussed hopeful developments in Germany. This included the news that the German ‘Minority’ Socialists had been issued passports for Stockholm from the German government.
759 Thompson, Woodrow Wilson, p. 158. Apparently, Wilson said that discussions between socialists were ‘likely to make a deal of mischief’. Stevenson, The First World War and International Politics, p. 158.
own pronouncements. However, the Radical publicists’ correspondence to Wilson was subject to censorship, not by Ambassador Page or the British authorities, but by Colonel House! Amazingly, House withheld this letter from Wilson until 28 June because he did not agree ‘altogether’ with its purpose.

Laurence Martin, in his account of the relationship between Wilson and the Radicals, has given the impression of an unending flow of information between them via Buckler in London and House in the U. S. Yet, at this critical moment the flow of information from the British Radicals to Woodrow Wilson was stopped, or at least delayed. Up until this time, Martin argued, the Radicals had exerted considerable influence on Wilson at critical stages, but in this instance, Colonel House had decided to curtail this influence. It is interesting to speculate that, if Wilson had received the U.D.C letter earlier, it may have influenced his next major pronouncement on the war.

Philip Snowden’s despair about the direction of American policy as indicated by the ‘Message to Russia’ was evident in the 7 June edition of the Labour Leader:

There is a real danger that America’s entry into the war may prolong rather than shorten the war. The war fever seems to have attacked many Americans very badly, and it will take some time for the illness to exhaust itself. Vested interests have had their appetites stimulated by the prospect of financial gain.

Snowden was perhaps ahead of his colleagues in recognising the contradictions in Wilson’s policy. He questioned those who believed that the President was acting on some ‘carefully thought-out plan’ and that all his actions were designed to bring about an early peace: ‘We would like to believe this, but the evidence on which to do so is not at all convincing.’ Snowden was concerned that the unrest in Russia was largely due to the Allied government’s unwillingness to make a clear declaration on war.

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760 Knock, To End All Wars, p. 139.
761 Ibid., p. 139, n. 80.
763 Ibid.
aims. Snowden took a further step the following week by publicly declaring that Wilson’s ‘Message to Russia’ of 26 May was a real departure from ‘peace without victory’, and that there were ‘growing indications that President Wilson is getting a too exalted idea of his own supreme importance and power.’ Snowden thought that as a neutral he might have succeeded in pressing the kind of settlement he outlined in his ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech the previous January. On the day that Snowden expressed these ideas, Wilson made another significant address that came as an even greater shock to the Radical publicists.

President Wilson’s Flag Day Address of 14 June 1917 rang the alarm bells loudly for the Radical publicists. In a now familiar theme, Wilson drew a distinction between the German people and the German government. Then he reminded his listeners of the wrongs done by the German government, from U-boat attacks, spies, conspirators and the threat of joining Mexico and Japan into a hostile alliance against the United States. Wilson attacked the ‘military masters of Germany’ whom he described as the ‘sinister power that has at last stretched its ugly talons out and drawn blood from us.’ These German leaders began the war, the President declared, to get a ‘broad belt of German military political power and political control across the very centre of Europe and beyond the Mediterranean into the heart of Asia.’ This dream of conquest ‘had its heart at Berlin.’ The Central Powers, he asserted, were really one power with Germany at the head. ‘From Hamburg to the Persian Gulf the net is spread,’ declared Wilson. What most disturbed the Radical publicists about this speech was Wilson’s dismissal of all past and present peace discussions and initiatives.

764 Ibid.
766 Selected Addresses and Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson, pp. 210-217.
767 Ibid.
768 Ibid.
because they allegedly all originally emanated from Germany. Wilson declared that ‘peace, peace, peace has been the talk of her Foreign Office for now a year or more; not peace upon her own initiative, but upon the initiative of the nations over which she now deems herself to hold the advantage.'

Wilson declared that peace proposals had come to him through all sorts of channels and under many guises but at no time was there any mention of terms on behalf of the German government. The motivation for German-inspired peace proposals was that Germany wished to ‘close the bargain’ before it was too late and it had little left to offer for the ‘pound of flesh it will demand.’ The only way the leaders of Germany could perpetuate their influence, the President declared, was to get peace now. Only then, would their prestige be secure, and ‘with their prestige their political power.’ If Germany succeeded, Wilson reasoned, the U. S. and the world will have to remain ‘armed and ready’ for ‘their next step in aggression.’ Towards the end of his address Wilson made references that were probably intended to apply to Russian socialists and American pacifists, but could just as easily have applied to the British Radicals. He asserted that, as part of their aims to deceive, the Germans employed liberals in their enterprise: ‘They are using men, in Germany and without, as their spokesmen whom they have hitherto despised and oppressed, using them for their own destruction – socialists, the leaders of labour, the thinkers they have hitherto sought to silence.’ These people were ‘agents and dupes’ and ‘friends and partisans’ of the Imperial German

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769 Ibid.
770 Ibid.
771 Ibid.
772 Ibid.
Government.\textsuperscript{773} This amounted to an outright rejection of Russian hopes to secure a negotiated settlement, and of the Stockholm proposal.

Understandably, the Radical publicists were most concerned. The \textit{Herald} was disappointed in the change in Wilson. There was now less ground for hope, according to the \textit{Herald}'s editor, George Lansbury.\textsuperscript{774} Snowden, however, in his uncompromising fashion, went further: ‘Six months ago President Wilson was the greatest hope for peace. Today he is probably the greatest obstacle to it.’\textsuperscript{775} The remainder of Snowden’s article followed in this same vein:

> It was inevitable that when President Wilson entered the war he would be driven to begin to employ all the jargon by which the war-mongers delude the people into supporting every war, whatever its character may be. His speech delivered in Washington last week is more regrettable even than his Note to Russia \cite{Message to Russia}. It is a rehash of the stuff which filled the speeches of our statesmen and our press in the first months of the war, and which no longer influences people who have taken the trouble to examine the diplomatic history of the war. It is quite inconsistent with the position stated by him in his great speech to Congress in January last.\textsuperscript{776}

Furthermore, Snowden deplored the fact that each Allied nation had sent separate notes to Russia. There needed to be a joint declaration of Allied aims, he contended. Each Allied nation making independent claims would have disastrous effects, warned the editor of \textit{Labour Leader}. Massingham also thought it ridiculous that each Allied nation had sent notes to Russia. ‘Clearly the notes are all too vague,’ he complained. What was needed was a more definite statement of war aims.\textsuperscript{777} Knock has suggested

\textsuperscript{773} Ibid. David Esposito has summed up the President’s Flag Day Address thus: ‘Gone were the subtleties of his peace-without-victory speech. He did not repeat his earlier criticism of the Allies once America entered the war. He identified only one set of sinners in the world, and he coloured its ambitions in very dark hues.’ Esposito, \textit{The Legacy of Woodrow Wilson}, p. 111.\textsuperscript{774} \textit{Herald}, ‘The World At Stake’, 16 June 1917.\textsuperscript{775} Ibid.\textsuperscript{776} \textit{Labour Leader}, Philip Snowden, ‘Peace Notes’, 21 June 1917.\textsuperscript{777} \textit{Nation}, A London Diary, 16 June 1917. The British ‘pro-war press’, on the other hand, were quite pleased with the Flag Day Address. Spender’s Asquithian \textit{Westminster Gazette} took a middle position of praising the Flag Day Address and assumed that it would be well received in Russia. Spender agreed with Wilson’s argument, in his earlier ‘Message to Russia’ speech, that there must be a surer foundation than the status quo. However, Spender declared that the sooner the British government
that this speech fortified super-patriotism and anti-German hysteria and ‘obscured the objectives for a just peace and a league of nations.’\footnote{Knock, \textit{To End All Wars}, p. 139} Martin too was correct in asserting that this was very different to the principles of ‘peace without victory’ to which the Radicals had ‘become attuned.’ Further, Martin stated that ‘the President’s blowing hot and cold puzzled them. Many feared that Wilson had caught war fever and abandoned his former emphasis on the political dimension of the war.’\footnote{Martin, \textit{Peace Without Victory}, p. 137.} What annoyed the Radicals even more was that this speech enabled the forces of reaction, their opponents, to claim that Wilson thoroughly endorsed the existing Allied war aims.\footnote{Ibid., p. 137.}

The British Radicals now sought reassurance that Wilson had not turned his back on their mutually held ideals. Buckler reported that Massingham, Whitehouse and Noel Buxton were agreed on the urgency of a restatement of Allied aims.\footnote{Ibid., p. 138.} Concerned at the direction of Wilson’s policy, Hobson wrote an article in the \textit{Nation} on 23 June provocatively entitled ‘An American Victory in 1920?’ Hobson asked:

\begin{quote}
Is it wise, or even a sane thing, to pay down several more million lives for the distant and dubious prospect of an American military victory by attrition in 1920 without taking every means to ascertain whether the objects which are rightly indispensable cannot be got earlier, more certainly, and cheaper? ...How long is this policy, based on the demand for a military victory of a sort known now to be unattainable, to carry Europe further on the road to ruin?\footnote{\textit{Nation}, ‘An American Victory in 1920’, 23 June 1917.}
\end{quote}

Massingham again communicated his views to Wilson on 28 June in more detail, explaining that the forces of German reaction were strengthened by the Allies’ failure to renounce annexationist aims. Furthermore, Massingham pleaded with Wilson to do

\footnotetext[778]{\textit{Westminster Gazette}, ‘The Week’, 16 June 1917.}
\footnotetext[779]{\textit{To End All Wars}, p. 139}
\footnotetext[780]{Ibid., p. 137.}
\footnotetext[781]{Ibid., p. 138.}
something to encourage the German and Russian moderates.\footnote{Martin, \textit{Peace Without Victory}, p. 138.} The information that flowed from Colonel House and on to Wilson clearly indicated the Radical’s growing sense of gloom. Buckler sent letters from Radicals, copies of Parliamentary debates, Liberal and labour newspapers and books written by Dickinson and Morel.\footnote{Ibid., p. 137.} A letter from C.P. Trevelyan to Buckler on 28 June clearly illustrated the Radicals’ intensifying anxieties:

> Personally I maintain a deep-seated confidence in President Wilson. But I see a danger of one of the most tragic reverses of history if he finds himself isolated with the Western European powers who have not adopted his policy, and, sees Russia, which has adopted it, forced into anarchy or a separate peace by its inability to get more than insincere phrases for the other Allies.\footnote{Charles Trevelyan to Buckler, London, 28 June 1917. Quoted in Joseph Allen Nevins, \textit{Henry White. Thirty Years of American Diplomacy} (New York, 1930), p. 346.}

Both the ‘Message to Russia’ speech on 26 May 1917 and the Flag Day Address of 14 June 1917 represented a significant shift in President Wilson’s attitude to a negotiated peace. From December 1916 and through to February 1917, President Wilson had doggedly sought to bring about a negotiated end to the Great War. However, Wilson’s attitude to the war appears to have undergone a dramatic shift once he made the decision to enter the United States into the conflict. Historians have tried to understand this shift and the factors motivating Wilson’s policy. In his landmark study of the relationship between the British Radicals and President Wilson, Laurence Martin identified four reasons for the change in Wilson’s policy: his desire to avoid a rift with his new Allied coalition members; his eagerness to reverse the fortunes of the Central Powers; his concentration on the tasks of mobilisation; and his desire to discredit the German government in the eyes of the German people by
repeatedly asking the Germans – and only the Germans – for a declaration of terms.\textsuperscript{786}

More recently, Esposito argued that a major factor in Wilson’s changed policy was that he realised that the Allies were, in fact, much weaker than he had been led to believe six months earlier.\textsuperscript{787} This last point is supported by an earlier work by Peterson, who claimed that Wilson’s realisation of the precarious situation of Allied finances in late February was crucial to his thinking.\textsuperscript{788} Fleming, in his recent study of American intervention in the First World War, also takes the view that it was Wilson Administration’s shock at the revelation that the Allies were on the point of economic and military collapse that was a major factor in determining American policy. For Wilson, this added a new urgency to American intervention.\textsuperscript{789} Thompson’s analysis of Wilson’s changed policy went deeper. He argues that Wilson’s shift from neutrality to belligerence produced three significant shifts about the war and the peace. Once a belligerent, Wilson viewed the causes of the war differently. Wilson had previously portrayed the war as being caused by the European system of power politics. After April 1917, Wilson declared simply that the war was started by Germany. The second change in Wilson’s thinking was his abandonment of the project of seeking a negotiated peace based upon the \textit{status quo ante bellum}. Thompson also highlights a third shift in Wilson’s thinking concerning the nature of the proposed League of Nations. Wilson had originally spoken of a League as being an association of all nations. After April 1917, he characterised the League as a partnership of democratic nations, with the implication that those not democratic would be excluded.\textsuperscript{790} These dramatic changes were understandable, according to Thompson: ‘Once in a war, it

\textsuperscript{786} Martin, \textit{Peace Without Victory}, pp. 135-136.  
\textsuperscript{787} Esposito, \textit{The Legacy of Woodrow Wilson}, p. 111.  
\textsuperscript{788} ‘When the perilous situation of the Allies was fully comprehended, the Administration was a bit aghast.’ Peterson, \textit{Propaganda For War}, p. 319.  
\textsuperscript{789} Fleming, \textit{The Illusion of Victory}, pp. 99-100.  
\textsuperscript{790} Thompson, \textit{Woodrow Wilson}, pp. 157-158.
was natural to blame the enemy for starting it, to fight for victory rather than a draw, and to insist upon the iniquity and unacceptability of the enemy government."\textsuperscript{791}

However, despite Wilson’s acceptance of most of the Allies’ interpretation of the war, Thompson maintains that Wilson was still committed to liberal values. Esposito shares this viewpoint, but goes further to assert that he was still interested in a ‘peace without victory’, but only after Germany had been defeated.\textsuperscript{792} Wilson’s declared commitment to liberal values and the ‘earnest dignity of his demeanour,’ along with his superb oratorical skills,\textsuperscript{793} enabled him to win sufficient domestic support to prosecute the war.\textsuperscript{794} However, American pacifists at home and Radicals in Britain had undergone no such transformation in their attitudes to the war. To American pacifists and British Radicals, what still mattered most was securing a revision of war aims, followed hopefully by a negotiated peace and then a just and lasting settlement. Wilson and his Radical admirers, therefore, were moving in different directions. Both still agreed on the desire to fulfil a liberal internationalist world order, with a ‘league of nations’ as the centrepiece. However, over the following months they realised that they differed totally on the means to be employed to achieve their vision for a new world order.

With doubts cast growing over the consistency of President Wilson’s views about achieving a negotiated peace, the Radical publicists redoubled their efforts at

\textsuperscript{791} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{792} Esposito, \textit{The Legacy of Woodrow Wilson}, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{793} Fleming, \textit{The Illusion of Victory}, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{794} However, Fleming’s account tends to the interpretation that the harsh measures used by the Wilson Administration to whip up patriotism and encourage attacks on antiwar groups, was also needed. For instance, one of George Creel’s tasks as head of the Committee on Public Information was to create ‘war will’ as it was virtually non-existent in the United States even two months after U. S. entry into the war, according to reports from British agents to Wellington House. Fleming, \textit{The Illusion of Victory}, p. 94. So, Wilson’s fierce speeches, like the Flag Day Address, were needed to whip up domestic support for the war.
encouraging newly democratic Russia in its quest for a revision of war aims. On 13 June, as reported in the *Nation*, the first official request by the Russian government for a revision of Allied war aims was made.\(^{795}\) This was done in response to the earlier exchange of notes with the United States and the other Allied powers.\(^{796}\) Disavowing any thought of a separate peace with Germany, the new Russian leaders requested a revision of all Allied war aims, excluding the Pact of London.\(^{797}\) However, for more than a month, that is, ever since the controversy of Wilson’s ‘Message to Russia’ the Radicals had been pointing to a growing gulf between Russian and Allied diplomacy in the matter of war aims. Snowden expressed concern about Russia because the Allies had contradicted the ‘no annexation’ formula.\(^{798}\) Similarly, the *Herald* maintained that the attitude of the Entente laid bare their imperialistic intentions, contrasting with Russia which was setting a good example.\(^{799}\) Meanwhile, E. D. Morel observed the familiar fault-lines developing between moderates and extremists. Using dramatic language he made the following statement:

> Show me the man who is working for a reasonable, constructive and speedy peace, who seeks to dethrone Extremism in the councils of his country, who combats the falsehoods of perjured press, who is facing calumny for the truth - and that man - be he an Englishman, a Frenchman, a Russian, or a German - that man is my brother.\(^{800}\)

For Morel, and for many of his Radical publicist colleagues, the real culprits causing the continuation of the war were the extremists and Jingoists of both sides. In the context of depressing estimates about the war lasting for anywhere between another

\(^{795}\) The Russian request from Tereshchenko was made on 13 June. See Stevenson, *The First World War and International Politics*, p. 155. *Nation*, Events of the Week, 23 June 1917.

\(^{796}\) *Nation*, Events of the Week, 23 June 1917.

\(^{797}\) A treaty, signed on 5 September 1914 that bound Britain, France and Russia to refuse to make any separate peace and not to offer peace terms without previous agreement between each of the Allies. For details, see Stevenson, *The First World War and International Politics*, p. 110.


\(^{799}\) *Herald*, ‘No Conquests’, 26 May 1917.

two and five years,\textsuperscript{801} and Allied foot-dragging in response to the Russian movement for a revision of war aims,\textsuperscript{802} for Radicals the upcoming Leeds Convention was a chance to mobilise opinion in Britain in harmony with the dramatic developments in Russia.\textsuperscript{803}

The Leeds Convention represented a beacon of hope for the Radical publicists but was a cause of apprehension for the ‘powers that be’ in Britain. The Russian Revolution had demonstrated that the mobilization of labour was critical to successfully exerting pressure on the Government. There was now the prospect of an alliance between pacifists and disaffected labour, and this was something that the Government did not relish.\textsuperscript{804} The Convention, sponsored by the I. L. P. and the B. S. P. (British Socialist Party), convened at Leeds on 3 June under the slogan ‘to follow Russia’.\textsuperscript{805} There were fiery speeches, resolutions to democratise foreign policy and revise war aims, and calls to establish councils of workers’ and soldiers’ delegates on the Russian model.\textsuperscript{806} The Leeds Convention was an indication of the mood of articulate members of the working class, according to Swartz. U. D. C. Radicals wholeheartedly approved of the Convention and authorised its members to cooperate with the proposed workers’ and soldiers’ councils.\textsuperscript{807} The \textit{Labour Leader} reported in great detail on the Convention attended by over 1,000 delegates. Notable among six of the key speakers selected to speak were three Radical journalists and editors, Philip Snowden, Henry Massingham and George Lansbury. Unfortunately, Lansbury was sick but he sent a letter, which was read to the Convention. Another editor would also

\textsuperscript{801} \textit{Labour Leader}, ‘When Will the War End?’ 31 May 1917.
\textsuperscript{803} \textit{Herald}, ‘How Britain Must Answer Russia’, 26 May 1917.
\textsuperscript{804} Beryl Haslam, \textit{From Suffrage to Internationalism}, p. 110.
\textsuperscript{805} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{806} Swartz, \textit{The Union of Democratic Control}, p. 159.
\textsuperscript{807} Ibid.
have attended the conference were he able. Unfortunately, Fenner Brockway, ex-editor of the *Labour Leader*, was in gaol. He had been the editor until August 1916 when he took leave of absence to concentrate on his duties as secretary of the N. C. F. However, he was first imprisoned under DORA for distributing a leaflet against the Conscription Act. Two months later he was arrested under the Military Service Act. Under the harshest conditions in prison, Brockway was occasionally able to smuggle out letters and articles, with the help of some Sinn Fein prisoners. Brockway sent his greeting to the I. L. P. and the Leeds Convention. The Leeds Convention not only impacted on the peace movement but it was the cause of great concern in the War Cabinet. On 5 June 1917, the War Cabinet decided to undertake an active campaign to counter-act the peace movement, because the pacifist movement ‘had the field to itself.’ Certainly, the challenge to the Government was clarifying. For at the Convention, a telegram from the Petrograd Soviet had been read out, wishing the Conference delegates well, and looking forward to seeing British delegates in Stockholm. It was to Stockholm that the Radical publicists’ attention was now drawn.

In presenting coverage of developments in Russia, the Radical publicists reported the continued determination of the Russian government to get a general peace while still shunning a separate peace. The Russians, it was noted, pinned their

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810 Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control*, p. 175.
811 Robbins, *The Abolition of War*, p. 133. However, according to Robbins, the Government had little to worry about regarding the Leeds Convention: ‘Perhaps fortunately for the Cabinet, pacifists were not agreed about the use to be made of their political opportunities.’ There were many groups all maintaining their own identities and all ‘internally divided on important questions of policy.’ Ibid. p. 122.
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hopes on a new military offensive to take place in the following few weeks. Meanwhile, the All-Russian Congress sent a greeting to Ramsay MacDonald ‘with the hope that the dauntless fighter for universal peace would be the guest of the Russian Revolution.’ In *Common Sense*, Hirst noted that MacDonald had recently been prevented by super-patriotic trade unionists from going to Russia, and might be prevented by the Government itself from going to Stockholm. Whatever happened in Stockholm, Hirst explained that the new Russian foreign Minister, Tereshchenko, would welcome Allied support for his proposal for an Allied conference to consider and revise the secret treaties. Hirst argued that the Russian Government was afraid of being forced into a separate peace if its own renunciations of annexations failed to receive a sympathetic response from the Allies. Even the *Star*, which usually took a far more conservative view than *Common Sense*, added its voice to the call for an Allied conference on war aims: ‘So that Free Russia, on the one hand, and the United States on the other, may be brought into full harmony with the rest of us.’ However, the ‘pro-war press’ in Britain labelled Stockholm a ‘pro-German intrigue.’ In defence of Stockholm, Hirst pointed out that German jingoism called Stockholm an ‘anti-German intrigue’. What Hirst was implying in his response was that reactionaries on both sides naturally opposed Stockholm. Meanwhile, Hirst was confident that Allied war aims would be revised due to the Russian initiative.

814 Ibid.
818 Ibid.
819 *Common Sense*, ‘The Stockholm Conference’, 23 June 1917. Hirst quoted Count Reventlow’s *Tageszeitung* as urging its readers to guard against being misled on war aims because ‘there is no doubt about the fact that English influence has permeated the [Socialist] International. Branting [Swedish socialist leader] the leader of the Conference, took the Entente’s part even before the war, and during the war her has never tired trying to induce Sweden from neutrality to the side of his enemies.’ *Tageszeitung*, 4 June 1917, quoted in Ibid.
However, he stressed that there was growing pressure within Russia for a separate peace, but due to the ‘heroic efforts’ of Kerensky and others, the Russian government had rallied the country around its call to ‘avoid the dishonour and disaster of a separate peace.’

However, Hirst noted the deep concern that existed in Russia on this issue:

The [Russian] Government is afraid of being forced into this disastrous separate peace if its own renunciation of annexation evokes no reciprocal concessions from its allies and no sympathetic diplomacy. The Russian Government believe that the war can be brought to an end by negotiations conducted with the utmost publicity, and by free discussion between the Socialist Parties of the belligerent States.

Snowden added his voice to the issue by declaring that ‘the success of the Russian Revolution depends upon the repudiation by all the Allies of the Imperialist aims and the acceptance of the Russian formula.’ For extra insurance, in the event that the Allied governments failed to agree to a conference to revise war aims, the Russian government continued to talk up the proposed socialist conference in Stockholm.

Despite the fact that the Wilson Administration had refused passports for American socialists to attend Stockholm a month earlier, on 23 May, the governments of Britain, France and Italy were reluctant to act in such a cavalier manner due to the significant support that existed among socialist groups in their countries. Similarly, while Wilson had, in his Flag Day Address, accused all who advocated a negotiated peace as being dupes of the German government, the British anti-war movement still clung to signs of hope in Britain that Stockholm and Russia might break the diplomatic stalemate between the Allies and the Central Powers. Francis Hirst believed that in ‘the last few months a great movement of opinion has been taking place both at home and abroad. The fiery blast that swept away the Romanoffs is

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821 Ibid.
822 Ibid.
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blowing across Europe.¹⁸²⁴ Internal developments in Germany were encouraging too, not only in respect of Stockholm,¹⁸²⁵ but also in regard to movement on the critical issue of reform of the Prussian suffrage: for example, a memorial addressed to the Kaiser by a large number of influential Germans’ urged that the electoral reforms, promised at Easter, be proceeded with.¹⁸²⁶ Then on 19 July, this was eclipsed by the dramatic events surrounding the Reichstag Peace Resolution, to be discussed below.¹⁸²⁷ Meanwhile, Lloyd George gave a major address at Glasgow that pleased the Radical publicists to some extent because he expressed a willingness to consider any reasonable peace offer and it seemed to be, according to Hirst, a ‘substantial change from the attitude of the knock-out blow.’¹⁸²⁸ In Parliament, Foreign Minister Balfour confirmed, in his reply to Trevelyan, that Russia had officially asked for a general conference to revise war aims.¹⁸²⁹ Even some women peace activists, who had been involved in the 1915 Hague Congress, were hopeful of repeating their earlier success and running a parallel women’s conference at Stockholm to coincide with the Socialist conference.¹⁸³⁰ Snowden was encouraged by more recent events at The Hague. The British government had recently held discussions with the German

¹⁸²⁵ Hirst also noted that the German ‘Majority’ Socialists had accepted the Russian formula as well as the removal of tariffs. Ibid.
¹⁸²⁶ Nation, Events of the Week, 7 July 1917.
¹⁸²⁷ Swartz, The Union of Democratic Control, p. 159.
¹⁸²⁸ Hirst described the Lloyd George’s speech as ‘a step forward in the direction desired by the new Government of Russia.’ Common Sense, ‘The Prime Minister’s Peace Policy’, 7 July 1917. See Martin, Peace Without Victory, p. 135.
¹⁸²⁹ Snowden made the following comment on the significance of this: ‘This Conference will meet at a very critical time, and if the opportunity is rightly used the result may be to bring the war to an early conclusion on satisfactory conditions. There are signs of important developments in Germany. The breach between the Imperialists and the Democrats is widening. The Allies have now a fateful opportunity to help the Liberal elements in Germany to overthrow the military party. They lost one such opportunity last January.’ Labour Leader Philip Snowden, ‘The Allies and Germany’, 12 July 1917.
¹⁸³⁰ Rosika Schwimmer to Ellen [no surname], 13 July 1917, Schwimmer-Lloyd Papers, Box A89. At this time, Schwimmer was in Hungary, and up to this point had been prevented from leaving her native country by the Foreign Minister. Little did Schwimmer realise at this point, but the freedom they possessed in 1915 to conduct a conference at The Hague, would be totally absent in 1917 for everyone.
government over the exchange of prisoners.\textsuperscript{831} Lansbury thought that the Leeds Convention had been a turning point and looked forward to the Stockholm Conference scheduled for 15 August.\textsuperscript{832} Despite the seemingly inexplicable failure of President Wilson to push for a negotiated peace, the Radical publicists had good reason to be hopeful by the end of July 1917. The British government had apparently agreed to the Russian request for a conference to revise war aims, the Stockholm Conference was closer to happening, and there were extremely hopeful political developments in Germany.

The Reichstag Resolution appeared to the Radical publicists to be the culmination of on-going political struggles in Germany between moderates and extremists. On 19 July 1917 the Reichstag passed a ‘Peace Resolution’ by 212 to 126 votes.\textsuperscript{833} The I.L.P. and Radical M. P.s were inspired and prepared a resolution welcoming these developments in Germany. In the House of Commons on 26 July, Ramsay MacDonald read out the widely suppressed text of the Reichstag’s resolution to the Commons,\textsuperscript{834} and suggested that influence had been exerted on the British newspapers to get them to ignore or downplay the resolution.\textsuperscript{835} MacDonald complained that

the propaganda current in England about the undemocratic German government as the cause of all Europe’s miseries had prepared the way for the interpretation which was put upon the resolution. For it was widely contended that the Reichstag was of no significance since the German people could not control the government.\textsuperscript{836}

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\textsuperscript{832}Herald, ‘The Portent of Stockholm’, 28 July 1917.
\textsuperscript{833}For the text of the Reichstag Resolution, see Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, pp. 44-45.
\textsuperscript{836}Quoted in Crosby, op. cit., p. 47.
\end{flushright}
Similarly, in the Commons, Trevelyan said the reactionaries in Germany feared a negotiated peace while Lees Smith asked why the Entente did not have a plan to give up territory as they expected Germany to do.\textsuperscript{837} However, at the end of the debate the I. L. P. and Radical M. P.’s got only 19 votes when a resolution in the same terms as the German was finally put in the Commons.\textsuperscript{838} Consequently, there was no British Government action on the Reichstag Resolution. The Radical publicists were dismayed. Also, one casualty over the political infighting within Germany was the moderate Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg. Hirst thought this was possibly a triumph for the ‘jingoes’ in Germany, which if true, did not bode well for the future.\textsuperscript{839} Massingham agreed only in part. The \textit{Nation} viewed both the Reichstag Resolution and the fall of Bethmann-Hollweg as positive developments and Massingham thought it was a good sign that the Junkers had fought the Reichstag Resolution, because this was proof of its sincerity.\textsuperscript{840} A week later, Hirst was willing to give the new Chancellor, Michaelis, the benefit of the doubt after his first speech to the Reichstag. Hirst now felt confident in declaring that, ‘the general upshot appears to be that the peace-by-negotiations party has become predominant.’\textsuperscript{841} Once again, Massingham did not share Hirst’s optimism. Though there were grounds for hope, the Lloyd George government was undermining all attempts at a negotiated settlement. Recalling all the recent opportunities for peace, Massingham’s frustration was apparent, as he parodied the response of the Lloyd George government to each of

\textsuperscript{838} Crosby, \textit{Disarmament and Peace in British Politics}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{839} \textit{Common Sense}, ‘The Fall of Bethmann-Hollweg’, 21 July 1917.
\textsuperscript{840} \textit{Nation}, Events of the Week, 28 July 1917.
\textsuperscript{841} \textit{Common Sense}, ‘The German Chancellor’s Speech’, 28 July 1917.
these as a thoughtless and wearisome repetition of the phrase, ‘the war must go on.’

Snowden, on the other hand, remained positive about the prospects of peace as Europe entered its fourth year of war:

The outlook for peace is brighter than it was a year ago. There are encouraging signs that the failure of the politicians and militarists to make peace must force the peoples themselves to undertake this task. There are today no more signs that the war can ever be brought to an end by a military decision than there were a year ago. We shall probably not see another war anniversary. The coming year must surely bring peace to a sorely stricken world.

Meanwhile, Lansbury’s Herald welcomed the Reichstag Resolution and questioned what it regarded as Asquith’s unremittingly negative response. The Asquithian Westminster Gazette was even more upbeat about the prospects of peace and the eventual triumph of liberal idealism, though due more to J. A. Spender’s faith in British leaders than any faith in the socialist movement or internal developments in Germany. However, Spender’s faith in the Government was to be severely shaken over the following few weeks.

Overall, the Radical publicists’ assessment of the Reichstag Resolution was inconclusive. This, of course, was a reflection of the fact that it was difficult reading developments within Germany but also because the Resolution was coupled with Bethmann-Hollweg’s resignation. Up to this point, the Radical publicists had been

842 Nation, London Diary, 28 July 1917. George Lansbury’s Herald felt that the Reichstag Resolution was genuine. However, he noted Asquith spoke against it. Herald, ‘Who Aims At Conquests’, 4 Aug. 1917.


844 Spender declared that, ‘we enter the fourth year without a shadow of regret.’ He described speeches by Asquith and Smuts as ‘eloquent’. He sincerely believed that, at this stage, ‘the military war is more and more dominated by the war of ideas’, and, ‘we may be of good courage about this war of ideas.’ He still believed that the German government needed to be removed. However, he still retained his faith in Liberal aims whose supreme object was not to gain territory, or ‘to carve boundaries which shall give us advantages in another war, but to make another war impossible, so far as human foresight and contrivance can do so,’ and ‘to relieve the world from the burden of armaments and armed competition, to make the little nations secure against the threats and aggressions of their powerful neighbours. Whatever the fortunes of war, we must fight on until this main object is honestly and wholeheartedly accepted by the peoples at war. Then we shall be able to negotiate with the certainty that there will be a new spirit in the world which will overcome the obstacles to peace.’ Westminster Gazette, ‘After Three Years’, 4 Aug. 1917.
fairly accurate in interpreting Bethmann-Hollweg’s actions in the context of the posturing of various elites and lobby groups in German politics. Now, an unknown sat in the Chancellor’s seat. Chancellor Michaelis’ attitude towards the Peace Resolution would be instrumental in determining the impact on German politics and the chances for a negotiated peace. The Radical publicists were also having difficulty understanding the actions of their own leaders at this time. However, over the next few months the Radical publicists’ attitudes to their leaders moved from incredulity to outright hostility.

As the furore in the British Parliament over the Reichstag Resolution died down, the proposed Stockholm Conference re-ignited what became known as the ‘Stockholm Affair’. On Sunday 24 July, Arthur Henderson, the sole Labour representative in the War Cabinet, returned from Russia inspired by his socialist counterparts there. Then on 25 July, Henderson persuaded the Executive Committee of the Labour Party to put the question of participation at Stockholm to a special Labour conference scheduled for 10 August. Within a week, MacDonald and Wardle joined Henderson in Paris to discuss Allied socialist cooperation at the upcoming Stockholm Conference. However, at this point, the War Cabinet became concerned about these developments, and particularly about Henderson going to Paris with Ramsay MacDonald, a member of the U. D. C., because this might be seen as Government approval for the U. D. C.’s program. On his return from Paris, on 1 August, Henderson was left waiting ‘on the doormat’ outside a War Cabinet meeting.

845 See Mary Agnes Hamilton, *Arthur Henderson* (London, 1938), Ch. VII.
847 Ibid.
while his action was discussed.\footnote{Martin, \textit{Peace Without Victory}, p. 133. Taylor, \textit{The Troublemakers}, p. 154.} Henderson immediately began to voice sympathy openly with the U. D. C.’s war aims, and at the Labour Party Conference on 10 August, Henderson’s speeches helped carry a resolution in favour of Labour representatives going to Stockholm. As a result, Henderson was forced to resign from the Cabinet.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 164-5}

For the Radical publicists, the concern over Henderson’s fate in the first few weeks of August 1917 mirrored their fears about the proposed Stockholm Conference in general. Massingham was scathing in his attack on the Government over the affair. A statesman would have made something of it, he declared, but Britain only has a ‘clever manager’ in Lloyd George, and he remained joined to the ‘wrong people’.\footnote{\textit{Nation}, A London Diary, 11 Aug. 1917.} Obviously, for Massingham, and for many other Radical publicists, the missing ingredient to securing a negotiated settlement was statesmanship:

\begin{quote}
The abolition of war depends not merely on the issue of our fighting, but on the spirit and character of the peace and of the statesmen who negotiated it.\footnote{\textit{Nation}, Events of the Week, 11 Aug. 1917.}
\end{quote}

The socialist and I. L. P. papers watched the Stockholm Affair unfold with keen interest. The \textit{Labour Leader} noted the huge, three to one majority vote in favour of sending delegates to Stockholm, at the special Labour Party Conference at Central Hall in London on Friday 10 August.\footnote{For Stockholm: 1,846,000 Against Stockholm: 550,000. \textit{Labour Leader}, ‘The London Labour Conference’, 16 Aug. 1917.} At this conference Arthur Henderson played a critical role. Henderson served a dual role as leader of the Labour party and member of the small, ruling War Cabinet.\footnote{Henderson was one of the five original members when the Lloyd George coalition government was formed in December 1916. In mid-1917, it was expanded to seven with the addition of Carson and Smuts. See French, \textit{The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition}, p.17. An extremely useful account of the passage of events over the following few weeks that involved Henderson is to be found in F. M.}
Stockholm vote at the Conference. He thought the resolution he put would be defeated. However, it seems that his impassioned speech in favour of sending delegates to Stockholm had swayed the delegates at the Conference. Henderson’s behaviour was significant because, up to this time, he had been a staunch supporter of Government policy. He had opposed the setting up of a workers’ and soldiers’ council proposed at the Leeds Convention and he had previously secured a resolution against sending representatives to Stockholm. How can this about-face in Henderson be explained? It appears that after his return from a mission to Petrograd, Henderson’s views had been transformed. Henderson had been dispatched to Russia after Kerensky’s accession to power, due to the fears that Russia might opt for a separate peace. Henderson was under instructions to assess the situation. Eventually, after discussions with Kerensky, Prince Lvov, Miliukov and Tereshchenko, manufacturers, academics and workers’ representatives, he came to the conclusion that defeatism was rampant and Bolshevism was gaining ground. He believed that the Russians would only continue fighting if their faith in democratic and genuinely anti-imperialist war aims could be rekindled. Henderson believed that even if Russia ceased to be an effective ally, a crippled ally ruled by men sympathetic to the Allied cause would be preferable to a Bolshevik Russia. The Russian moderates had convinced Henderson that participation in Stockholm was essential to both the survival of democracy in Russia and for its continued participation in the war. In response, Henderson acted decisively. On 25 July he wired ahead to organise a special Labour party conference for 10 August to discuss Stockholm, arranged to meet MacDonald and G. H. Wardle in Paris to discuss Stockholm with socialists there, then informed Lloyd George of his


plans. However, Henderson’s cabinet colleagues were outraged at his behaviour. Henderson was summoned to a War Cabinet meeting on 1 August 1917, and, as noted above, kept waiting outside for an hour while his colleagues discussed his recent behaviour. This became known as the ‘doormat incident’. The 10 August Conference vote for Stockholm enraged Lloyd George who accused Henderson of treachery and demanded his resignation. In the next few days there was a ‘carefully orchestrated’ campaign in the mainstream press accusing Henderson of being a traitor, a liar and a pacifist.\(^855\) On 11 August, the day of Henderson’s sacking, passports were denied for any British socialists for Stockholm. The Radical publicists were full of indignation at the War Cabinet’s treatment of Henderson.

The words ‘Stockholm or the Doormat’ filled the front page of the *Herald* on Saturday 18 August 1917.\(^856\) Lansbury rejoiced that Labour was now ‘morally free’ after Henderson’s departure from the War Cabinet.\(^857\) A week later the *Herald* was still entirely focused on the Stockholm Affair with the headline, ‘Russia’s, New Message to the Herald’, filling the front page.\(^858\) By September, the *Herald* was clearly disappointed as the prospects of a conference at Stockholm faded: ‘The Stockholm Conference has receded into the distance, and we are the last to underestimate the calamitous effects which its postponement is likely to have.’\(^859\)

The *Labour Leader* struggled in vain over the following months to keep the issue of Stockholm alive. Snowden dismissed Lloyd George’s accusations against Henderson of concealing from the Labour Conference the depth of hostility the War Cabinet had

\(^858\) *Herald*, ‘Russia’s, New Message to the Herald’, 25 Aug. 1917.
towards Stockholm. Indeed, he accused Lloyd George of being loose with the truth in claiming that a telegram he had received from Kerensky had revealed a change of heart by Kerensky towards Stockholm.\textsuperscript{860} At the end of August, Snowden was consoled by the commencement of the Inter-Allied Conference of Socialists. This conference was a sop to Allied socialists prevented from going to Stockholm. He had hopes that the delegates might come to an agreement on peace terms that would be forwarded to the Stockholm conference for discussion by neutral and enemy delegates.\textsuperscript{861} However, these hopes were dashed the following week when internal socialist divisions surfaced and the conference spent much time debating a negative sounding resolution to be sent to Stockholm declaring against meeting the German socialists as long as Germans occupied the territories that had been seized and ‘pursue their campaign of murder, outrage, and piracy’. Fortunately, as far as Snowden was concerned, this resolution was rejected.\textsuperscript{862} On 13 September the \textit{Labour Leader} greeted the announcement that Belgian socialists had voted to send a delegate to Stockholm, with the comment that: ‘Stockholm is the historic ground upon which the Socialists of the whole world will meet and deliberate on peace.’\textsuperscript{863} Faced with the news that the Stockholm Conference had been delayed, Snowden insisted that it had not been abandoned: The Conference is now delayed, but for every organised proletarian the watchword is still, ‘To Stockholm.’\textsuperscript{864} The \textit{Labour Leader} kept the flame of Stockholm alive as long as it could.\textsuperscript{865} However, no matter how much


Snowden tried to put a positive spin on events since the Inter-Allied Socialist Conference, the reality was that the Stockholm Conference was dead.

Francis Hirst was angered at the indignity suffered by Henderson in the ‘doormat incident.’ However, of even greater concern to the editor of *Common Sense* was the short sightedness of the Government’s policy on Stockholm. He urged these ‘statesmen,’ who failed to see the implications of the Russian Revolution the previous March, to display some ‘little imagination and prevision at home.’\(^866\) If the statesmen failed to do this then Britain might eventually suffer a revolution of its own.\(^867\) However, much worse, in Hirst’s opinion, was the Lloyd George Government’s aversion to the free circulation of information on foreign policy and of its labelling of every peace proposal as a ‘German intrigue.’\(^868\) Hirst was scathing in his condemnation of the Government’s approach to these matters:

> The folly of stamping every suggestion of peace as a German manoeuvre or a Hunnish trick hardly needs to be emphasised. Such puerilities only undermine the moral position of our official policy at home and abroad. Surely, the efficient conduct of the war, and the efficient conduct of diplomacy by which alone the war can be ended, are two entirely separate things. Nothing could be more fatal than to have an official embargo laid upon the discussion of war aims and peace terms by meeting every question and every approach with an appeal to some worn-out formula such as ‘get on with the war’, or ‘the last man and the last farthing’.

\(^869\)

When the Stockholm Conference eventually came to nought and the Provisional Government collapsed and the Bolsheviks seized power, Hirst placed the blame for this discussion at the feet of Lloyd George and Balfour, who between them had frustrated all efforts towards a general peace. Instead, they had held out for the ‘knock-out blow’.\(^870\)


\(^867\) Ibid.

\(^868\) Ibid.

\(^869\) Ibid.

\(^870\) *Common Sense*, ‘A Separate Peace’, 24 Nov. 1917.
The ‘holy war’ Radicals were in agreement with the ‘peace-by-negotiation’ Radicals in seeing Stockholm as a missed opportunity. Gardiner’s Daily News was quite adamant at the beginning of August that British and French delegates should attend Stockholm, because if they did not attend then the German delegates would get a ‘powerful hold’ over the Russian delegates. In addition, this was one way of allaying the suspicions that were growing in Russia about the aims and motives of Britain. Finally, Gardiner advanced an even more important reason. That was, that at Stockholm, ‘for the first time since the war began, an opportunity will offer of meeting representatives of the German people face to face round a table. That, say our Junkers, is the peril.’

Gardiner was obviously pleased with the overwhelming vote for Stockholm, and liked Henderson’s speech on the day. On 16 August, the Daily News helped vindicate Henderson when they published an interview with Kerensky by their correspondent in Russia, Arthur Ransome. Gardiner and his Daily News displayed a greater concern than Scott’s Manchester Guardian, regarding the Stockholm Affair. However, one sign that Scott too was willing to foster discussion of peace diplomacy during August 1917 in the Manchester Guardian was the publishing of a full-page table detailing six peace programmes belonging to the Allies, the Pope, the British Labour Party, the German Majority Socialists, the

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875 The 10 January Allied Reply to President Wilson.
German Minority Socialists and the Austrian Socialists. Readers appeared to have been invited to survey the prospects for peace themselves.

A most intriguing aspect of the Stockholm Affair was the attitude of the Westminster Gazette and its editor, J. A. Spender. The issue of Stockholm seemed to have roused a sleeping giant in the form of J. A. Spender. An Asquithian Liberal, Spender thought that Henderson should not have been forced to resign from the War Cabinet and that his attendance at Stockholm would have done no harm. Furthermore, Spender pointed to the recent successful prisoner exchanges to show Stockholm could work: ‘If the Foreign Office can send Lord Newton to The Hague to discuss prisoner exchange then why is sending delegates to Stockholm illegal as the Attorney-General claimed?’ Furthermore, the Westminster Gazette believed that Stockholm should not be opposed because German and Russian delegates would be going and would meet each other anyway. Besides, the Allied governments had to reckon with the popular discontent at the failure of the ‘old-fashioned methods of statesmanship.’ Spender believed that Stockholm was significant because if the Russian government backed it and British Government did not, then Britain would incur a great deal of loathing in Russia and this would ‘throw obstacles in the path of those who are trying to steady the situation in Russia and shape it for the good of the Allies.’ Even though Ramsay MacDonald was the last person he would want to send to Stockholm, as Spender explained, the conference had chosen freely for

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876 *Manchester Guardian*, ‘Six Peace Programmes: A Comparison of the Main Proposals’, 20 Aug. 1917. A letter from the Peace Negotiations Committee, that appeared on 24 August, in response to the table, made the following point: ‘The innumerable informal programmes show that negotiation is in the air; would it not be wiser for the Governments to negotiate, since the peoples are themselves trying their hands at it?’ The Committee also rebuked the paper for not taking the Peace Negotiations Memorial more seriously. *Manchester Guardian*, ‘The Peace Negotiations Memorial’, 24 Aug. 1917.
878 *Westminster Gazette*, ‘Mr. Henderson and the Cabinet’, 1 Aug. 1917.
879 Ibid.
MacDonald to represent it. 881 The *Westminster Gazette* was disgusted with the Lloyd George government’s attitude to Stockholm: ‘The Government has shown lamentable weakness in the matter of the Stockholm Conference, and unless it can make up its mind to take a more decided line it may run into serious trouble both in this country and in its relations with Russia.’ 882 In Spender’s opinion, the Allies could have survived a ‘thousand Stockholm Conferences,’ 883 and Henderson’s forced resignation over the affair was deplored. 884 The Government’s handling of the Stockholm affair would deeply affect how the *Westminster Gazette* responded to the next opportunity for a negotiated peace.

Regarding Stockholm, in mounting their criticisms of the Lloyd George Government there was none of the moral support the Radical publicists had received from Woodrow Wilson in their earlier campaigns. In a letter to William Buckler, at the U. S. Embassy, dated 17 August, Ramsay MacDonald let loose with all his frustrations over American policy since the U. S. A.’s entrance into the war in April.

MacDonald said that those wanting a negotiated peace look in vain for indications that Mr. Wilson is still aware that this war will have to be settled by political agreement, however long it is fought, and are in consequence driven to the conclusion that the effect upon Europe of America’s entry into the war has been to strengthen aggressive Jingoism and to set back the moral and political movements that had become strong in consequence of the Russian revolution. 885

Furthermore, MacDonald expressed amazement at the attitude of the U.S. Government to the Stockholm Conference and said that the policy of refusing

881 Ibid.
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passports for those wanting to attend should be reversed. Finally, MacDonald recommended that the U. S.

should renew its declaration that the utility of war was severely limited by the political objects which it could gain, and that whilst you can have peace without victory, history shows that as a rule nations have had victory without peace.  

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Following American entry in April 1917, most Radical publicists had been hopeful that President Wilson would force a revision of war aims, thus making a negotiated settlement likely. However, by August 1917 the Radical publicists had real cause to be concerned that Wilson had abandoned his ‘peace without victory’ principles and his belief in the desirability of a negotiated peace. Contrary to what they would have expected, the Radicals found that Wilson did not share their hopes regarding Russia and the Stockholm Conference. To make matters worse, he spoke out against both of these Radical hopes and generally took a far more reactionary line, to the delight of Allied leaders and the conservative press. The Radical publicists were puzzled as they wondered on what basis President Wilson would support a negotiated peace or in fact whether he would support one at all! It was certainly clear that Wilson was averse to any socialist proposals. However, despite their bewilderment at Wilson’s attitude to Russia and Stockholm, many Radical publicists were still enthralled by his championing of liberal internationalist principles. Some Radical publicists began to accept the line now peddled by the President, even though it contradicted the ‘peace without victory’ principles that they had hailed the previous January. The recurring theme of Wilson’s rhetoric was that the German Government was solely to blame for starting the war and, in fact, had secretly plotted to start it. In addition, now the only perceived obstacle to peace was the autocratic German

government. Two articles that appeared in the *Daily News* in the following weeks demonstrated that some Radical publicists were willing to entertain this Wilsonian view.

H. G. Wells displayed his characteristic optimism about the possibilities for a new international order in the *Daily News* on 14 August: ‘The international situation at the present time is beyond question the most wonderful that the world has ever seen.’ The reason for Wells’ optimism was that ‘the conditions of peace can now be stated in general terms that are as acceptable to a reasonable man in Berlin as they are to a reasonable man in Paris or London or Petrograd or Constantinople.’ Everywhere, he observed that the great mass of the people were ‘passionately desirous of peace’ yet ‘the war goes on.’ Woodrow Wilson would no doubt have agreed with Wells’ contention that the reason that the war still continued was due to the intransigence of the German ruling elite. Wells put it thus: ‘The German Imperial Government alone – stands in the way, that is its tradition is incurably a tradition of conquest and aggression.’ After all, Wells maintained, the Allies had stated their intentions. In trying to explain why the German people did not rid themselves of their ruling elite, Wells stated that the Allies did not intend to destroy Germany or cripple the German people. ‘Is that true? Our leaders say so, and we believe them. We would not support them if we did not,’ Wells argued. Therefore, Wells questioned why the German people did not overthrow their Government. The answer, Wells maintained, lay in the fact that Allied statesmen (with the honourable exception of Wilson) had been incompetent in declaring Allied aims:

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888 Ibid.
889 Ibid.
890 Ibid.
891 Ibid.
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They seem incapable of thinking how the war may be brought to an end. They seem incapable of that plain speaking to the world audience which alone can bring about a peace. They keep on with the tricks and feints of a departed age, with bureau politics. Both on the side of the Allies and on the side of the Germans the declarations of public policy remain childishly vague and disingenuous, childishly diplomatic. They chatter like happy imbeciles while civilisation bleeds to death.  

Wells went on to paint a picture of a liberal internationalist peace where everything from the Ottoman Empire to the German colonies would be treated fairly, and free trade would flourish because nations would see it in their own interest to do so. There would be no threat of ‘war after war’ because this threat would rob ‘the reasonable German of his last inducement to turn on his government and insist upon peace.’ Rather, the only way to internationalism lay in ‘an international survey of commercial treaties, through an international control of Inter-State shipping and transport rates.’ However, Wells asked again why the Allied statesmen did not state these things plainly:

Why do they not shout it so completely and loudly that all Germany will hear and understand? ... Why do they maintain a threatening ambiguity towards Germany on all these matters? By doing so they leave Germany no choice but a war of desperation. They underline and endorse the claim of German imperialism that this is war for bare existence. They unify the German people. They prolong the war.

The main planks of Wells’ argument were that the German leadership was primarily to blame for keeping the war going, but that, primarily poor Allied statesmanship in London and Paris contributed to the German people misunderstanding Allied intentions. If only the German people would cast off their rulers, they could have a fair and just peace. Distilled into essentials, Wells had articulated the new Wilsonian prescription for ending the war.

892 Ibid.
893 Ibid.
894 Ibid.
895 Ibid.
Gilbert Murray was a Radical who had taken the ‘holy war’ approach to the war since August 1914. Like Wells, Murray argued the liberal internationalist case. He argued that the ‘simple old half-animal patriotism’ which views all Germany as the enemy and seeks to ‘crush, dismember and mutilate’ Germany so it would never rise again, was now ‘powerless.’ A new spirit based on Liberal principles was now ascendant. A peace based on these Liberal principles would not be a peace based on injustice or mere ‘right of conquest’; it must leave the nations free – Germany included; and it must carry no seeds of future war. .... When we have signed the peace we will try to make it a real peace, and show the people who have driven out their bad rulers that they have not done so in vain.

Murray went on in his article to stress the necessity of ensuring ‘absolute free trade’ after the war and no form of protectionism whatsoever. He believed that this time ‘Germany was in the wrong in making war; all the world knows and confesses it.’ However, he also warned the Allies that they could not be hypocritical in this matter:

If we and our allies first arrange to possess half the globe, and next proceed by tariffs to shut Germany [i.e. German trade] out from our possessions, then the next time Germany plots a war Germany may be in the right.

Murray placed his hope in the German people taking the initiative and making the first move towards peace. He laid out his vision of how peace could come about in the following way:

Suppose we gain our ends; the Kaiser is deposed by his own people; a Parliamentary Government is established in Germany, with in all likelihood, a Liberal-Socialist majority. Then the way of peace is plain. Germany joins the League of Nations. She accepts arbitration and the reduction of armaments. She sets all her grievances before the tribunal of the League. Her main concern will be to pay her debts and reconstruct her

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897 Ibid.
898 Ibid.
899 Ibid.
900 Ibid.
shattered society. In that case, the terms once settled, there must be no
cultivation of hatred, no penalisation of Germany…

It is interesting to note that this picture conformed fairly accurately to the German
vision of peace one year later. However, Murray’s analysis surely begs the question
that if Germany did get rid of its leadership, what guarantee would there be that the
Allies would renounce a punitive settlement and an economic trade war against
Germany after the cessation of hostilities, as had been agreed by the Allied leaders in
the Paris Resolutions of 1916? There is no reason to suggest that this was no less a
major issue in August 1917 as it was to become just over a year later. What is
significant about these articles by Wells and Murray is that they articulated the new
Wilsonian vision of liberal internationalism. Integral to this vision was the belief,
often stated by Wilson since April 1917, that the German people must make the first
move and rid their country of their rulers and set up a form of government that the
Allies could recognise as truly democratic. This was a seductive argument, perhaps
given extra credence by the belief that American military power would soon be felt at
the front and that there were rumblings from inside Germany that indicated that a
Reichstag-led revolt against the Government was a distinct possibility. The second
of these beliefs was a potent one, for the world had seen autocracy disappear in
Russia, and therefore, as many believed, surely it was possible in Germany too. The
Radical publicists were well aware of the sort of arguments advanced by Wells and
Murray. Many of these Radicals may well have agreed with Lord Buckmaster, a
prominent Asquithian: ‘I am delighted to read the articles of Murray and Wells in the

\[901\] Ibid.
\[902\] The first official parade of American troops down the street of London had been recently reported in
the *Daily News*. *Daily News*, ‘March of the U. S. Troops’, 16 Aug. 1917. This must have made a better
impression than the first parade of American troops on the streets of Paris on 28 June 1917. Fleming
described that General Pershing ‘was horrified by what he saw marching past the reviewing stand.
Rank after rank was out of step, their uniforms a mess, their rifles held at all sorts of weird angles.’
However, the Parisians did not care how unmilitary the Americans looked. Fleming, *The Illusion of
Victory*, p. 124.
Daily News. I think they must help things immensely.\textsuperscript{903} Previously, the Radical publicists had demonstrated a measure of unity over their calls for a revision of war aims and a negotiated peace. However, as the war entered its fourth summer, the new Wilsonian vision complicated the Radical publicists’ reactions to future attempts to end the war quickly.

As the Great War entered its fourth summer, another hopeful sign appeared. As the Stockholm Affair grabbed the public’s attention, it was rumoured that the Pope was preparing a bold peace initiative. In the aftermath of the Reichstag resolution and in the light of attempts by international socialism to negotiate at Stockholm, Ramsay MacDonald reminded Parliament on 26 July 1917, that besides international socialism there was another international organisation that had adherents ‘in every belligerent country, which could work to bring about an end to the conflict,’\textsuperscript{904} namely, the Roman Catholic Church. Coincidentally, just a few days after MacDonald’s speech, the head of that ‘international movement’, Pope Benedict XV, was to launch a dramatic new peace initiative.\textsuperscript{905}

\textsuperscript{903} Lord Buckmaster to F. W. Hirst, 22 Aug. 1917, Hirst Papers.
\textsuperscript{904} MacDonald’s 26 July Parliamentary speech was reprinted in the \textit{Labour Leader}, 2 August, 1917.
\textsuperscript{905} In seeking to understand the events surrounding Benedict’s peace appeal there needs to be an appreciation of the position of the Vatican during the First World War. Firstly, contrary to what the causal observer might expect, the Vatican was on extremely bad terms with predominantly Catholic Italy. Relations between the Vatican and the Italian Government were strained ever since the unification of Italy in 1870 which involved the liquidation of the Papal States and the reduction of the Pope’s temporal power to a small area of land no bigger than a few football fields. The Vatican resented the Italian-imposed solution of the Roman Question and sought to be represented as a temporal power in its own right. From August 1914 to May 1915 Italy remained a neutral in the war. While the Italian Government conducted negotiations with both sides in the war over whether it would stay as a neutral or join the war as a belligerent, Pope Benedict used all the diplomatic leverage he could muster to keep Italy out of the war. The Vatican’s efforts were to no avail. Once Italy joined the war on the side of the Entente the Vatican was like an island in a sea of hostility. The Vatican was treated with great distrust by the Italian Government which closely monitored all its communications and activities throughout the war. One problem for the Vatican was that it had always had warm and cordial relations with the Austria-Hungarian Empire that it regarded as the bulwark of Catholicism in Europe. Austria-Hungary was one of the few nations that maintained diplomatic relations with the Vatican, along with Germany (through the Vatican nuncio in the Catholic state of Bavaria) and Britain. Once Italy joined the war, the ambassadors from the Vatican...
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In this Peace Note, dated 1 August but not communicated to the Governments until 10 August, the Pope made a peace proposal to the belligerent powers based on seven concrete terms. Benedict’s reasons for his appeal were stated:

We wish now to come to more concrete and practical proposals, and to invite the Governments of the belligerent peoples to come to an agreement upon the following points, which it would seem should be the bases of a just and lasting peace, leaving it to them to settle and complete the details.  

The seven terms of the Pope’s initiative are summarised below:

- **Disarmament:** ‘A simultaneous and reciprocal reduction of armaments according to rules and guarantees to be established.’

- **Arbitration:** ‘the institution of arbitration according to rules to be drawn in concert and under sanctions to be determined against any state which decline either international questions to arbitration or to accept its awards.’

- **Freedom of the Seas:** unimpeded sea communication, because this would ‘eliminate numerous causes of conflict, and, on the other hand, would open to everybody new sources of prosperity and progress.’

- **Reciprocal condonation of damages:** Each side was to pay for its own reconstruction to be funded by an immense reduction in armaments. Where special cases existed they ‘should be considered in the light of justice and equity.’

- **Reciprocal restitution of occupied territories:** Germany should totally evacuate Belgium and French territory and Germany’s colonies should be returned.

had to station themselves in Switzerland. One further problem for the Vatican was that the country that it perceived as its greatest threat was on the side of the Entente, Russia. The Vatican feared that an Entente victory would see Russia in control of the Dardanelles and the establishment of Constantinople as the capital of Orthodox Church in direct opposition to the authority of Rome. 


Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter, Vol IV*, p. 19. Also, the _Daily News_ suggested that the Pope borrowed this phrase directly from Wilson. When the Pope was asked what he meant by the term the ‘freedom of the seas’ he replied ‘with a discreet assurance that he means what President Wilson means’. _Daily News_, ‘Right and Might’, 24 Aug. 1917.

Ibid.
• In the contested territories (such as Alsace-Lorraine and the territories between Italy and Austria) the aspirations of the people should be taken into account (i.e. by plebiscite).
• The territorial and political situations in Armenia, the Balkan States and Poland should also be examined in a ‘conciliatory spirit’ – which implied at least autonomy and possibly independence for these territories.

Benedict concluded with a plea that a settlement on these principles would ‘render impossible a repetition of similar conflicts, and to prepare the way for the solution of the economic question, which is of so much importance for the future and the material well-being of all the belligerent States.’

Benedict’s most recent biographer, John Pollard, declared that this was ‘the first time during the war that any person or power had formulated a detailed and practical schema for a peace of negotiation.’ This is a valid point. Neither the German nor American Peace Notes contained terms, while Wilson’s ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech was a critique of the failure of the international system rather than a proposal for negotiation. The Allied Reply of 10 January could not be the basis of negotiation since it implied the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. Of course, many writings of the Radical publicists and others interested in a negotiated peace outlined concrete proposals for peace. However, these emanated, of course, from groups within nations, and were the works of individuals, not official organisations or national leaders. The only other statement of an international character that made practical proposals upon which to build a negotiated peace were

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913 Johnson argued that the fact that the Pope mentioned Armenia shows that he was not only interested in the fate of Catholic peoples. Johnson also argued that the reference to Poland was indefinite but that Benedict would have welcomed Poland being a third partner in the Dual Monarchy. Johnson conceded that the Czechs were left out of the Pope’s proposals for autonomy or independence. Johnson, *Vatican Diplomacy in the World War*, p. 29.
the 19-point Resolutions passed at the Women’s Congress at The Hague in 1915. In fact, the Hague Resolutions were far more sophisticated and extensive, except that the women delegates had refrained from stating specific issues related to territory. On this last point, the Pope was the first statesman to place proposals on the table regarding territory. Benedict stated boldly that Germany must leave occupied France and Belgium and appeared to link this to the return of German colonies. In this regard it was a return to the status quo ante bellum. However, all other areas were to be sorted out on a case-by-case basis. The inclusion of Belgium in his proposals was significant because this was seen to be the main sticking point preventing peace negotiations between Britain and Germany. Benedict had gone to great pains to ensure that Germany would agree to the renunciation of Poland. Negotiations with Germany conducted by Cardinal Pacelli were directed towards this end.

There is some uncertainty about when the Papal Note actually reached the Allied governments. Historians, generally, have not been able to give a definitive answer. The British Government claimed to have received the Note on the Saturday night, 11 August, though Kernek suggests that it was received on 10 August and also that the Cabinet discussed it on that same day. This makes for a time lag of at

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917 There were originally 19 points in the Resolutions but an extra point was added right near the end of the last conference. This was a resolution for delegations from the Women’s Congress to visit world leaders immediately after the conference to communicate the resolutions to them personally. For the full text of the Resolutions and a report of the Congress, see ‘International Congress of Women: Resolutions Adopted’, including Rebecca Shelley’s handwritten notations, Shelley Papers, 1915, Box 8. The full text of the resolutions was incorporated into Jane Addams, Emily G. Balch and Alice Hamilton, Women at The Hague: The International Peace Congress of 1915, (New York, 1915), pp. 123-130.


920 S. J. Kernek, ‘Distractions of Peace During War: The Lloyd George Government’s Reactions to Woodrow Wilson, December 1916-November 1918’ in Transactions of the American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia, 1975), vol. 65, p. 54. This is the earliest that any of the historians place the receipt of the Papal Note by any of the Allies. Also, it is important to note that this was the day of Henderson’s speech at the Labour Conference about the Stockholm Conference.
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least nine days from when the Note was written and when the Allied Governments received it. Any discrepancy in the date of reception of the Note by each Allied nation could have been crucial in the formulation of an Allied strategy on the Note. 921 However, this time lag has not been discussed by historians dealing with the Papal Peace Note, except for one small note by Johnson that ‘though bearing the date August 1st, the document was, owing to a hitch, not presented to Count de Salis till some time later.’ 922 What is certain though, is that the arrival of news of the Papal Peace Note sparked a flurry of diplomatic activity. Sir William Wiseman cabled Colonel House from London on 11 August saying that he had just received an appeal from the Vatican for peace, though he had not received the full text yet. This was probably up to a full day after it was received and after it had already been discussed by the Cabinet. Wiseman, obviously concerned, said to House, that, ‘from the cabled summary it is clear that it will raise many objections of difficulty.’ 923 Further, any answer would have to be ‘carefully considered’ and Mr. Balfour hoped President Wilson would let him know ‘privately’ what his views were. 924 This message led to frantic communications between the Allied capitals in the next few days before the arrival of the full text of the Papal Note.

By August 1917, the Radical publicists were familiar with Pope Benedict XV and had formed some opinions about his character. On his election to the Papacy in September 1914, Cardinal Della Chiesa, who took the name of Benedict XV, was an

921 This is because the Government that had time to consider the Note first could discuss all the options and come up with a strategy to subtly influence its allies to adopt a course of action which suited this Government. The British Government did certainly have some time advantage over the United States, giving them the opportunity to formulate a strategy to which they hoped the U.S. Government would conform.

922 Johnson has not enlightened us as to what this ‘hitch’ was. Johnson, Vatican Diplomacy in the World War, p. 46.


924 Ibid.
active man of seventy years of age. However, the *Nation* knew nothing of his opinions in August 1914. While deploring the war, Benedict believed that getting involved in peace negotiations would jeopardise the Vatican’s neutrality. For the following two years the Vatican was involved in humanitarian efforts such as prisoner exchanges, securing the treatment of ‘diseased captives’ and assisting in establishing communication between missing men and their families. Pope Benedict also used his spiritual authority to repatriate interned civilians, and to organise the exchange of prisoners of war not fit for service. In 1915, Pope Benedict protested the violation of the neutrality of Belgium. The Vatican was also involved in food relief operations to people behind the war zones in Lithuania, Montenegro in 1916 and 1917, Poland in 1916, and Syria and Lebanon from 1916 to 1922, though the Italian Foreign Minister, Sonnino, obstructed the latter. The Vatican’s protests to the German High Command over the mass deportation of civilians finally bore fruit, with these being halted. Not so successful were Benedict’s vigorous protests at the ‘ethnic cleansing’ of Armenian civilians in Turkey during 1915, though the Vatican tried both direct communications to Constantinople and indirect pressure through Germany and Austria-Hungary. Unfortunately, the Pope’s efforts in the latter case were in vain, with over one million Armenians being massacred. However, Benedict seemed to be the only one to make use of all available avenues in this attempt to prevent genocide. Overall, the Vatican’s humanitarian efforts were significant. The humanitarian work among prisoners alone

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925 *Nation*, Events of the Week, 5 Sept. 1914. Before the war Benedict was known as Cardinal Della Chiesa, Archbishop of Bologna. Della Chiesa’s views on the war were first publicly stated in August 1914 while, as Archbishop of Bologna, he made an impressive address to all Catholics on the need to adhere to the strictest neutrality in the war. This speech gave him wide recognition in Catholic circles and enabled Della Chiesa to be elected successor to the deceased Pius X on 3 September 1914.

926 The *Daily News* made reference to Benedict’s ‘last peace attempt in July 1915’ that demonstrated that there was awareness in Britain of these earlier peace efforts. *Daily News*, ‘Pope Presents Peace Plan’, 15 Aug. 1917.

927 Pollard has meticulously outlined the humanitarian activities of Benedict XV in the early years of the war. John Pollard, *The Unknown Pope*, pp. 112-116.
was equal in scale to the work of the international Red Cross. By the end of the war Benedict’s expenditure on humanitarian aid had nearly led the Vatican into bankruptcy. In Britain, it was the Radical publicists who showed due recognition for Benedict’s efforts at the time. Though they were not aware of all of Benedict’s activities, by 1917 they generally had quite a positive assessment of him. 

From 1915, it was well known that Benedict was willing to use his position to do more than just humanitarian work. In January 1915 the _Nation_ reported his desire to be represented at the peace congress when the war ended, however, Massingham assumed that if Italy entered the war this would not be possible. Massingham assumed that this was one of Benedict’s motivations for displaying fervour for strict Italian neutrality. In the Pope’s Easter Message of 1915 Benedict announced that he placed his ‘entire hopes’ for an early peace on American efforts and promised his utmost support to the U.S. in this endeavour. In ‘A London Diary’, Massingham defended Benedict at this time against accusations that he was ‘pro-German’ and, as for his desire for peace, observed that ‘it is not likely to come today or tomorrow. But, I suppose, it is still permissible for a Pope to pray for it.’ In addition, the Pope had

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928 Ibid., p. 113.
929 Ibid., p. 116.
930 The _Labour Leader_ praised Benedict for his effort towards ‘reconciliation and a just peace’, and wished that more religious leaders were like him. _Labour Leader_, ‘The Pope and the Bishop of Limerick’, 15 Feb. 1917. In July 1917 the _Nation_, in a very perceptive analysis of politics in Austria and Germany, cited Vatican pressure on the left wing of the Catholic Party in Germany as the explanation for the party’s mustering courage to push for the renunciation of foreign conquests. _Nation_, ‘Peace With Democracy’, 14 July 1917. The _Nation_ analysed the growth of peace sentiment in South Germany and Austria, which had found expression in the Centre Party, and asserted that ‘its own leanings have been stimulated and perhaps directed first by the Pope and then by the Emperor’. As MacDonald was to argue two weeks later, the _Nation_ stated that ‘Catholicism has, like Socialism, an international character.’ _Nation_, 28 July 1917. The _Nation_ saw this as a sign that there were moves in the enemy camp towards a negotiated peace, and speculated that in this case, there was some Catholic input.
931 _Nation_, A London Diary, 9 Jan. 1915.
932 _Nation_, Events of the Week, 17 Apr. 1915.
933 _Nation_, A London Diary, 17 Apr. 1915. After the sinking of the Lusitania on 13 May 1915, there was a temporary hardening of attitude to the Papacy by Massingham, for the generally perceived reason that the Pope should specifically condemn every atrocity. _Nation_, 26 June 1915 and _Nation_, ‘The Papacy and the War’, 31 July 1915. In August 1915, Massingham noted Benedict’s peace appeal but
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tried to achieve a Christmas Day ceasefire in 1914 but this had failed due to French and Russian opposition.\footnote{Pollard, \textit{Unknown Pope}, p. 112-113.}

The Radical publicists, therefore, were willing to take the Vatican peace initiative seriously. However, it was to be at least five days after the British Government learnt of the Papal Peace Note that the newspapers learnt of it. To complicate matters, the Note arrived in the midst of the Stockholm Affair. Though the Radical publicists were already consumed with Stockholm and with the situation in Russia, they immediately grasped the significance of the Pope’s peace initiative. In tandem with Stockholm and the Russian government’s pressure to revise war aims, the Pope’s peace appeal was a cause of real hope for the Radical publicists. The arrival of the Papal Peace Note was most timely, according to the \textit{Nation}:

\begin{quote}
At the moment when the Western Allies have banned the Stockholm Conference, the Pope has issued to all the belligerent Powers a circular letter in which he exhorts them to peace, and suggests a basis on which it may be reached.\footnote{Nation, \textit{Events of the Week}, 18 Aug. 1917.}
\end{quote}

Massingham recognised what he saw as the true nature of the initiative:

\begin{quote}
It is, in fact, an appeal to public opinion. It is a letter which requires a careful answer, and the world will form its judgement of the belligerents by the answers which they give.\footnote{Ibid.}
\end{quote}

However, this was exactly what the Allied governments feared, as explained above. The \textit{Nation}’s editor was also apprehensive of the reaction of the War Cabinet: ‘The bigger test will be whether our Government will adopt a better tone than our Press, and admit its readiness to discuss at all.’\footnote{Ibid.} On the accusations of the Pope being ‘pro-German’ or the Note being ‘Austrian inspired’, the \textit{Nation} was quick in coming to

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Benedict’s defence: ‘The Pope suggests a peace which would yield us nearly all the emancipating issues to which we were pledged, and the war-for-ever-and-ever-party tosses its away with a sneer and a cry, Pro-German.’

Furthermore, the Nation noted the similarities between the treatment then being meted out in the Press to international socialism and the Pope, and the earlier insulting treatment of President Wilson’s peace initiatives. Undeterred, the Nation placed its faith in these two, ‘neglected and partly disinterested’ international forces, the papacy and socialism, in the same way it once had placed its faith in Wilson as a mediator. Furthermore, Massingham declared that it was not for a lack of proposals that a negotiated peace had not yet occurred: ‘The obstacle to a good settlement is not any dearth of proposals. An excellent scheme could be drafted by combining the Papal proposals with the best features of the various socialist schemes.’ Alternatively, if the Government disapproved of the ‘rough democratic aspect of a popular Socialist Conference,’ then the ‘Papacy places at their disposal a diplomatic engine as discreet and conservative as any in the world.’ In other words, the Lloyd George government could choose either a democratic socialist peace or a conservative religious peace.

The Nation was upbeat in its response to the Papal Peace Note, declaring that the tone of the document was touching in its ‘simplicity and unworldliness’ that no-one who read it could suppose that its motive was anything other than the desire to ‘serve humanity’. The Papal Note was compared with Wilson’s peace note the previous December and it was recognised that it was in essence an appeal to public

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940 Ibid.
941 Ibid.
942 Ibid.
943 Nation, Events of the Week, 18 Aug. 1917.
opinion. After a brief outline of the Pope’s proposals the Nation questioned whether the British Government would adopt a ‘better tone than our Press,’ and show any ‘readiness to discuss at all.’\textsuperscript{944} The Nation argued strongly that those who did not like an international Socialist Conference could make use of the Papacy that placed at their disposal ‘a diplomatic engine as discreet and conservative as any in the world.’\textsuperscript{945}

After giving an in-depth update on Stockholm and Henderson, the Nation hopefully concluded that, ‘an excellent scheme could be drafted by combining the Papal proposals with the best features of the various socialist schemes.’\textsuperscript{946}

On first hearing of the Pope’s peace initiative Lord Loreburn wrote to Hirst on 16 August, expressing his hopes for its success using a metaphor from Pilgrim’s Progress:

\begin{quote}
If this prospect is really before our ministers, they will no more dare to wreck it than Christian would have dared to retrace his steps through the valley of the Shadow of Death when the exit came in view.\textsuperscript{947}
\end{quote}

Loreburn believed that the Government would make it easier for the moderate elements in Germany to overthrow the militaristic ‘demons’ there by skilful handling of such peace initiatives. He believed that this was Wilson’s thinking too. Loreburn was hopeful that the combination of factors would lead to a negotiated settlement:

\begin{quote}
I rely on a combination of Pope, President, industrial unrest throughout the world and the submerged but not extinct impulses of Christianity and humanity and common sense to drive this thing to an end quite soon and the danger is the prevalence of something akin to insanity clamouring from unattainable ends.\textsuperscript{948}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{944} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{945} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{946} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{947} Loreburn to Hirst, 16 Aug. 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917.
\textsuperscript{948} Ibid.
Francis Hirst’s *Common Sense* exuded an optimistic sentiment similar to Loreburn’s. Hirst found that ‘this message’ endorsed the ‘essential points in our public aims’ and noted that the ‘jingo press’ found it ‘too close an echo’ of President Wilson’s ‘peace without victory’ speech. The Papal Peace Note deserved ‘serious and benevolent consideration.’ Furthermore, the mediation of the Pope provided a ‘bridge’, a means of direct diplomacy with Germany that the Government said it did not have (and, yet, as Hirst noted, they had Lord Newton in The Hague exchanging prisoners). A week later there were further grounds for optimism when Chancellor Michaelis welcomed the Pope’s initiative and promised that the Reichstag would be taken into his confidence in making a reply, claiming that he was in sympathy with any effort to end the ‘misery of the war.’ Hirst’s response to the Vatican peace initiative was predominantly optimistic. He was concerned, however, that the Peace Note might be eclipsed by the opening of big military offensives on the Western and Italian fronts. Loreburn was also concerned that after a week of discussion in the press the Government had not answered the Papal Peace Note. As he told Hirst, this raised his suspicions that it was to do with Britain’s ‘secret agreements with the Allies

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950 *Common Sense*, ‘The Pope’s Message’, 18 Aug. 1917. Hirst also felt the need to defend Wilson and the Pope against the slur, made by the Northcliffe Press, that there was a ‘criminal pedigree’, that is, German origin, for the slogan, ‘freedom of the seas’. Hirst managed to trace the origin of the expression back to Jefferson and Cobden, hence establishing that the term was British and American in origin. *Common Sense*, ‘Freedom of the Seas,’ 25 Aug. 1917.
952 Hirst would also have been bolstered in his optimism by a letter from Lord Buckmaster at this time. The Liberal Lord was determined to push for the definition of war aims in the House of Lords to counter all the ‘unreasonable and violent people’ in Germany ‘using Lloyd George’s speeches at every turn for the purpose of persuading the reasonable element in Germany that we only have one object, and that is their extirpation as a race.’ Lord Buckmaster to F. W. Hirst, 22 Aug. 1917, Hirst Papers. Loreburn also expressed the fear that the Germans ‘believe we want to crush them.’ Lord Loreburn to F. W. Hirst, 25 Aug. 1917.
953 *Common Sense*, ‘The Situation in Italy: The Pope’s Peace Note’, 25 Aug. 1917. Richard Holt also expressed the hope that Lloyd George was ‘setting his mind towards peace’ as the Allies difficulties would soon increase without a ‘big military success.’ Richard Holt to F. W. Hirst, 28 Aug. 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917.
Chapter 3: Woodrow Wilson, Russia, and the Peace Offensives: April 1917 – August 1917

since the war began. Loreburn’s private letters to Hirst were, as usual, full of insight. But a boon for Hirst at this time was that Loreburn finally agreed to go public with his views, and an article submitted by him went to press in the 1 September edition of *Common Sense*. Loreburn gave his unqualified support to the Pope’s peace initiative. However, according to Loreburn, the real problem was the lack of information about the condition of Britain’s allies and about Britain’s treaty obligations to them, let alone making judgements about the condition of the enemy, internal political developments in the Central Powers, or any terms for peace they might have had in mind. Therefore, any contribution that the Pope, or anyone else, might have made toward either ‘an innocuous exchange of views among the Allies themselves or among the enemy Powers or between the two groups of belligerents, if is a sincere step, as this undeniably is, ought to be welcomed.’ Lord Buckmaster similarly was confident that Benedict’s peace move would elicit a united response from the Allied governments: ‘It may be between now and October that the Allies will reply to the Pope’s Note and will attempt to re-define our military objects that we can see.’ However, events would later demonstrate how remote this possibility was going to be.

Even before the Papal appeal had been made public, Ramsay MacDonald had offered the view in the *Labour Leader* that, in the same way as international

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954 Lord Loreburn to F. W. Hirst, 21 Aug. 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917. Loreburn observed that the post-war pledges which the Allies made to each other and based on the assumption that ‘our idiots thought the British troops would be marching through to Berlin in 9 months time at the latest,’ were the real obstacle to peace. Lord Loreburn to F. W. Hirst, 30 Aug. 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917.

955 ‘Any step which the Pope or any other potentate, whether spiritual or temporal, may take toward an innocuous exchange of views either among the Allies themselves or among the enemy Powers or between the two groups of belligerents, if it is a sincere step, as this undeniably is, ought to be welcomed … No human relations based on lasting and irreconcilable hatred between nations have ever proved beneficial in all history or ever will. If the Pope makes us realise this a little sooner rather than a little later the difference may mean the saving of millions of young lives.’ *Common Sense*, Earl Loreburn, ‘The Pope’s Circular’, 1 Sept. 1917.

956 Ibid. Unfortunately, the impact of Loreburn’s letter was diminished because, by 1 September, President Wilson’s reply to the Papal Note dominated the debate.

socialism, the Catholic Church was an international organisation ideally placed to ‘find a common way to peace.’ On the Peace Note’s publication, Snowden, of the Labour Leader, declared that the Pope had made ‘concrete and practical proposals for a just and lasting peace.’ However, he noted that it was treated offensively in the Press by ‘bitter-enders’, in the same way that Wilson’s ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech had been treated.

The Herald had made a similar speculation about the suitability of the Catholic Church being used as a channel for peace discussions in July. On publication of the Note in August, the Herald declared that: ‘All Christendom should welcome the new effort of this great Christian internationalist,’ and that urged that nothing should stem the ‘movement of right-thinking men towards a spiritual peace, a peace of reason, a peace of reconciliation.’ A week later, Henry Brailsford made a point-by-point analysis of the Papal Note and commented that: ‘it need not surprise us that the good deed of Benedict XV has met with the same reception [in the ‘pro-war press’] that greeted Mr. Wilson’s initiative last year.’ Brailsford argued that a crushing victory for either side would not be conducive to a lasting peace. Also, he lashed out at the Paris resolutions that would ‘make the world’s future a squalid inferno of tariff wars and economic tyrannies.’ Brailsford then discussed the proper use of economic pressure in enhancing the Allies’ bargaining power to ‘secure peace

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959 Ibid.
962 Herald, ‘A Peace of Reconciliation’, 18 Aug. 1917. Note in this issue that, understandably for a socialist publication, the Herald was mainly concerned with Stockholm. It gave considerable attention to this ecclesiastical initiative. The willingness of socialists to give unqualified backing to a Catholic peace move, contrasts markedly to that of the Vatican, which feared a socialist-brokered peace. In fact, fear of a socialist peace was one of the motivations of Benedict’s peace appeal.
964 Ibid.
on something like the Pope’s terms. Finally, Brailsford asked: ‘What should we lose by requesting the Pope to ascertain for us how far his terms are capable of realisation?’

The ‘holy war’ Radical publicists, Gardiner and Scott, were a little harder to please when it came to the Pope’s peace plan. On 15 August, the front page of the Daily News reported spectacularly on negative Allied reaction to the Pope’s peace proposal although, in truth, not even the President had yet seen a copy of the Note. In the editorial, Gardiner accepted the idea that the Papal Peace Note was an ‘Austrian-inspired,’ event though he had also not yet seen the text. However, he speculated that if the German government responded positively, identifying some terms upon which it was willing to negotiate, then ‘a point-blank refusal on behalf of the Allied Governments would be almost unthinkable.’

The next day, after having seen the text of the Papal Peace Note, Gardiner described it as a ‘weak and plaintive’ document, ‘faintly ridiculous to a layman reviewing the course of the last three years,’ comprising as it did a ‘series of aspirations, not a basis of a settlement.’ ‘If the Pope can persuade the warring nations to build on this foundation, well and good,’ exclaimed the Daily News. Gardiner also questioned the Pope’s lack of action over Belgium and again asserted that the inspiration of the Note was Austrian.

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965 Ibid.
966 Ibid.
967 Ibid.
968 Daily News, ‘Allies to Consult’ and ‘The Chief Gain’, 15 Aug. 1917. Colonel House recorded in his diary that the President had not received the Papal Peace Note until Thursday 16 August. He suspected that the War Cabinet in London had held onto the Note, or an outline of it, for a week before passing it on to Washington. Clearly annoyed, House wrote in his diary: ‘I cannot understand why there was so much delay in its coming through to us. I have asked the State Department two or three times a day whether it was in.’ From the Diary of Colonel House’, 18 Aug. 1917, PWW, Vol. 43, p. 521.
969 Daily News, ‘The Pope’s Plan’, 15 Aug. 1917. This may have been a major concern of the War Cabinet, that is, that if Germany replied positively to the Papal Peace Note, with terms such as the renunciation of Belgium, then they would be obliged to reply also. This may explain why the War Cabinet appears to have sat on the Note before passing it on to others.
971 Ibid.
Scott, of the *Manchester Guardian*, was less willing to jump to conclusions on first hearing of the Papal Note. On 15 August, the *Manchester Guardian* merely surveyed hostile press comment from Washington, under the less than friendly heading, ‘Inspired By Germany,’ and offered lengthy excerpts also from Northcliffe’s conservative paper, *The Times*, which was totally opposed to the Papal Offer. On 17 August, Scott revealed his own views in an editorial describing the Pope’s Note as well meaning but ineffective. On the other hand, Scott was willing to acknowledge the noble motivation of Benedict XV and so he was harsh in his condemnation of the *Times*’ seethingly hostile treatment of the Pope’s Note. According to Scott, the attitude of the Allied leaders towards the Pope should have been one of gratitude, not anger, as in the case of the *Times*, toward ‘anyone who will honestly endeavour to set forth the terms on which [peace] can and ought to be negotiated.’ The *Manchester Guardian’s* main objection to the Papal Note was that it appeared to invite a settlement on the basis of a restoration of the *status quo* before the war. The Pope’s ‘mere exhortations’ to Germany, Scott argued, were like offering ‘toffee to a tiger’. For Scott, the Papal Note was lacking in substance. The real hope, he insisted, continued to lie with ‘Revolution or Democracy’, that is, with Russia and Stockholm, or America. Scott looked for either the democratic or the revolutionary ideological blossom, or both, to find expression in Germany, and overturn the ‘organised militarist State,’ that is, German militarism, which Scott depicted as the greatest threat to civilisation. Scott also took issue with the fact that the Pope evidently ‘did

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973 Generally negative press comment was repeated the following day. *Manchester Guardian*, 16 August 1917.
975 Ibid.
976 Ibid.
not rejoice’ in the Russian Revolution, which was probably accurate.\textsuperscript{977} Despite the Manchester Guardian’s passion for developments in Russia, the paper kept readers reasonably well informed on the Papal Peace Offer. As noted above, on 20 August, the Guardian sought to promote discussion on peace by publishing a table comparing the terms of six different peace proposals, highlighting again the Radicals’ argument that there was no shortage of opportunities or means to achieve a negotiated settlement.\textsuperscript{978} On the same day, however, there also appeared four letters to the editor protesting at the Manchester Guardian’s rather lukewarm coverage of the Papal Note in the previous week. There were no letters praising the Guardian’s position on this matter. This suggests that there were a significant number of Liberals not happy with the Guardian’s less than enthusiastic treatment of the Papal Note.\textsuperscript{979}

The attitude of the Westminster Gazette to the Papal Note was the most surprising. It took the same attitude to the Papal Note as it took towards Stockholm, that is, that it should be used as an opportunity to revise war aims and so bring the end of the war closer. The Asquithian Spender was closer to the pro-Papal Note stance taken by the Nation and Common Sense than the ‘holy war’ Radicals. No doubt this was due to Spender’s hostility towards the Lloyd George government. On first news of the Papal Note the Westminster Gazette was adamant that it was not a German intrigue.\textsuperscript{980} The paper argued that the Papal Note presented an opportunity to state Allied aims and promote the idea of some mutual give-and-take in negotiations.

\textsuperscript{977} Ibid. Perhaps we see here the real core of Scott’s objection to the Papal Offer. Scott saw much more cause for hope in Russia, as is demonstrated by the amount of column space in the Guardian dedicated to discussion of Russia each day over the following few weeks. Scott’s abiding optimism regarding the Russian situation made him rather dismissive of the Papal Offer. It is ironic that a continuation of the war would destroy the new Russian democracy that Scott admired so much, while perhaps a papal peace may have saved it.

\textsuperscript{978} Manchester Guardian, ‘Six Peace Programmes,’ 20 Aug. 1917.

\textsuperscript{979} Manchester Guardian, ‘The Pope’s Appeal’, 20 Aug. 1917.

Spender argued that the Allied Governments should even contemplate the return to Germany of captured colonies. A bold response was required, Spender insisted:

We hope that the Allied governments will, in answer to the Pope, boldly project into the foreground their ideas of a peaceful Europe reconstructed in terms of law, the guarantee which shall be disarmament by mutual consent. If that were honestly accepted, the whole situation would be transformed; but if it is not accepted, we must be prepared for every sacrifice to get it.  

In the Saturday edition, after a lengthy treatment of the Stockholm ‘muddle,’ a plea was made ‘to be careful not to repeat all over again in dealing with the Pope’s overture, the mistakes which have been made in dealing with the Stockholm Conference.’ Repeatedly, the *Saturday Westminster Gazette* stressed the importance of handling the Papal Note skilfully: ‘The right handling of this situation may detach an enemy; its wrong handling may alienate an Ally.’ A restatement of common Allied war aims was essential, argued Spender: ‘We shall be stronger for the fight, and the whole Alliance will be on securer ground, if we state them [i.e. Allied aims] clearly defined and declared to the world.’ A week later, while admitting the difficulty of negotiating with the Germans, the paper was still insistent that a joint Allied reply, envisaged for the following month, should not be mishandled.

On the issue of the Papal Peace Note, T. P. O’Connor’s *Star* was more in line with the conservative ‘pro-war press’. The *Star* saw nothing of value in the Papal Note, preferring to trust in U.S. military might. The *Star* commented: ‘Perhaps the best marginal comment upon the Pope’s Peace Note is the march of American soldiers

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981 Ibid.
983 Ibid.
984 Ibid.
through the streets of London.' The Star did not want to trust in any 'papal platitudes' which 'swirl and whirl round,' as O'Connor put it, 'like fog-wreaths.' The Pope had issued 'fine words, but they butter no parsnips,' concluded the Star. On the proposal that Germany should guarantee Belgium’s independence of all powers, the Star commented sarcastically that, ‘this is indeed wonderful past all whooping.’ The Star suspected that the ‘Pope’s new peace kite’ was ‘an Austrian eagle loosed by Germany.’ The Star reasoned that, ‘having failed to mobilise the Red International, Germany is now endeavouring to mobilise the Black International,’ but in any case it was the ‘voice of the Kaiser.’ The editorial then went on to attack the credentials of the Vatican, citing its ‘indifference’ to Belgium over the previous three years.

In the midst of the Stockholm Affair, a Parliamentary debate on war aims happened to be proposed on 16 August, just when news of the Papal Note became public. There was great concern about the Stockholm fiasco expressed by MacDonald and Snowden, in their lengthy speeches that night. The Henderson affair was the main concern to the Radical and I. L. P. politicians in this debate. However, the Radical, Phillip Morrell, turned his attention to the Pope’s message. Morrell described the Note as one of the most important documents he had read, and argued that a suitable reply should be given by the Lloyd George Government. Morrell expressed astonishment that the Prime Minister should have had nothing to say about the Note when he spoke

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987 Ibid.
988 Ibid.
989 Ibid. Note that the Star was owned by T.P. O’Connor, an Irishman who was still hoping that Lloyd George would give Ireland home rule in return for patriotic loyalty.
990 Ibid.
992 House of Commons, MacDonald speech, 1498-1506, & Snowden, 1527-1535. 16 Aug. 1917.
in Parliament earlier in the day. In an effort to focus attention on the diplomatic opportunities, the Radical speakers argued, unsuccessfully, that the House should not go into a two-month recess because of the urgency of the situation. MacDonald, Snowden, Morrell and King all argued strongly that either the sitting time of the House must be lengthened or the adjournment period reduced. However, in the event the House would only extend the sitting period for another two days. On the last day of sitting Mr. King attempted to determine the Government’s intentions regarding a formal answer to the Pope’s Note by asking whether the Government had received the Note from the Pope and whether the Allied Governments would confer on the matter before a reply was sent. Lord Robert Cecil replied tersely, that, ‘the answer to both parts of the question is in the affirmative.’ However, as subsequent events were to reveal, the last thing on the Government’s mind at the time was to focus public attention on war aims by inviting prolonged discussion of the Papal Note at an Allied conference.

President Wilson’s initial reaction to the Papal Note was one of annoyance. It came at a time when, in the words of British Ambassador, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, Wilson and his Administration were ‘doing their utmost to kindle a warlike spirit throughout the States and to combat pacifists.’ Wilson was not inclined to make a reply at all. Again, on August 17, House urged Wilson to make a reply to ‘take the peace negotiations out of the hands of the Pope and hold them in your own’, because

993 House of Commons, Phillip Morrell’s speech, 1542ff., Aug. 16, 1917.
994 Mr. King asked for an adjournment period of three weeks, not two months, giving the reason that, “I believe that in time of danger and stress Parliament, like the men at the front, should be at their post.” Column 1546, 16 Aug.1917.
995 House of Commons, Robert Cecil, 20 Aug. 1917.
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‘the Allies must succumb to your judgment.’

As far as House was concerned, the reason for the reply to the Pope was solely to gain the political and diplomatic initiative, not seriously to consider any of the proposals. Like the British Cabinet, neither House nor Wilson had any intention of using the Papal Note as a basis of a serious settlement of the war. Furthermore, House argued that a properly worded reply ‘would bring about almost a revolution in Germany,’ that would ‘be the undoing of autocracy in Germany’ and, at the same time, ‘strengthen the hands of the Russian liberals.’

While the Vatican’s pleas to reply favourably to the Papal Note were simply ignored in Britain, the French pressed their case against the Note in America, arguing that the Central Powers had inspired the Papal Note. Ambassador Jusserand said that if there was an answer to the Pope it would have to be a general one that represented all the Allies. On 18 August, Colonel House was despondent over the fact that the President had still not decided to answer the Pope’s Note. Boris Bakhmet’ev, the Russian Ambassador, conveyed to the President the view that if they brushed the Papal Peace Note aside, as they did Stockholm, this would schism cause a

999 Ibid
1000 These pleas from the Vatican went via Monsignor Marchetti, the papal agent in Switzerland. See K. Bourne and D. C. Watt, (gen. eds.), British Documents on Foreign Affairs, Series H: The First World War, Stevenson, D. (ed.), Vol. 3. (1989), Documents 125 and 126, p. 208. On 22 August, Marchetti urged the Allies to read the Note differently: ‘It was intended by the Pope to be the first of a series of notes .... He (the Pope) knew that the present war could not be settled by one note, but he hoped that most belligerents would accept the ideals he had put forward, such as disarmament.’ Enclosure - Sir H. Rumbold to Mr. Balfour (received September 1, 1917), Ibid.
1003 ‘The President, I feel, has taken a wrong position and I am as certain as I ever am these days that he will make a colossal blunder if he treats the note lightly and shuts the door abruptly. I wish I could be with him. I feel it something of a tragedy to be heat bound at this moment. I trust the President will decide the question wisely in the end and I shall not borrow to trouble....’ From the Diary of Colonel House, 18 Aug. 1917, PWW, vol. 43, pp. 521.
political, not only in Russia, but in other countries too. Lansing urged rejection of the Papal initiative arguing that it was simply a renewal of the German offer of the previous December and that the Pope had become an unwitting agent of Germany. Meanwhile, Wilson received pressure from conservative internationalists of the League to Enforce Peace who wanted him, in his reply to the Pope, to insist that the ‘Prussian military autocracy’ must be routed no matter what the cost, and that this could only be achieved by a more vigorous prosecution of the war. Similarly, among the ultra-patriots, Senator Lodge, in a speech to the Senate, strongly opposed a peace on the basis of the status quo ante, insisting that, ‘we can have no peace without complete victory.’ Significantly, it was at this time that Wilson consulted Lodge and other Senators in a meeting saying he was ‘adrift and troubled’ and ready to listen to their views.

What factors were significant in Wilson’s change of mind regarding his replying to the Papal Peace Note we cannot be completely sure, but on 24 August House cabled Balfour to say that Wilson had drafted a reply and would send it in a few days. Also, House hoped that the Allied Governments could accept it, as their
common answer to the Pope, which he was sure, would ‘strengthen their cause throughout the world.’ One wonders what Balfour’s reaction on reception of the message was. Though the British Cabinet had previously agreed to use Wilson to make a reply to the Pope as a fallback strategy if the German reply to the Pope caused difficulties, they had not anticipated Wilson making a unilateral reply, while still presuming to speak on their behalf. There was a concern that Wilson might change course or, worse still, might want to revise war aims or even consider a negotiated peace. Also, Robert Cecil felt it would be awkward if Wilson referred to economic questions. Furthermore, Cecil was concerned that Wilson might commit them to negotiations for which they were not prepared and which would weaken the will to fight. Charles Seymour has suggested that the Allies were ‘embarrassed by the lack of close coordination with the United States, especially in view of the fact Wilson was coming to be regarded in the popular mind as the spokesman for their causes as against that of Germany.’ With their carefully thought-out plans unravelling, the British Cabinet members braced themselves for President Wilson’s imminent reply to the Papal Note.

1011 Ibid.
1013 Seymour, Intimate Papers, p. 151.
1014 Ibid.
Chapter 4: The New Wilsonian Vision: September 1917 – November 1917

Every day the war is prolonged the more dominant a part America takes and the louder will be her voice at the peace settlement. When America is satisfied the time has come to make peace it is hardly likely an Allied belligerent will be prepared to insist on further fighting. After a few more months of fighting all European belligerents will be so indebted to America they will have to yield to the President’s wishes.

American Correspondent for *Common Sense*, September 1917.\(^{1015}\)

What I am opposed to is not the feeling of the pacifists, but their stupidity. My heart is with them, but my mind has a contempt for them. I want peace, *but I know how to get it, and they do not*.

Woodrow Wilson, November 1917.\(^{1016}\)

The President’s reply to the Papal Peace Note, of 27 August 1917, was certainly an impressive document. Wilson commenced his note in a courteous tone: ‘Every heart that has not been blinded and hardened by this terrible war must be touched by this moving appeal of his Holiness the Pope.’\(^{1017}\) However, the American President questioned whether peace was possible based on the principles enunciated by Benedict XV. It would be ‘folly’, he argued, if, in embarking on peace negotiations, the powers did not ensure that a stable peace was achieved.\(^{1018}\) The main aim, according to the President, was the achievement of a ‘stable and enduring peace’ so

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\(^{1015}\) *Common Sense*, ‘The President’s Peace Message to the German People’, From Our American Correspondent, 1 Sept. 1917.


\(^{1017}\) *Daily News and Leader*, ‘Rights of the Free Peoples of the World’, 30 Aug. 1917. President Wilson’s Reply to the Pope was published here in full, as it was in many other papers. Robert Lansing, Secretary of State of the United States of America to His Holiness Pope Benedictus XV, 27 Aug. 1917, *PWW*, vol. 44, pp. 57-59.

\(^{1018}\) Ibid.
that the world did not have to go through this ‘agony’ again. So, despite acknowledging merit in the Pope’s key proposals for disarmament, a concert of nations, international arbitration, the freedom of the seas, and the settling of territorial claims, Wilson now believed that the intransigence of the German leadership made a negotiated peace impossible. This was a significant shift in the American position since the winter of 1916-1917 when President Wilson twice proposed a negotiated settlement with the German rulers. Now Wilson viewed these same German rulers as the major stumbling block to a negotiated settlement.

The President claimed that the Pope’s plan represented a return to the *status quo ante bellum*.\(^{1019}\) He advanced three reasons for why this sort of peace was no longer desirable. Firstly, as noted above, such a peace would not remove the ruling regime in Germany, and this regime was condemned by the President in the harshest possible terms. Discarding his analysis of the causes of the war outlined the previous January, he now declared that the object of the war was to ‘deliver the free peoples of the world from the menace and the actual power of a vast military establishment controlled by an irresponsible Government.’\(^{1020}\) Furthermore, he asserted, this regime had ‘secretly planned to dominate the world’ and had wilfully violated international law, ignoring ‘sacred obligations’ and ‘long established practices.’\(^{1021}\) The German leaders had reveled in the violence that had ensued, he went on, sweeping the whole of Europe in a ‘tide of blood’, including the ‘blood of innocent women and children.’\(^{1022}\) Secondly, Wilson argued that leaving the current regime in power would spell doom for newly democratised Russia as Germany would seek to stir up counter-

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\(^{1019}\) Ibid. This was not strictly a fair description as the Papal Plan implied a league-style concert of nations, a program of mutual disarmament, an international court, free trade and the settling of the various contentious territorial disputes such as Alsace-Lorraine and perhaps giving self-government to the peoples of Armenia, the Balkans and Poland.

\(^{1020}\) Ibid.

\(^{1021}\) Ibid.

\(^{1022}\) Ibid.
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revolutions there. Thirdly, and most importantly, Wilson insisted that the Germans would simply use such a peace to recuperate and then strike again at some future date. This would, therefore, require the creation of ‘a permanent hostile combination’ of nations against Germany, to prevent it from breaking out in the future.

Wilson’s criticisms of the ruling regime in Germany sounded very similar to the British propaganda that was emanating from Wellington House, with one exception. This was that all Wilson’s venom was directed at the rulers of Germany, and not the German people, whereas the British propaganda machine made no distinction between the German people and their rulers, labelling them all as the ‘Hun.’ Wilson pursued his now familiar theme, first outlined in his War Message of 2 April 1917, that the German people themselves were not the enemy. Only the ‘ruthless masters’ of the German people were the target of American wrath. Wilson continued to cast the German people as victims of the tyrannical rule of their ‘ruthless masters.’

The German people themselves would receive ‘fair treatment’, he promised, if they sought ‘equality’ and not ‘domination’. This appeared to be a strong hint that a negotiated peace with Germany could be considered, but only if Germany’s autocracy was replaced by a truly democratic government that reflected the will of the German people. This appeared to be a direct incitement to the German people to embark upon a revolution along the lines of the March Revolution in Russia.

Despite his Reply to the Pope being largely a damning indictment of the German regime, Wilson also included a swipe at the Allies. By declaring his opposition to things such as ‘punitive damages,’ the ‘dismemberment of Empires,’ and ‘selfish and exclusive economic leagues,’ Wilson was striking at things dear to

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1023 This would seem to be contrary to what the Russian ambassador told Colonel House on 19 August. See E. M. House to Woodrow Wilson, 19 Aug. 1917, PW, vol. 43, p. 522.
1024 Ibid.
1025 Ibid.
the hearts of the Allied leaders. In doing so, Wilson appeared to be trying to give
the appearance of taking the higher moral ground, far removed from the grubby
designs of the Allied secret treaties. Notwithstanding these veiled criticisms of Britain
and France, the Reply to the Pope was a far cry from the even-handed approach of
Wilson’s progressive internationalist critique of the war contained in his ‘Peace
Without Victory’ speech of January 1917. It was this shift in emphasis that was to
cause the Radical publicists great anxiety. Wilson’s high diplomacy of the years
1914-1916, his astute handling of the German submarine menace, his progressive
internationalist rhetoric, and his sincere attempts to secure a negotiated peace, had
endeared him to the Radical publicists. However, the subtle shift in Wilson caused
some confusion in the ranks of the Radical publicists. Some continued to hold him in
the highest esteem, even though his actions and policy after April 1917 often ran
counter to their ideas of what should happen. Despite there being a significant change
in Wilson’s critique of the German regime and a narrowing in his conditions for the
acceptance of a negotiated peace, he still held to a progressive internationalist
prescription for the post-war world. It was this aspect of Wilson’s approach that still
gave the greatest promise for a satisfactory outcome the war, in the estimation of to
the Radical publicists.

Wilson’s Reply was indeed a comprehensive and forceful document. As
with his War Message the previous April, there was something in it for everyone.

\[1026\] Ibid.

\[1027\] Colonel House, who had been pressing Wilson to make a reply to the Papal Note since its
publication, was extremely happy with the content of the Reply: ‘I endorse every word of it. I am sure
it is the wise, the statesmanlike and right way to answer the Pope’s peace overtures. You are blazing a
new path, and the world must follow, or be lost again in the meshes of unrighteous intrigue.’ House to
Wilson, 24 Aug. 1917, PWW, vol. 44, p. 41. After the publication of Wilson’s Reply, House reported
that its reception by the American public had been, ‘spontaneous and enthusiastic beyond expectation.’
House to Wilson, 29 Aug. 1917. Ibid., pp. 83-84. Max Eastman, representing American Socialist
opinion, praised Wilson’s Reply as being “not only a step towards ending the war”, but also a blow to
the ‘imperialist schemers’, and a declaration in favour of ‘substantially Russian terms’. ‘Appeal to
Reason’, quoted in Ibid.
Many people from diverse backgrounds were won over by the President’s Note. While the denunciations of the German government and the military won the wholehearted approval of the Allied leaders and the ‘bitter-enders’ in the mainstream press, a number of Radicals publicists declared themselves impressed with the President’s provocative ruling out of ‘punitive damages, the dismemberment of empires, and the establishment of selfish economic leagues.’

Similarly, Page, the American ambassador to Britain, was ecstatic. Wilson had scored a ‘bulls-eye’ said Page, because the Note highlighted the great ideal, the destruction of Prussian autocracy, and this would mean the elimination of a serious threat from the world. Furthermore, Page claimed, its effect on Germany would be worth a ‘dozen battles’ and might even lead to a revolution. Some in the British Government were not so enthusiastic. General Smuts thought that the ‘no peace with the Hohenzollern’ approach was foolish because the Germans love for their Reich could not be uprooted, and Lloyd George agreed on the powerful influence that the military command had over the people as a result of its many proud victories. However, despite these and other reservations, the Allied Governments were relieved that Wilson had rejected the Papal Note on his own, and that he had scored a propaganda coup for the ‘bitter ender’ chorus at the same time. On the other hand, it was noted that Wilson had given in his Reply to the press before sending it to the Allied Governments. Nevertheless, on 1 September 1917, the British Government notified the Allies that the Papal peace matter was now settled with Wilson’s Reply, and that they would now wait for the Central Powers’ reply. There would be no Allied

1028 *PWW*, vol. 44, pp. 57-59.
1030 Ibid.
1031 Ibid.
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conference to reformulate war aims and there would be no joint Allied reply. On 4 September, House declared to Wilson: ‘I believe your reply to the Pope is the most remarkable document ever written, for surely there was never one approved throughout the world so universally and by every shade of political opinion.’ House was even hopeful of the Reply’s effects in Germany, stating that he did not believe that the German Government would be able to ‘stem the tide’ that would ‘soon set in against them.’ Whatever reservations the Allied governments may have had about Wilson’s unilateral Reply to the Pope, they were at least happy that for the time being it terminated the necessity for them to consider the Pope’s proposals in any serious way. For this the Allied governments were grateful to President Wilson.

The Radicals were divided over Wilson’s Reply to the Pope. On the one hand, the ‘holy war’ editors, Scott and Gardiner, who had been critical of Benedict’s peace initiative, were satisfied with the President’s Reply. The headline of 30 August said it all: ‘Mr. Wilson’s Peace Test - No Settlement Possible With Germany’s Present Masters,’ Manchester Guardian. C. P. Scott believed that this ‘peace test’ was the main thrust of the Note. On 31 August, the Manchester Guardian quoted from the extremely positive coverage of Wilson’s Reply in the American press, and described it as ‘a despatch which has been justly admired for the classic quality alike of its

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1032 The British Government had decided on 28 August 1917 that it was impossible to make an official comment on Wilson’s Reply due to its unfavourable points such as its condemnation of discriminatory economic leagues. See Kernek, ‘Distractions of Peace During War’, pp. 59-60. Also, Britain rejected a French proposal for a parallel reply to Wilson’s Reply which would have been more harsh. The British feared this would lead to a renewed debate on peace terms among the Allies and renew suspicion from the British public of their war aims, according to Ritter, The Sword and the Scepter. Vol. IV, p. 28.
1033 House to Wilson, 4 Sept. 1917, PWW, vol.44, p. 149.
1034 Ibid.
thought and its expression. Furthermore, the only ultimate guarantee of the terms of peace was their backing by the will of the German people ‘because as things are in Germany at present the Government cannot give that guarantee [and thus Wilson] has to put aside the humane effort of the Pope.’ On Wilson’s argument that the German people must win their own liberty the Guardian commented that ‘this is a very powerful argument’, and further, that ‘if the German people do act for themselves, they have it in their own power both to shorten the war and to make their future much more favourable.’ So, as far as Scott was concerned, the Reply had placed the ball firmly in the German’s court; the people of Germany could overturn their Government and thus shorten the war. The Manchester Guardian also hoped that the Allied powers would endorse this Reply and that it might stand as the ‘reply of all.’

In the issue of 2 September, Scott was indignant about the unfavourable reaction that Wilson’s Reply received in the German press. Some German newspapers had accused the President of trying to dictate to Germany what its internal political constitution should be. Scott defended Wilson from this charge, declaring, with questionable consistency, that ‘Mr. Wilson did not propose to make it [a revolution] a condition of peace.’ The main reason for hope, as far as Scott was concerned, was the effect of the Reply on the internal politics of Germany. To this end, the Manchester Guardian ran a hopeful piece on 4 September about an expected left-liberal move in the Reichstag being made, interpreting this as proof that ‘President Wilson’s reply to the Pope’s Peace Note has made a profound impression in political quarters in

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1038 Ibid.
1039 Ibid.
1040 ‘It is true that he offers an inducement to the German people to declare for freedom, but that is not to destroy their liberty of choice.’ Manchester Guardian, ‘German Government on President Wilson’s Despatch’, 2 Sept. 1917.
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Like the *Manchester Guardian*, Gardiner’s *Daily News* was extremely supportive of Wilson’s reply to the Pope, as indicated by the headlines on the first day of coverage. Similarly, Gardiner expressed indignation at the fact that the German Press had greeted Wilson’s Reply with ‘hypocritical misinterpretation, mock indignation, and calculated insults.’ Also, Gardiner backed Wilson’s call to the German people to ‘accept our terms’ and ratify them by a ‘vote of the people’, and he supported Wilson’s warning that no quarter would be given to the ‘military gods’ of Germany. In its detailed comment, the *Daily News* chose to concentrate also on the progressive economic aspects of Wilson’s Reply, declaring that, ‘the Paris resolutions as they stand in black and white, were irreconcilable with the institution of any such League of Nations.’ The *Daily News* did not have a problem with Wilson’s demand for Germany to democratise itself, citing the fact that the German socialist paper, *Vorwärts*, which represented the Majority Socialist party (The S. P. D.) of Scheidemann and Ebert, had long endorsed such democratisation. However, the *Daily News* was dismissive of the fact that the rest of the German press had cried ‘hands off’, arguing that this was less significant than the *Vorwärts*’ acceptance. At least,

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1044 However, Gardiner thought that the Allies had enough bargaining power to achieve their objectives without overwhelming military victory. He argued that the Allies controlled ‘four-fifths of the surface of the earth; they are in possession of the markets; they own the raw material. Germany has been cut off from these things for three years. Its trade is obliterated, its credit has gone, and its internal resources have been devoured in the furnace of war. On the day that the war ends it will be like the skeleton of a man who has gone through a fever. It will suffer from a famine of raw materials without which it cannot find employment for its people. It must have those materials or perish.’ *Daily News*, A. G. Gardiner, ‘The Weapon of Peace’, 22 Sept. 1917.
the article concluded, it was wise not to say to Germany that if she made peace it would be ‘a peace that will be little better than war.’ Gardiner had given his unquestioning acceptance of the American President’s demand that German democratisation be a pre-condition for the commencement of any peace negotiations with Germany.

Not surprisingly, the Star was also ecstatic over Wilson’s reply to the Papal Peace Note: ‘With masterly breadth of vision, born of education rather than theology, the head of the mighty Republic declares to the Sovereign Pontiff of an ancient Church that, grim as are the horrors of war, it is useless to cry “peace, peace, when there is no peace.”’ Hopes were expressed that the Reply might precipitate a ‘parliamentary crisis in Berlin’ that would ‘hasten peace’. Like the Manchester Guardian and the Daily News, the Star, saw this as the main achievement of Wilson’s Reply. The newspaper hoped that Wilson’s declaration that there would no peace with the current German Government would encourage internal rebellion in Germany: ‘It may bring the German people to their senses and accentuate the Parliamentary crisis in Berlin, which has become chronic. In that event, it will hasten peace.’ All three editors, Scott, Gardiner and O’ Connor, viewed Wilson’s Reply to the Papal Peace Note as something akin to a psychologoical bombshell in the German camp, rather than a serious opportunity for discussing peace. These editors unquestioningly accepted Wilson’s dismissal of the possibility of a peace based on the Vatican proposals as well as his pre-condition of a democratisation of Germany.

J. A. Spender’s Westminster Gazette took a different slant in its analysis of Wilson’s Reply. After giving prominence in the previous two days of its coverage to

\[1047\] Ibid.
\[1048\] Star, ‘President to Pope’, What We Think, 30 Aug. 1917.
\[1049\] Ibid.
\[1050\] Ibid.
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international reports praising Wilson’s Reply, it commended Wilson for bringing progressive war aims to the fore. However, the Westminster Gazette did point out that the peace for which Wilson wanted to fight would be difficult, and it questioned Wilson’s idea of appealing over the heads of the German government. The tactic of seeking the disintegration of Germany might not succeed, warned the Westminster Gazette. In the Saturday edition of the Westminster Gazette there was more emphatic support. It was again argued that the main gain from Wilson’s Reply to the Pope was that it put the Allies’ war aims at the forefront of public debate and ‘laid a good foundation for a lasting peace.’ Like Scott and Gardiner, the Saturday Westminster Gazette commented that Wilson’s vow to destroy Prussianism was ‘a hot shot into the camp of the Hohenzollerns’ because it meant that the total power of America would be used to ‘make the world safe for democracy.’ Strangely though, the Saturday Westminster Gazette also expressed doubts over this key aspect of the Reply, Wilson’s appeal ‘over the heads of the military rulers.’ Further, the paper questioned whether the German Government could be distinguished from its people:

The endeavour to discover a German people as distinguished from the German government has, so far, proved rather like the philosopher’s search for the ‘thing in itself’ as distinguished from the thing known to our sense.

Spender’s papers praised the fact that Wilson had given prominence to progressive Allied war aims, but they expressed significant doubts over the likely success of the tactic of appealing directly to the German people.

Surprisingly, the Labour paper, Forward, was seduced by the high-sounding

1053 Ibid.
1055 Ibid.
rhetoric of Wilson’s ‘far-seeing utterances’ and by Wilson’s arguments about the Papal Note being a return to the status quo, which was characteristic of many of the ‘so-called pacifist proposals.’\footnote{Forward, ‘Make the World Safe for Democracy’, 8 Sept. 1917.} Forward also approved of the idea of placing the onus on the ‘peoples of the Central Powers’ who needed to be ‘wakened from their dreams’, throw off their ‘ruling caste’ and end the war.\footnote{Ibid.} All these papers judged Wilson’s Reply to the Pope only on the basis of its utility for achieving aims rather than as a starting point for peace negotiations. All these papers placed their faith in President Wilson’s apparent aims of bringing about a negotiated peace by sparking popular revolt in the Central Powers.

Hirst certainly regretted the comfort Wilson appeared to have given to the ‘No-Peace-With-the-Hohenzollern’ chorus and, in the pages of Common Sense, was less certain about the merits of Wilson’s Reply. The paper did concede that it as ‘a long stride towards peace’ and argued that it would bring peace within the immediate reach of the German Reichstag and the Austrian Reichsrat, which were both democratically elected parliaments. Common Sense acknowledged that Wilson’s Reply was so ‘strongly worded’ that the German government might not have allowed it to be printed in Germany, but the paper predicted that it would eventually be read by the majority parties in the Reichstag and ‘strengthen their hand in the struggle which is now proceeding for the control of German foreign policy.’\footnote{Common Sense, ‘Democratic Control in Germany’, 1 Sept. 1917} Hirst agreed with the President that there could not be a return to the status quo. He emphasised the progressive aspects of the Wilson Reply, noting that he was definitely ‘not fighting for punitive damages, for the dismemberment of empires, or for the establishment of
selfish and exclusive economic leagues.'\textsuperscript{1059} In common with the other Radical editors, Hirst held the optimistic view that liberal internationalism was now in the ascendancy and that the ‘plans of the Knock-Out Press for the dismemberment of Austria and the erection of an Allied customs tariff go by the board.’\textsuperscript{1060} Putting the best face on Wilson’s Reply, therefore, Hirst concluded:

A firm and satisfactory basis for the sort of peace which the Pope has proposed, and for which the Russian Democracy is striving, must be found, as President Wilson shows, by a popular recognition, starting from Germany, of the common rights and reciprocal duties of mankind. The word of the Kaiser cannot be accepted, unless it is explicitly supported by the representatives of the German people, whom he again refuses to identify with the crimes of the Government.\textsuperscript{1061}

Hirst clearly, grasped the new Wilsonian vision and in its spirit demanded that the peoples of the Central Powers make the first boldly diplomatic move. However, this view was contradicted by another article in \textit{Common Sense} in which it was pointed out that the Reichstag appeared more involved in Government policy-making than the British Commons. This was because, while the Commons had been sent away for ‘nine weeks at a time when decisions of the utmost importance have to be made,’ in Germany the Reichstag Committee of Seven was being consulted on drafting the reply to the Pope.\textsuperscript{1062} In addition, while the British government refused passports for Stockholm, the German government allowed its Majority and Minority Socialists to go to Stockholm. Furthermore, the Chancellor had officially adopted the Reichstag Resolution in favour of a ‘no-annexations peace’ and Michaelis was convening a committee of seven Reichstag deputies to deal with a single question, the reply to the Papal Note, while in Britain no one in Government talked officially of replying to the Papal Peace Note. On 8 September, \textit{Common Sense} was forced to defend Wilson’s
Reply from being hijacked by the pro-war Northcliffe Press that had claimed that Wilson had now embraced Northcliffe’s ‘absurd formula’ of ‘No Peace with the Hohenzollerns.’

Hirst was appalled. However, some of his Radical publicist colleagues thought that the ‘No Peace with the Hohenzollerns’ formula was exactly what Wilson’s Reply to the Pope had implied. However, despite some reservations, Hirst was willing to sign up to Wilson’s Reply to the Papal Peace Note. Like the other publicists who supported Wilson’s Reply, Hirst was still impressed enough by Wilson’s statesmanship to trust his strategy. A report from the American correspondent for *Common Sense* about American strategy was perhaps representative of the confidence that many of the publicists had in Wilson:

> Every day the war is prolonged the more dominant a part America takes and the louder will be her voice at the peace settlement. When America is satisfied the time has come to make peace it is hardly likely an Allied belligerent will be prepared to insist on further fighting. After a few more months of fighting all European belligerents will be so indebted to America they will have to yield to the President’s wishes.

Perhaps this belief that the Americans had an effective strategy for securing a progressive peace was the reason why many publicists were willing to give their backing to President Wilson’s negative response to the Pope’s appeal. Some Radical publicists, however, were willing to call Wilson’s strategy into question.

This new Wilsonian version of liberal internationalism and the President’s strategy for ending the war came under direct challenge from Henry Massingham. As far as the editor of the *Nation* was concerned, Wilson’s Reply could indeed be equated with the ‘No peace with the Hohenzollerns’ slogan being trumpeted by the Northcliffe

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1064 Ibid.
1065 *Common Sense*, ‘The President’s Peace Message to the German People’, From Our American Correspondent, 1 Sept. 1917.
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press. \footnote{1066} Though Wilson’s Reply was ‘a document of great skill and phrasing,’ Massingham questioned its intent. \footnote{1067} Though Wilson’s style was ‘the most effective that any living statesman possesses,’ the Reply was an ‘impractical document’ because it approached the formula of ‘No peace with the Hohenzollerns.’ Obviously disappointed with the Reply, the \textit{Nation} tried to put the best light on it:

The practical point is – would Mr. Wilson prevent the conclusion of peace on any terms at present, even if Germany were to adopt the proposals of a League of Nations with disarmament, and to negotiate on other points? We hardly think so. His underlying meaning may be that the military situation is not yet sufficiently favourable for a good peace. \footnote{1068}

Massingham expressed the hope Wilson was not ruling out peace discussions with the German government because:

A refusal to negotiate at all should strengthen the hands of the German Junkers, and delay the advent of that general European democracy which Mr. Wilson hopes to present to America as her contribution to the war and the peace. \footnote{1069}

This view was repeated in another column in the same issue. Massingham declared that: ‘We have never been willing for our part, to add to our war aims the forcible achievement of democracy in Germany.’ \footnote{1070} Furthermore, the \textit{Nation} feared that there was ‘a risk that [Wilson’s] refusal to deal with the existing German Government may mean an almost indefinite prolongation of the war.’ \footnote{1071} This ‘may perhaps result in the advent of German democracy – an event which is the probable upshot of the first German general election after peace,’ but it was concerned that, ‘it may also place upon Russia a burden which will destroy democracy there.’ \footnote{1072}

\footnotetext{1066}{\textit{Nation}, ‘Events of the Week’, 1 Sept. 1917} \footnotetext{1067}{\textit{Ibid.}} \footnotetext{1068}{\textit{Ibid.}} \footnotetext{1069}{\textit{Ibid.}} \footnotetext{1070}{\textit{Nation}, ‘Will Germany Become Democratic?’ 1 Sept. 1917.} \footnotetext{1071}{\textit{Ibid.}} \footnotetext{1072}{\textit{Ibid.}}
still insisted that he was impressed by the President’s liberal internationalist credentials and still believed he was in favour of a negotiated settlement (albeit with the German people), he did not mince his words on what he thought the main thrust of the Reply was, and also on what he thought would be the effect on Germany and the length of the war.

A week later, Massingham’s view of Wilson’s Reply had hardened further after reflecting on its implications for the war. The editor of the Nation was despondent over the apparent disappearance of the Stockholm initiative and the negative publicity surrounding the Papal Note, because the people of Europe had been ‘building their expectation of an early peace by negotiation’ on these ‘two hopes.’

Believing Wilson was still sincere in his desire for a covenanted peace, Massingham interpreted the differences between Wilson and those who hoped something would come from either Stockholm or the Pope’s Note as arising from a different reading of the ‘immediate probabilities.’ Massingham assumed that Wilson was planning for another year of war, and he speculated upon what factors the American President might have based his calculations. Was Wilson hoping for a military recovery in Russia perhaps? This was highly unlikely, according to Massingham. Or, was Wilson hoping that a decisive political change in Germany might bring peace? On this, all Radicals could do was wait and see, wrote Massingham. The third basis for Wilson’s calculations may have been a decisive military development at the front, but for this to eventuate, first ‘the Russian armies must be replaced’ by American armies. Yet, the first conscripts of the American Army only ‘went into camp this week. Can the American Army be ready for next summer?’

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1074 Ibid.
1075 Ibid.
Massingham clearly wanted everyone to take a reality check. It would take time for the failing Russian armies to be replaced by two to three million American soldiers and this might extend the war another one to three years. By this time, the Nation reasoned, the ‘ruin of civilisation’ might have become a ‘literal fact’ well before the final American reinforcements arrived.\textsuperscript{1076} Further, Massingham declared:

A military decision, in all human probability, means two, if not three, years more. That is not a guess: it is the time required for America to become a military Power equivalent to a Russia which is for all practical purposes out of action.\textsuperscript{1077}

In other words, Massingham had come to the conclusion that the strategy Wilson was employing to end the war was flawed and short-sighted. Massingham offered an alternative. This was to get an immediate ‘nominal peace’ on minimum terms that would achieve a ‘peace which ends the bloodshed but continues the strife’.\textsuperscript{1078} Then the Allies could use economic pressure (in the form of tariffs, shipping restrictions, refusal of raw materials) and delay the recovery of prosperity, and even isolate, any nations ‘frustrating the restoration of a tolerable world’. True, Massingham agreed that this would, in effect, be a truce but one involving an economic campaign ‘deliberately undertaken with a deliberate purpose’ requiring ‘one, two or three years’.\textsuperscript{1079} A long time? Yes, ‘but this bloodless pressure would work as swiftly as slaughter.’\textsuperscript{1080} On Wilson’s contention that a semi-autocratic Germany might not be a loyal member of a League, Massingham believed this question would settle itself within a few months of the first general election in Germany. After all, Massingham believed that, since there was so much democratic agitation occurring in Germany during the war, when all Government restraints were off at war’s end, then the

\textsuperscript{1076} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1077} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1078} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1079} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1080} Ibid. This could be described as a state of armed, uneasy peace – a ‘cold war’!
democratic pressure inside Germany would be greater. Furthermore, there was a
cleaner way of fulfilling the democratic requirement for League membership. This
was a requirement that each nation’s parliament vote by a three-fourths majority to
join the League. This would make it ‘a true Society of Nations, and not merely a
Concert of Governments.’

This would be a peace ‘based upon the faith of all the
peoples involved,’ thus satisfying Wilson’s specific demand, Massingham
asserted.

Not only was Massingham disappointed by Wilson’s response to
Benedict’s peace initiative, he despaired of Wilson’s strategy. Not content just to be
destructive in his criticism, Massingham put forward what he believed was a more
realistic alternative strategy. Massingham’s analysis of President Wilson’s Reply to
the Papal Peace Note was in stark contrast to the confidence in Wilson’s strategy that
editors of Forward, the Manchester Guardian, Daily News, Westminster Gazette and
even Common Sense continued to exhibit.

Phillip Snowden was another Radical publicist willing to take issue with the
new Wilsonian vision evident in the reply to the Pope. Writing in the Labour Leader,
Snowden added another dimension to the criticism of Wilson’s Reply. According to
Snowden, Wilson was ‘either innocent or very ignorant of the aims of the Allies, and,
of the commitments of the Allies to each other, if he imagines that his program of war
aims is that for which the Allied nations are fighting.’ For Snowden, the secret
treaties and obligations between the Allies was the real sticking point. These had not
been repudiated, Allied war aims had not been revised and Wilson was a lone voice
for a progressive settlement. The blunt-speaking Snowden put it like this: ‘The fact is
that President Wilson’s Note shows that there are as wide differences between himself

1081 Ibid.
1082 Ibid.
1083 Ibid. Massingham said this idea for League membership came from the French Socialists.
and his Allies as between himself and the Central Powers.'\textsuperscript{1085} Snowden was even more damning of Wilson’s demand for democracy in Germany which he found ‘objectionable.’\textsuperscript{1086} Furthermore, Snowden believed that the Reply was so ‘offensively expressed as to defeat its intended purpose.’\textsuperscript{1087} This last point Snowden felt was particularly hypocritical because of the failure of the Allies to prove that their constitutions were any more democratic than Germany’s, and Wilson’s own undemocratic behaviour at home.\textsuperscript{1088} As far as Germany was concerned, Snowden was encouraged by the fact that the German Chancellor was presiding over a Foreign Affairs Committee ‘on which representatives of the five parties in the Reichstag are sitting, which is drafting the reply to the Pope’s Note.’ Snowden hoped that this was a step forward to Germany becoming ‘thoroughly democratic’ and with tongue in cheek he called for ‘a like revolution in Great Britain and America.’\textsuperscript{1089}

Massingham and Snowden’s harsh critiques of Wilson’s reply to the Papal Peace Note were eclipsed by Henry Brailsford’s attack in the \textit{Herald}. Brailsford commented: ‘Mr. Wilson has ruined the Pope’s intervention.’\textsuperscript{1090} Furthermore, he was angered at Wilson’s refusal to make peace until the German Government was ‘utterly destroyed, if not in the battlefield then by revolution at home.’\textsuperscript{1091} Astonished, Brailsford asked how such sentiments could be reconciled with Wilson’s ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech. He was appalled at the ‘vision of another three years of this agony,’\textsuperscript{1092} and wondered what prospects existed now for a lasting peace. He echoed Snowden’s concerns about Allied war aims: ‘If Mr. Wilson enables the Allies to crush

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{1085} Ibid.
\bibitem{1086} Ibid.
\bibitem{1087} Ibid.
\bibitem{1088} Ibid.
\bibitem{1089} Labour Leader, Philip Snowden, ‘Germany and Foreign Affairs’, Review of the Week, 6 Sept. 1917.
\bibitem{1090} Herald, H. N. Brailsford, ‘What Does Mr. Wilson Mean?’, 8 Sept. 1917.
\bibitem{1091} Ibid.
\bibitem{1092} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
Germany will they renounce their plans of dismemberment and vengeance? Will he have the power to restrain them? Brailsford tried in vain to see the positive side, observing that Wilson’s Reply was a ‘politician’s note’ and that it was written for domestic consumption with the Middle West particularly in mind. However, the idea that the rift may have deepened between the German Government and the people after another winter of starvation was remote, according to Brailsford. Rather, he was certain that there would be no revolution. Worse still, Brailsford predicted that ‘Mr. Wilson’s Note may have retarded the very movement [i.e. German democracy] which he wishes to promote. That assuredly would be its effect if it were addressed to us.’

Brailsford went on to speculate that the only reason Wilson’s Reply was published so promptly was in order that it would be less probable that the Germans would make a satisfactory reply. If perchance, the Germans did make a satisfactory reply then the Allied Press has had its cue. ‘No peace with autocracy!’ ‘No trust in Germany’s word!’ All the brass bands of the Allied Jingoes will deafen us with their answer. They have only to repeat the language of this Note.

In his criticisms of Wilson’s Reply, Brailsford certainly pulled no punches. Brailsford could not have been more disillusioned with Wilson and his reply to the Pope: ‘Like most Progressives in this country’, Brailsford declared, ‘I had a deep admiration for Mr. Wilson.

Thomas Knock claimed that Woodrow Wilson’s Reply to the Papal Peace Note had ‘relieved’ the British Radicals of ‘much of their anxiety’ However, the survey of the Radical publicists’ opinions above indicate that this clearly was not the

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1093 Ibid.
1094 Ibid.
1095 Ibid.
1096 Ibid.
1097 Ibid. Emphasis added.
1098 Knock, To End All Wars, p. 140.
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case. Erroneously, Knock had based his assessment of Radical opinion on Laurence Martin’s work on Radicalism, *Peace Without Victory*.\(^{1099}\) Martin was dependent mostly on the *Nation* to gauge Radical opinion. However, Martin missed the critical issues of the *Nation* in which Massingham had directed harsh criticism towards the Wilson’s Reply.\(^{1100}\) The other two landmark works on Radicalism also failed to discern the deep division that existed within the ranks of the Radical publicists over this issue.\(^{1101}\) Clearly, the British Radical publicists were significantly divided over Wilson’s reply to Benedict XV’s peace initiative. For the ‘war-aims revision’ Radical publicists such as Massingham, Snowden and Brailsford, Wilson’s Reply had made them realise what they had long suspected. This was that Wilson was no longer serious about entertaining the possibility of a negotiated peace even if it was on the terms similar to his ‘Peace Without Victory’ pronouncement of January 1917. These Radical publicists suspected that the American President was now committed to a peace-through-victory position and they shuddered at the implications this had for the length of the war.

Disquiet over the direction of American strategy in the war also surfaced closer to President Wilson. John Nevin Sayre,\(^ {1102}\) the brother of Wilson’s son-in-law,

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\(^{1102}\) John Nevin Sayre (1884-1977) was an ordained minister in the Episcopal Church. After attending a lecture on Christianity and war, Sayre examined the teachings of Jesus on the use of force and the requirement to love one’s enemies. He came to the conclusion that Jesus was a pacifist who totally rejected war and joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation (F. O. R.) in 1915. His brother, Francis B. Sayre, was married to the daughter of President Wilson in a ceremony at which he officiated. This connection gave Nevin regular access to President Wilson. For some examples of how Nevin made use
conceded that Wilson’s reply to the Pope was indeed a ‘wonderful speech.’\textsuperscript{1103} He felt it would ‘mean a lot if he can hold [the] Allies to a peace on principles of justice and fairness and free from economic leagues, punitive indemnities etc.... Much the best statement on war aims from any of the Allied Governments thus far.’\textsuperscript{1104} However, Sayre was adamant that it meant a ‘prolongation of the war,’ because the German people had ‘no guarantee of safety’ and would be justified in believing that Wilson was ‘changeable.’\textsuperscript{1105} This was because the Reply contrasted so starkly with the December Peace Note. Added to this was the fact that Wilson ‘may not be able to restrain the Allied Governments.’\textsuperscript{1106} Like Brailsford, Sayre believed that the Reply would make it less likely that the moderates in Germany would undermine the Government, and therefore, less likely that Germany would sue for peace:

Must not the German people therefore also surely think that their only hope is trusting to the Kaiser and Army – that by a super human effort they must support this and win the war or at least remain defensively unconquerable. Seems probable to me that Wilson’s speech was interpreted as a bid for a German Revolution, and will play directly into the hands of the German reactionaries and tend to delay rather than hasten, the coming of constitutional government there. On the other hand, it will strengthen convictions of American and Allies that our war is right and tremendously stimulate its popularity. Therefore, its result will be an unprecedentedly bitter renewal of hostilities by both sides. Peace is hardly possible now for almost a year. And maybe longer.\textsuperscript{1107}

Like Massingham, Sayre offered what he thought was a far better alternative:

Would it have not been better to have begun negotiations for peace on [the] Pope’s proposed terms, to have held the same principles as outlined in the Reply, but trusted to the processes of peace to bring these into effect rather than the self-defeating processes of war? Can we now hope for any peace other than a peace of exhaustion? Will this afford any more stable basis for righteousness than we have at the present time? ....President

\textsuperscript{1104} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1105} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1106} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1107} Ibid.
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Wilson’s Reply in effect follows out Balfour’s principle of no peace with Germany unless she is helpless or free. [The] practical effect I fear will be to make all belligerents more helpless and less free – all will be more enslaved in war.\(^{1108}\)

The most comprehensive and forceful critique of the new Wilsonian strategy in the United States came from progressive publicist, Randolph Bourne, in August 1917, and was written before the Papal Peace Note. Bourne felt that the attempt to bring about an end to the war while America was still a neutral marked the highwater level of American strategy, and that once this had failed, armed neutrality was the best option. Wilson’s decision for a ‘thorough’ war had the effect of draining the country’s energies from the simple task of defeating the submarine menace and by August 1917 America’s strategy had been weakened. Bourne complained that the effect of American entry would not be the shortening of the war, but rather, he asserted, American entry ‘has rather tended to prolong it.’\(^{1109}\) Bourne and a number of other progressive publicists felt that America’s approach to the war had ‘encouraged those people in the Allied countries who desired ‘la victoire intégral,’ the ‘knockout blow’.’\(^{1110}\) Also, the suggestion that America could persuade the Allies to revise their war aims had come to nought. The refusal of passports to socialists to attend Stockholm was a serious factor in the weakening of American strategy because it denied the opportunity of the Administration making contact with the German

\(^{1108}\) Ibid. Meanwhile, Julia Grace Wales, the author of the Wisconsin Plan (adopted at the Hague Women’s’ Congress in 1915), was pleased with the language of Wilson’s Reply if it meant that the Allied nations could join together, in a similar way to what was envisaged by the L. T. E. P., and hold a conference with the purpose of agreeing to fight together for the objectives outlined by Wilson: ‘Best of all, Wilson’s reply to the Pope. It seems to me that the war has come to be in some way the kind of war there would be if a League to Enforce Peace were fighting a recalcitrant nation. I feel with the Woman’s’ Peace Party that the immediate end to be aimed at now is the establishment of a permanent conference of the nations now associated in the fight for freedom and democracy.’ Julia Grace Wales to David Starr Jordan, 12 Nov. 1917, Jordan Papers, Box 81. Unfortunately, Wales was unaware of the parlous state of relations between the U. S. and the Entente governments when it came to war aims.


\(^{1110}\) Ibid., p. 26.
socialists who were ‘the only liberal reservoir of power in Germany.’ Not only had America lost the initiative for peace, Bourne asserted, but the initiative had passed to Russia, which wanted peace more. The ‘Message to Russia’ and the ‘Flag Day’ Address had weakened both Russian and American strategy.

Like Brailsford and Sayre, Bourne criticised the strategy of appealing over the heads of the German rulers to promote a negotiated peace direct to the German people. Far from this strategy encouraging a revolution in Germany, the ‘prolongation of the war’ delayed democracy in Germany by convincing the German people that they were fighting for their very existence, thereby forcing them to cling even more desperately to their military leadership. In announcing an American strategy of ‘conquer or submit,’ the President was unwittingly encouraging the German people to prolong the war. The end result of American policy therefore, would be that America had involved itself in a moral obligation to send large armies to Europe to secure a military decision for the Allies. Bourne’s criticism of American strategy was savage:

We have prolonged the war. We have encouraged the reactionary elements in every Allied country to hold out for extreme demands. We have discouraged the German democratic forces. Our strategy has gradually become indistinguishable from that of the Allies. With the arrival of the British Mission our ‘independent basis’ became a polite fiction. The President’s Flag Day Address merely registers the collapse of American strategy. All this the realistic pacifists foresaw when they held out so bitterly and unaccountably against our entering the war. The liberals [on the other hand] felt a naïve faith in the sagacity of the President to make their strategy prevail. They looked to him single-handedly to liberalize the liberal nations. They trusted him to use a war-technique which should consist of an olive branch in one hand and a sword in the other. They have had to see their strategy collapse under the very weight of that war-technique. Guarding neutrality, we might have countered toward a speedy and democratic peace. In the war, we are a rudderless nation, as the Allies wish, politically and materially, and towed to their aggrandizement, in any direction which they may desire.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1111}} \text{Ibid., p. 28.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{1112}} \text{Ibid., p. 29.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{1113}} \text{Ibid., pp. 34-35.}\]
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Bourne’s critique of American policy shows that all this was apparent in American strategy before Wilson’s reply to the Papal Peace Note. In this perhaps, the American progressive publicists may have had the edge over the British Radical publicists in waking up to the major flaws in the new Wilsonian strategy. Sayre’s and Bourne’s comments indicate that concerns about the nature and direction of American strategy were shared by progressives on both sides of the Atlantic.

President Wilson’s Reply to the Papal Peace Note had won over many Radical publicists in Britain but had opened up a deep faultline, a powerful minority of critics emerging, led by of Massingham, Snowden and Brailsford. These three publicists now looked intently at the Wilsonian strategy and found it wanting. Snowden had not been one to mince his words in the past and had often been a lone dissident voice among the publicists, while Massingham was fired with the conviction that the Liberal idealists and the Wilsonians were on the wrong path. Brailsford, who had been absent from the pages of the Radical press, now returned with a vengeance. These editors realised before the rest of the Radical publicists that Wilson did not guarantee an early salvation from the nightmare of the on-going conflict, and in fact might cause it to drag on until the ruin of civilisation of Europe. These three publicists therefore, set their sights on the German response to the Papal Peace Note. A conciliatory reply from the Central Powers they hoped, might yet exert sufficient public pressure on Wilson and the Allies to negotiate peace.

While those Radical publicists who had supported Wilson’s Reply to the Papal Peace Note looked for evidence of popular revolt against the German rulers, the

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1114 For a comprehensive account of the American progressive publicists’ critique of American strategy at this time, and also the bitter divisions within their ranks, see John A. Thompson, Reformers and War, pp. 186-191.
critics hoped that the official replies from the governments of the Central Powers would be conciliatory enough to act as a circuit breaker. It was generally agreed, however, that the one thing the Central Powers needed to do was include some specific terms in their reply to the Papal Note.

Chancellor Michaelis’ Reply to the Pope’s Peace Note was sent to the Vatican on 19 September 1917 via Cardinal Gasparri. The German Reply was seven paragraphs long and written in a conciliatory tone throughout. However, it was not an impressive document, consisting chiefly of platitudes and vague generalities. At the end of the fourth paragraph Michaelis got to the point, in expressing the German government’s view that the Papal Peace and the Reichstag Resolution represented a ‘practical basis for a just and lasting peace.’ Finally, in the fifth paragraph the Reply got down to specifics. Out of the seven concrete points mentioned in the Papal Peace Note as the basis for a negotiated peace, the German Chancellor specifically addressed the acceptance of compulsory arbitration of international disputes, disarmament for a post-war world and the ‘true freedom and community of the high seas.’ Added to Bethmann Hollweg’s previously announced acceptance of a ‘league of nations’, this was a significant move in the Wilsonian direction – a promise to participate in remaking the post-war international order. However, no reference was made to the territorial matters or the payment of damages that made up four of the Pope’s original seven points. However, the most glaring omission was any reference to Belgium. Benedict had tried desperately to get prior agreement from the German

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1115 For a full text of the German, Austrian, Bulgarian and Turkish replies, see G. L. Dickinson, ed., Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, pp. 53-55, 55-57, 57-59, 62-64. 
1116 Ibid., p. 54. 
1117 Ibid.
government to renounce Belgium, since he knew how important this issue was for the Allies.\textsuperscript{1118}

The \textit{Manchester Gazette} evinced a deep interest in the issue of the Central Powers’ replies to the Pope, as shown by its extensive foreign coverage of various responses.\textsuperscript{1119} However, the newspaper was clearly disappointed by the German Reply to the Pope. The German Chancellor was ‘vaguer than the Pope’ and ‘the Pope, after all, did mention Belgium.’\textsuperscript{1120} Furthermore, C. P. Scott asserted that there was much ‘moral and political cowardice in the Note,’ and that Germany needed to ‘convince the world of the sincerity of her return to the humanities,’ and explain ‘what atonement she meant to offer.’\textsuperscript{1121} ‘That would have been the brave thing to do,’ Scott stated, but ‘Germany has not done it.’\textsuperscript{1122} The editor expressed his preference that, through a ‘political revolution’, the German people might yet pursue a ‘new German policy’. On this, he saw a glimmer of hope in the tone of the language in the German Reply, which he thought was an indication that the German rulers had been forced to show ‘marked deference to the views of the Reichstag.’\textsuperscript{1123} The increasing confidence that the \textit{Manchester Guardian} placed in the internal politics of Germany was indicated by the following:

\begin{quote}
We in England have tended to underestimate the political importance of the last crisis, in which Bethmann-Hollweg fell; it is every day becoming
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1118} For an outline of these pre-Papal Note attempts to secure German agreement to renounce Belgium, see Dragan R. \v{Z}ivojinovi\c, \textit{The United States and Vatican Policies}, pp. 76-80. \v{Z}ivojinovi\c argued that ‘without Germany’s concurrence [on Belgium], however, the whole demarche was doomed.’ Ibid., p. 80. Klaus Epstein agreed: ‘The responsibility for the German failure to make the necessary pledges on Belgium rest squarely upon the shoulders of Michaelis and Kühlmann.’ Klaus Epstein, \textit{Matthias Erzberger and the Dilemma of German Democracy} (New York, 1971), p. 218.


\textsuperscript{1120} \textit{Manchester Guardian}, ‘The German Reply to the Pope’, 24 Sept. 1917.

\textsuperscript{1121} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{1122} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{1123} Ibid.
more apparent that it was of tremendous importance. We are justified, too, in concluding from the Note that Germany’s rulers now desire peace with a passionate intensity; nothing else could have induced them to use language which before the war was never heard in Germany outside a meeting of Social Democrats.\textsuperscript{1124}

Therefore, Scott urged the Allies to ‘help the German people’ in their struggle with their Government, and to make it clear that they were ‘not fighting for the humiliation of Germany’ but for the ‘overthrow, final and irretrievable, of the principles of this Government that made and conducted the war.’\textsuperscript{1125} Overall, the \textit{Manchester Guardian} hoped ‘that something more definite would have come from the German Government with the Papal message,’ yet saw indications in the German Reply that internal change was occurring.

The first issue of the \textit{Daily News} to mention the replies of the Central Powers to the Pope demonstrated that perhaps the editor had a pre-conceived view even before the arrival of the full texts:

\begin{quote}
The defect of all the proposals hitherto made – not excepting the Vatican’s own – is that they take no adequate cognisance of the criminality of the German Government’s conduct of the war. Yet that must be the first, not the last, article in any peace that is likely to be permanent. Unless the world is to be swept clean from such diplomacy as that which the Kaiser has just approved and honoured, what is the good of talking peace at all?\textsuperscript{1126}
\end{quote}

Surprisingly, on reading the German Reply a few days later, Alfred Gardiner declared it was a document of ‘considerable significance’ that breathed a ‘chastened spirit’ and

\begin{flushright}\textsuperscript{1124} Ibid. This speculation about positive developments inside Germany increased over the following weeks. e. g. `In the December Note the sword rattled in every syllable; in the Note to the Pope the rattle of the sword disappears, and is replaced by professions of a devotion to peace and by talk of disarmament and arbitration. The atmosphere of German diplomacy and of official declarations is transformed.’ \textit{Manchester Guardian}, ‘Tendencies in Germany’, 9 Oct. 1917. Two days later signs of a mutiny were perceived: ‘The atmosphere of the period in which the mutiny seems to have taken place was marked by two events – the discussions over and the preparations for the Stockholm Conference and the Pope’s first Peace Note. That fact shows the foolish error of those English journalists and public men who assured their compatriots that the Stockholm Conference and the Pope’s Note were “German peace-traps.” Curious varieties of a “German peace-trap” which precipitates a revolutionary movement in the German fleet.’ This was in reference to the mutinies in the Grand Fleet in August 1917. \textit{Manchester Guardian}, ‘The Mutiny’, 9 Oct. 1917.\textsuperscript{1125} Ibid.\textsuperscript{1126} \textit{Daily News}, ‘The Kaiser and Peace’, 22 Sept. 1917.\end{flushright}
indeed was a ‘blunt admission that, in the war of ideas, militarism can no longer
defend itself in the very home of its adoption.’\textsuperscript{1127} However, the editor concluded that
the only way to judge the Kaiser’s sincerity was to question what the Kaiser was
willing to do, in practical terms, to show that he was prepared to accept the
‘preliminary conditions’ upon which alone it is possible to ‘build up the new world of
peace.’\textsuperscript{1128} The \textit{Daily News} also covered British reactions to the new German Note. At
a speech given at the Leeds Coliseum on Wednesday 26 September, Asquith
described the German Reply as teeming with ‘nebulous and unctuous generalities’
which failed to give an assurance that Germany was willing to give Belgium back its
full independence ‘without fetters or reservations.’\textsuperscript{1129} In commenting on Asquith’s
speech, Gardiner acknowledged that a preliminary step for Germany to take for peace,
in the eyes of the Allies, was to renounce the occupied territories of Belgium, Serbia
and Rumania. However, the editor of the \textit{Daily News} was quite alarmed about Asquith
adding the ‘recession to France of Alsace Lorraine’ as a non-negotiable demand
before peace could be contemplated:

\begin{quote}
The wisdom of making this surrender a preliminary even to the
discussions of peace is still debatable on the merest grounds of
expediency. It is fairly certain that such a course means a very
considerable stiffening of the German resistance, a very great weakening
of the power of the growing democratic movement in Germany, and
probably a considerable lengthening of the war and of the loss and misery
it entails to all the belligerent countries, and to France certainly not least…
But the decision should not be taken without due regard to the tremendous
stakes at issue.\textsuperscript{1130}
\end{quote}

On the other hand, the \textit{Star} displayed no such qualms about Asquith’s speech.
Praising the speech as a ‘momentous utterance’ that was ‘statesmanlike in vision,’ the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{1128} Ibid. The full text of the German Reply appeared in this issue. \textit{Daily News}, ‘Germany’s reply to the
\end{flushright}
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_Star_ agreed with Asquith’s description of the Central Powers’ replies as teeming with ‘nebulous and unctuous generalities.’\(^{1131}\) The previous week the _Star_ had declared that the Central Powers’ replies ‘gave no grounds at all for expecting any practical result,’\(^{1132}\) and reported Smuts’ boast that Allied victory was no longer in doubt. Smuts was also reported claiming that the current German thirst for peace was due to it being ‘strangled to death’.\(^{1133}\) However, like Scott and Gardiner, the _Star_ did its best to will a revolution on Germany: ‘How long will the German democracy wear its chains? How long will it die for its Hohenzollerns and Tirpitzes and Hindenburgs? … Will the German democracy join hands with the other democracies and get rid of tinsel Kaiserism?’\(^{1134}\) However, the _Star_ felt compelled to defend Asquith against accusations from the _Nation_ that he was a ‘Never-Endian’ intent on the ‘annihilation of Germany’ or the ‘permanent degradation of the German people.’\(^{1135}\)

Asquith’s Leeds Speech seemed a puzzling development. This speech can be placed in context by reference to the fact that the War Cabinet was at this point engaged in secret discussions regarding a major German peace initiative. The Radical publicists were totally unaware of the Kühlmann peace initiative at the time and did not find out about it until mid-December. Kühlmann’s blundering role in the diplomacy surrounding the Papal Peace appeal can only be understood by acknowledging his determination to launch his own peace move, out of the public

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1131 _Star_, ‘Mr. Asquith’s Speech’, 27 Sept. 1917.
1132 _Star_, ‘The German Reply’, 22 Sept. 1917. Included in the same issue was a short column reminding readers of the Papal Peace Note. It reduced the Note to six key points. _Star_, ‘The Pope’s Proposals’, 22 Sept. 1917. By 29 September, the _Star_ was quite forthright in dismissing the Central Powers’ replies, branding Michaelis’ silence on Belgium as ‘sinister’. The paper also declared: ‘Let the German democracy face the supreme fact that the road to world peace is through Belgium.’ _Star_, ‘The German Reply’, 29 Sept. 1917.
1133 On the military situation, Smuts commented that General Haig’s method of limited offensive was certain but slow. _Star_, ‘Smut’s Tonic for Pessimists’, 18 Sept. 1917. The _Star_ commented on Smut’s view a week later, believing, with him, that the Allies would win, but expressing the view that peace aims needed to be forthrightly stated to promote a change of heart in Germany. _Star_, ‘War and Peace Aims’, 26 Sept. 1917.
1134 Ibid.
1135 Ibid.
gaze. Richard von Kühlmann was the new German Foreign Minister. He believed that Germany had to achieve peace in 1917 and he planned to succeed in this by offering a renunciation of Belgium and a granting of autonomy to Alsace-Lorraine. In return he wanted Germany’s overseas colonies to be returned and a free hand in Russia. The War Cabinet received the Kühlmann offer on 19 September.

Apparently in the discussion that ensued that day, Balfour wanted at least to listen to the German terms, but, along with Milner, Carson, and Smuts, he also wanted to inform Britain’s allies of the peace offer to ensure that Germany did not split the Entente. On the other hand, Lloyd George and Bonar Law wanted to consult the military leadership first to ascertain whether Britain could still win without Russia. However, while Lloyd George was speaking with Haig in France on 26 September, Asquith made his speech at Leeds on opposing peace at Russia’s expense and insisted on adding Alsace-Lorraine to Britain’s war aims. David French has raised the possibility that if Lloyd George had abandoned his ‘knock out’ blow policy at this point to advocate a separate peace with Germany, then his Prime Ministership would have been on the line. The upshot of all this was that at two subsequent meetings

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1138 For discussion of the War Cabinet deliberations, see Ibid., p. 145. Turner asserted that that the offer did not spell out detailed statements of German terms ‘though it was assumed that a satisfactory settlement in the West could be achieved by large concessions to Germany in Russia – a prospect which Lloyd George was quite happy to contemplate’. However, the opinion in the War Cabinet tended against a compromise peace, though Lloyd George wanted an assurance from the military that Germany could be beaten if Russia made a separate peace. Turner, *British Politics and the Great War*, p. 235.
1139 French questions whether Lloyd George really entertained the idea of a separate peace at Russia’s expense. French, *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition*, p. 145. However, the fact that he went to the trouble to go to France and have discussions with Haig and French officials on the matter, indicates compelling evidence for this. See Turner, *British Politics and the Great War*, p. 235.
1140 Asquith was urged to make this speech by Sir Eric Drummond, of the Foreign Office. Drummond wanted to counter German propaganda that the western Allies were about to desert Russia and so encourage Kerensky’s government to keep on fighting. Therefore, Drummond briefed Asquith about the Kühlmann peace offer. French, *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition*, p. 146.
1141 Ibid.
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on 24 and 27 September, the War Cabinet decided against a compromise peace in 1917. Whatever possibility of negotiation survived this was soon liquidated. On 6 October, Balfour informed the allies of Kühlmann’s peace initiative, on 9 October Kühlmann made an angry speech refusing any concessions on Alsace-Lorraine, and on 11 October Lloyd George insisted that Britain would keep fighting until Alsace-Lorraine was liberated. At the time, the Radical publicists expressed amazement when Alsace-Lorraine blew up as a major issue, seemingly out of nowhere. Only later, when the Radical publicists learned that this connected with the Government’s rejection of yet another opportunity for peace, did the speeches on Alsace-Lorraine by Asquith, Kühlmann and Lloyd George make sense. The public learnt about the rejection of the Kühlmann peace initiative on 14 December, well after the fact. However, what the public were never to find out was that the rejection of the Kühlmann offer was the major factor in the decision to allow General Haig to continue with the disastrous Flanders offensive.

Meanwhile, Massingham’s vehement attack on President Wilson’s Reply a few weeks earlier was indicative of a hardening of his resolve to campaign for a negotiated settlement at the earliest opportunity. A contributing factor to the editor of

1142 Turner claimed Milner gave the reason that a peace in 1917 would mean another war in ten years. Ibid. However, Denis Winter has cited problems with the minutes of the crucial War Cabinet meetings of 24 and 27 September 1917. The agenda of these meetings indicate that the German peace offer was discussed but the minutes on the shelves of the Public Record Office relate only to German air raids. Denis Winter, Haig’s Command (London, 1991), pp. 305-306.

1143 French, The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition, p. 147. Winter estimated that the British casualties in the Passchendaele Offensive were much higher than official estimates. He put them at around at least 350,000, though he claimed that most of the statistics for Passchendaele have been withheld from the Public Records Office. Denis Winter, Haig’s Command (London, 1991), pp. 110-113. On Passchendaele, see also R. Pryor and T. Wilson, Passchendaele: The Untold Story (New Haven, 1996).
the Nation’s renewed determination was, of course, the banning of overseas circulation of the Nation for much of 1917. This ban had been instituted in April 1917 and lasted until 19 October. In addition to his conviction about the need for a negotiated settlement, Massingham had also come to the conclusion by this time that Lloyd George was a major impediment to this. Massingham believed that it was now his duty to resist all those who supported a war to the finish. From September, he described these people as ‘Never-Endians’ in the pages of the Nation. On the publication of the Central Power’s replies to the Pope’s Peace Note, Massingham was critical of the ‘Never-Endians’ on the Allied side who ‘accept no political equivalent of a defeat of German militarism which is not attested by a peace of unconditional surrender.’ Like all the other Radical publicists, the Nation was disappointed at the Central Powers’ silence on Belgium but still interpreted the Central Powers’ replies as generally positive. On this point, the Nation was in agreement with the Westminster Gazette. For example, on the Austrian Reply, Massingham questioned whether it could have gone any further in the expression of its desire for peace.

\[1146\] See Common Sense, ‘Freedom of Opinion’, 14 April 1917, and Herald, ‘Suppressing the Nation’, 14 April 1917. The War Department banned the Nation for overseas circulation on 29 April. The reason given for the ban by the Chief Military Censor in May 1917 was that the Nation preached ‘peace by negotiation.’ This decision was reviewed by Cabinet and supported on 16 April, and on 17 April, Lloyd George defended the ban in one of rare appearances in Parliament. Massingham received a flood of support from fellow publicists such as H. G. Wells, G. B. Shaw, G. Loves Dickinson, Arnold Bennett and G. K. Chesterton, as well as the editors J. A. Spender and Robertson Nicoll, T. P. O’Connor, and A. G. Gardiner. Meanwhile, William Buckler at the American Embassy smuggled out copies of the Nation to be sent to President Wilson via Colonel House. Despite the ban on its overseas circulation, the Nation’s circulation increased from 8,300 to 11,000 over 1917. The ban was finally lifted on 19 October 1917. See Havighurst, Radical Journalist: H. W. Massingham, pp. 250-256. On 27 October over fifty letters appeared in the Nation applauding the lifting of the ban. Nation, ‘The Lifting of the Ban’, Letters to the Editor, 27 October 1917. Massingham commented on the lifting of the ban thus: ‘The Government have removed the ban which for six months they have imposed on the export of Liberal opinion abroad.’ Nation, ‘The March of An Idea’, Politics and Affairs, 27 October 1917.

\[1147\] Havighurst, Radical Journalist: H. W. Massingham, p. 257. However, Massingham was more favourably disposed towards General Smuts. See Nation, ‘The Never-Endians’, 22 Sept. 1917.


\[1149\] Ibid.

\[1150\] Nation, ‘Clearing the Road to Peace’, 29 Sept. 1917.
while the ‘Never-Endians’ maintained their attitude that ‘it did not matter what our enemies said so long as it was they who said it.’ The Nation also noted that the majority of the Reichstag was associated with the preparation of the German Reply to the Pope. The fact that they were consulted was in stark contrast with the way the Allies’ reply was drafted by one man in isolation – Wilson. Finally, the Nation was still confident with regard to the Central Powers’ reply to the Pope. If only they would issue a proclamation renouncing Belgium, for ‘the door to peace lies here: the question is whether Germany means to close it or leave it ajar.’

In the pages of Common Sense Hirst was most positive in his attitude to the replies of the Central Powers. Hirst noted that both Austria and Germany were prepared to accept arbitration and disarmament and to submit detailed questions for negotiation. Furthermore, Common Sense observed that Austria’s main concern was

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Ibid. In his critique of Wilson’s Reply this is what Brailsford had predicted would happen. If the Germans did make a satisfactory reply then the cries of ‘No peace with Autocracy’ and ‘No trust in Germany’s word’ would be made. Herald, H. N. Brailsford, ‘What Does Mr. Wilson Mean?’, 8 Sept. 1917. Ramsay MacDonald made a similar point in Forward. He accused the War Cabinet and pro-War newspapers of labelling everything that did not suit them as being ‘pro-German’. MacDonald commented that he one day hoped to write an ‘interesting and humiliating’ book about the revelations that the war had made about the mentality of people. MacDonald provided a list of the objects of the pro-German accusation: President Wilson, the Pope, the Russian Revolution, the Spanish strikers, the South Wales miners, Branting, the International Socialist Movement, the ‘remnant of the Church which remained Christian,’ the ‘British constitution and its attending liberties,’ and the Gospels. Forward, Ramsay MacDonald, ‘A Survey Here and There’, 22 Sept. 1917.

President Wilson’s Reply was ‘a characteristic Wilsonian product drafted in the isolation of his study, with only the advice of House.’ Ritter, The Sword and Scepter, Vol IV, p. 27.

Nation, ‘Clearing the Road to Peace’, 29 Sept. 1917. On this, Chancellor Michaelis defended the lack of a reference to Belgium in a statement reproduced in the 29 September issue of the Manchester Guardian: ‘It is difficult to understand how anyone acquainted with the international situation and international usages could ever believe that we would put ourselves in such a position as, through one-sided public statement on important questions which are indisolubly bound up with the the entire block of questions that are to be discussed at the peace negotiations, to bind ourselves to a solution to the prejudice of ourselves. Any such public statement at the present time could only have a confusing effect and harm German interests…. I must at the present moment, decline to specify our war aims and bind the hands of our negotiators.’ Manchester Guardian, ‘German Chancellor’s Desire to Negotiate With Hands Unbound’, 29 Sept. 1917. Michaelis’ speech was delivered on 28 September 1917. See G. L. Dickinson, ed., Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, pp. 59-60.
to preserve her unity, while Germany’s chief fear was that of economic isolation.\textsuperscript{1154}

Hirst believed that the time was ripe for a statesman to move for peace:

Here is a situation with which statesmanship ought to be competent to deal. In the military sphere the Central Powers are undefeated; but in the economic sphere, which, as General Smuts reminded us the other day, is the decisive sphere in modern war, the Allies hold an overwhelming advantage.\textsuperscript{1155}

It appears that Hirst had shifted his ground from the time of Wilson’s Reply. A month previously Hirst had applauded President Wilson’s rejection of the Papal Peace Note. However, now, on the basis of the Central Powers’ replies, Hirst believed that peace was possible based on Benedict’s peace initiative and the Central Powers’ replies. He was drawn to the same conclusion as many of his colleagues, that if the Allies were assured a final victory due to the economic weapon, and Germany was more receptive to a diplomatic settlement because the economic blockade was working, then the time was right to move for a negotiated peace. The problem was that those favouring a continued prosecution of the war used these same two factors as reasons to push on to ultimate victory.

Meanwhile, the Labour press reacted positively to the Central Powers’ replies also. These were depicted as consistent with the Reichstag Peace Resolution, though again the labour press showed its disappointment that Belgium was not mentioned. In the \textit{Herald}, Henry Brailsford asserted that Germany and Austria’s desire for arbitration, disarmament and a conference were indicative of Prussian militarism being ‘destroyed’. The publicist agreed that Germany’s failure to mention Belgium was disappointing but noted its professed desire to find a practical basis for a just and lasting peace based on the Reichstag Resolution.\textsuperscript{1156} Brailsford found it quite

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1154} \textit{Common Sense}, ‘Austria, Germany and the Pope’, 29 Sept. 1917.
  \item \textsuperscript{1155} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{1156} \textit{Herald}, H. N. Brailsford, ‘The End of Militarism’, 29 Sept. 1917.
\end{itemize}
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reasonable for Germany to withhold making announcements in advance. Belgium, after all, was a pawn, along with the other occupied territories, with which the Germans would wish to negotiate. The Allies, similarly, had their pawns to negotiate with, namely, the German colonies and the ability to strangle the German economy by closing it off from world markets and supplies of raw materials. Brailsford reasoned:

Germany holds Belgium. We hold cotton, rubber, tin and oil. It is idle for us to expect that Germany will abandon the military assets which are her only weapons in a bargain save on the understanding that we will drop the tremendous economic weapons with which our sea-power has armed us. 1157

Brailsford used this opportunity to again reiterate what he and others had been arguing for some time, that is, that the economic weapon that the Allies possessed could be used to secure a good peace immediately. 1158 Nevertheless, though Brailsford understood Germany’s failure to mention Belgium, he regretted it ‘profoundly.’ 1159

According to Brailsford, the diplomacy on this point was not over yet: ‘The Reichstag may have something yet to say which may induce Dr. Michaelis to define his position more clearly’ and hopefully, ‘the Pope may yet have a part to play.’ 1160 However, Brailsford argued that the Allies needed to play their part: ‘All these forces will fail unless our own democracy will do its part. If it [the German government] allows itself to adopt the view of our war-at-any-price party, that arbitration and disarmament are nothing, the hope of the world is gone.’ 1161 In the same issue of the Herald, Lansbury was in agreement with Brailsford in his disappointment that the German Reply did not specifically mention the renunciation of territories: ‘It means the loss of another great opportunity for shortening the war, and for encouraging those in the countries of the

1157 Ibid.
1158 ‘So far, General Smuts is the only British statesman who has ever hinted that we are using the economic weapon as an instrument of pressure to attain a good peace.’ Ibid.
1159 Ibid.
1160 Ibid.
1161 Ibid.
Allies who are hoping for a reasonable negotiated peace.'

In parallel with Brailsford, Lansbury stressed that the German government had placed itself in agreement with the Reichstag Resolution, which contained the ‘no annexations, no indemnities’ formula, thus implying a renunciation of Belgium. Similarly, on the general questions, Lansbury found the German Reply ‘encouraging’ and noted many similarities with Wilson’s reply to the Pope. Lansbury reasoned that, overall, the Pope’s peace initiative had been beneficial:

If the world can survive the war there is hope of a better international order in the years to come, since all the chief belligerents have now expressed themselves in favour of the fundamental principles upon which such an order must be founded. In comparison with this result all minor territorial questions are of little importance, and public opinion in Germany is such that Belgium could no longer be made an obstacle. The problem for the world now is to bring the war to an end before civilisation has perished.

In the same way, the Labour Leader had held high hopes in mid-September for the imminent replies to the Pope from the Central Powers, particularly as it was assumed that these would involve a guarantee to evacuate Belgium. The Labour Leader reacting to positive predictions; declared that, ‘if these reports prove true, as we pray they may, we prophesy that there will be no barriers strong enough to withstand an awakened people’s will to peace.’ When the Central Powers Replies to the Pope were released, the Labour Leader declared them a ‘big step towards peace,’ while deploring the absence of concrete terms on Belgium. Based on
the agreement to general principles such as disarmament and arbitration, the newspaper urged the Allied governments to see the Central Powers’ replies as an opportunity for negotiation:

Surely a propitiatory advance does not call for a stupid and senseless sneer, but for a genuine effort to make the most of it. In this adhesion to general principles we have the opportunity for negotiation, if our statesmen are not more concerned about the chances of territorial plunder than about the desperate need of humanity.\(^{1167}\)

The *Labour Leader* assumed that in the Allied governments’ reply to the Pope there would be some encouragement to German moderates; the paper pleaded that the Allies should not indulge in ‘crushing heroics’ which only ‘assist the evil elements’ in the German government to make another bid to rally the German people behind ‘iron militarism’.\(^{1168}\) However, there was a note of despair in the *Labour Leader’s* assessment of the situation:

Our fight-to-a-finishers have a terrible responsibility upon their shoulders. The only hope for civilisation is that, in every country, the people take the work of making peace out of the hands of the power-drunk Imperialist few whose mad and conflicting ambitions made and now prolong the war.\(^{1169}\)

On this point, the *Labour Leader* believed that the Entente governments, no less than the Central Powers’ governments, would act reasonably if they were forced to do so by their people. On this score, the *Labour Leader* was confident that perhaps the British Labour Party would make a definite stand for a reasonable reply to the Pope, and that if it did, it would find unexpected support from a large section of the Liberal Party.\(^{1170}\) So, as far as the *Labour Leader* was concerned, everything now hinged on an Allied reply to the Papal Peace Note. This was also the view of the Pope, who was reported to be waiting on an Allied reply after which he would address a ‘second

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\(^{1168}\) Ibid.


\(^{1170}\) *Labour Leader*, International Notes, 27 Sept.1917
Note’ to all the belligerents, looking for general agreement on the common principles from all the replies, and from here, to open up ‘friendly discussion’ on specific questions.\footnote{Labour Leader, ‘The Pope and a People’s Peace’, Review of the Week, 27 Sept. 1917. The view, held by both the Labour Leader and the Pope, that everything hinged on an Allied Reply to the Vatican’s diplomatic efforts, is supported by Johnson: ‘Had however, the Allies made an honest declaration of their willingness to conclude a moderate peace, the Pope’s efforts in Berlin and Vienna would certainly have led to very different results.’ Johnson, Vatican Diplomacy in the World War, p. 35.}

None of the Radical publicists were totally pleased with the Central Powers’ replies to the Papal Peace Note.\footnote{Historians have agreed that the failure to mention Belgium in the replies to the Pope was a mistake. Epstein has argued that Kühlmann’s manoeuvrings on the German side played a large part in the failure of the papal peace initiative. Klaus Epstein, Matthias Erzberger and the Dilemma of German Democracy (New York, 1971), p. 221. Ritter agreed with Epstein. He saw that Germany’s failure to give a swift acceptance to the Papal Note meant that they lost a chance for Germany to deliver a propaganda coup, and he analysed the reasons for Kuhlmann’s strategy to explain this failure. Gerhard Ritter, The Sword and the Scepter. Vol. IV, pp. 31-35. Hans Gatzke explained this failure of Germany to capitalise on its reply to the Pope as being due to the decision of Michaelis and Kühlmann to rely on the latter’s secretive contacts with Britain rather than on the mediation of the Vatican. The restitution of Belgium was to be the ‘bait’ that Kuhlmann intended using in his secret negotiations with Britain. This, said Gatzke, was why the answer to the Papal Note ‘had to be treated in a dilatory fashion’ or ‘framed as vaguely as possible.’ Gatzke, Germany’s Drive to the West, p. 224. Crosby saw hope not in Michaelis’ ambiguous German reply, but in the Austrian reply which stressed unqualified approval of the Pope’s disarmament and arbitration proposals. This was followed up by Czernin’s 2 October speech in which he again stressed the idea of disarmament which ‘was as basic to this speech as it was to Pope Benedict’s note’. Crosby, Disarmament and Peace and in Britain Politics 1914-1919, p. 50. Johnson agreed that the Austrian reply of 20 September was much more conciliatory. Johnson looked much more favourably on the quality of the Central Powers’ replies to the Pope: ‘The Quadruple Alliance, however, [showed] a punctilious correctness in its relations with the Holy See, which was lacking in the opposing groups. Even its minor members, Turkey and Bulgaria, sent replies to the Vatican.’ Johnson, Vatican Diplomacy in the World War, pp. 34-35.} They all believed that the omission of any mention of Belgium was a mistake. But they also agreed that the language of the German Reply was conciliatory and was perhaps an indication of popular pressure being placed on the German government by its people and also of the fact that the economic weapon was beginning to bite. At this point, the Radical publicists diverged in their thinking once again. The ‘holy war’ Radical publicists, like Scott and Gardiner, based their argument on the assumption that the combination of President Wilson’s appeal over the heads of the German rulers with America’s rapidly expanding military power would lead to a revolution in Germany in the near future. In contrast, Massingham,
Snowden, Brailsford and Lansbury based their approach on the assumption that appealing over the heads of the German rulers would only weaken the moderates and strengthen the extremists in Germany, in making the democrats more vulnerable to the ‘traitor’ smear. Secondly, according to Massingham and his colleagues, the fact that the Allies were increasing their leverage with the economic weapon was all the more reason to use it at the peace table, along with the Allied possession of the German colonies, as crucial bargaining chips. However, in the view of the ‘holy war’ Radicals, the onus was on the governments of the Central Powers to offer concrete guarantees, such as the renunciation of Belgium, or for the people of Austria and Germany in particular to take things into their own hands and change their governments. Massingham, Brailsford, Snowden, Lansbury and their American colleagues such as Bourne, Weyl and Sayre, hotly contested this point. Yet these progressives realised that the Wilsonian strategy was pivotal on just this expectation. Massingham and his colleagues still hoped for positive developments within Germany but felt that the Allied leaders also had to play their role in advancing the cause of peace by clarity and moderation in their statements, for example, by making an official reply to the Papal Peace Note. Massingham and his colleagues still believed there was reasonable hope for a peace settlement before the New Year, despite their grave reservations about whether the Lloyd George government had either the statesmanlike qualities or the political will to exploit the current round of peace parleys.

The Radical publicists had split into two camps by the beginning of October 1917. The ‘holy war’ publicists were willing to place their trust in Woodrow Wilson’s strategy and their expectations for the future in the growing impact of American economic and military might on the war. On the other hand, the ‘peace-by-
negotiation’ publicists, Massingham, Snowden, Lansbury and Brailsford had concluded that Wilson’s strategy was flawed and made an early-negotiated peace less likely, and, as a consequence, placed the progressive vision for a just and lasting peace in jeopardy. The differences between these groups must not be over-emphasised, however. Though there was deep division in the ranks of the Radical publicists over the new Wilsonian strategy, there was still agreement over other matters such as the desirability of a non-punitive peace, the establishment of a League of Nations with Germany as a member, and disdain for the ‘jingo press’. Despite their differences over American strategy, as a whole, the Radical publicists’ hopes for an early end to the carnage were sustained over the following months by a number of factors. Firstly, the flame of the Papal peace initiative of August still flickered through the Autumn of 1917. It was kept alive by Benedict XV’s continued probing of the Allies and Central Powers, by the expectation that an Allied reply would be made, and by the Kühlmann peace offer. Secondly, the Radical publicists monitored the internal politics of Germany for signs of either a popular clamour for peace or for a greater willingness on behalf of the German leadership to make dramatic concessions. The fall of Chancellor Michaelis in late October was but one indication of the intensifying political crisis inside Germany. Thirdly, Austria increasingly appeared to be much more willing than its coalition partner to consider an early peace.

Henry Massingham gave expression to Radical hopes on the first weekend in October 1917. Despite his obvious disappointment at the replies of the Central Powers, and his sense that the German ‘peace offensive’ might be over, he still had reason to be optimistic that peace was possible in the next few months. The three

1173 Britain, France, Italy and Russia had made no reply of their own to the Papal Peace Note. Only the Americans had replied and there was an expectation that each Allied nation might make a separate reply to the Pope in the same way that the Central Powers had.
1174 On the fall of Michaelis, see Gatzke, Germany's Drive to the West, pp. 195-197.
bases for his confidence were the ‘action of the Pope’, the ‘policy of America’ and the ‘marked difference between the tone of German and Austrian policy.’ Massingham was referring to rumours of a second Papal Note. Johnson has argued that the Vatican ‘worked tirelessly to keep peace discussion going.’ However, the Allies did not welcome the prospect of a second Papal Note. The Second Papal Peace Note arrived in Britain sometime after 2 October. It was addressed to Lloyd George and enclosed were the German and Austrian replies to the Papal Peace Note of August. The Note expressed the hope that the enclosed replies still left the door open for an exchange of ideas and offered the Vatican’s assistance in gaining any further explanations or precise definitions from the Central Powers. An unofficial summary of the Second Papal Note – but not the official text – then appeared in the British press in the first week of October. Meanwhile, the Nation and Labour Leader commented on the impact of the debate over the Papal Peace Note on politics in Germany, and both papers were buoyed by Austrian Foreign Minister Czernin’s

1175 Events of the Week, 6 Oct. 1917.
1176 The text of this Second Papal Note was never officially revealed. Crosby, Disarmament and Peace in Britain Politics, p. 35. Crosby is not precise. She notes that ‘a few days after 2 October’ the Pope sent a note to Lloyd George. Johnson said that the Note was handed to Count de Salis, at the Vatican, with the replies of the Central Powers. See Johnson, Vatican Diplomacy in the World War, p. 35. However, on 3 October a ‘substantially accurate summary of the Pope’s note’ was published in the Times. There is some confusion over who was the actual author, either the Pope, or Cardinal Gasparri. See Crosby, Disarmament and Peace, pp. 50, 51; and Johnson, Vatican Diplomacy in the World War, p. 26. The Times had no doubt as to how to receive the Second Papal Note: ‘There is no place for compromise .... The choice for both sides is surrender or defeat. There can be no halfway house.’ Crosby, Disarmament and Peace, p. 50. According to the Times the Pope’s ‘Second Note’ suggested the abolition of conscription, commercial boycotts against violations of the peace, and an international tribunal to determine whether violations had been committed. Crosby commented, however, that despite the unfortunate reception given to the ‘Second Papal Note’, its arrival was timely due to the Pope’s emphasis on disarmament at a time when it was just being given prominence in public discussion, such as in General Smuts’ speech on 24 October. Ibid., p. 51.
1177 Johnson, Vatican Diplomacy in the World War, p. 105.
1178 Ibid.
1179 Johnson, Vatican Diplomacy in the World War, p. 35.
1180 The Nation was hopeful about the Second Papal Note. Nation, Events of the Week, 6 Oct. 1917. The Star was pessimistic. On Pope’s second Note addressed to the Allied powers interpreting the reply from the Central Powers: ‘The civilised world is not deeply interested in any conjectural reading of an obscure German text, even though it may come from the Vatican itself.’ Star, ‘Conversations: Not Verbal Notes’, What We Think, 3 Oct 1917.
pronouncements. On Czernin, Massingham wrote that, ‘neither his language nor his spirit is distinguishable from Mr. Asquith’s or Mr. Wilson’s or Lord Grey’s, or from that of any statesman in the Entente whose intellect and character command.’

Snowden was similarly impressed with Czernin’s recent speech on disarmament:

This declaration, taken in conjunction with the references to the same subject contained in the German reply to the Papal Note, is the most encouraging incident which has transpired in connection with peace suggestions since the outbreak of the war.

However, Massingham warned that though Czernin was sincere he was now being abused by the ‘jingo’ elements in the German press. Massingham was dismayed that no one on the Allied side was willing to stick his neck out to consider a negotiated peace in the way Czernin had done so. Again, Massingham lamented what he saw as the lack of a real statesman on the Allied side:

Is it not high time that a reasonable statesman in the Entente countries made some sympathetic reply to this eloquent endorsement of principles which the Allies have professed to regard as their own? He could do it without yielding an inch on the concrete conditions of peace, and he would thereby disarm in advance the anti-English propaganda which Germany will derive from our silence.

Meanwhile, Massingham feared that the ‘jingo’ elements in Britain, particularly Lloyd George and Northcliffe, were dampening peace talk. The Nation’s editor had little good to say of Asquith’s speech, a few weeks earlier, which added Alsace Lorraine to the Allies’ war aims. This was a blunder, according to Massingham. He despaired that British leaders were being led by the ‘pro-war press’, which had the ‘the brains and the morals of a perverted child.’

\textsuperscript{1182} Common Sense, ‘Austria’s Peace Program’, 6 Oct. 1917.
\textsuperscript{1183} Nation, Events of the Week, 6 Oct. 1917.
\textsuperscript{1185} Nation, Events of the Week, 6 Oct. 1917.
\textsuperscript{1185} Nation, A London Diary, 13 Oct. 1917.
Meanwhile, Gardiner reported President Wilson’s declaration of 9 October that the war would continue until Germany was beaten. Wilson described talk of an early peace before Germany was defeated as evidence of misdirected thought, and ‘he urged every American to work hard to assist the Government in the task of helping the Allies to defeat a common enemy.’ Gardiner stated approvingly that, now that Congress had adjourned, the President would be chiefly ‘occupied in directing war preparations and supervising legislation mobilising resources of the country, and will make as few speeches as possible.’ Gardiner was far more willing to place his faith in American strategy at this time, than was Massingham. A week later, Massingham gave vent to his anger towards all those who wanted to keep the war going:

> For the Never-Endians lose no chance of recording their resolve to ignore and rebuff every approach to a settlement which fails to yield them the new map of Europe they want.

However, despite the Allied leaders’ determination to continue to shun any peace discussions, the ‘peace-by-negotiation’ Radicals kept up the pressure on the Lloyd George Government over its failure to respond to either the socialist or Vatican peace offensives.

1187 Ibid.
1188 Ibid. In addition, the fact that the sons of so many members of Wilson’s Cabinet decided to enlist, made an impression on Gardiner. ‘An excellent impression has been created in the training camps by the announcement that nine sons of Cabinet officers have joined American fighting forces. Mr. Secretary Daniels has a son who is a private in the Marines, and three other sons of Ministers have also enlisted as privates. Mr Secretary Wilson, of the Department of Labour, holds the record with three sons in training, two as junior lieutenants and the third a corporal in the Field Artillery.’ See Fleming for an account of some of these sons. However, Fleming has recounted the military careers of these sons and found only sadness in the fate that eventually awaited them. See Fleming, *The Illusion of Victory*, pp. 145-7, 155, 199, 204, 234-5, 329, 489. Also, the fate of ordinary soldiers was little better, with 38,000 dying in training camps in America. Ibid., p. 307.
1189 *Nation*, ‘Endians and Never-Endians’, Politics and Affairs, 13 Oct. 1917. A week later, Lloyd George gave a speech at Albert Hall, in which he ruled out an early peace. Lloyd George declared that ‘there could be no peace until the shrine of the war spirit in Potsdam had been shattered and its priesthood dispersed and discredited forever.’ *Daily News*, ‘No Peace Yet’, 23 Oct. 1917.
Speculation and rumour about whether there would or should be a British reply to the Papal Peace Note lingered on into November. On 19 October, the *Daily News* confirmed suspicions that President Wilson’s reply to the Pope, on 27 August, was not the result of consultation with the Allies. In Parliament, Lord Robert Cecil denied there had been any secret negotiations made by or through the Vatican. On war aims, Cecil promised that there would be an Allied Conference but he could not say when.\(^{1190}\) Meanwhile, the Vatican’s on-going diplomacy revealed Rome’s deep disappointment that there were no replies from the Entente to the Pope’s two notes. Seizing the initiative again, the Vatican did all it could to kick-start the peace process. Monsignor Marchetti, the papal agent in Switzerland, in a confidential communication with the British government, asked what answer the Allies, and particularly Britain, intended to make. Marchetti believed that if the Allies accepted some of the Pope’s suggestions then the Central Powers would be ‘willing to make any large concessions.’\(^{1191}\) Marchetti argued that if the Allies made a statement saying they were willing to consider the peace proposals then this would strengthen progressive forces in Germany. Also, significantly, Marchetti stated that, ‘if we could drop our attacks on the dynasty, Hindenburg and the other advocates of a war policy would no longer be able to resist the pressure of the more moderate parties.’\(^{1192}\) Like Massingham, Snowden and Brailsford, Marchetti too believed that Wilson’s strategy of appealing over the heads of the German rulers was misguided and only prolonged the war. Marchetti put it this way:

President Wilson’s cry of ‘no peace with the Hohenzollerns’ was in reality only calculated to make the Germans more stubborn; no people, least of

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\(^{1192}\) Ibid.
Marchetti was hopeful that negotiations could still be commenced. He argued that ‘if the Allies would only return a reply to the Papal note on the lines he suggested, he thought that the Belgium question would not provide difficulty.’ However, Marchetti’s pleas to the British Government on this issue went unheeded.

It was in this setting that the Radicals turned again to the House of Commons and used a debate on war aims on 6 November 1917 to voice their intensifying concern over lost opportunities for peace. It had been some weeks since Lord Robert Cecil had promised a conference on war aims. MacDonald argued that while peace should not be made simply on the basis of war weariness, ‘we do not want to drift’. Further, he said that if they wanted democracy in Germany, then the British government needed to seize the initiative and take steps towards this end. Despite the Radicals being joined in this debate by the moderate Liberal, Runciman, they lost heavily.

Foreign Minister Balfour stuck wearily to the Government’s line, arguing that there was nothing in the replies of the Central Powers to the Pope that offered any basis for the British government taking the initiative. However, reports of the continuing effects of the Papal Note in Germany kept surfacing. The Nation speculated on the policy of the new Chancellor, the Catholic Centre Party’s Count Hertling, who had replaced Michaelis in late October as a consequence of much agitation in the Reichstag on the issues of democratisation of the Prussian suffrage as well as annexationism. The Nation suggested that Hertling may have been privy to the Pope’s
peace move since it was well known that he was sympathetic to the Catholic Peace Movement. On 8 November, it was reported that the new Chancellor’s foreign policy was to seek a ‘negotiated peace on the lines of the Reichstag’s peace resolution and the German reply to the Pope.’ Snowden concluded that the German Reichstag possessed more control over the selection of ministers than was possessed by the British House of Commons. However, nearing the end of the month of November, there was still little sign that anything would come of any of the diplomatic initiatives of the Pope or of Kühlmann. Beyond the old diplomacy, of course, there had been one astonishing development – the seizure of power by Lenin’s Bolsheviks in Petrograd on the night of 7-8 November. This had been followed immediately by the announcement that Lenin’s Government would seek an armistice with Germany, which the Bolsheviks claimed would be the first step to a general peace. Initially, at least, British Radicals saw that the Bolshevik Revolution had only worsened matters. On a personal level, the continued imprisonment of E. D. Morel, was disappointing. MacDonald confided in Helena Swanwick: ‘I feel a return of the swinging tide but the water under us is still very shallow and the channels are badly

1199 Nation, Events of the Week, 3 Nov. 1917.
1201 The Labour Leader also claimed that one of the Reichstag’s conditions for the appointment of Hertling as Chancellor was that Germany’s foreign policy be conducted along the lines of the German reply to the Pope. Labour Leader, ‘The German Chancellorship’, 15 Nov. 1917.
1202 Morel was given six months jail in September for sending a copy of the Nation to a friend in Switzerland. Star, ‘Gaol for Morel: Six Months in the Second Division’, 4 Sept. 1917. The Nation described the sentence as out of proportion. Nation, Events of the Week, 8 Sept. 1917, while Hirst criticised the hypocrisy of the ‘Yellow Press’ in criticising the gaoling of the German dissident, Liebknecht, but not Morel’s. Common Sense, ‘Mr. E. D. Morel’s Sentence’, 8 Sept. 1917. The Herald claimed that Morel was targeted because of his association with the U. D. C. Herald, ‘E. D. Morel’, 16 Sept. 1917. On 22 Sept. 1917, there was a short article about Morel’s failed appeal but at least he could now sleep on a bed instead of a plank. Star, ‘Mr. E. D. Morel’, 22 Sept. 1917. The Radical publicists kept up the reporting about Morel in gaol with concern for his welfare. Morel received high praise from Commander Wedgwood in a speech in the Commons, which was reported in the Labour Leader. Labour Leader, ‘E. D. Morel in the House of Commons’, 15 Nov. 1917. Also, see Swartz, Union of Democratic Control, pp. 178-180.
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silted up with prejudice.’ Ramsay MacDonald to Helena Swanwick, 17 Nov. 1917, Swanwick Papers, Box 1.

Lansbury too, was quite depressed over the fall of Russia to the Bolsheviks and the missed opportunity of the Papal Peace Note:

Over and over again our governors have refused to accept a democratic and international formula for peace such as was recently proposed by the Pope… Our persistent refusal has disastrously weakened our cause in Russia and Italy.

As far as Lansbury was concerned, Britain’s rulers were as hopeless at making war as they were at making peace.

Just when it seemed that Benedict XV’s peace initiative had run its course, it was revived in the last major war aims debate in the House of Commons for 1917, on 19 December. It was the Bolshevik’s release of the Allies’ secret treaties, first published in the Russian newspaper, 

I argvia on 28 November 1917, which sparked debate again on the Papal Peace Note. Phillip Morrell was one of a number of Radicals who participated in the major war-aims debate. As Morrell reminded the House, no answer had been made to the Papal Peace Note by any leading statesman in Britain. This was shameful, he asserted, for the Pope’s proposals were a genuine chance for peace: ‘The Pope’s letter, even if one could not agree with it altogether, did offer some hope of getting a conference between the nations, and it did lay down some elements of a lasting and honourable peace.’ Morrell further argued that the Papal Note had been absolutely clear on the restoration of Belgium. Recalling the lost opportunity for peace of the proposed Stockholm Conference, Morrell complained that ‘it was an outrageous thing that the second great opportunity that this Government has had since they came into office, should have been entirely passed by,


Ibid.

In the Commons, Mr. King asked if there were a secret clause in the Pact of London, in which Britain would support Italy in opposing any peacemaking initiatives by the Vatican. Johnson, Vatican Diplomacy in the World War, p. 37. Forster argued that this indeed was the reason that the British government did not reply to the Papal Peace Note. Forster, The Failures of Peace, pp. 131-132.

H. of C. Debs., Consolidated Fund Bill, Third Reading, Column 2063, 19 Dec., 1917.
Morrell depicted the Papal Note as yet another tragic missed chance for a compromise peace. Morrell reminded the House that the Lloyd George Government had reacted with arrogance and hostility not only to Stockholm and the Papal Peace Note, but also to Czernin’s bold speech in response to the Pope’s Note, and to Lord Lansdowne’s recent public letter calling for a moderation of Allied war aims (to be discussed below). Morrell concluded: ‘There we have had four opportunities, which hitherto have been missed, of making a full statement [of war aims].’ In the same debate, Arthur Ponsonby accused the Lloyd George government of hiding behind Wilson’s Reply to the Pope. Ponsonby, like Morrell, believed that Britain’s failure to respond to the Papal Peace Note in any significant way was part of a broader pattern of failure on the part of the British Government to either explore the possibility of a negotiated peace or to revise war aims. On both counts it was a case of a failure of political vision.

What this speech demonstrated was that, four months after the Papal Note was issued, it was still seen by many of the Radical publicists as a critically important opportunity in the diplomacy of the war that had been poorly handled by their Government, to say the least. Also, it emerged clearly that one of the reasons for the British failure to deal successfully with events like the Papal Note or Stockholm was

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1208 Ibid.
1209 Ibid., Column 2064, 19 Dec. 1917.
1210 Ibid., Column 2065, 6 Nov. 1917.
1211 Ibid., Column 2006, 6 Nov. 1917.
1212 Disquiet over the drift over war aims was also apparent in the War Cabinet. Lord Milner told William Buckler on 2 November 1917 that British diplomacy had been ‘deplorably weak’. There had been all kinds of German offers of negotiation from Germany, yet they all got the same reaction, an absurd outcry of ‘peace trap’ and an insinuation that Britain was about to betray an ally. In regard to President Wilson’s Reply, he was inclined to wish that ‘the President had not insisted so strongly upon what amounted to a revolution in Germany,’ which he believed was ‘an event almost impossible to bring about during a war.’ Buckler passed the details of this conversation on to Colonel House, who passed it on to President Wilson describing it as ‘an extraordinary memorandum which Buckler has sent me…. If this memorandum gets out it would be the undoing of Milner.’ E. M. House with Enclosure, 9 Nov. 1917, PWW, Vol. 44, pp. 546-549.
the Government’s failure to develop clearly defined war aims of its own. However, Balfour’s indignant response demonstrated the Government’s sensitivity to the accusation that they had hidden insincerely behind Wilson’s reply to the Pope and had dodged the task of making a reply of their own in a clear a manner as the Central Powers had done.1213 These two aspects of the Papal peace initiative were indeed to be a cause of much unease in the Allied camp. According to Laurence Martin, the disastrous news of the Bolshevik seizure of power and the Italian defeat at Caporetto,1214 meant that conditions were becoming less conducive for the Radical publicists to push for war aims revisions because Germany was less likely to be in a moderate mood during times of military success.1215

From the beginning of November 1917 – and notwithstanding Lenin’s talk of a general peace – the Radical publicists observed gloomily that the tide was probably turning against the prospect of early peace. On 11 November, Henry Brailsford returned from Dublin, in an anxious state of mind, and wrote to Lady Courtney:

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1213 See Nation, ‘Events of the Week’, 22 Dec. 1917. The Nation described the debate as one where Sir William Collins and Arthur Ponsonby put Balfour on the defensive over war aims.

1214 After the German General von Below launched an Austro-German attack on the Italian front on 24 October 1917, the Italian armies suffered enormous losses and were in full retreat. According to Johnson, it was a claim commonly made in nationalist circles in Italy that the ‘Vatican and the socialists had contributed to the debacle.’ Johnson, Vatican Diplomacy in the World War, p. 113-114.

1215 Martin, Peace Without Victory, p. 147. In regard to the Vatican’s peace efforts, Johnson argued that after Caporetto the Pope considered another peace move to get the Central Powers to renounce annexations in Italy: ‘The Allies and the Americans were worried lest the Vatican use this opportunity to issue a new peace proposal similar to that of 1 August. They could not refuse to consider it – in view of Russia’s withdrawal from the war, Italy’s war weariness and the prospects of Austria’s leaving the war. Furthermore, they would have had to announce their war aims publicly.’ Johnson argued too, that the Central Powers no longer welcomed a papal initiative because ‘the military and political situation seemed very promising, especially to Germany. With Russia out of the war, with Italy shaken and hardly able to hold its own, and with the U. S. divisions arriving slowly on the battlefields, papal action was hardly desirable.’ Hertling directly informed the Vatican that it would not be convenient for the Holy See to launch a new bid for peace. Thus, the German government ‘crushed anew the pope’s ambitions to mediate and forced the Vatican to abandon its efforts.’ By the end of the year, Benedict’s vigour and will were sapped and the restrictions detailed in the recently revealed Article XV of the Pact of London served to temper Benedict’s zeal. Johnson, Vatican Diplomacy in the World War, p. 114-115.
Can I come and see Lord Courtney? What I saw and heard in Dublin filled me with anxiety. Every preparation including tanks, poison gas, and aeroplanes, had been made for a fresh rising.... To come home from this to the news of the Russian catastrophe was to abandon all faith in human sanity.\textsuperscript{1216}

Though the situation in Russia had been foreseen, the \textit{Daily News} could hardly conceal its shock over the Bolshevik seizure of power. Gardiner felt that the Allies were partly to blame. Kerensky fought marvellously, but his appeal for an Allied conference on war aims was disregarded and Henderson, who had just visited Russia, was then thrown out of the war cabinet. As a consequence, the Allied position was now so weak that the editor hoped that the ‘worst that can be feared will not be realised.’\textsuperscript{1217} The upshot of the coup in Russia and the debacle in Italy, according to Gardiner’s editorial, was that the burden of the War would fall more heavily on Britain, France and the United States. The obvious implication now was the ‘duration of the war would seem to be indefinitely prolonged.’\textsuperscript{1218} A few weeks later, the \textit{Daily News} could afford to be more confident. Gardiner wrote that there was a ‘bulwark of confidence’ in the fact that the Allied cause had behind it the ‘resources of the greatest potentiality in the world,’ even though there had been great problems in America which had delayed the moment of her making an impact at the front at this stage.\textsuperscript{1219} What was more, the ‘sacrifices’ of the war were not in vain because they had achieved the full reconciliation of ‘the two great English-speaking families.’ Furthermore, it was ‘the great statesman’, President Wilson, ‘who, with so much wisdom, so much courage and so much eloquence has brought his country into this mighty adventure for freedom. The peace that the world wants is the peace that he has so harmoniously set

\textsuperscript{1216} H. N. Brailsford to Lady Courtney, 11 Nov. 1917, Courtney Papers, XII.
\textsuperscript{1217} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1218} \textit{Daily News}, ‘M. Kerensky’s Fall’, Editorial, 9 Nov. 1917.
\textsuperscript{1219} \textit{Daily News}, ‘America and the War’, Editorial, 21 Nov. 1917.
before us.’ While Alfred Gardiner found refuge from the gloomy outlook by snuggling securely in the arms of America, C. P. Scott could not conceal his disappointment in the Allies’ failure to assist the Kerensky government in the summer of 1917 by agreeing to Stockholm. This had played into the hands of the ‘pro-Germans and anarchists’ in Russia who ‘saw their chance’, argued the Manchester Guardian editor. It was all a rather sorry episode in British diplomacy, according to Scott:

> Our record as a nation in this matter of sympathy with democratic movements is very strange. People that sit in political darkness look upon us as a great light. To Russian revolutionists we always seemed the promised land of liberty, [but to the Revolution] England as a whole appeared deaf and blind. The official attitude was cold and repellent. No effort was made to maintain a common understanding about war aims or to assist the revolutionary Government in its dealings with extremists and pro-Germans.

Scott found it harder than Gardiner to place his hopes in America. Similarly, the Westminster Gazette thought that if the Allies had either supported Stockholm or agreed to Russian requests to revise war aims, the ‘danger might still have been averted.’ Spender too lamented the fact that the Allies had vetoed Stockholm, fobbed off Russian requests for a revision of war aims, and left it to President Wilson to answer the Pope, thus giving the Russians nothing and losing them to German diplomatic moves. In the meantime Spender urged his reader to be of good courage despite what was happening in Italy and Russia, and, to remember that ‘if worst came to worst, Great Britain, France, and America, with their unshaken sea-power and their tremendous resources, would still be able to bring down the German

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1220 Ibid.
1222 Ibid.
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dream of conquest to nought.” M. Phillips Price, the correspondent for the Manchester Guardian in Petrograd, believed that the main cause of the fall of the Kerensky government was the failure of the Allies to agree to a reconsideration of war aims.

Francis Hirst was even more uncompromising and critical, seeing in the downfall of the Kerensky government vindication of the Radicals’ criticism of the ‘knock-out blow’ policy of the Lloyd George government. He reminded readers of some of the things Lloyd George had said in his now infamous, knockout-blow speech of 29 September 1916. He repeated some of the phrases Lloyd George had used, such as: ‘The sporting spirit would animate Britain to the last’, and, ‘We are game dogs and certain to win’, and that Russia ‘will go through to the death.’ This speech had been received by the London Press with ‘rapture and acquiescence’ while it was an open secret that many of Lloyd George’s colleagues, who had desired peace negotiations in late 1916, kept their views to themselves. Hirst believed that he and a number of Radicals had been shown to be right in their analysis of the Lloyd George government’s approach:

We thought then, and we think now, that Mr. Lloyd George’s adoption of the Northcliffe Press programme was a misfortune for the Allies and calamity for the world. It was based, no doubt, upon a series of miscalculations. We do not impugn his patriotism any more than he would impugn that of Lord Lansdowne or Lord Loreburn. He misjudged the result of Roumania’s intervention; he misjudged altogether the position in Russia; and he also misjudged, most grievously, we think, the effect upon the moral of Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey of his announcement that we were determined to smash them up before dictating terms of peace.

1225 Westminster Gazette, ‘The Leninites and the Allies’, 9 Nov. 1917. Even if there were a separate peace, the Allies would still have won if they had the will and the control of the seas. ‘The foundation of their strength is in the command of the sea. Upon this is built both their military and their economic strength.’ Westminster Gazette, ‘Russia and the Allies’, 24 Nov. 1917
1227 Common Sense, ‘The Diplomacy of the Knock-Out Blow’, 10 Nov. 1917
1228 Ibid.
1229 Ibid.
Therefore, Hirst called for a repudiation of the ‘knock-out blow’ policy, which included the implied aim of the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. Secondly, a different type of statesmanship was needed because ‘evasion, insincerity, [and] unfounded optimism’ were qualities which could never bring a ‘secure’, and ‘an honourable peace’.\(^{1230}\)

The *Nation* was substantially in agreement with *Common Sense*, believing that a blight had fallen on Britain’s promise to establish ‘a noble and helpful relationship with emancipated Russia’.\(^{1231}\) Massingham saw the pro-war ‘patriotic’ press as the main culprits in having made plain their hostility to Russia’s new Government virtually from March 1917: ‘Hardly was a revolutionary Government installed in Petrograd than the *Times* and its satellites and the *Morning Post* and its imitators set themselves to discredit it.’\(^{1232}\) Furthermore, ‘Revolutionary Russia was cold-shouldered by our directing classes and cruelly assailed by the Press which has contrived to palm off its harsh prejudice as if it were the authentic voice of England.’\(^{1233}\)

Not surprisingly, Snowden agreed wholeheartedly with his fellow publicists. He said that Bonar Law’s announcement that the long-awaited Allied Conference, scheduled to open on 30 November 1917, would not be discussing war-aims, had fallen like a ‘bombshell’ on the late Kerensky government. On the day of the Bolshevik seizure of power, Snowden summed up what he had consistently argued over the past nine months:

> It [the fall of the Kerensky Government] will be the culmination of innumerable acts on the part of the British Government which can bear no

\(^{1230}\) Ibid.
\(^{1232}\) Ibid.
\(^{1233}\) Ibid.
other interpretation in Russia than that Great Britain has no regard for the well-being of that new democracy, but is willing that she should be left to become the prey of internal dissension and external attack. The conflicting statements as to war aims made by the Statesmen of the different Allied countries show that there is no more coordination of political action in the war than there appears to have been up to the present in military strategy.  

Lansbury was even more forthright about what had caused the collapse of democracy in Russia:

Only one thing could have saved Russia – that revision of war-aims on democratic lines which Mr. Lloyd George has consistently refused and Lord Northcliffe’s Press has frequently derided.  

Lansbury was also certain about what needed to be done as a result of what he saw as the incompetence of Britain’s ruling elite:

The test of our rulers is – Can they make war? Can they make peace? Have they the skill to do the one or the will to do the other? And if they have neither, what duty can be so urgent as to get rid of them? They have been tried, and they have failed. It is time to make an end.  

It is clear then, that the Radical publicists, were at one in sheeting home the blame for the fall of the Kerensky government to both the Lloyd George government and the ‘pro-war press’. In their view, not only had the British government successfully managed to hobble each of the opportunities for an early peace, but now with Russia out of the war and Italy staggering, the prospect of a military defeat for the Allies loomed large. If the Allies were to triumph it would involve years more fighting, further incalculable sacrifices of the youth of Britain and greater impoverishment for future generations. In this setting, for some Radicals – most notably Gardiner – the temptation to see Wilson not as he was but as they wished him to be, was overwhelming. In the aftermath of Caporetto and the virtual collapse of Russia, only the promise of massive American military and economic assistance could persuade  

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1236 Ibid.
some that liberal redemption through military effort was still possible. For others, most notably, Massingham, Brailsford and Snowden, Wilson’s chance to transform the Allies’ war into a war for liberal values had already passed. He was already a fallen idol.
Chapter 5: Wanted, A Peace Offensive  
December 1917 – March 1918

The sun is shining this morning and in the light of it I have just read twice over Lord Lansdowne’s letter. It could not be better. It is the sanest and wisest pronouncement that has been delivered by a British statesman since August 1914. I dread the clouds coming up again. How can we make him Prime Minister?

Arthur Ponsonby, 29 November 1917.\textsuperscript{1237}

The most objectionable feature of President Wilson’s message is his assumption of the disinterested and exalted motives of the one side and the unrelieved depravity of the other. How any man with any knowledge at all of European diplomacy can calmly take up such an attitude is incomprehensible. Does President Wilson know anything of the Secret Treaties, which have been published by the Russian Government?

Philip Snowden, December 1917.\textsuperscript{1238}

The course of English statesmanship is clear. \textit{He must make the victory of the German Military Party impossible by anticipating it with a Peace Offensive}. We have to make it clear to the German people that we seek to impose upon them no dishonourable or one-sided conditions, that we do in fact seek not our own aggrandisement but the peace of the world. It would be useless to suppose we have done so already.

Henry Massingham, January 1918.\textsuperscript{1239}

No event during the war galvanised and united the Radical publicists more than the publication of a letter by Lord Lansdowne’s in the \textit{Daily Telegraph} on 29 November 1917. The Lansdowne Letter came at a time when, domestically, the peace movement faced its darkest hour.\textsuperscript{1240} By this courageous act Lansdowne attracted the wrath of the

\textsuperscript{1237} Arthur Ponsonby to Lady Courtney, 29 Nov. 1917, Courtney Papers, XII.  
\textsuperscript{1239} Nation, ‘Wanted, A Peace Offensive’, Politics and Affairs, 26 Jan. 1918.  
\textsuperscript{1240} Haslam observed that on the evening of the publication of Lansdowne’s Letter, the raiding of fourteen pacifist organisations, the introduction of DORA Regulation 27c (a new regulation tightening censorship still further), the fear of a Lloyd George dictatorship and the disenfranchisement of conscientious objectors, resulted in the fear that the ‘pacifist movement’ might ‘go under’. Haslam, \textit{From Suffrage to Internationalism}, pp. 115-117.
British establishment, but, for the Radical publicists, he had opened up a chink of light in the gloom. By November 1917, the ‘peace-by-negotiation’ Radical publicists had come to the realisation that President Wilson’s war strategy seemed barely distinguishable from that of the Allied leaders. Wilson’s rejection of the various opportunities for a negotiated peace that had surfaced during 1917 brought the Radical publicists to the realisation that the American President no longer held to the principles laid out in his ‘Peace Without Victory’ address of January 1917 and appeared now to be pursuing a ‘peace through victory’ strategy. In 1917, when Wilson was found to be wanting, the Radical publicists had turned instead to the new democratic Russia for hope. With the democracy in Russia all but extinguished by November 1917, the Radical publicists were buoyed by the unexpected actions of one man in Britain, Lord Lansdowne. The action of this hawkish Conservative peer and ex-Foreign Minister in publicly questioning the British Government’s direction in the war united the Radical publicists more completely than anything previously. For the following few months, Lansdowne provided a focal point for the Radical publicists. However, there were other hopeful developments. After Colonel House’s failure to secure Allied agreement to American war aims at the Inter-Allied Conference at the end of November, there was a renewed determination on the part of Woodrow Wilson to seize the initiative in the diplomacy of the war from both the Allied leaders and the Bolsheviks. This culminated in his now famous Fourteen Points speech of January 1918, which served to restore significantly the Radical publicists’ faith in his commitment to achieving an early end to the war and progressive settlement.

British Radicals and all those in the wider movement for a negotiated peace immediately recognised the significance of Lansdowne’s publication in the *Daily
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Telegraph at the end of November 1917. A letter from Arthur Ponsonby to Lady Courtney, on the day the Lansdowne Letter was published, illustrated this point:

The sun is shining this morning and in the light of it I have just read twice over Lord Lansdowne’s letter. It could not be better. It is the sanest and wisest pronouncement that has been delivered by a British statesman since August 1914. I dread the clouds coming up again. How can we make him Prime Minister?  

Some of the immediate background needs to be recalled in order to understand this kind of reaction to Lansdowne. In September 1917, while the War Cabinet was considering the secret Kühlmann peace initiative, news came to light of an earlier secret memorandum by Lord Lansdowne, advocating a negotiated peace in November 1916. This became public knowledge. At that time, the Asquith Cabinet had dismissed his arguments for a compromise peace, but when his memorandum was leaked ten months later, in September 1917, many people were sympathetic. Since the fall of the Asquith coalition in December 1916, the Radical, Lord Loreburn had cultivated his contacts with Lord Lansdowne and eventually put Lansdowne in touch

1241 Arthur Ponsonby to Lady Courtney, 29 Nov. 1917, Courtney Papers, XII. Lady Courtney herself described Lansdowne’s letter as a ‘veritable peace bomb’. Robbins, The Abolition of War, p. 151. There are numerous examples of similar private reactions by Radical publicists indicating the hope that they placed in the Lansdowne Letter. For example, Bertrand Russell exclaimed, ‘I am cheered by LD Lansdowne’s [letter] written in the D. T. Also by the prospect of 27c being practically withdrawn. And last night’s debate in the Lords.’ Bertrand Russell to Catherine Marshall, 29 Nov. 1917, Marshall Papers, D/MAR/4/27. Catherine received a similar letter from her mother: ‘I felt sure in spite of your news that some cloud had lifted. I think Lord L. has lifted it. It is so brave’. Caroline Marshall to Catherine Marshall, 29 Nov. 1917, Marshall Papers, D/MAR/2/35.

1242 The first attempt was done in secret in November 1916. Lansdowne was a member of the Asquith’s May Coalition. Lord Lansdowne was an ex-Unionist Foreign Minister responsible for negotiating the Anglo-French Entente of 1904 and had been a supporter of British intervention in August 1914. After the Somme Offensive, Lansdowne became increasingly uneasy about the military’s predictions of imminent victory. On 13 November 1916, in a secret session of cabinet, Lansdowne tabled a memorandum to challenge the generals, advocating a negotiated peace. Despite Asquith and Grey’s hints that they were willing to consider Lansdowne’s arguments, nothing eventuated as a few weeks later Asquith was deposed as Prime Minister and replaced by Lloyd George who was dedicated to a fight-to-the-finish. For further information about Lansdowne’s 1916 memorandum see Brock Millman, Pessimism and British War Policy (London, 2000), pp. 29-31, and Douglas Newton, ‘The Lansdowne “Peace Letter” of 1917 and the Prospect of Peace by Negotiation with Germany’, Australian Journal of Politics & History, 48 No. 1, 2002, pp. 16-39.

1243 The War Cabinet was most anxious that this information had been leaked. As Milner told Carson, because Lansdowne was an insider and a ‘man of position’ who came out and said ‘what many people must be thinking.’ This may ‘set the ball rolling. The situation is evidently becoming critical.’ Denis Winter, Haig’s Command (London, 1991), p. 325.
with his friend, Francis Hirst, the Radical publicist. Through Hirst, Lansdowne had access to Radical opinion. From late 1917, Hirst and Lansdowne were in frequent correspondence.\textsuperscript{1244}

By late 1917, Francis Hirst was aware of, and perhaps involved in, plans for Lansdowne to speak out and was speculating about getting Lansdowne back into the Government.\textsuperscript{1245} The disaster of the Passchendaele Offensive, coupled with the military’s optimistic predictions of victory, was the last straw. Lansdowne had heard it all before. He had had a gutful of optimistic predictions of victory that flew in the face of the unsustainable and horrific slaughter of the nation’s youth on the Western Front. He could keep silent no longer. However, before going public, Lansdowne prepared the ground first by writing a nine-page memorandum to Foreign Minister Balfour on 6 November,\textsuperscript{1246} by meeting Colonel House on his arrival in England on 14 November,\textsuperscript{1247} and then telling Balfour of his plans for publishing a letter in the Press on 16 November.\textsuperscript{1248} On 17 November, in a letter to Margaret, Hirst displayed an awareness of these preparations:

Just a line to tell you and M privately, that Loreburn is in close touch with Lansdowne and the latter with Balfour and others…. Possibly M[orley] and L[oreburn] may be coming to lunch at 27 C[amden] Hill to meet Colonel House. The Col. I hear is going to take a very strong and independent line. I think the President has stuck to his peace views and will press them…. It looks as if LG [Lloyd George] will now come a

\textsuperscript{1244} It is interesting that despite the Radicals’ strong disapproval of Lansdowne’s past career as a hawkish Foreign Minister, they nevertheless chose to cooperate with him, as indicated by correspondence between Loreburn and Hirst. Lord Loreburn to F. W. Hirst, n. d., Sept. 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917.

\textsuperscript{1245} ‘Morley inclines to think that an Asquith Lansdowne Ministry is possible.’ F. W. Hirst to Gertrude, 28 Oct. 1917, Hirst Papers, Letters to Gertrude Hirst, 1894-1929.

\textsuperscript{1246} A draft of Lansdowne’s letter was found in Balfour’s papers, dated 6 Nov. 1917. However, it is not certain whether Balfour approved of it. Turner, \textit{British Politics and the Great War}, p. 249.

\textsuperscript{1247} It is interesting to note that on 24 November, the \textit{Westminster Gazette} ran a four-line notice about Lansdowne receiving a badge as Chancellor of the Order of St. Michael and St. George from the King. \textit{Westminster Gazette} ‘Lord Lansdowne Decorated’, 14 Nov. 1917. That the paper would print this is probably due to a renewed public interest in Lansdowne since mid-September when his memorandum on November 1916 became known.

Colonel House was in England at the time because he was due at the long-promised Allied Conference scheduled to begin in Paris on 29 November. The significance of this conference cannot be overestimated. Firstly, this was the conference which the Russians had been asking for since March 1917, but never got. Secondly, this was the first high level Allied conference since American entry into the war. Up to this point, there had been no coordination of war aims between the Allies and their ‘Associated Power’, the United States. There was a wide chasm that separated the war aims of the Allies with those of President Wilson. The Radical publicists hoped that at the Inter-Allied Conference in Paris, the Americans would put pressure on the Allied leaders for a revision of war aims. Lanndowne’s plan appeared to be, that on the day that Colonel House was to press the Allied leaders at Paris for a moderate statement of war aims, his letter would be published in the press to add support to the American negotiators in Paris. Douglas Newton has made a convincing argument that Lanndowne’s letter ‘should be interpreted as an attempt to build support for a restatement of moderate war aims of a Wilsonian tone, a common program at last, uniting the Entente powers and the U. S. A., and restoring the credit of the war in Russia.’

On 24 November, Hirst played John the Baptist as he heralded Lansdowne’s move. After lambasting Lloyd George and Balfour for frustrating all efforts towards a general peace and declaring that Henderson and MacDonald had now been vindicated over their advocacy of Stockholm, Hirst made the following observation:

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1249 F. W. Hirst to Margaret, 17 Nov. 1917, Hirst Papers, Letters to Margaret Hirst, 1896-1941.
1251 Ibid., p. 30.
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We wonder if it is too late to call the attention of Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Balfour to these considerations; and, if not, is there any possibility that Lord Lansdowne or any other enlightened person who commands the respect and confidence of either the House of Lords or the House of Commons would be willing to promote prompt action before it is too late.\(^{1252}\)

The stage was now set for the high profile peer to make his move. However, there was a last minute hitch. The *Times*, an organ of Northcliffe’s media empire and an adversary of those who advocated a negotiated peace, refused to publish Lansdowne’s letter. Fortunately for Lansdowne, when Lord Burnham heard of this, he read the letter and agreed to publish it in the *Daily Telegraph*.\(^{1253}\)

Lansdowne’s letter appeared under the heading Coordination of Allies’ War Aims in the 29 November issue of the *Daily Telegraph*.\(^{1254}\) Lansdowne wrote that the ‘wanton prolongation’ of the war would be a crime comparable with the crime of those who started it. He questioned the objectives for which the Allies claimed to be fighting. He stated that an honourable end to the war would be a ‘great achievement’, but a greater achievement would be to ‘prevent the same curse falling upon our children.’ Prophetically, Lansdowne warned that a future world war would be far worse because ‘the prostitution of science for the purpose of pure destruction is not likely to stop short.’ Rather, what was absolutely essential was that the great powers should bind together under a ‘solemn pact’ to submit future disputes to arbitration.\(^{1255}\)

Lansdowne reminded his readers that the concepts of arbitration and a League of Nations had been accepted by President Wilson, Bethmann-Hollweg, the Pope, and Count Czernin. Further, he totally rejected the idea of a punitive trade war against the

\(^{1252}\) *Common Sense*, ‘A Separate Peace’, 24 Nov. 1917.


\(^{1254}\) For a full text of the Lansdowne Letter, see Dickinson, ed., *Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims*, pp. 84-89.

\(^{1255}\) Lansdowne was referring to the idea of collective security that had been advocated by progressive groups in Britain and the U.S. since 1914.
Central Powers once the war had stopped and argued that this was ‘certain to retard the economic recovery of all the nations involved.’ On territorial claims, Lansdowne gave the assurance that he remained adamant that the German occupation of Belgium must end. However, on other issues regarding southeastern Europe, Lansdowne indicated that there might have been room for negotiation. To examine all these issues, Lansdowne wrote that there needed to be an Allied Council to ‘adapt our strategy in the field to the ever-shifting developments of the war.’ Lansdowne declared:

We are not going to lose this war, but its prolongation will spell ruin for the civilised world, and an infinite addition to the load of human suffering which already weighs upon it…. It is my belief, if the war is to be brought to a close in time to avert a worldwide catastrophe, it will be brought to a close because on both sides the peoples of the countries involved realise it has already lasted too long.

Finally, Lansdowne argued that the moderates in Germany could be encouraged to pressure their Government for peace if the Allied Council made it plain to Germany that the Allies and the United States did not desire: the ‘annihilation of Germany as a Great Power;’ the imposition on Germany of any form of government not of its own choice; or, the denial of Germany’s place ‘among the great commercial communities of the world.’ Furthermore, Lansdowne wanted the Allied Council to give a commitment to Germany that all the Powers would combine to examine ‘the group of international problems’ connected with the question of the ‘freedom of the seas.’ Lastly, the Allied Council should make it clear that it envisaged an ‘international pact under which ample opportunities would be afforded for the

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1256 Keynes was to argue along these lines in 1919. See J. M. Keynes, The Economic Consequences of the Peace (London, 1919).
1257 Dickinson, ed., Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, pp. 84-89.
1258 Ibid., p. 88.
1259 Ibid.
1260 Ibid.
1261 Ibid.
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settlement of international disputes by peaceful means.’ Lansdowne concluded his letter with the observation:

There are no insurmountable difficulties upon these points. The political horizon might perhaps be scanned with better hope by those who pray, but cannot at this moment hardly venture to expect, that the New Year may bring us a lasting and honourable peace.

The reaction from the establishment was predictable. The Northcliffe Press was scathing of Lansdowne’s letter. Northcliffe heard about it while in Paris with the British delegation to the Inter-Allied Conference. While he did not agree with his editor’s decision to refuse to print Lansdowne’s letter, he thoroughly agreed with the declaration by the Daily Mail on 30 November that ‘if Lord Lansdowne raises the white flag he is alone in his surrender.’ He also approved of the Times commenting that ‘the letter reflects no responsible phase of British opinion … in all the Allied countries it will be read with universal regret and reprobation.’ Other Tory papers added to the abuse. The Morning Post called Lansdowne’s letter ‘a surrender cloaked in the camouflage of hypocrisy,’ while the Daily Express portrayed Lansdowne’s appeal as the ‘menace of the future.’ At a public meeting, Bonar Law responded for the government declaring that Lansdowne’s letter was a ‘national misfortune’ and that ‘peace made on this basis would be nothing less than defeat.’

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1262 Ibid., p. 89.
1263 Ibid.
1264 He would have preferred it if his editor, Geoffrey Dawson, had printed it side by side with a ‘stinging letter’ refuting it. Thompson, Lord Northcliffe and the Great War, p. 176.
1265 Ibid. A journalist at the Times wrote to Hirst to confess his bad conscience at the ‘disgraceful’ attacks by the Times on Lansdowne. He apologised: ‘I am officially their art critic. But I can’t bite the hand that feeds me even indirectly.’ A. Clutton Brock to F. W. Hirst, 31 Dec. 1917 [sic], Hirst Papers, Jan.-May 1918.
1266 Koss, the Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain, p. 323.
1267 Cooper Willis, England’s Holy War, p. 246.
1268 Thompson, Lord Northcliffe and the Great War, p. 176.
no foreknowledge of the imminent publication of the letter, though this was a lie.\footnote{Both Lord Balfour and Lord Hardinge had seen the drafts. Robbins, \textit{Abolition of War}, pp. 149-150.}

This reaction was to be expected by such vigorous opponents of both war aims revision and a negotiated peace.

A far more welcoming reaction was given to Lansdowne’s letter in a host of other papers. The \textit{Star} declared that Lansdowne’s letter was like ‘a thunderbolt dropped in the camp of the Never-Endians.’\footnote{\textit{Star}, ‘Lord Lansdowne’s Thunderbolt’, What We Think, 29 Nov. 1917.} Lansdowne was ‘no fool and no pacifist, but he has more practical wisdom in his little finger than Lord Milner, Lord Curzon, Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Lloyd George have in their four heads.’\footnote{Ibid.}

Furthermore, the paper agreed that if the Allies clearly stated their aims in the way Lansdowne suggested, then this would be an immense stimulus to the peace party in Germany. The \textit{Star} concluded: ‘We agree with the \textit{Daily Telegraph} that Lord Lansdowne’s proposal deserves the full consideration of the Allied Governments now represented at the Paris Conference. The trump cards of peace are in the hands of the Allies. Let them be played resolutely and skilfully.’\footnote{Ibid.} The next day the \textit{Star} commented on the refusal of the Northcliffe Press to publish Lansdowne’s letter: ‘Happily the Northcliffe Press is not yet able to suppress all independent opinion.’

Finally, the article defended Lansdowne against the accusation that he was a defeatist: ‘Let us not make ourselves ridiculous by pretending that Lord Lansdowne’s violently prudent letter is a white flag. It is merely a mild and timid request for sanity.’\footnote{\textit{Star’s} endorsement of the Lansdowne Letter was quite amazing considering the paper’s rejection of some of the previous proposals for a negotiated settlement such as...}
the Papal Peace Note. Even the ‘holy war’ Radical publicists, Gardiner and Scott, were in full support of Lansdowne’s action. Gardiner’s comment on the reaction of the ‘jingo’ press was that the ‘cleavage between reason and unreason follows the lines that we might have anticipated.’ Lord Buckmaster was moved to praise Gardiner for his support of the Lansdowne Letter:

You have been engaged in your life in promoting many great causes, and you have suffered for your courage, but you have never put your hand to any task more noble and more difficult than the one you have now just undertaken…. I am going to see how many of my late Liberal colleagues I can get to join publicly in support of my publication.

The Star also reported the spirited defence of Lansdowne mounted by Gilbert Murray, a ‘holy war’ Radical who, in the past, had often disagreed with the proponents of the negotiated peace. Unlike Hirst, Massingham and Snowden, Murray had been a supporter of Lord Grey’s foreign policy. There was no group that wanted a peace that sacrificed Belgium, Murray argued. Then, he turned on Lansdowne’s attackers claiming: ‘The mark of the jingo is that he regards every Briton who disagrees with him as a pacifist, a Bolo, a white flagger, a traitor, an advocate of surrender.’ For his part, Murray was willing to stand with Lansdowne:

The Lansdowne Letter has revealed the slowly deepening discontent of the nation. The need of the hour is a clear statement of war aims which will enable us to counteract the German propaganda. If we are to make the world safe for democracy, we must unite all the democracies against the Prussian tyranny. Above all, we must set the League of Nations in the forefront of our purpose. Having done so, we can all stand firmly together in the fight for the world’s peace and the world’s freedom.

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1274 Martin, Peace Without Victory, p. 149.
1276 Lord Buckmaster had been trying to get Liberal agencies to circulate Lansdowne’s Letter but got a refusal from Gulland. However, he was not prepared to drop the matter and tried to enlist the support of Liberal colleagues. He wanted to add the names of as many members of the late Liberal Cabinet ‘either to an appeal for funds for the circulation of literature, or as members of a committee to secure its distribution. This will bring the Liberal Party out into the open, and this it is, that I desire’. Lord Buckmaster to A. G. Gardiner, 2 Dec. 1917, Gardiner Papers, 1/4.
1278 Note that there was, at this stage, no formal commitment of the Lloyd George Government to a League of Nations. Winkler recounted how the idea was discussed by the Cabinet a number of times.
The *Star* also saw no difference between Wilson and Lansdowne:

They both rule out an inconclusive peace, a peace by compromise or surrender of our ideals; but they do not rule out a negotiated peace after victory, for no peace was ever or ever will be made without negotiation. Mr. Wilson, like Lord Lansdowne, tells the German people that no one is threatening their existence or independence or peaceful enterprise. We must seek by the utmost openness and candour as to our real aims to convince them that their masters are deceiving them. Sooner or later the tides of liberty will sweep over the Kaiser.

Significantly, the *Star* concluded that both Liberals and Radicals now looked to Asquith for a clear lead. In a strange twist of fate, this letter by a Tory ‘hawk’ had somehow served to unite some moderate Liberals with Radicals of all shades of opinion. Even the big Liberal guns were being wheeled out in defence of Lansdowne’s proposal.

The *Westminster Gazette*, forever the bastion of Asquithian Liberalism, tried to entice Lord Grey into the defence of Lansdowne. Spender quoted approvingly from Lord Grey’s preface to Gilbert Murray’s recent book, *The Way Forward*, in which Grey argued that the peace which they sought involved a drastic reformulation of the

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since January 1917 and committees were set (such as the Phillimore Committee) to examine various proposals for a League. The 10 January 1917 Allied Reply to the American Peace Note contained the first vague acceptance of the idea of a ‘league of nations,’ and again there was a vague reference again in Lloyd George’s 5 January 1918 Caxton Hall speech. Winkler asserts that while cabinet discussions reveal a cautious approach to the ‘league’ concept, they felt it was important enough not to be ignored. The Phillimore plan was never officially adopted by the Lloyd George Government, and there were no discussions about ant League proposals at an official level with the U. S. until the Paris Peace Conference, though it was hinted to the Allied and enemy public that it was one of Britain’s post-war objectives. See Henry Winkler, *The League of Nations Movement in Great Britain*, pp. 233-240.

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1280 Ibid. However, Murray drew limits on his public support of Lansdowne two weeks later in a letter to Hirst. He said he could not sign an address of support to Lansdowne because he objected to the wording: ‘I have already backed him up in public…. My reasons are 1) That your second paragraph stresses the pacifist side of his letter, which I do not particularly want to emphasize. 2) Your third paragraph expresses rather more personal allegiance to him as a Foreign Minister.’ Gilbert Murray to F. W. Hirst, 3 Jan. 1918, Hirst Papers, Jan.-May 1918.


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1280 *Star*, ‘The Eyes of the People’, 5 Dec. 1917. However, the following day there was concern that the Jingoes were using underhand ways of claiming Wilson and Lansdowne opposed each other: ‘The hour is critical and the need for masculine leadership is great. The minds of men are confused by the strident voices of jingoism which pervert truth and bellow falsehood in their ears. After grossly misrepresenting the Lansdowne Letter, they are now busy misrepresenting the President’s address.’ *Star*, ‘A Clear Lead’, 6 Dec. 1917.

international system. After the war, asserted Grey, there would need to be the establishment of ‘public right as the law of the civilized world’ that ‘delivers humanity from the power of the sword’.\(^\text{1282}\) The *Westminster Gazette* declared that: ‘We are heartily at one with him, and we greatly hope that this policy will emerge in some definite form from the Conference of the Allies now taking place in Paris.’\(^\text{1283}\) Spender thought it was a good idea to revise war aims, however, he cautioned against hoping that it would shorten the war: ‘Let us, as a counter-move, set ourselves definitely right as to our own war-aims, but do not let us yield to any illusion about the immediate outcome.’\(^\text{1284}\) Spender was pessimistic about the chances of the Allies avoiding a ‘long and grim military struggle’ to bring Germany to the point where it was willing to sue for peace.\(^\text{1285}\) However, while not believing that there was any evidence that the German authorities were in any mood to negotiate a reasonable peace, the *Westminster Gazette* went to great lengths to defend Lansdowne against attacks from the ‘pro-war press’: ‘It is ridiculous to pretend that because we are at war it is almost an offence even to speak of peace.’\(^\text{1286}\) On 4 December, Spender aired his concerns about those who were aiming to nullify Lansdowne’s appeal. Bonar Law had just declared that no debate would be allowed on the Lansdowne Letter in the Commons and the Censor was interfering in the production of the Lansdowne Letter into a pamphlet.\(^\text{1287}\) Spender speculated that ‘the chief centre of hostility’ was to be found among Tariff Reformers, who saw that the Lansdowne Letter was aimed at the

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1283 Ibid.
1284 Ibid.
1287 On 15 November, D. O. R. A. Regulation 27c, came into effect, ruling that all pamphlets and leaflets relating to either the war or the conclusion of the peace, must be submitted to the Press bureau before publication. Haslam, *From Suffrage to Internationalism*, p. 116.
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Paris Resolutions, and their ‘ardently desired revival of Protectionism after the war.’

Hirst, now playing the apostle of Lansdowne, declared: ‘With these hopeful and inspiring words we may conclude; there is little to add, and less to subtract, from this epoch-making announcement.’ However, there appears some nervousness on Hirst’s part about the ambivalence in high places to Lansdowne’s appeal. At a Lord’s conference on the Thursday following the publication of the Letter, it appeared that none of Lansdowne’s fellow peers had bothered to read the Letter, the reason being that they did not ‘take in the Daily Telegraph.’ Then Hirst was informed that a follow-up letter by Lord Loreburn had been refused publication by Lord Burnham in his Daily Telegraph. Due to the malicious attacks against Lansdowne in the Tory Press, Hirst was forced to come immediately to the defence of Lansdowne, for which the Tory peer was most grateful. A week later, Hirst launched a stinging counter-attack. Firstly, he said that the refusal of the Times to publish Lord Lansdowne’s Letter was fortunate because it exposed the danger of censorship by the ‘Newspaper Boss’ which is no better than official censorship. Hirst was particularly angered at the personal nature of the attacks by the Northcliffe’s papers, which had accused Lansdowne of succumbing to the ‘spineless temperament of old age, on which private

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1291 Lord Beauchamp to F. W. Hirst, 5 Dec. 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917. Meanwhile, Loreburn gave some words of encouragement to Hirst: ‘I am quite sure that the Lansdowne Letter will let loose an avalanche in public opinion very soon. And then the watchers of the jumping cat will find out they always thought so and that they must accept office for the country’s good. What a miserable show it is. But Lord Lansdowne does come out really finally’. Lord Loreburn to F. W. Hirst, 4 Dec. 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917.  
1292 Lansdowne thanked Hirst for his ‘encouragement’ and said that his ‘review of the journalistic forces arrayed on each side is extraordinarily instructive.’ Lord Lansdowne to F. W. Hirst, 6 Dec. 1917, Hirst Papers.  
1293 Hirst hoped that the Labour party would look at measures to restore an independent press. ‘Something ought to be done to restrain the newspaper bosses and to give individual opinion more scope.’ Common Sense, ‘The Press on the Lansdowne Letter’, 8 Dec. 1917.
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grievances and ill-health morbidly reacted.‘Private griefs’ referred to the death of Lansdowne’s son at the front. Hirst also took offence at the Evening News of Friday 30 November, which described the Lansdowne Letter as ‘Pacifist Turkey Trot’ and asserted that

all the daily papers, with the significant exception of the Cocoa Press [the Radical press], deplore the publication of the letter.... It is regarded as nothing more than a rehash of Pacifist pleading by an old man who thinks the war has lasted too long, and is deeply regretted in all responsible quarters. The only element by which it was received with satisfaction is the Pacifist group.

Hirst refuted this assertion of the Evening News by listing all of the newspapers that had welcomed the Lansdowne Letter. On the contrary, he recorded, the Letter was warmly welcomed by the Manchester Guardian, Daily Mirror, Freeman’s Journal, Birmingham Gazette, Evening Standard, Aberdeen Free Press, Yorkshire Post, Westminster Gazette, Daily Telegraph, Yorkshire Observer, Sheffield Independent, Plymouth Mercury, Leicester Post, and the Irish Independent. Also, a great many other newspapers gave mixed replies. In a bitter parting shot, Hirst declared that ‘the fury of the Northcliffe Press and its auxiliary, the Globe and the “policy” of the Times in refusing to print the letter and the vulgarity of the attacks of the Evening News, the Mail, and the Dispatch will not soon be forgotten.’

The Nation was no less effusive in its praise of the Lansdowne Letter:

No utterance of British, or even European, statesmanship since the war began compares in importance with the letter which Lord Lansdowne has sent the Telegraph, and which has been withheld from the Times, or even refused by it.... This great State document, which has been received with enthusiasm in nearly all Liberal and many Conservative quarters, is a clear

1294 Ibid.
1297 Ibid.
and reasoned statement of the case for a League of Nations as the essential basis of the peace.\textsuperscript{1298}

The \textit{Nation} then listed three and a half pages of letters in support of Lansdowne’s Letter, which had been received in reply to a telegram sent to all members of both Houses of Parliament asking whether they approved of the Letter. Some of those offering public support were: Lords, Buckmaster, Beauchamp and Brassey; Bertrand Russell; Arthur Henderson; Ramsay MacDonald; Noel Buxton; Arthur Ponsonby; Walter Runciman; Philip Morrell; David Davies; Llewelyn Williams; R. L. Outhwaite; Fred Jowett; W. C. Anderson; and Philip Snowden. Out of the forty-six replies published, seven were negative, including Lord Northcliffe’s.\textsuperscript{1299} This was the largest number of letters printed on any topic in the pages of the \textit{Nation} during the three preceding years of the war. Massingham had good cause to be upbeat about the impact of the Lansdowne Letter. Listing all the papers that had supported Lansdowne, he asked: ‘where is the anti-Lansdowne movement? Outside the froth of the ‘jingo press’ it hardly exists.’\textsuperscript{1300}

Both the \textit{Labour Leader} and the \textit{Herald} were, similarly, fully supportive of the Lansdowne Letter. Snowden asserted that Lansdowne’s Letter was a ‘moderate statement’ that urged the removal of misunderstandings that stood in the way of a ‘reasonable and conclusive peace.’\textsuperscript{1301} Lansdowne had enabled timid people, who would never have wanted to be associated with alleged ‘pacifists,’ to feel free to voice

\textsuperscript{1298} \textit{Nation}, Events of the Week, 1 Dec. 1917.
\textsuperscript{1299} \textit{Nation}, ‘Lord Lansdowne’s Letter’, 8 Dec. 1917. Northcliffe commented: ‘I regard the letter as one which entitles Lord Lansdowne to the thanks of every true-hearted German, Austrian, Turk and Bulgarian.’ Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1300} \textit{Nation}, Events of the Week, 8 Dec. 1917. Massingham noted that, besides the ‘vulgarly abusive language of the Northcliffe Press, a distinct preponderance of sober journalism either approves the letter, or criticises it in a fashion which reveals or conceals a substantial agreement.’ However, the Government’s tactics had been ‘deplorable’. Ibid. Massingham was also optimistic due to the increased interest he observed in the Papal Peace Note: ‘A SIGN of the TIMES. An extraordinary number of copies of the Pope’s Peace Note, running I am told, into five figures, have been sold in this country.’ Ibid.
their opinions openly now that the ‘Unionist peer and ex-Foreign Secretary has identified himself with these views.’\footnote{1302} As Snowden argued, Lansdowne had pointed out that there was ‘an ambiguity about the aims of the Allies Powers’ which only served the interests of the ‘Militarist Party’ in Germany who were trying to encourage the German people to keep fighting because they feared that the Allies aimed to ‘crush Germany politically and economically.’\footnote{1303} On the slander coming from the ‘Knock-Out Blow press,’ the claim that Lord Lansdowne favoured an ‘ignominious surrender to Germany,’ there was absolutely no foundation to this, according to Snowden.\footnote{1304} Meanwhile, in the Herald, a number of Radicals expressed their support for the Lansdowne letter. Boldly, Ramsay MacDonald declared that the country was ‘looking for a new leader’ and the people were ‘listening for a voice that will speak the truth and counsel wisdom. The sooner we have Lord Lansdowne as Premier the better it will be for the world.’\footnote{1305} Henry Nevinson was in full agreement with the principles laid out in the Lansdowne Letter. His only concern, however, was that it might be too late. Four months earlier, the Letter could have prevented the fall of the Kerensky government.\footnote{1306} Richard Holt wrote that there was no reason why an attempt to end the war along the lines that Lansdowne advocated ‘should not be made to bring peace to the world and free it from its rapidly-increasing load of misery – that burden which must overwhelm us all if we follow the “Knock-Out Blow” policy of

\footnote{1302} Ibid. 
\footnote{1303} Ibid. 
\footnote{1304} Ibid. On the Tariff Reformers who wanted to destroy Germany, politically and economically, Snowden commented: ‘This aim is madness, and it is because those who have control of our national policy are infatuated by that idea that the war continues, and the war will continue until saner men assert themselves and rally the commonsense of the peoples to a reasonable and practical policy.’ Ibid. 
\footnote{1305} Herald, Ramsay MacDonald, ‘Will Do More Than Two Years Fighting’, 8 Dec. 1917. 
\footnote{1306} Herald, Henry W. Nevinson, ‘Why Do the Heathen Rage?’, 8 Dec. 1917.
the Prime Minister and his present entourage. On behalf of socialist men and women, Robert Williams was grateful:

We thank Lord Lansdowne. We profoundly agree. The war ‘has already lasted too long’ – much too long. The world stands in need of statesmanship. The people whose hands are at the helm in Britain are mentally bankrupt.

However, despite the unanimous praise of Lord Lansdowne’s analysis of the prospects of peace, within days the Radical publicists had cause to be deeply concerned. As mentioned above, one of Lansdowne’s aims for publishing his letter was to influence the Allied leaders at the Inter-Allied Conference in Paris which was scheduled to start on 29 November, the day the Lansdowne Letter was published in the Daily Telegraph. The Letter was designed to lend support to Colonel House, as he sought to negotiate a joint statement of Allied war aims. House went to the Inter-Allied Conference on 29 November with explicit instructions to secure a joint resolution on moderate war aims with Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando. In the previous two weeks House had consulted with William Buckler, Alfred Gardiner, Henry Massingham, C. P. Scott, Henry Brailsford, Francis Hirst, Lord Loreburn, Noel Buxton and Josiah Wedgwood. All were key Radicals, five of them being influential Radical editors! On 12 November, Noel Buxton wrote to House to impress upon him how important it was that President Wilson exerted his influence to secure a

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1309 Fleming commented that Lansdowne ‘clearly differed with Wilson and with his own government about their refusal to negotiate with the supposedly autocratic German government. He did not belabour the point. But he was obviously calling for a peace without victory.’ Fleming, The Illusion of Victory, p. 164.
1310 E. M. House to Woodrow Wilson, 30 Nov. 1917, PWW, Vol. 45, p. 166. Wilson replied and made the point that he wanted the resolution to be in harmony with the January 1917 address to the Senate. ‘Our people and Congress will not fight for any selfish aim on the part of any belligerent, with the possible exception of Alsace Lorraine, least of all for any divisions of territory such as have been contemplated in Asia Minor.’ Woodrow Wilson to E. M. House, 1 Dec. 1917, PWW, Vol. 45, pp. 176.
1311 House was visibly impressed with the conversations he had with the various Radicals as shown by comments in his papers. Martin, Peace Without Victory, p. 150.
revised statement of Allied terms to encourage moderate opinion in Germany.\textsuperscript{1312} Then, as mentioned above, House met Lord Lansdowne on 14 November.\textsuperscript{1313} No wonder the Radicals had high hopes for House at the Inter-Allied Conference! As Martin pointed out: ‘These contacts left House more than ever convinced that some moderate declaration was necessary,’ though, ‘several conversations with Lloyd George suggested that it would be far from easy to obtain.’\textsuperscript{1314}

Meanwhile, events in Paris had not unfolded the way the Radical publicists’ had hoped. Despite all Colonel House’s conversations with key advocates of war aims revision and peace by negotiation, and his instructions from Wilson, it appears that the Colonel was unable to exert any influence whatsoever on Lloyd George, Clemenceau or Orlando. Lloyd George actually blamed the Lansdowne Letter for his inability to push for a moderate war aims statement.\textsuperscript{1315} However, Laurence Martin placed the blame for the failure to get a joint statement of war aims at the feet of Lloyd George, who was simply reluctant to commit himself to general war aims, and to Colonel House’s lack of knowledge on territorial matters and his reluctance to get involved in inter-Allied squabbles. House gave up, deciding it was useless to try and obtain a joint American-Allied declaration in the current climate.\textsuperscript{1316} In the end all the Conference could agree on was a statement of its willingness to discuss war aims when a ‘stable government’ was restored in Petrograd. Instead of the joint statement of war aims, the Conference decided that each Allied country should send its own message to Russia, stating its willingness to discuss a revision of war aims with any stable Russian

\textsuperscript{1312} Ibid., p. 151.
\textsuperscript{1313} House remarked that, ‘Conservative that he is, we scarcely disagreed at all.’ Also, when he spoke to Lord Loreburn, he remarked that, ‘our minds run nearly parallel’. Ibid., p. 150.
\textsuperscript{1314} Martin, \textit{Peace Without Victory}, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{1315} Lloyd George blamed the Lansdowne Letter for not being able to make a joint declaration on war aims at the Inter-Allied Conference on 1 December 1917, because if he made a statement on war aims it would have been interpreted as an endorsement of the Lansdowne Letter. Robbins, \textit{The Abolition of War}, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{1316} Martin, \textit{Peace Without Victory}, pp. 152-152.
government. As far as the military were concerned, the plans for greater coordination were a successful outcome for the Conference. However, the failure to achieve an Allied-American joint statement on war aims did not bode well for attempts to use diplomacy to gain leverage with the revolutionaries in Russia or the moderates in Germany, and it was a disaster as far as the proponents of peace by negotiation were concerned.

Concerned at how things had turned out at the Inter-Allied Conference, House warned the President. He believed that Wilson needed to take a firm lead once again in the public reformation of terms, but House urged Wilson not to make any statement on foreign affairs until he returned to the United States to give his personal report on the Inter-Allied Conference. However, the Colonel was not due back in the United States until 17 December. Wilson could not wait this long, telling House that he could not leave foreign affairs out of the State of the Union Address. The President therefore drafted his speech in total ignorance of the depth of hostility to his war aims displayed by Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando, at Versailles. If Wilson could have listened to House’s confidential report of the proceedings at the Inter-Allied Conference, then perhaps his speech might have been designed in a more radical way, in order to put pressure on the Allied leaders. Instead, Wilson’s State of the Union Address was in stark contrast to the Lansdowne Letter.

President Wilson’ State of the Union Address, of 4 December 1917, vilified the German Government in the now familiar manner. He referred to the

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1317 Ibid., p. 152.
1318 E. M. House to Woodrow Wilson, 1 Dec. 1917, PWW, Vol. 45, p. 177. On 2 December, House admitted that he could not get the other leaders to agree to a joint statement of war aims. Hence, each of the Allies would send a separate declaration to Russia. E. M. House to Woodrow Wilson, 2 Dec. 1917, PWW, Vol. 45, p. 184-185.
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‘intolerable wrongs done and planned against us by the sinister masters of Germany’, not to mention the ‘ugly face’ and the ‘menace of combined intrigue and force which we now see so clearly as the German power.’ Furthermore, Wilson said, this ‘German power, a thing without conscience or of capacity for covenanted peace, must be crushed.’ Peace could only be made, claimed Wilson, when ‘the German people have spokesmen whose word we can believe.’ The American President made no reference at all to the Lansdowne Letter, though William Buckler via Colonel House had made him aware of its contents. Throughout the Address Wilson returned to the theme that an early-negotiated peace, advocated by pacifists, was not an option. The American people, he said, were ‘impatient with those who desire peace by any sort of compromise.’ Every effort needed to be directed towards the war until the task was accomplished:

Those who desire to bring peace about before that purpose is achieved I counsel to carry their advice elsewhere. We will not entertain it. We shall regard the war as won only when the German people say to us, through properly accredited representatives, that they are ready to agree to a settlement based upon justice and reparation of the wrongs their rulers have done.

The last thing Wilson wanted was a ‘premature peace’ before ‘autocracy had been taught its final and convincing lesson and the people of the world put in control of their own destinies.’ Far from considering an early peace, Wilson widened the conflict by declaring war on Austria-Hungary, because it was ‘simply a vassal of the German government.’ He called for a peace based on ‘justice and a reparation of wrongs,

45, pp. 194-203. Massingham gave a detailed analysis of this speech. Nation, Events of the Week, 8 Dec. 1917.
1321 Ibid.
1322 Ibid.
1325 Ibid.
1326 Ibid. Fleming says this request for a widened war led to an eruption of war rage in the United States. This announcement of war on Austria-Hungary was greeted with so much loud cheering that
the liberation of subject peoples in Austria-Hungary and Turkey, and a new set of leaders in Germany. These were much more demanding aims than Lansdowne’s.\footnote{Turner, British Politics and the Great War, p. 252.}

As expected, the Radical publicists were concerned the President’s speech seemed to be so much at odds with the Lansdowne Letter. Of great concern to Massingham was the President’s ‘insistence on internal change in Germany as a condition of her inclusion after the war in a League of Nations and in its commercial privileges.’\footnote{Woodrow Wilson, ‘An Annual Message on the State of the Union’ XV, 4 Dec. 1917, PWW, Vol. 45, pp. 194-203.} Massingham tried to paper over the difference on this key point by stressing the points of agreement between the Lansdowne Letter and the State of the Union Address.\footnote{Nation, ‘Why Lord Lansdowne is Right’, Politics and Affairs, 8 Dec. 1917.} Snowden was less diplomatic in his analysis of Wilson’s Address:

> The most objectionable feature of President Wilson’s message is his assumption of the disinterested and exalted motives of the one side and the unrelieved depravity of the other. How any man with any knowledge at all of European diplomacy can calmly take up such an attitude is incomprehensible. Does President Wilson know anything of the Secret Treaties which have been published by the Russian Government?\footnote{Labour Leader, Philip Snowden, ‘The President’s Speech’, 6 Dec. 1917.}

The end result of the State of the Union Address on 4 December was to cut the ground from under Lansdowne and Wilson’s real ideological fellow travellers, the Radical publicists. Once again, the ‘peace-by-negotiation’ Radical publicists were forced to question the American President’s strategy for winning the war.\footnote{Thomas Fleming argued that Wilson’s rhetoric soared above any semblance of realism: ‘Wilson claimed he sympathised with the German people, who had allowed their evil leaders to deceive them into thinking they were fighting for their national existence.’ Fleming, The Illusion of Victory, p. 165. For an interesting analysis of President Wilson’s rhetoric, see Mary Stuckey, ‘The Domain of Public Conscience: Woodrow Wilson and the Establishment of a Transcendent Political Order’, Rhetoric and Public Affairs, 6.1, 2003, pp. 1-23.}
Wilson was more concerned with his losing the initiative in Allied diplomacy than the effect of his speech on Radical opinion in Britain. The President’s State of the Union Address had done nothing to increase his leverage in dealing with Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando. The Allied leaders had hardened and were in no way willing to consider formulating revised war aims along the progressive lines favoured by the American President. Wilson was keenly aware that he had lost the initiative on war aims, and this prompted his decision quickly to formulate specific war aims, fleshed out with territorial details, which he could use as ammunition in a future address. Yet, as far as the ‘peace-by-negotiation’ Radicals were concerned, they were greatly disappointed that their attempts to encourage both the British government and President Wilson openly to declare joint moderate aims had failed miserably. For nine months the ‘peace-by-negotiation’ Radicals had attempted to influence the British Government to consider a revision of war aims. There seemed no reason to imagine that the New Year would bring any breakthrough on this key issue.

As the New Year approached, both Radicals and Liberals knew that they had to capitalise on the broad support that the Lansdowne Letter had generated at least in the Liberal and Radical press, and translate this into action, especially on the matter of war-aims revision. For some this meant attempting to enlist Liberal heavyweights

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1332 Wilson called for a memorandum from the Inquiry to assist in drawing up detailed war aims. This was the genesis of the Fourteen Points. Thompson, *Woodrow Wilson*, p. 164.

1333 Lord Buckmaster wanted to use Liberal Agencies to circulate Lansdowne’s Letter but was rebuffed by the party whip. He then turned to Gardiner to encourage him to further efforts on Lansdowne’s behalf. Buckmaster to A. G. Gardiner, 2 Dec. 1917, Gardiner Papers, 1/4. Meanwhile Runciman wrote to Grey on 5 December but Grey’s reaction had been very guarded and he replied that he did not wish ‘to get sucked into that whirlpool again.’ Koss, *Fleet Street Radical*, p. 234. Meanwhile, Spender, the leading Asquithian publicist, was lamenting the lost opportunities for a negotiated peace and wishing that the Allies had their own spokesman like Wilson: ‘Greatly as we admire President Wilson, we see no reason why the Allied Governments should not speak for themselves, why they should not have said what he said at the time when it might have influenced the Russian people, why they should have left it to him to answer the Papal Note, and allowed their agreement to be a matter of inference. We owe the
to their cause, particularly Liberal ex-Cabinet members, with Asquith and Grey being the main targets. Some saw the controversy over a negotiated peace as an opportunity for Asquith to reassert himself as a vigorous and combative leader of the Liberal Party.\footnote{1334} However, as we shall see below, he gave no hint in public of any intention to position himself as the spokesman of the peace-by-negotiation movement. Radical efforts with Lord Grey also bore no fruit. Hugh Bell had spoken to Grey about the possibility of saying something publicly about Lansdowne’s Letter, but he replied that he had thought of it but then refrained because he felt that the ‘time had passed to intervene effectively.’\footnote{1335} He added that even Lansdowne’s Letter was too late, saying that the ‘altered situation in France made any present declaration most inopportune.’\footnote{1336}

Meanwhile, both Asquith and Lloyd George had decided that they needed to add their voices to the current state of agitation over war aims brought about by the Bolsheviks and Lansdowne. Though he sent a private letter of sympathy to Lansdowne over his being savaged by the ‘jingo’ press, Asquith would not give any public support or backing for Lansdowne.\footnote{1337} Instead, in his speech of 11 December at Birmingham he urged a moderate ‘clean peace’ eventually, but in every other respect he attempted to remain consistent with the line he had pursued in the past and to

\textit{Westminster Gazette}, ‘War Aims Rhetoric’, 11 Dec. 1917. Margot Asquith’s views on the reactionary press barons in the Parliament would no doubt have accorded with any Radical’s view: ‘Your House [of Lords] is truly marvellous, never objecting to anything that is done and swallowing Northcliffe and Rothermere without the faintest indigestion (growing larger and larger), fed and fattened by the perfidious press, with perpetual victory-bells rung – submarines conquered – noble stands in Italy – glorious revolution in Russia etc!’ Margot Asquith to Lord Courtney, n.d., Courtney Papers, XII.

\textsuperscript{1334} Noel Buxton and Josiah Wedgwood put this proposition to Asquith. Despite the reservations of some Radicals, Buxton and others pursued the idea of Asquith becoming the leader of a ‘negotiation peace’ party. Robbins, \textit{Abolition of War}, p. 152.

\textsuperscript{1335} Hugh Bell to F. W. Hirst, 14 Dec. 1917, Hirst papers, 1917.

\textsuperscript{1336} Bell replied that this was the same tired old argument used in the past: ‘The side having the upper hand at the moment was always inclined to negotiate while the other side wished to delay till the situation changed in its favour and so we had a deadlock.’ However, Grey did not encourage further discussion so he regarded the matter concluded for the present. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{1337} Newton, ‘The Lansdowne “Peace Letter” of 1917’, p. 32.
maintain support for the Government. His Birmingham speech was similar to Lloyd George’s speech of 14 December, except that, like Lansdowne, Asquith did not insist on a change in the German regime before peace could be considered. Lloyd George, in his speech, on the other hand, remained committed to the knock-out blow and the democratisation of Germany.\footnote{French, The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition, pp. 200-201.}

On balance, Asquith’s ‘Clean Peace’ at Birmingham was an ambivalent response to the controversy over war aims whipped up by Lansdowne’s Letter. The Star was pleased, thinking it was a good description of a peace based on ‘generosity and justice, to the exclusion of selfish claims to advantage even on the part of victors.’\footnote{Star, ‘What We Think’, 12 Dec. 1917.} Meanwhile, Spender asked whether the Government was in accord with the ideals of both Wilson’s peace and Asquith’s ‘clean peace.’\footnote{Westminster Gazette, ‘The Tests of Victory’, 15 Dec. 1917.} Further, Spender questioned why there was so much opposition to Lansdowne’s Letter the ideas he had enunciated were essentially the same as those of Wilson. Spender maintained that the settlement did not have to be built purely on a military victory. History was full of warnings against ‘smashing blows’ or ‘crushing conquests’. These often lead to wars of revenge ‘and in the meantime, left the whole world in a hubbub of unrest and suspicious rivalry.’\footnote{Ibid.} The ‘clean peace’, asserted Spender, could not be built on that foundation, it could only be built on a settlement that would ‘justify itself in experience as fair and just.’\footnote{Ibid.} Therefore, he said, ‘there can be no doubt about our immediate duty, but let us make it known that what we want eventually is not a mere smashing and pulverizing but a real and permanent reconstruction of the world-

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  \item \footnote{French, The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition, pp. 200-201.}
  \item \footnote{Star, ‘What We Think’, 12 Dec. 1917.}
  \item \footnote{Westminster Gazette, ‘The Tests of Victory’, 15 Dec. 1917.}
  \item \footnote{Ibid.}
  \item \footnote{Ibid.}
\end{itemize}
order. Though Radicals could see some merit in Asquith’s speech, it was not in their view a sufficiently clear endorsement of Lansdowne, war aims revision, or a negotiated peace. Turner’s assessment, that Asquith did not capitulate to the ‘wishes of the more radical advocates of a negotiated peace,’ is valid here. Asquith’s lukewarm ‘Clean Peace’ speech had carefully skirted around the main argument of the Lansdowne Letter.

Mindful of the popular sentiment for peace, Lloyd George also managed to skirt around the Lansdowne Letter, avoiding a frontal attack. His speech on 14 December disavowed any desire to destroy the Austro-Hungarian empire. Though both Asquith and Lloyd George made some conciliatory noises in their speeches of 11 and 14 December, both had successfully side-stepped Lansdowne’s. Massingham read more into these speeches than was really there. He was very optimistic about all the Liberal forces, both in Britain and the United States coming together: ‘America intervened, and the American view of peace has never changed. She has not come into this war to cut up the map of Europe or to canalise its commerce. She wants what Mr. Asquith calls a “clean peace.”’

Massingham noted that, like Lloyd George, Wilson repudiated the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. Prematurely, Massingham declared that: ‘one by one the political motives for Never-Endianism have fallen with

\footnotesize 1343 Ibid.
1344 Turner, *British Politics and the Great War*, p. 251. However, Asquith faced pressure from his wife and threats from his colleagues that they would be compelled to make a fuller and stronger statement of support for Lansdowne. Ibid., p. 257. Margot Asquith’s letter to Lord Courtney, referred to above is evidence that perhaps Margot Asquith’s heart was really with the principles espoused by Lansdowne. See Margot Asquith to Lord Courtney, n.d., Courtney Papers, XII. It also appears that Margot did all she could to promote the idea of her husband joining in a coalition with Lansdowne. As Turner stated, Margot Asquith was immersed in intrigue in an attempt to create a coalition to replace the Government. Turner, *British Politics and the Great War*, p. 258.
1345 Turner, *British Politics and the Great War*, p. 256. One reason for Lloyd George’s care with Austria was the secret Smuts-Mensdorff talks due to start in Geneva in a few days. See French, *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition*, pp. 198-199.
the autumn leaf.'\textsuperscript{1347} Still, the lack of an authoritative statement of war aims worried the editor of the \textit{Nation} because he saw too many reasons for prolongation of the war being given by the likes of Carson and the \textit{Times} and the \textit{Daily Mail}.\textsuperscript{1348} However, the dramatic events being played out in Europe would soon place unbearable strain on the Lloyd George government’s policy of keeping the public in the dark of war aims.

On 2 December, preliminary peace negotiations commenced between the Bolshevik Government in Russia and the German Government. On 7 December, the Bolsheviks formally invited the Allies to take part in a peace conference for a general peace based on the ‘no annexations, no indemnities’ principle. The Asquithian Spender and the Radical Massingham were in agreement over what they thought the Allied response to the Bolshevik peace offer ought to be. In the 8 December edition of the \textit{Westminster Gazette}, Spender stated his conviction that the Allied governments’ veto of Stockholm, their failure to do anything when the Russians asked for a revision of war aims, and their failure to reply to the Papal Peace Note, had lost Russia to German diplomatic moves.\textsuperscript{1349} Breaking news of the rejected secret German peace offer of the previous September no doubt strengthened convictions among a number of publicists that some response was needed this time to the current peace offer.\textsuperscript{1350} After hearing news of the Bolshevik proposal and its acceptance by the Germans on Christmas Day,\textsuperscript{1351} Spender declared the Bolshevik’s six-point plan too much like a

\textsuperscript{1347} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1348} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1350} News of the Kühlmann peace offer was published in the \textit{Westminster Gazette}. \textit{Westminster Gazette} ‘German Peace Offer’, 14 Dec. 1917.
\textsuperscript{1351} The Russians presented a six-point programme for peace without annexations or indemnities, which the Central Powers accepted without reservation on Christmas Day. However, the condition imposed by Germany was that the Allies should do the same. Stevenson portrayed the Bolshevik Decree of Peace as ‘Wilsonian rather than Leninist’ and has refuted the suggestion that the Bolsheviks
peace based on the status quo ante bellum. For him, it lacked the major premise of all negotiations, that is, the ‘acceptance of some international system which will enable the nations to live in freedom and security.’ Despite these reservations, and believing that the rejection of all previous peace offers had been a mistake, Spender was of the opinion that this time the Allies should make a response to Czernin. Even the ‘holy war’ Radical, Gardiner, believed that the Allies should seize the opportunity without hesitation and make a candid statement of their war aims and peace terms. Gardiner’s belief was no doubt influenced by Arthur Ransome, the Daily News correspondent in Russia. Ransome wrote a vigorous warning to the Allies on 1 January 1918:

I am convinced that our only chance of defeating the German designs is to publish terms as near the Russian terms as possible, and by taking a powerful hand at the proposed Conference to help at the same time the democratic movement in Germany and the Russians in forcing the German Government in the direction which it partly under pressure from below and partly with a cunning view to the future, has had to take.

On 4 January, Ransome wrote again, spelling out clearly what he thought must be done:

For nearly a year we have played with the Russian Revolution. For nearly a year we have missed chance after chance of making it our most powerful instrument of victory and the swiftest means of bringing the war to an end and establishing a clean peace. Is this tragedy of incompetence to continue? … This is the moment for a great gesture by the Allies…. The moment must not be lost.

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1352 On 27 Dec. 1917, the Germans issued a declaration of a ten-day adjournment to the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, giving the Entente until 4 January to consider whether they wanted to join the negotiations for a general peace. French, The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition, pp. 201-202.
1353 Perhaps Spender believed that the terms in the Kühlmann peace offer were reasonable for the western Allies, now that Germany was offering a status quo peace with Russia on the eastern front. Westminster Gazette, ‘Diplomatic Skills and Honesty’, 28 Dec. 1917. Note that Czernin was appointed head of the Central Power’s initiative.
1354 Cooper Willis, England’s Holy War, p. 247.
1355 Ibid.
1356 Ibid.
Meanwhile, in Paris, Robert Dell, correspondent for the *Nation*, warned that France was a real concern too. Dell reported unease in France connected to the fog surrounding war aims. There was a widespread belief that France was taking an unfair burden of the sacrifices in terms of manpower, with reports that the French army were putting men over fifty in the trenches. ‘At the same time,’ Dell reported that there is strong resentment at the monstrous pretensions of Italy and suspicions about British war aims, because nobody is clear about them. People are very [much] with the Australians for refusing conscription…. Everyone here thinks that the German colonies should be given back to Germany.\(^{1357}\)

Dell reported that references to Italy’s ‘monstrous pretensions’, vague British war aims, and lust for the German colonies, were evidence of a fear in some circles in France that Britain and Italy were keeping the war going for other objectives and not for the sake of France or Belgium. Also, Dell reported on similar sentiments among British troops on the Western Front:

I had a letter yesterday from an officer in one of the crack regiments of the British army, a regiment of the Guards, who said; ‘I think I am right in saying that almost everyone here is for negotiating on them [the German peace proposals to Russia]. There is, of course, a certain mistrust…. If the Allies refuse to negotiate with them, I think that it will be a folly for which we deserve to get a thorough beating. If that is the opinion of the Guard’s mess, what must the private soldier think? Of course, this must not be quoted in print.\(^{1358}\)

In the meantime, the Labour movement demonstrated popular support for war aims revision in Britain. On 28 December, the day after the German peace appeal, a special Labour Party conference endorsed the party’s long-anticipated Memorandum

\(^{1357}\) Robert Dell [Paris correspondent for the *Nation*] to H. W. Massingham, 1 Jan. 1918, Massingham Papers, MC 41/1-28.

\(^{1358}\) Ibid. Finishing the letter to Massingham on a personal note, Dell wrote: ‘I had a letter yesterday from Hirst, who told me that you were ill in bed. I hope that it is nothing serious and that you will soon be alright.’ Ibid. Havighurst suggested that the contents of Dell’s letter weighed heavily on Massingham’s spirit. Havighurst, *Radical Journalist*, p. 265.
on War Aims, by a vote of 2,132,000 to 1,164,000. The National Executive of the Labour Party had been preparing the memorandum ever since Henderson had been galvanised into action by the Stockholm Affair several months earlier. The Memorandum demanded the ‘democratisation of the conduct of foreign policy, an end to secret diplomacy, international limitation on armaments, and the establishment of a League of Nations to prevent future wars.’ This was seen by Radicals as virtually an endorsement of the programme of the U. D. C.

The British Government could no longer ignore the growing public disquiet over the prosecution of the war. The combination of the U. D. C. propaganda on war aims, the Bolshevik release of the secret treaties, the Lansdowne Letter, pressure from Asquithian Liberals, the Labour Memorandum on War Aims, and the German Christmas Peace Offer, led Lloyd George to conclude on 31 December that a statement of Allied war aims was necessary. Historians differ somewhat as to how this issue was received by the War Cabinet. David French has asserted that the War Cabinet was not convinced that the Germans were serious about a compromise peace at their moment of triumph over Russia. General Robertson put the view that the

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1360 Ibid. For further detail see Roger Moore, *The Emergence of the Labour Party* (Dunton Green, 1978), pp. 155-156.
1362 Swartz has argued that the U. D. C. had contributed to the pressures to which Lloyd George responded in his war aims speech – ‘Not only through its propaganda but also through the permeation of the Labour movement by its foreign policy ideas, the Union exerted an influence on the Prime Minister. Government attempts to compete with the Union’s propaganda (through sponsorship of the National War Aims committee) or to render it ineffective (through censorship) had failed. One of Lloyd George’s intentions when he appeared at the Caxton Hall was to counter the dissenting propaganda of the Union of Democratic Control.’ Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control*, p. 198.
1363 The contrast between the Bolsheviks and the Allies seemed great. Trotsky had talked of open diplomacy, and then backed this up by publishing the Allies’ secret treaties. Robbins, *The Abolition of War*, p. 153.
1364 Ibid., p. 153.
Germans merely wanted a truce to reorganise their forces for another war.\(^{1365}\) Keith Robbins, on the other hand, has argued that everyone at the 31 December War Cabinet meeting talked of peace in a completely changed atmosphere. This was assisted, according to Robbins, by the fact that General Smuts and Philip Kerr had just returned from their secret peace missions to Austria and Turkey.\(^{1366}\) Regardless of what was the true mood of the War Cabinet discussions that day, there was agreement that the Prime Minister should make a major speech on war aims. The War Cabinet had realised that the issue of war aims could not be dodged any longer. There was a real danger that the popular clamour for an early peace might become irrepressible. Therefore, Smuts and Lord Robert Cecil provided drafts for a major speech by Lloyd George on war aims. These drafts were considered by the War Cabinet on 3 January and Lloyd George wrote his war aims speech based on them.\(^{1367}\) The War Cabinet hoped that this public declaration of unselfish war aims would ‘help calm the waters and counter Bolshevik appeals to Allied workers to join a worldwide revolt.’\(^{1368}\) Before delivery of the speech, C. P. Scott talked Lloyd George into discussing the text with Asquith and Grey, though this task was carried out with great reluctance by all three. Scott’s aim was to bring about some sort of agreement on war aims within the

\(^{1365}\) See French for an outline of the War Cabinet discussion that led to the Caxton Hall address. French, *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition*, pp. 202-203. Robbins has given a different perspective on these War Cabinet discussions. Robbins, *The Abolition of War*, p. 154.

\(^{1366}\) Ibid., p. 153. Smuts and Mensdorff had met in Geneva on 18 and 19 December, and Kerr met with Turkish representatives on 19 December. French commented on the secrecy surrounding these talks: ‘The Smuts-Kerr mission was shrouded in secrecy, for if the War Cabinet’s refusal to negotiate with Germany had become known it would have given still more ammunition to those who were criticizing the government for their determination not to end the war until they had delivered a knock-out blow.’ For further information on the Smuts-Mensdorff talks and Kerr’s talks with Turkish representatives, see French, *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition*, p. 198-199.


\(^{1368}\) Ibid., 154. Turner informs us that Smuts provided two-fifths of the input for the speech, Robert Cecil, two-fifths and Lloyd George, one fifth. As Turner observed: ‘The war aims speech which emerged from these discussions was therefore the product of consensus, not of conflict.’ Turner, *British Politics and the Great War*, p. 269.

\(^{1366}\) Thompson, *Lord Northcliffe and the Great War*, p. 186.
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It is important to note also that no consultation with the U. S. A., or any other ally, took place before Lloyd George delivered this major speech on Britain’s war aims. It was a unilateral statement.

The choice of location for the first major declaration of war aims by Britain since 10 January 1917 was a calculated one. Lloyd George spoke before a trade union congress on the Government’s forthcoming Manpower Bill held at the Caxton Hall on 5 January 1918. This choice of venue, with the Prime Minister speaking at a trade union conference rather than in Parliament, reflected the new political reality. The trade union movement was no longer willing to work for peace through victory at any price. After the wastefulness and slaughter at the Somme and Passchendaele, the labour leaders wanted to be sure that any further sacrifices would be for purposes for which they approved. On the other hand, Lloyd George needed the support of trade unionists for his new Manpower Bill. The Prime Minister declared that Britain’s key war aims would be: the restoration and reparation of Belgium; a ‘reconsideration’ of Alsace-Lorraine; the return of the occupied parts of France, Italy and Roumania; an independent Poland; and the restoration of Serbia and Montenegro. As far as the Austro-Hungarian Empire was concerned, the nationalities should be given the chance of self-government ‘on true democratic principles.’ With the repudiation of the secret treaty with Russia, Turkey could keep Constantinople though the Straits should be internationalised and neutralised, while Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria and

1369 Turner, British Politics and the Great War, p. 269.
1370 For the full text of the speech, see ‘Speech of Mr. Lloyd George, January 5 1918’, Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, pp. 108-115.
1371 Martin, Peace Without Victory, p. 156.
1373 ‘Speech of Mr. Lloyd George, January 5 1918’, Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, pp. 108-115.
Palestine all deserved ‘recognition of their separate national condition.’\textsuperscript{1374} Russia would have to fend for herself and make her own arrangements and the future of the German colonies ought to be decided by the peace conference.\textsuperscript{1375} Finally, the Prime Minister committed the nation to the ‘creation of some international organisation to limit the burden of armaments and diminish the probability of war.’\textsuperscript{1376} These terms were a retreat from the terms to which Britain had agreed with its allies between 1914 and 1917.\textsuperscript{1377}

David French has asserted that Lloyd George had three objectives for this speech. Firstly, he wanted to impress the British public about the reasonableness of Britain’s case in order to encourage greater sacrifices for the war effort. Secondly, he wanted to reassure France and Italy that Britain would continue to support them if they wanted to keep fighting. Thirdly, he wanted to appeal directly to the people of the Central Powers to convince them that it was their governments that stood in the way of an early peace. The French were pleased because of Lloyd George’s apparent endorsement of their claims to Alsace-Lorraine. However, the Italians were concerned that he had not endorsed their claims to the Adriatic coast.\textsuperscript{1378} On the second objective, there was also partial success. But there was little enthusiasm at home for the Caxton Hall address. However, it was the trade union movement that really mattered to Lloyd George. When the Labour Party conference met at Nottingham between 23 and 25 January, it did not demand an immediate end to the war, though it

\begin{itemize}
  \item\textsuperscript{1374} Ibid.
  \item\textsuperscript{1375} However, the British government’s real intention was to keep the German colonies. Walter Long had sent a telegram to the Dominion governments the previous day cautioning them not to take the Prime Minister’s words at face value. Britain intended to retain the colonies but could not at this stage secure agreement from its allies on this point. French, \textit{The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition}, p. 204.
  \item\textsuperscript{1376} Ibid.
  \item\textsuperscript{1378} Ibid., p. 205-206.
\end{itemize}
did request that a joint statement of aims follow the Caxton Hall and Fourteen Points speeches (to be discussed below). Also, the Labour leader, Arthur Henderson, approved the speech though he was critical of the way Lloyd George had cold-shouldered the Bolsheviks. The effect on British public opinion ‘was all that the Prime Minister could have desired.’ It was certainly enough to get Lloyd George through this difficult time. On the third objective, appealing to the peoples of the Central Powers, there was little success, although major strikes in late January in Germany testified to the volatile domestic situation. When Hertling and Czernin responded to Lloyd George and Wilson on 24 January 1918, it was clear that some movement was taking place, especially in Vienna, and that continuing dialogue was a real possibility. This will be discussed further below.

The *Times* hailed the Caxton Hall speech as the ‘most important State document issued since the declaration of the war.’ The ‘holy war’ Radical publicists would not go that far, but they were pleasantly surprised by the commitment to self-determination and the general moderation of the Caxton Hall address. They had been expecting another ‘knockout blow’ speech, but instead found that there was no intention of destroying Germany, while the treatment of the Alsace-

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1380 French also pursues an argument that Lloyd George was fortunate in that ‘war weariness’ did not develop into ‘defeatism’, because ‘rhetoric could only go so far in sustaining popular support for the war.’ For French, the crucial factor that prevented war weariness from developing into defeatism was that the government had succeeded in feeding the people. French, *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition*, pp. 205-206.
1381 Hertling’s words were: ‘Regarding the Belgium question, my predecessors in office have repeatedly declared that at no time during the war did the incorporation by violence of Belgium in Germany constitute a programmatic point of German policy. The Belgian question belongs to the complex of questions, the details of which will have to be settled by the war and peace negotiations.’ ‘Count Hertling’s Reply to President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George, January 24, 1918’, in G. L. Dickinson, *Documents and Statements*, pp. 125-132. The statement regarding Belgium is on p 129. See also, ‘Count Czernin Replies to President Wilson’s Address of January 8th’. January 24, 1918’ in Dickinson, pp. 122-125. On the domestic unrest in Germany, see Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter, Vol. IV*, ch. 3. On the on-going conflict between annexationists of the O. H. L. and the moderates around Prince Max, in the period between the Lansdowne Letter and the German offensive of March 1918, see Ritter, *The Ritter, The Sword and the Scepter, Vol. IV*, ch. 5.
Lorraine issue seemed to leave open the possibility of compromise.\textsuperscript{1383} Relieved at the milder than expected speech, Gardiner declared:

\begin{quote}
The contest between Democracy and Liberalism is not confined to Germany alone. On a greater or a lesser scale it has been fought out in every country in the world…. In our country we have known something of the contest, and it was not till relatively recent days that we could assure ourselves that Democracy had secured its future…. Only in Germany are the autocrats still enthroned.\textsuperscript{1384}
\end{quote}

The ‘holy war’ Radicals hoped that Lloyd George had taken a step forward and, with Wilson at his side, would move further still down the road to a ‘Clean Peace’.\textsuperscript{1385}

Meanwhile, the ‘peace-by-negotiation’ Radicals did not believe that a leopard could change its spots. Massingham thought that Lloyd George’s Caxton Hall speech was an ‘ascent from the spirit of the knock-out blow,’ but believed that the change in the Prime Minister’s attitude was due only to the pressure from the reinvigorated trade union movement that refused to give its assent to ‘an indefinite prolongation of the war.’\textsuperscript{1386} Charles Roden Buxton analysed the ambiguity of the phrases in the Caxton Hall speech and concluded that it was a ‘potent weapon’ in the hands of German Militarists against the ‘peace tendency’ in the enemy countries.\textsuperscript{1387} Many Radicals, indeed, had little cause for joy in the Caxton Hall address. Hobson noted the lofty rhetoric of Lloyd George’s that was without precise meaning. For example, the misleading suggestion that the former German colonies were to be disposed of by a peace conference, and the use of the elastic term, ‘reconsideration,’ to describe the future status of Alsace-Lorraine. Ponsonby warned his friend, Trevelyan, to be on his guard and sensed the speech was a trap to get Radicals to sign up to a vague formula, while Trevelyan himself was more concerned, not about what was in the speech, but

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\textsuperscript{1383} Cooper Willis, \textit{England’s Holy War}, p. 250.  \\
\textsuperscript{1384} \textit{Daily News}, 25 Jan. 1918.  \\
\textsuperscript{1385} Cooper Willis, \textit{England’s Holy War}, p. 250.  \\
\textsuperscript{1386} \textit{Nation}, ‘The Coming Peace’, Politics and Affairs, 12 Jan. 1918.  \\
\textsuperscript{1387} \textit{Nation}, ‘Mr Lloyd George's Speech’, Letters to the Editor, 12 Jan. 1918.
\end{flushright}
what was left out. For his part, Philip Snowden refused to trust Lloyd George or accept that his suggestions could be used as a basis for peace. However, despite objections from ‘peace-by-negotiation’ Radicals, the Caxton Hall speech was a political triumph for Lloyd George. Most importantly, from the perspective of the War Cabinet, the speech had prevented the issue of a negotiated peace ‘threatening the domestic political structure.’

However, as Harris has observed, the ‘peace-by-negotiation’ Radical publicists were probably right in their assessment, as Lloyd George was later to call upon his fellow Allied leaders to avoid making declarations of war aims but to restrict themselves to making speeches because ‘nobody was bound by a speech.’

Across the Atlantic, the American President had a very different view about the importance of speeches. As mentioned above, he had been putting the finishing touches to his own speech when Lloyd George delivered his Caxton Hall speech. In fact, President Wilson felt miffed that, once again, his thunder had been stolen.

Thomas Knock has given five reasons for Wilson’s Fourteen Points of 8 January 1918. Firstly, it was designed to diminish the impact of the publication of the secret

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1388 Harris, *Out of Control*, p. 200. On reflection, Ponsonby observed a few months later that the Caxton Hall address had been designed to deceive the Labour movement. Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control*, p. 201.

1389 Turner asserted that the War Cabinet had been fairly successful in constructing a definition of war aims that satisfied the Labour Party, Asquith, the Unionist members of the War Cabinet, and Lloyd George to some extent. Even the Radical Liberals found a foothold in the speech, Turner argued. See Turner, *British Politics and the Great War*, p. 70. On this last group, this description applies only to some Radicals, as demonstrated above.

1390 Ibid.

1391 Wilson at first thought that the Caxton Hall speech was so akin to his Fourteen Points address that he had been thinking of abandoning its planned delivery before Congress. However, House persuaded the President that his speech would so smother the Caxton Hall speech that the latter would be forgotten and he would once again become the spokesman for the Entente. Thomson, *Woodrow Wilson*, p. 166. Note that a similar thing occurred in December when the Germans beat him in issuing their Peace Note. He had been just about to issue his own Peace Note when news came of the German Note. Wilson was inclined to trash his planned peace initiative but Colonel House convinced him to go ahead.
treaties. Secondly, Wilson aimed to bring the Bolsheviks back into the war by appealing to common principles. Thirdly, the President intended to rally the American people behind the idea of a peace settlement based on the League of Nations. The fourth reason was to induce the Allied governments to sign up to his war aims. Finally, Wilson hoped to promote a popular clamour for peace in Germany by indicating that the peace terms would be fair. In formulating his speech, Wilson did not share the view of Radicals or American progressives who wanted to revise war aims drastically in order to make an early peace more likely.

In his address to Congress on 8 January the President began with praise of Russian insistence on open diplomacy, an outline of the failed intentions of moderates in Germany, and a denunciation of German ambitions then revealed at Brest-Litovsk. He praised the candour with which Lloyd George had spoken the previous week, attacked the Central Powers for their failure to make a definite statement of the object of the war, and declared that no statesman ‘should permit himself to continue this tragic and appalling outpouring of blood and treasure’ unless he was sure that the ‘objects of the vital sacrifice’ were truly held by the people for whom he speaks. Wilson expressed empathy for the Russian people who ‘are prostrate and all but helpless’ and spoke of his desire to ‘assist the people of Russia to attain their utmost hope of liberty and ordered peace.’ The day of conquest and aggrandisement and secret treaties was gone, the President announced. What America demanded the President said, was that the world be made ‘safe for every peace-loving nation.’ In a similar, but much more comprehensive way than the Papal Peace Note, Wilson

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1392 Knock, To End All Wars, p. 145.
1393 For the full text of the speech, see Dickinson, ed., Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, pp. 116-125.
1394 Ibid.
1395 Ibid.
1396 Ibid.
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outlined a fourteen-point programme for the realisation of his objectives. The first five points dealt with open covenants, freedom of navigation upon the seas, free trade and no tariff barriers, disarmament and an impartial adjustment of colonial claims. The sixth point demanded the evacuation of Russian territories, while points seven to thirteen dealt with the evacuation of Belgium, the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France,\textsuperscript{1397} the adjustment of the Italian-Austrian frontier according to nationality, autonomous development for the peoples of the Austro-Hungarian empire, the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire, and the creation of an independent state of Poland with an outlet to the sea. The most important point for Wilson, however, was the fourteenth, the creation of a League of Nations. Finally, Wilson pledged that he did not seek the destruction of the German nation or to impair its role as a great nation. Rather, Germany would be given ‘a place of equality’ among nations if she renounced plans for ‘a place of mastery.’ In summing up the speech, Wilson appealed to

the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak. Unless this principle be made its foundation no part of the structure of international justice can stand. The people of the United States could act upon no other principle, and to the vindication of this principle they are ready to devote their lives, their honor, and everything that they possess. The moral climax of this, the culminating and final war for human liberty has come, and they are ready to put their own strength, their own highest purpose, their own integrity and devotion to the test.\textsuperscript{1398}

Overall, the Radical publicists, along with the U. D. C., the I. L. P., and a host of other dissident organisations such as the W. I. L., were pleased with the Fourteen Points speech.\textsuperscript{1399} The reaction of the Radical publicists to the President’s speech was certainly warmer than their reaction to their own Prime Minister’s Caxton Hall

\textsuperscript{1397} In promising the return of Alsace-Lorraine in its entirety to France, without mention of any plebiscite of negotiation on the redrawing of borders, Wilson appeared to conform to French nationalist expectations more readily than Lloyd George.
\textsuperscript{1398} Ibid., p. 121.
\textsuperscript{1399} Haslam, From Suffrage to Internationalism, p. 119.
address. Wilson’s generous references to Russia, in particular, won the approval from Radicals who thought Lloyd George’s treatment of Russia was cold. The Labour conference at Nottingham, on 24 January, expressed the hope that Wilson’s speech would be a step in the direction of a joint declaration of terms by the Allies. Gardiner’s *Daily News* exclaimed that ‘Democracy has secured its future,’ while Massingham’s *Nation* proclaimed that: ‘Mr. Wilson is fighting superbly against all imperialism and cynicism, and doing it with a shrewdness and courage which stamp him as the leader of civilization.’ Massingham was impressed with the friendliness towards the Bolsheviks and the ‘sharp recoil from the policy of pressing, or even forcing, democracy on Germany.’ The speech was a ‘wonderfully precise intellectual record.’ Furthermore, according to Massingham, moral ideas had been ‘restored to their proper eminence first by the wild evangelism of the Bolsheviks, and secondly, by Mr. Wilson’s more sober and critical, but firmly impressive, endorsement of them.’ For many Radical publicists the Fourteen Points had served to restore somewhat their faith in Wilson, to something like the heartfelt conviction that it had been in late 1916.

However, despite their approval of the general principles in Wilson’s famous speech, other Radical publicists, like Brailsford and Snowden, still had some significant reservations. Snowden issued a warning against showing enthusiasm for the Fourteen Points because the points on Alsace-Lorraine and autonomy for the subject peoples of Austria-Hungary were ‘terms not for negotiation but terms which

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1401 Ibid., p. 162.
1403 *Nation*, 12 Jan. 1918.
1404 Ibid.
1408 Ibid., pp. 201-202.
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would only be accepted by a nation which had been completely defeated in the field. Hirst was concerned that these aims in the Fourteen Points were not the original British aims, as stated in the autumn of 1914, and that the limited goals of the ‘defence of Belgium and Northern France, have altered out of all recognition.’ As he said to Gertrude, he was pleased with only the first four points of the President’s speech and unhappily concluded that peace was either two months or four years away.

The Fourteen Points Speech has been hailed since the First World War as one of the great speeches of the war. Of course, part of the reason for the historic importance of this speech was that in October 1918 the head of the new democratic government of Germany, Prince Max, asked for an armistice on the basis of the Fourteen Points. Wilson’s insistence that the Fourteen Points speech form the basis of the peace settlement greatly magnified its place in history for posterity. However, in January 1918, the monumental significance of the Fourteen Points was not yet clear. Both the Caxton Hall and Fourteen Points speeches seemed to provide comprehensive statements of British and American war aims. However, as Robbins argues, it was also clear that ‘neither government wished to probe the areas where they diverged.’ Martin’s observation that the Fourteen Points speech constituted ‘the most comprehensive and striking presentation yet of a liberal program, almost exactly endorsing the aims of the British Radicals,’ is perhaps too rosy an assessment. In making a judgement about the effectiveness of the Fourteen Points speech it is worth

1409 Labour Leader, 10 and 17 Jan. 1918.
1410 Common Sense, 19 Jan. 1918. As Thompson commented: ‘The overall conception of a liberal peace presented in the Fourteen Points was significantly different from that of a settlement based on the status quo – which had seemed to be the implication of such phrases as ‘a peace without victory’ and ‘no annexations, no indemnities.’ Thompson, Woodrow Wilson, p. 165.
1411 However, Hirst confided that he had ‘a good talk with the Colonel [House]’. F. W. Hirst to Gertrude, 15 Jan. 1918, Hirst Papers, Letters to Gertrude Hirst, 1894-1929.
looking again at what Thomas Knock has listed as the aims of the speech. On Wilson’s first two aims of trying to diminish the impact of the secret treaties and to bring the Bolsheviks back into the war by appealing to common principles, Fleming argues that the Fourteen Points were a ‘flop’ on the first and accomplished a ‘zero minus’ with the Bolsheviks.\footnote{Fleming, \textit{The Illusion of Victory}, p. 180.} On rallying the American people behind the idea of a peace settlement based on the League of Nations, there was more success. On the fourth and most important aim, of inducing the Allied governments to adopt progressive war aims, openly and without equivocation, there was total failure. On the fifth aim, of encouraging the clamour for peace in Germany, there was minimal impact, though, surprisingly, as we have seen, both the German and Austrian governments expressed a willingness to explore the limited amount of common ground that they found in the Fourteen Points.

As demonstrated above, the Radical publicists were not just dispassionate observers and interpreters of events but were often drawn in as active participants. This became particularly the case in the first half of 1918. Ever since August 1914, their convictions about the necessity of achieving a just and lasting peace had led them to make increasingly bold attempts to influence the high politics of the war. During the early months of 1918 both Massingham and Hirst attempted to use the pages of their newspapers, the \textit{Nation} and \textit{Common Sense}, to move beyond simply urging the Allied leaders to revise war aims and consider a negotiated peace. Out of frustration with their own Government, Hirst and Massingham openly promoted the possibility of a new coalition government including Lansdowne, Asquith, and possibly, Henderson. Francis Hirst went further than Massingham in actively playing
the role of kingmaker. Hirst became the lynchpin of what became known as the Lansdowne Movement. This movement included Radicals and disaffected Liberals and hoped to draw in the Labour Party.

Lord Loreburn had played a central role in bringing both Lansdowne and together in November. Now Loreburn had a role in urging Hirst to take up direct political activism. The recent Labour conference’s Memorandum of War Aims prompted Loreburn to suggest that ‘a move on the Lansdowne lines would do immense good’ at this time. Further, he hoped that a revival of the proposals of the secret German peace feeler the previous September, with the approval of the French and Americans, would advance the cause of peace diplomacy. Most of all though, Loreburn was aware of the looming Spring offensives and hoped that the war ‘may stop before the impending horrible engagements sacrifice more blood.’ On New Year’s Eve, ex-Foreign Minister, Lord Grey also felt the time was encouraging for a peace effort. Grey broke his silence to reveal his hopeful thoughts about the New Year to Lady Courtney:

> It appears to me that Wilson is in a position to decide the peace terms of the Allies: I should be quite satisfied personally if I felt sure that the terms indicated by Wilson could be obtained.

The same day, Lord Loreburn confided to Hirst that he had high hopes for Arthur Henderson, leader of the Labour Party, whom he thought would ‘come out in the H of C.’ This was written in the wake of the Labour Party Memorandum on War Aims, released a few days earlier. Loreburn also hoped for a secret debate on war aims in the House of Lords. He thought this would be a more effective means of influencing

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1415 Lord Loreburn to F. W. Hirst, 29 Dec. 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917.
1416 Ibid.
1417 Lord Grey to Lord Courtney, 31 Dec. 1917, Courtney Papers, XII.
1418 Loreburn to F. W. Hirst, 31 Dec. 1917, Hirst Papers, 1917.
1419 Ibid. Loreburn did not want to ‘raise a public agitation’ for he wanted to keep ‘a united front.’
the War Cabinet because ‘the real people to move are the Ministers.’\textsuperscript{1420} Also on New Year’s Eve, Hirst had nothing but praise for an editorial in the \textit{Daily News} by fellow Radical publicist, Alfred Gardiner. In his editorial, Gardiner argued that both Britain and Germany were plunging headlong into the abyss, though Germany was closer to it. This explained Germany’s urgent need for peace. Gardiner concluded his editorial with a plea for an early peace:

[Germany] alone knows is she must have peace before the next offensive has revealed her impoverishment in men. Her reply to the Allies will give the clue to this vital question, and if the answer shows that a just peace can be reached without another year of carnage on a scale more terrible than anything that has gone before it would be a crime on the part of the Allies to delay such a peace for the sake of problematical military decisions on Germany’s soil, won (or not won) by the sacrifice of thousands of men whose death would achieve nothing but a vain military ambition. And it would not only be a crime: it would be a blunder, for there is no assurance that our position for dictating terms next New Year’s Day will not be inferior to our position today.\textsuperscript{1421}

Hirst commented approvingly in his draft letter to the editor that Gardiner’s conclusion was ‘based not on sentimentalism, but on a careful analysis of the facts and the probabilities.’\textsuperscript{1422} Methuen told Hirst of his encouragement of Gardiner to speak out and also his observation that the public mind had become ‘quite reasonable’ and open to ‘peaceful penetration’.\textsuperscript{1423} By the end of the month, with the Lansdowne Movement absorbing his every waking hour, Hirst found that he was becoming more than just a commentator and a spectator of events.

For the Radical publicists, the advent of the New Year had restored some hope that war aims revision could be achieved and a negotiated peace made possible. Lloyd George had been forced to give his major war aims speech at the trade union

\textsuperscript{1420} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1422} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1423} A. Methuen to F. W. Hirst, 5 Jan. 1918, Hirst Papers, Jan.-May 1918.
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conference at Caxton Hall in order to keep the Labour movement’s support for the war. This, combined with President Wilson’s Fourteen Points address, seemed to indicate that the kind of peace to which the Radical publicists could subscribe was beginning to take shape. Further hope was generated by the replies of Hertling and Czernin to Wilson’s Fourteen Points speech. By the end of January, Hirst was doing all he could to capitalise on the promising nature of the dialogue between the American President and the leaders of the Central Powers. Uppermost in the minds of Hirst and many others was the upcoming meeting of the Supreme War Council to be held on 1 February. A conciliatory joint Allied statement of war aims might have been able to capitalise on the promising parley that had emerged between President Wilson and Central Powers. This might then take both sides closer to peace and so avert the coming Armageddon of the next round of offensives expected in the Spring of 1918.

At the end of January 1918, Hirst found himself in the unfamiliar world of political intrigue. Hirst spent much of January busily gathering support for war aims revision along the lines advocated by Lord Lansdowne. Part of Hirst’s plan was to mobilize opinion by getting prominent Liberals to sign an official memorial, especially bound in vellum, recording the signatories’ support for Lansdowne. Lansdowne was most appreciative of Hirst’s efforts: ‘I need not tell you how much your communication interests me. I should certainly like to see you before any steps are taken in the

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1424 Lord Newton, writing in 1929, expressed this atmosphere of hope succinctly: ‘It looked for a short time at the beginning of 1918, as though the possibilities of such a peace as Lord Lansdowne had urged were not altogether hopeless. President Wilson’s peace proposals had been followed [sic] by a speech from Mr. Lloyd George in which he admitted the necessity for a restatement of war aims, and by the overtures of Count Czernin.’ Lord Newton, Lord Lansdowne, p. 474.

1425 Lord Brassey said he ‘would sign the letter to Lansdowne. Dear Friend. I am ill. To the last I would do what I could.’ Lord Brassey to F. W. Hirst, 17 Jan. 1917, Hirst Papers, Jan.-May 1918.
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In a letter to Lady Courtney, Hirst reported on his success in gathering signatories for the memorial: but he was not successful in all his approaches: ‘I am afraid its too late for Haldane\(^\text{1427}\) and for the Archbishop to sign,’ he wrote. Plans were made for the presentation of the memorial at Lansdowne’s house at Berkeley Square on 31 January 1918, in a gesture designed to win publicity for the Lansdowne Movement.\(^\text{1428}\) About forty prominent supporters turned up and Loreburn\(^\text{1429}\) gave in Hirst’s description, a ‘most charming speech’ in formerly presenting the memorial.\(^\text{1430}\) In his reply to Lord Loreburn, Lansdowne emphasized the necessity of a restatement of war aims:

We desire such a peace to be obtained as soon as possible, and we trust there will be no unnecessary fencing through an exaggerated fear of falling into peace traps. Finally, may I express our hopes that our own Government in pursuit of these objects will leave no effort unmade, however difficult, and no avenue unexplored, no matter how unpromising it may seem to be.\(^\text{1431}\)

The seventy-three year old formidable elder statesman appeared to have placed his considerable wisdom and prestige in the service of those who desired a purification of war aims and an early and just peace. Francis Hirst, self-appointed facilitator of this political revival, was an odd match for the English Lord. This relationship between the Radical, Liberal free-trader, economist and outspoken opponent of the privileged class, and the great Lord and ex-Unionist Minister, and foreign policy hawk, who had engineered the Entente with France, would have been inconceivable in peacetime.

\(^{1426}\) Lansdowne was thanking Hirst for his letter of 19 January. Lansdowne also asked to meet Hirst at the House of Lords on Thursday 24 January. Lord Lansdowne to F. W. Hirst, 23 Jan. 1918, Hirst Papers, Jan.-May 1918.

\(^{1427}\) Haldane was another big name Liberal. Viscount Haldane was Lord Chancellor in Asquith’s government at the beginning of the war. He was accused of being pro-German by the press and was forced to leave Asquith’s coalition government in 1915.

\(^{1428}\) Ibid.

\(^{1429}\) Hirst said it was Morley who insisted that Loreburn would be ‘the best person to present address to Lansdowne.’ F. W. Hirst to Helena, 27 Jan. 1918, Hirst Papers, Letters to Helena Hirst 1904-1919.

\(^{1430}\) F. W. Hirst to Gertrude Hirst, 1 Feb. 1918, Hirst Papers, Letters to Gertrude Hirst 1894-1929.

Their social and political circles were poles apart. However, there was more than simply the shared conviction of a need for a negotiated settlement that brought them together. As Hirst recounted to his sister, Gertrude, as soon as he read Lansdowne’s Letter in the *Daily Telegraph*, ‘I made up my mind he was the right man for us, and I at once laid myself out to promote his ideas as fair I could.’\(^{1432}\) Then he sounded out a few author and journalist friends and sent a memo to Lansdowne, signed by them all. Lansdowne and his ‘most agreeable’ wife were ‘delighted’ with this gesture of support organised by Hirst. However, Hirst’s admiration of Lansdowne went deeper:

> I have never before had any dealings with him at all, but I found him what Loreburn said, whose friendship with him dates back from Balliol [College in Oxford]; the very best type of Englishman; aristocratic, straightforward and frank, dignified, accessible, firm and even tenacious, yet wisely regardful of other’s opinions.\(^{1433}\)

To Hirst, Lansdowne seemed like a very different type of national leader to those with whom he was familiar. Lansdowne appeared to be a straight-talking and courageous man of character. What was more, Lansdowne was a high-profile national figure. If all the groups advocating war aims revision and a negotiated peace could be mobilised around him, then real pressure might be exerted on the government to act decisively on these issues.

During January 1918, the Radical publicists were aware that for the future prospects of the Lansdowne Movement much depended on the replies of the Central Powers to the Caxton Hall and Fourteen Points speeches. For example, in a letter to Hirst, on 21 January, Lord Beauchamp pinned his hopes on Chancellor Hertling’s expected reply to the Fourteen Points.\(^{1434}\) As we have seen, there were some

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\(^{1432}\) F. W. Hirst to Gertrude Hirst, 1 Feb. 1918, Hirst Papers, Letters to Gertrude Hirst 1894-1929.

\(^{1433}\) Ibid.

\(^{1434}\) Lord Beauchamp to F. W. Hirst, 21 Jan. 1918, Hirst Papers, Jan.-May 1918.
indications from both Berlin and Vienna of a willingness to negotiate on Wilson’s agenda. President Wilson’s Fourteen Points speech did prompt conciliatory replies from Count Czernin for Austria and Count Hertling for Germany.\textsuperscript{1435} The Central Powers made their replies on 24 January 1918. Hertling’s speech was a most intelligent and thoughtful response to the Fourteen Points speech. The German Chancellor found that both Wilson’s Fourteen Points and Lloyd George’s Caxton Hall speeches contained ‘definite principles for a general world peace’ that could constitute the basis of negotiations.\textsuperscript{1436} However, Hertling found that ‘a will to peace on behalf of our adversaries’ was ‘less discernible.’ This persuaded many ‘peace-by-negotiation’ advocates in Britain that only a change of government could bring about a renunciation of the secret treaties and make an early peace possible.\textsuperscript{1437} Austrian Foreign Minister, Czernin, was even more conciliatory in his reply to President Wilson. After analysing each of the fourteen points, Count Czernin concluded:

As will be seen from this comparison of my views with those of Mr. Wilson, we agree essentially, not only in broad principles according to which the world should be reorganised on the conclusion of this war, but our views also approximate in several concrete questions of peace. The differences of opinion do not appear to me so great that a discussion of these points would not lead to elucidation and approximation.\textsuperscript{1438}

Fleming asserts that ‘the House-Wilson team all but gloated over the replies when the Foreign minister for Austria-Hungary and the Chancellor of Germany replied to his Fourteen Points address in conciliatory tones, stressing their desire for peace. Both enemy leaders accepted the general points, freedom of the seas, lowered tariffs, and a league of nations.’ Fleming notes that a closer reading of the replies lowered their

\textsuperscript{1435} For the full text of these replies of 24 January, see Dickinson, ed., \textit{Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims}, pp. 122-132.
\textsuperscript{1436} ‘Count Hertling’s Reply to President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George, January 24, 1918’, Dickinson, ed., \textit{Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims}, p. 131.
\textsuperscript{1437} Haslam, \textit{From Suffrage to Internationalism}, p. 119. Harris, \textit{Out of Control}, p. 198.
\textsuperscript{1438} ‘Count Czernin Replies to President Wilson’s Address of January 8\textsuperscript{th}, January 24 1918’, Dickinson, ed., \textit{Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims}, p. 125.
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hopes. In short, Czernin and Hertling had questioned some of Wilson’s concrete points, ‘but the desire for peace seemed genuine.’ Meanwhile, the Radical publicists anticipated that advances could be made on the basis of these replies. Hirst was especially hopeful: ‘The full Hertling [speech] is not bad and Czernin is excellent.’ Meanwhile, Massingham was adamant that something be made of the Central Powers’ replies, despite the speculation over what was happening at the Brest-Litovsk negotiations. The Allies had only themselves to blame for now being confronted with a Red Peace, having rejected all previous opportunities:

The world would not listen to Mr. Wilson when he talked of peace without victory, nor to Mr. Branting when he proposed peace by democratic conference, nor yet to the Pope when he called for a Christian peace. The penalty for its deafness is the emergence of Trotsky and the portent of a red peace.

In trying to analyse what was really going on inside Germany, Massingham confessed to having no means of knowing. He assumed that there was a struggle between the civil and military arms of the German government. Massingham believed that when Hertling made his next long-postponed speech it should give an indication. However, he believed that in the meantime:

The course of English statesmanship is clear. He must make the victory of the German Military Party impossible by anticipating it with a Peace Offensive. We have to make it clear to the German people that we seek to impose upon them no dishonourable or one-sided conditions that we do in

1442 There was a struggle, of course, going on inside Germany between annexationists and moderates at exactly the same time, with Chancellor Hertling proving to be too weak to face down the militarists of the O. H. L., despite the best efforts of Prince Max, Kurt Hahn, Konrad Hausmann, Alfred Weber and others. See Gatzke, Germany’s Drive to the West, ch. V, Ritter, Sword and the Scepter, Vol. IV, ch. 5, Eberhard Demm, ‘Kurt Hans Memorandum on the Subject of Ethical Imperialism, 1918, war in History, 5, 1 (1988), pp. 84-120, and Eberhard Demm, ‘Une Initiative de Paix Avorte: Lord Lansdowne et le Prince Max de Bade’, Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains, 40, 159 (1990), pp. 5-19.
fact seek not our own aggrandisement but the peace of the world. It would be useless to suppose we have done so already.\footnote{1443} Furthermore, Massingham criticised the Entente leadership for not having the foresight to see that if the Entente had entered the Brest-Litovsk negotiations then it would have helped Russia’s bargaining position and earned Russia’s eternal gratitude. The least that the Entente statesmen could do would be to make things easier for the Peace Party in Austria. ‘What is the use of declaring in one breath that we do not aim at the break-up of Austria, and mentioning each of the nationalities which is to have autonomy?’ Besides, the editor of the Nation reasoned, these aims could not be secured during war unless the armies of the Entente invaded and occupied the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Therefore, ‘the democratic rearrangement of Europe cannot be dictated; it can only evolve out of the political chaos that is bound to follow this war throughout Europe.’\footnote{1444} Massingham concluded that: ‘Principles are all very well, but the world needs peace in which to give them air and time to do their beneficent work.’\footnote{1445} This was, yet again, the familiar Radical call for clear, attainable and moderate war aims, to be combined with some skilful diplomacy.

When the Supreme War Council began deliberations at Versailles on 30 January 1918, skilful diplomacy was not on the agenda. The Allied leaders decided to reject the latest Austrian and German speeches out of hand.\footnote{1446} The Supreme War

\footnote{1443} Nation, ‘ Wanted, A Peace Offensive’, Politics and Affairs, 26 Jan. 1918.  
\footnote{1444} Ibid.  
\footnote{1445} Ibid.  
\footnote{1446} For the full text see ‘Statement Issued by the Supreme War Council, February 4, 1918’, Dickinson, ed., Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, pp. 133-134.
Council published a declaration on 4 February stating its intention to fight on to victory.\textsuperscript{1447}

The Supreme War Council decided that the only immediate task before them lay in the prosecution, with the utmost vigour and in the closest and most effective co-operation, of the military effort of the Allies until such a time as the pressure of that effort shall have brought about in the enemy Governments and peoples a change of temper which would justify the hope of the conclusion of peace terms which would not involve the abandonment, in face of an aggressive and unrepentant militarism, of all the principles of freedom and justice, and the respect for the law of nations which the Allies are resolved to vindicate.\textsuperscript{1448}

The Radical publicists were shocked. The Executive Committee of the U. D. C. proposed a resolution that was passed by the General Council objecting to the Supreme War Council’s boast that its only task was the ‘vigorous and effective prosecution of the war.’\textsuperscript{1449} The resolution also demanded a new government which will place no obstacle in the way of a meeting of the representatives of Labour from all the belligerent countries, and will insist on the other Allied governments agreeing to renounce all their imperialist ambitions as has already been done by the Russians and to demonstrate their readiness to enter at once into negotiations to obtain a democratic peace.\textsuperscript{1450}

Massingham was in despair over the Supreme War Council’s rejection of the Austrian and German peace overtures.\textsuperscript{1451} When he regained his composure, Massingham went on the attack, firstly by lamenting that the United States was not even represented at the Supreme Council of the Allies.\textsuperscript{1452} He believed that this was a tragedy, especially in light of the recent conciliatory speech by Czernin. After all, Massingham stressed, the Count had greeted with ‘gratitude’ the President’s plea for disarmament, and had ‘accepted without qualification his demand for the freedom of the seas and an

\textsuperscript{1447} For the military decisions taken at this meeting, see French, \textit{The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition}, p. 217.


\textsuperscript{1449} Swartz, \textit{The Union of Democratic Control}, p. 200. Also, see Robbins, \textit{The Abolition of War}, p. 157.

\textsuperscript{1450} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{1451} Havighurst, \textit{Radical Journalist}, p. 259.

\textsuperscript{1452} This was technically correct, for the U. S. had observer status only at the Supreme War Council. See David Trask, \textit{The United States in the Supreme War Council} (Middletown, 1961), p. 48.
economic peace after war. How the Supreme War Council could have dismissed these sentiments as evidence of ‘an aggressive and unrepentant militarism’, to be met ‘by the sword and only the sword’, was beyond the nonplussed editor. Massingham questioned whether the American President could really have sanctioned this statement. Massingham railed at the hypocrisy of the Council for comparing the aggressive designs of the enemy with its own ‘moderate conditions’ and for claiming the ‘moral triumph’ that was their due. Furthermore, Massingham highlighted the unconscious touch of humour in the Versailles Declaration of 4 February, in which it was stated that the Allies were ‘united in heart and will’ and ‘not by hidden designs.’ With a touch of sarcasm, Massingham commented:

It was scarcely tactful to remind us that the compacts which formed the basis of the alliance between the Governments are no longer hidden. If we know now their view of what our young men are fighting for, we have to thank Petrograd rather than the Council at Versailles. There seems to be an impression abroad that the mere publication of the secret treaties abrogated all of them. That was almost our own view. But so far as we can follow these mysteries, there are only two of the secret treaties which can now be regarded as entirely obsolete...for the simple reason that the Tsar’s successors repudiated them.

However, Massingham then looked at one of the treaties still standing. On Signor Orlando’s recent visit to London, the Italian Treaty or Treaty of London was reaffirmed ‘with peculiar solemnity,’ first by the Italian Premier and then by Lord Robert Cecil in reply to a question in the House. Massingham described the Italian

\*1454 Ibid.
\*1455 Ibid. Massingham was perfectly correct. Wilson and House were both angered that the new Supreme War Council had issued such an overtly political statement. See Trask, The United States in the Supreme War Council, pp. 48-49.
\*1456 Ibid.
\*1457 Ibid. The reference was to the Strait Agreement of March 1915 (under which the Entente Powers had agreed to Russian possession of Constantinople) and the Doumergue Agreement of February 1917 (under which the French had agreed to give Russia a free hand in Eastern Europe in return for Russian support for France’s annexation of the Rhineland).
\*1458 Ibid.
Treaty as the ‘most elaborate’ and the ‘most cynical’ of all the secret treaties. Massingham recalled the description that Prime Foreign Minister, Salandra, gave to the Italian Treaty. He said that the principle Italy was fighting for must be ‘sacro egoismo’. Massingham said that there had been no deviation from this ideal of ‘sacred selfishness’ and he spent the next page of his article detailing how the Italian Treaty translated it into ‘territorial terms’. Massingham concluded that: ‘while this Treaty stands, we are committed to the policy of the “knock-out blow.”’ Lord Robert Cecil assures us of that.

Meanwhile, in the House of Commons, Balfour’s speech on 27 February, in defence of the Supreme War Council’s declaration, roused the anger of the Radicals. Balfour’s reckless rejection of Czernin’s and Hertling’s latest approaches was called a ‘crime against humanity’ by Snowden in Common Sense, while R. D. Holt called for a new coalition government that would reject the knock-out blow. On 28 February, Helena Swanwick wrote an article in Labour Leader titled, ‘A New Government Wanted’, and urged that every nerve be strained ‘to effect a change of government.’ ‘Peace-by-negotiation’ groups now rallied around Lansdowne. A Lansdowne Committee was formed and immediately set to organising a combined Lansdowne-Labour conference for Monday 25 February at Essex Hall. However,

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1459 Ibid. 1460 Ibid. 1461 Ibid. 1462 Ibid. What was also tragic, argued Massingham was that ‘by the acquisition of German, Slovene, Serbo-Croat, Albanian, Greek, Turkish, and possibly Abyssinian subjects, Italy would become an Empire doomed to racial unrest and firm government. The Treaty remains intact, with all its annexations and indemnities. We doubt whether outside the Southern Trentino and city of Trieste there is a region in all these acquisitions which Italy could win by referendum.’ Massingham also noted, that by inference, the Treaty committed them to much else - the total defeat and break-up of Austria and the partition of Turkey. Ibid. 1463 Robbins, The Abolition of War, p. 157. 1464 Haslam, From Suffrage to Internationalism, p. 119. 1465 Robbins, The Abolition of War, p. 157. Lord Beauchamp tried to drum up as many names as he could. Lord Beauchamp to F. W. Hirst, 21 Feb. 1918, Hirst Papers, Jan.-May 1918.
inexplicably, Lansdowne refused to attend. When asked by Hirst instead to write a letter that would be read out at the meeting, Lansdowne declined:

You must not think me indifferent, or discourteous, if I say that the reasons which led me to refuse your invitation to speak at that meeting, make me reluctant to write what would in effect be an address to those present.¹⁴⁶⁶

Nevertheless, the conference went ahead on 25 February. Lords Loreburn and Beauchamp gave speeches, while Ramsay MacDonald, Robert Smillie and Philip Snowden spoke for Labour. MacDonald said that for his part, he would welcome a Lansdowne Government ‘as an interregnum.’¹⁴⁶⁷ The question was, however, whether it was now too late for a new coalition government to emerge around Lansdowne.

Historical opinion is in agreement over the effect of the Supreme War Council’s Declaration of 4 February 1918. Fleming asserted that the Supreme War Council was motivated by nervousness about the possibility that too much peace talk might encourage the war-weary populations of the Allied nations to ask for an immediate armistice.¹⁴⁶⁸ As far as the ‘peace-by-negotiation’ Radicals were concerned, they believed that if the Allied leaders came up with a joint statement similar to Wilson and Lloyd George’s recent speeches, then the situation would have been very hopeful.¹⁴⁶⁹ Writing in 1918, Irene Cooper Willis claimed that the Supreme War Council declaration ended all possibility for further discussion: ‘This statement dismissed the speeches of Hertling and Czernin as holding out no hope of an accommodation, and announced that the only immediate task lay in the vigorous prosecution of the war. The Knock-Out Blow policy, despite Liberal optimism and

¹⁴⁶⁶ Lord Lansdowne to F. W. Hirst, 23 Feb. 1918, Hirst Papers, Jan.-May 1918.
¹⁴⁶⁹ Cooper Willis, England’s Holy War, p. 251.
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Liberal protest, was resumed. Haslam, in her 1999 study, agrees that the statement of Allied war aims at the Versailles conference on 4 February ‘discounted any further discussion of peace terms. However, at the time it appeared that not all was lost. This time it was President Wilson who came to the rescue.

The American President had been infuriated by the declaration of the Supreme War Council. Furthermore, the President was prompted by House to make a public reply in an effort to undo the Supreme War Council’s work. The President gave his speech to Congress on 11 February. This was perhaps the most difficult speech he had written. The first half was full of complicated argument while the second half gave way to his usual rhetoric about striving for international order. Wilson attempted to exploit the difference in tone between the latest German and Austrian speeches and he spoke of the ‘four principles’ that any settlement should embody. According to Fleming, the Congress listened in ‘baffled silence’. Domestically, Wilson’s Four Principles speech was an almost total disappointment, according to Fleming. The only outcome argued Fleming was ‘a peace feeler from Austria-Hungary’ which surfaced in Spain, but further conversations went nowhere.

However, in Britain, the reaction of the ‘peace-by-negotiations’ Radical publicists and the progressive forces surrounding Lansdowne was quite the opposite.

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1470 Ibid., p. 251.
1471 Harris, Out of Control, pp. 198.
1472 Comment must be made here of the fact that Wilson never informed the British in advance of any of the addresses he gave. Both Wilson and Lloyd George acted totally unilaterally when it came to their declarations or speeches. Today one can only wonder at the disjointed and haphazard relations between the United States and the Allies during the First World War.
1473 ‘President Wilson’s Address to Congress Discussing the Speeches of Count Hertling and Count Czernin, February 11, 1918, Dickinson, ed., Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, pp. 134-139.
1474 This involved a qualification of his earlier principles on self-determination in the Fourteen Points. Thompson, Woodrow Wilson, p. 169.
1475 Fleming, The Illusion of Victory, p. 196.
1476 Ibid., p. 195-196.
Massingham was ‘almost incoherent with enthusiasm’ over Wilson’s rebuke to the Supreme War Council in his address to Congress on 11 February 1918: 1477

Dark is the sky; the light from the West penetrates its gloom. Mr. Wilson’s last message is the best he has ever delivered. No living statesman possesses anything like his power of sustained elevation in argument, and of the close, persistent application of thought to practical policy. 1478

Now, we unaffectedly rejoice that this American intervention has come just in time to save Europe from her statesmen, and to secure a reasonable peace within a reasonable time. 1479

Massingham was relieved that Wilson clearly did not share the view of the Versailles Council that there was ‘nothing to do but fight’. In addition, Massingham saw the President’s distinguishing between the replies of Counts Czernin and Hertling as a useful observation. The editor liked the fact that Wilson welcomed the friendly tone of Czernin’s reply and his description of the German Chancellor’s speech as ‘vague and confusing’. 1480 This obviously appealed to Massingham’s previously stated belief that at least Austria could be brought to the negotiating table by some skilful diplomacy on the part of the Allies. Massingham was hopeful that Wilson’s 11 February speech could be used as a ‘groundwork’ for peace. Massingham stressed that it was ‘not peace next year or the year after. The Wilson pattern is devised that it might be put on the machine, as it were, tomorrow.’ 1481 Furthermore, Wilson had even done ‘Jingoes’ a favour:

Even Jingoes are relieved to think that through the American intervention comes the hope of cutting the entanglement of the Treaties. The statesmen concerned will not, or cannot, do it. Honor, rooted in dishonor, keeps them falsely true. 1482

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1477 Havighurst, Radical Journalist, p. 259.
1478 Nation, A London Diary, 23 Feb. 1918.
1480 Nation, Events of the Week, 16 Feb. 1918.
1481 Nation, A London Diary, 23 Feb. 1918.
1482 Ibid.
However, what Massingham wanted to see emerge next was a joint declaration of terms:

Here we welcome an apt suggestion of Sir John Simon that our next declaration of war-aims should be made in formal conjunction with America. There is the true way out of the growing and disastrous confusion of Allied policy.1483

While Massingham lent his editorial weight to President Wilson’s latest initiative in the war aims debate, Hirst and his circle swung into action. Richard Lambert urged Hirst to try to get Lansdowne to address a meeting at Queen’s Hall:

If only he would, I am confident that it would rally quite a considerable number of Unionist and Liberal M. P.’s to the views he has expounded in his letter and at Lansdowne House…. Moreover, I feel that if Lord Lansdowne would only come forward in this way, we should have the Government, or at any rate, Mr. Asquith, on the ‘peace trail’ in a week. It might be the decisive thing that would induce our rulers to take a reasonable and conciliatory attitude, and I am certain it could do no harm – something ought to be done without delay towards getting this country out of this mess.1484

Hirst received mixed messages from Lansdowne. Encouraged by his supporters, Lansdowne was preparing another ‘move’.1485 However, for some reason, Lansdowne was reluctant to attend a meeting in one of the great halls, using a ‘sharp attack of lumbago’ as the excuse. However, he did agree with Lord Buckmaster that he should write something in response to Hertling’s latest speech of 25 February.1486

Lansdowne again rocketed to nationwide attention on 5 March 1918 with the publication of a second letter in the Daily Telegraph. This was, in effect, a reply to

1483 Nation, Events of the Week, 23 Feb. 1918.
1484 Lambert estimated that he could get 20 Unionist, 10 Labour and 60 Liberal M. P.’s, as well as 30 Peers, along to meeting if Lansdowne were the speaker. Richard C. Lambert to F. W. Hirst, 27 Feb. 1918, Hirst Papers.
1485 F. W. Hirst to Lady Courtney, 28 Feb. 1918, Courtney Papers, XII.
1486 For the text of this speech, see ‘Speech of Count Hertling in Reply to President Wilson’s Address of February 11th, February 25, 1918 in Dickinson, ed., Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, pp. 152-159.
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Count Hertling. The Second Lansdowne Letter achieved a wider circulation in the press than the first. Lansdowne believed that since Hertling had recently indicated his willingness to consider Wilson’s principles, it should be possible to arrange an informal meeting of representatives of both sides. Lord Parmoor was full of praise: ‘This is the letter of a wise statesman of life experience, who refuses to follow blindly the dictates of a military press [in Britain], which does so much to help the War Party in Germany.’ Furthermore, Parmoor believed that the Second Lansdowne Letter and the Hertling speech of 24 January were the basis for peace negotiations. Lansdowne’s letter was followed up by a second Conference on 6 March organised by Hirst and Molly Hamilton. The meeting was ‘full to overflowing and unanimous’, according to Hirst. However, news of the terms of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty put a dampener on the activities of Hirst and his circle. Nevertheless, Lansdowne was not deterred. He gave a speech in the House of Lords on 19 March for which he used some of the ideas that Hirst had given him. Fate dealt the peace-by-negotiation advocates a cruel hand.

Dramatic news of the anticipated and much-feared German Spring offensive, on 21 March 1918, brought the Lansdowne Movement to a screeching halt.

1487 For the text of the letter, see ‘Lord Lansdowne’s Reply to Count Hertling, March 5, 1918’ in Dickinson, ed., Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, pp. 169-173.
1488 Lord Newton, Lord Lansdowne, p. 474.
1489 Haslam, From Suffrage to Internationalism, p. 120.
1490 Lord Parmoor to F. W. Hirst, 5 March 1918, Hirst Papers, Jan.-May 1918.
1491 Ibid.
1492 Haslam, From Suffrage to Internationalism, p. 120.
1493 In addition, he told Margaret, ‘we are much delighted with Lansdowne’s Letter.’ F. W. Hirst to Margaret Hirst, 6 March 1918, Letters to Margaret Hirst, 1894-1949.
1494 Lord Buckmaster reported that he was diligently writing articles for the press to help. ‘I got one in the Star on Thursday’ and in four or five ‘leading provincial papers.’ Apologetically, he said he felt that ‘this is the best we can do.’ Lord Buckmaster to F. W. Hirst, 17 March 1918, Hirst Papers, Jan.-May 1918.
1495 ‘I did not find it possible to frame my speech on Lord Parmoor’s motion exactly upon the lines which you were good enough to suggest.’ However, he assured Hirst that the debate would be resumed. ‘Your point that a “League of Ruined Nations” would not be of much use, though it is, I think, a very good one.’ Lord Lansdowne to F. W. Hirst, 21 March 1918, Hirst Papers, Jan.-May 1918. See also, Robbins, The Abolition of War, p. 158.
Lansdowne confessed to Hirst that: ‘for the moment it is difficult to think of anything except the events which are happening on the Western Front.’ But, once the initial crisis passed, German offensive did not stop the Radical publicists or Lansdowne from continuing their campaign for a revision of war aims and an early peace. They plodded on, but the bright hope of a negotiated peace and a satisfactory settlement had faded appreciably. The only individual on the progressive side of politics who still possessed any influence in determining the peace was Woodrow Wilson. Though many of the Radical publicists had deep reservations about the strategy pursued by the American President since April 1917, he now represented their only hope of achieving a just and lasting peace. However, Wilson had been ‘bewildered and dazed’ by the March offensive. He did not realise that the Germans still had it in them to make such exertions. This along with the humiliating Brest-Litovsk Treaty prompted him for the next few months to speak less of peace and his own ideals and more of winning.

It is not the task of this study to examine the events from March to November 1918 in detail. However, it is necessary to provide a brief sketch of how Wilson was viewed by the Radical publicists at the end of the war to understand their later bitter reactions towards President Wilson.

Over the last two years of the war, the British Radical publicists had been impressed by President Wilson’s progressive internationalist rhetoric but also puzzled and disappointed by the strategy he used to pursue his agenda. The main area in which the Radical publicists most keenly felt disappointment was in the American

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1496 Lord Lansdowne to F. W. Hirst, 25 March 1918, Hirst Papers, Jan.-May 1918.
1498 Ibid., pp. 262-263.
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President’s rejection of collaboration with anyone else who held similar views. Wilson had rejected working with European neutral governments, European socialists, the Russian Provisional Government and the Vatican. Wilson even refused to cooperate in the framing of a League covenant with the leading figures in the League organisations in Britain and the United States. To make matters worse, Wilson had been collaborating with his ‘Associates’ the reactionary Allied governments, since U. S. entry into the war, though this was tempered with his aloofness and air of moral superiority that he often displayed in his public pronouncements. Meanwhile, in the United States, American peace activists bemoaned the sustained attacks on civil liberties under the Wilson administration. Yet, despite all of their concerns over Wilson’s strategy and his domestic policies, the Radical publicists realised, by the time of the Armistice, that Wilson still represented the best chance of securing the just and lasting peace of which they had long been advocates.

In November 1918, E. D. Morel declared that though the U. D. C. had not always agreed with President Wilson, and though the President had committed many blunders, ‘his POLICY is ours.’\(^{1499}\) All hope was now directed towards the American President. Only Woodrow Wilson could now implement a just peace and promote a liberal internationalist programme.\(^{1500}\) The American peace activist, Oswald Garrison Villard, observed in a meeting with his British counterparts, the Radical publicists, on 13 December 1918,\(^{1501}\) that they still retained their hope that President Wilson could achieve a satisfactory peace. This was in spite of Villard’s warning them about having

\(^{1499}\) Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control*, p. 140. As Alan Dawley put it in his recent study: Wilson became a ‘vessel into which all the hopes and dreams of the moment were poured.’ Alan Dawley, *Progressive Internationalism and the Road Not Taken* (Princeton, 2003), p. 3.

\(^{1500}\) Privately though, Morel expressed his concern to Ethel Snowden that Wilson would be able to resist the pressure being put upon him by extremists. Ibid.

too much faith in Wilson. Villard’s Radical friends were totally united on several points. Firstly, they despised Lloyd George with a ‘deadly hatred’ and disdained his ‘lack of principle.’ Secondly, ‘they were all clear in their minds that whether the war was lost or won would depend solely upon the Peace Conference.’ Thirdly, ‘they unitedly placed all their hopes on Woodrow Wilson, in whom they saw the saviour of the world. The Radical publicists felt so deeply about this that they resented any suggestion that he might prove unequal to the task.’

In order to understand the depth of Radical disillusionment with the President when it did come, a brief survey of the diplomacy leading to the Armistice and the subsequent disaster of the Peace Conference can be offered here. In October 1918, the President appeared to have seized the diplomatic initiative during negotiations with the new German Government of Prince Max of Baden on securing an armistice and a peace based on the Fourteen Points. It appeared that the American leader might well succeed in his quest to build a just and stable peace at the future post-war peace conference. This was reinforced by the fact that Wilson faced down his critics at home and abroad over the nature of the settlement. These negotiations with Prince Max’s Government were carried out in the face of public opposition at home and strong Republican objections. Wilson’s detractors wanted an unconditional surrender. However, during the exchange of notes between the president and the German Government of Prince Max, Wilson gradually won over American and Allied public

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1502}}\] Villard told them that Wilson tolerated or approved of ‘outrageous censorship; the torturing of conscientious objectors; the first suppression of all dissent in war time in our history; the abandonment of his liberal program; his veering steadily to the right; and his monstrous and bloody conquest of Haiti. I stressed, of course his ideals and his admirable program but told them of his readiness to compromise.’ However, they politely applauded their foreign guest. Ibid.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1503}}\] Ibid.
\[\text{\textsuperscript{1504}}\] Ibid.
\[\text{\textsuperscript{1505}}\] Ibid.
on 12 October, the German Government accepted a peace based on the Fourteen Points. For a brief moment, Wilson appeared to reign supreme in shaping the future peace. However, appearances were deceiving.

The Allies had never officially accepted the Fourteen Points. While President Wilson carried on unilateral negotiations with the Germans over the month of October, Lloyd George publicly stated his opposition to the Fourteen Points on a number of occasions. Meanwhile, Colonel House had been despatched to Europe with the task of signing up the Allied leaders to President Wilson’s peace program. House had been entrusted with formulating U. S. plans for peace based on the findings of the Inquiry. As Inga Floto has stressed, the Allies had never officially subscribed to Wilson’s war aims, yet it was House’s task to reach agreement with them on the direction of the German-American correspondence ‘at a time when mutual distrust between the parties was at its highest.’ Thus, all did not bode well on this, the last of House’s missions.

On 28 October 1918, on the eve of the Inter-Allied conference at Versailles, the British Government, while considering the Fourteen Points, baulked at two of the key points. The British were engaged in a stormy debate over the ‘freedom of the seas’ and reparations for losses at sea. Aware of this, House concentrated all his efforts on getting the Allies to accept the Fourteen Points. The Versailles Council

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1507 Ibid., p. 37.
1509 Floto, Colonel House in Paris, p. 27. When drafting his reply to the Papal Peace Note in August 1917, Wilson decided that it was time to define the U. S. peace program. On 2 September 1917, House was told to prepare for peace by forming a group to ‘evaluate and digest facts for easy use.’ This was the beginning of the Inquiry, a group of fourteen academics whose task was to write and research on the basic tenets of an equitable peace settlement. See Levin, Edith and Woodrow, pp. 191-192.
1510 Ibid., p. 47.
on the making of the Armistice lasted from 29 October to 4 November 1918. On the first day of discussions at Versailles, against intransigent opposition from Lloyd George and Clemenceau, House made the dramatic threat that the United States would be forced to make a separate peace with Germany if the Allied leaders did not agree to the Fourteen Points as a basis of the peace settlement. On 30 November in a private meeting between House, Lloyd George and Clemenceau, House was presented with a British memorandum that contained the two key British reservations concerning the freedom of the seas and on reparations for losses at sea. At what Inga Floto has called ‘the most important meeting of the whole conference’,1512 House reluctantly agreed to including these two reservations to the Fourteen Points in the proposed Armistice.1513 It appeared that House had won a partial diplomatic victory in winning Allied acceptance to the bulk of the Fourteen Points, though it was achieved at the heavy cost of accepting these two reservations.1514 However, discussions at the conference over the next few days ensured the cost would be far greater.

In negotiating the Armistice provisions, House took a far more passive role despite Wilson’s telegram to House on 28 October in which he expressed his aims for the Armistice. Wilson believed that there would have to be some political content and that the framing of the conditions of the Armistice would have some bearing on the course of the peace negotiations. However, the main points of the Armistice had already been submitted to the Inter-Allied conference in Paris on 9 October. Then there had been a delay in forwarding them to the American negotiators. The Americans were kept out of much of the Armistice negotiations from here on, quite

1512 Floto, Colonel House in Paris, p. 53.
1513 Ibid. Note that this claim for reparations in the discussions at this conference was limited simply to losses at sea. This is contrary to what Floto and other historians have implied. See Newton, British Policy and the Weimar Republic, p. 184.
1514 Floto, Colonel House in Paris, p. 54.
deliberately, according to Fleming.\textsuperscript{1515} For the British and French, the Armistice represented the main device through which they hoped to realise key war aims such as the occupation of the Rhineland and the internment of the German fleet, in the same way, and the dilution of the Fourteen Points. As Inga Floto has observed, Britain and France ‘now had a clear eye on the possibility of realising parts of their political programme through the Armistice.’\textsuperscript{1516} Some in the American negotiating team, such as General Bliss, realised this.\textsuperscript{1517} However, House seems to have been completely outmanoeuvred in the Armistice negotiations. Floto has summed up the situation adroitly:

While House was fighting this battle, he completely lost sight of the political aspects of the Armistice, and it was this that made possible the dualism that characterised the Armistice and pre-Armistice Agreement the dualism that in fact weakened the American bargaining position even before the Peace Conference began.\textsuperscript{1518}

What Wilson had feared, that too much success for the Allies would make a genuine peace settlement extremely difficult, was demonstrated in subsequent events.

Given the course and outcome of the Inter-Allied conference at Versailles, it is hard to understand why House and the American negotiating team claimed on 5 November that they had won a diplomatic victory.\textsuperscript{1519} In assessing House’s performance at this vital conference Floto has argued that, though House was in a difficult position as negotiator, he had failed utterly:

Both as regards feeling for a situation and tactical vision, House seems to have failed miserably, finding it difficult to comprehend the tangled and complicated state of affairs in Europe. Would it be too much to say that he lost his head? At any rate, he had shown obvious weaknesses of a nature

\textsuperscript{1515} Fleming, \textit{Illusion of Victory}, p. 299.
\textsuperscript{1516} Floto, \textit{Colonel House in Paris}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{1517} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1518} Ibid.
that are not expected in an international top negotiator, weaknesses that did not augur well for the future.\textsuperscript{1520}

On the same day that House claimed his diplomatic victory the mid-term elections were held in the United States. The results were a disaster for President Wilson. The Democrats had lost control of the Senate. What was worse was that this result was a direct rebuff to Wilson who had flouted the convention that a President does not get involved in mid-term elections, and had campaigned nonetheless.\textsuperscript{1521} This bitter election loss can be attributed to Wilson’s failure to maintain the progressive-democratic coalition of 1916.\textsuperscript{1522} Wilson now faced the prospect of having to wage a bitter battle to achieve the sort of peace settlement he desired, not only with the wily Allied leaders, but also with his emboldened political opponents at home.

When peace finally did come at the end of 1918, the Radical publicists welcomed Wilson’s role in bringing it about. However, the unseemly squabbles over the spoils of war at the Paris Peace Conference turned out to be everything that the Radical publicists had warned about since August 1914. In their hearts, the Radical publicists knew that they had been right about seeking an early negotiated peace on progressive principles. Many of the men who had to go through the extra years of hell on the Western Front to satisfy the grand strategy of the ‘knock-out blow’ politicians, also knew that the Radical publicists had been right. As Mrs. G. S. Payne wrote to Francis Hirst:

\textsuperscript{1520} Floto, \emph{Colonel House in Paris}, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{1521} Knock said that the decision to involve himself in the mid-term elections was his greatest blunder. Knock, \emph{To End All Wars}, p. 179 and 184. Wilson had done this in response to attacks by Theodore Roosevelt, Senator Lodge and the Republican Party over Wilson’s willingness to accept a negotiated peace with Germany. Fleming, \emph{Illusion of Victory}, p. 291.
\textsuperscript{1522} See Knock, \emph{To End All Wars}, p. 185, and Fleming, \emph{Illusion of Victory}, p. 298.
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Every soldier I know, my husband and also my brother (who is fighting at Amiens now) think Lord Lansdowne right and the policy of Lloyd George and Northcliffe ruination to this country."\footnote{Mrs. G. S. Payne to F. W. Hirst, 7 April 1918, Hirst Papers, Jan.-May 1918.}
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Other


Conclusion:

Between December 1916 and March 1918 there were no less than nine opportunities which, if followed up, might have led to an earlier and more satisfactory end of the War. By this time Mr. Lloyd George had become Prime Minister, and all these efforts were rejected.

Philip Snowden

All the nations must perish unless they devise a means of living together under a form of law approaching at least the degree of security they obtain under national law. …..Give society hope and it will outlast worse horrors than it is enduring and even be the stronger for them. Base it upon hatred, and build on that idea a wall of economic barriers, and hope will not come. …. And therefore credit will not revive, industry will not revive, the healing social forces will not revive. Europe will sink again beneath the rule of fear under which she entered upon the war; and her dead will have died in vain.

Henry Massingham, August 1916.

It is not the task of this thesis to proceed to the Paris Peace Conference and Versailles Treaty and to describe the political squabbles, the bitter arguments and the vain attempt to build a lasting peace. Rather, the task of this thesis has been to analyse the views of the British Radical publicists in relation to American intervention and the prospects of a negotiated peace, largely in the year of 1917. The Radical publicists of course had much to say about the outcome of the peacemaking process of 1919. In short, the Radical publicists were united in their horror at the finished product of the Versailles Treaty and in their disillusionment with President Wilson. This was also

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1526 The Executive Committee of the Union of Democratic Control condemned the Treaty of Versailles. U. D. C., Foreign Affairs, Sept. 1919. Philip Snowden’s judgements on the Treaty were prophetic: ‘It is the death blow to the hopes of those who expected the end of the war to bring peace. It is not a Peace Treaty, but a declaration of war. It is the betrayal of democracy and of the fallen in the war. The treaty
true for the American peace activists. Historical scholarship has focused on the politics surrounding the Peace Conference in 1919 for the creation of an unstable peace that lasted only twenty years before the world was once again ravaged by the unimaginable horrors of an even more destructive world war. Others have looked at the effect of Woodrow Wilson’s illnesses to explain the outcome of the Conference and the wholesale rejection of it by the American people. However, this study of the British Radical publicists’ views of the war and of American intervention opens up other possible reasons for the peace settlement’s failure to create the conditions for a stable and lasting peace.

At the time of the Armistice negotiations, Wilson may well have wondered whether his fears that too much success for the Allies would make a genuine peace settlement extremely difficult, had now been realised. Certainly, by April 1919,}

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exposes the true aims of the Allies.’ *Daily News*, 8 March 1919. The *Herald* declared that, ‘President Wilson has been beaten…. We do not know what reasons he has had for abandoning “open covenants openly arrived at” for the sinister secrecy of Paris. What we do know is that from the moment he abandoned the first of the Fourteen Points he, in effect, abandoned all.’ *Herald*, ‘When there is no Peace’, 18 May 1919. Likewise, Philip Snowden declared: ‘Beyond all other statesmen who are responsible for the Peace Treaty, President Wilson is utterly discredited. He has not insisted upon the observance of a single one of the condition of peace he has laid down…. His intervention in the European war has been disastrous from every point of view. If we had not brought America into the war, a decent peace would probably have been secured. His intervention has intensely aggravated the European situation and has left Europe seething with jealousy, hatred, malice, and the certainty of a generation of war and bloodshed. The sooner he gets back to America and ceases to interfere in international politics, for which he has evidently neither the courage nor the knowledge, the better it will be for the peace of the world.’ *Labour Leader*, Philip Snowden, 22 May 1919. In a similar fashion, Wilson’s supporters at home condemned the Versailles peace: ‘We find these documents framed in the spirit of autocracy, moulded by the dead hand of forces of economic exploitation and imperialism which brought upon the world the dread calamity of the Great War.’ *An Open Letter to President Wilson*, from The Women’s International League of Greater New York, 14 July 1919, Wald Papers, Reel 038.

1527 This was particularly true of the women peace activists who were among the first to state that the Treaty of Versailles planted the seeds for a further war. Sandi Cooper, ‘Peace as a Human Right: The Invasion of Women into the World of High International Politics’, *Journal of Women’s History*, 14.2, 2002, p. 15.

1528 For recent discussions about Wilson’s illnesses on his Presidency, see James Robert Carroll, *The Real Woodrow Wilson*, pp. 36, 53-54. Phyllis Lee Levin’s recent biography of Wilson is catalogues all the various illnesses that afflicted Wilson during his Presidency. Of particular interest in this study is not the catastrophic stroke of 1919 but his minor strokes and other chronic afflictions. For example, see Levin, *Edith and Woodrow*, pp. 294-296. For the interplay between Wilson’s illnesses and his psychological flaws, see Cooper, *Breaking the Heart of the World*, pp. 263-264, 417 and 421.

Wilson felt very alone in his struggle to build a just peace. Perhaps the comment by the Radical publicist, Henry Brailsford, on Wilson’s rejection of Pope Benedict XV’s proposals for an early peace, is relevant here: ‘If Mr. Wilson enables the Allies to crush Germany, will they renounce their plans of dismemberment and vengeance? Will he [Wilson] have the power to restrain them?’ With hindsight, we can now say that the answer to this question is in the negative. American intervention did allow the Allies to crush Germany and the Allies refused to renounce their plans of dismemberment and vengeance, and Wilson did not have the power to restrain them. Yet, Brailsford was not writing with the benefit of hindsight. Like many of his Radical publicist colleagues, the alarm bells began ringing for Brailsford within months of America’s entry into the war in April 1917. Though the Radical publicists were, to a large degree, inspired by Wilson’s rhetoric, they also increasingly questioned the strategy he pursued in 1917. Furthermore, the Radical publicists lamented the lost opportunities for peace. Philip Snowden articulated this in his autobiography written in 1934, a year in which portentous events in Europe would have heightened his sense of the lost opportunities for a lasting peace in World War I.

Between December 1916 and March 1918 there were no less than nine opportunities which, if followed up, might have led to an earlier and more satisfactory end of the War. By this time [December 1916] Mr. Lloyd George had become Prime Minister, and all these efforts were rejected.

So, for Radical publicists like Snowden and Brailsford there was a sense of dismay that so many opportunities for an earlier peace had been passed up and that Wilson and the Allied leaders were blind to the long-term consequences of a peace of vengeance. Wilson, on the other hand, was not blind to the dangers. However, his
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lone-hand approach to achieving a satisfactory settlement failed miserably. As Inga Floto pointed out:

The salient feature of American diplomacy from April 1917 to October 1918 was Wilson’s attempt to impose a moratorium on political consultation with the Allies. It was as if he had announced to the Allies, as he did to domestic politicians, that politics was adjourned. There would be no alliance, and there would be no negotiations over objectives.1533

However, it was not only Wilson’s strategy regarding his dealings with Allied leaders that was questionable. Wilson also spurned or nobbled the efforts of those who had similar beliefs about the war and the nature of the settlement that was required for a lasting peace. For example, the proposals of the Petrograd Formula, the Papal Peace Note, and the ideals underpinning the projected Stockholm conference were not too dissimilar to Wilson’s ideas as stated in his December 1916 Peace Note and his January 1917 ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech. Not only did he spurn others’ efforts at securing a negotiated peace, but Wilson alienated his progressive internationalist supporters in Britain, Europe and America. The dramatic failure of American aims in the Great War has since called into question the strategies pursued by President Wilson both as a neutral and as a belligerent.1534 Writing in 1918, an American progressive publicist, Walter Weyl, was angered by the lost opportunities for peace in 1917. He believed that the optimum time for ending the war had been between April and October 1917.1535 Weyl, like many other progressive publicists, and British

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1533 Floto, Colonel House in Paris, p. 25.
1534 This is the argument of numerous American historians such as May and Devlin and most recently by Fleming’s The Illusion of Victory: America in World War I.
1535 Walter E. Weyl, The End of the War (New York, 1918), p. 2. Weyl maintained that Wilson’s mistakes were: not making American assistance to the Allies conditional; not supporting Russian diplomacy; failing to support Stockholm; ignoring the Reichstag Resolution; and failing to hold an Inter-Allied conference to revise war aims. See Ibid., pp. 5-6. Furthermore, the conversion of Russia from an Imperial to a Democratic regime was ‘one of the greatest opportunities presented for a truly international peace. Had the United States at that time endorsed the proposal of the Kerensky government, or had she later attempted to come to an understanding with the Bolsheviks, the two nations, Russia and America, might have forced their Allies to agree upon a reasonable peace and have compelled the German ruling classes to some terms. Unfortunately, President Wilson did not rise to the unique opportunity, and the Allies presented a solid opposition to Russia’s request.’ Ibid., pp. 180-181.
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Radical publicists, believed that the strategy pursued by President Wilson must take a significant amount of the blame for the failure to secure a negotiated peace in 1917.

With hindsight, Woodrow Wilson’s true motivation has become much clearer. Wilson’s first and preferred aim was to obtain a negotiated settlement to the war, but one mediated by himself alone, and one which would enhance the strategic position of the United States. Wilson wanted to be the key player at any peace conference that was to follow the end of hostilities. The President was not interested in any combined mediation with other neutrals. This explains Wilson’s refusal to give his backing to the Wisconsin plan and Ford peace mission of 1915, the Neutral Conference of Continuous Mediation of 1916, the Petrograd Formula, the Papal Peace Offer, the Stockholm Conference, and Bolshevik Peace Appeal of December 1917. Wilson shunned the repeated requests of the neutral powers of Europe to lead a combined peace offensive. The only sort of negotiated peace Wilson was interested in was one brokered by the United States. This contrasted with the neutral governments of Europe, the Russian Provisional Government, and the European socialist groups, none of whom cared who mediated an end to the war just as long as it was ended as soon as possible. Benedict XV, on the other hand, would have welcomed an American-mediated peace but was apprehensive about the prospects of a socialist-brokered peace would have enhanced the prestige of socialism in post-war Europe, to the detriment of the Catholic Church. However, Wilson would not concede any role for the Pope in mediating peace. Before America’s entry into the war in April 1917,

Of course, as discussed above, one reason for Wilson’s rejection of various peace initiatives in 1915 and 1916 was his anticipation that Britain would activate the House-Grey Memorandum. However, no one knew, beyond the inner circles of power, of the existence of this ‘trick plan’, as Petersen called it. Petersen, Propaganda for War, p. 205.

In early May 1916, King Alfonso XIII of Spain proposed that the United States, Spain and the Vatican act together for peace. However, Wilson took three months to reply to this proposal. According to Živojinović, he did not want to act with other neutrals and the Pope was clearly excluded from working jointly with America in any mediation attempts. Živojinović has asserted that, in 1916, both Colonel House and the British were unanimous in their determination to avoid having the Pope as a...
Wilson expressed sympathy for American peace activists and British Radicals who advocated a negotiated peace. He identified himself with their progressive internationalist programme. However, after April 1917, Wilson increasingly distanced himself from his progressive supporters. Wilson opted from this time on to use hard power and military force to gain a seat at the peace conference. Writing in his autobiography in 1939, in the face of the rise of Hitler and the triumph of militarism in Europe, Oswald Garrison Villard recalled Wilson’s statement to the American Federation of Labor on 12 November, 1917: ‘What I am opposed to is not the feeling of the pacifists, but their stupidity. My heart is with them, but my mind has contempt for them. I want peace, but I know how to get it, and they do not.’

Villard, exclaimed: ‘When in all history was there an idler boast? Never has the falsity of solemnly spoken words been more clearly demonstrated and in so short a time and the utter fallibility of the man who voiced them.’ Villard’s harsh judgement was that the rise of Nazism was largely a result of Wilson’s unilateralist approach to achieving peace in the Great War. Villard, surely one of Wilson’s most unforgiving critics, argued that with the onset of the Second World War the world was witnessing the most overwhelming proof of the futility of force in the settlement of national and international problems and that fact millions are admitting. Never did it occur to me in 1917 that within twenty years the bulk of our countrymen would agree with us who declared we could not win the war and that our entry into it was the greatest blunder in American history.

It is easy to be critical in hindsight, and there is no shortage of critics among historians of all political persuasions, of Wilson’s actions and policies in World War I.
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and at Versailles. However, it is vital to stress that many Radical publicists under study here repeatedly warned of the consequences of Wilson’s actions during the war. In the most prescient of wartime journalism, the Radical publicists warned of the consequences of a vindictive peace and they wrote profusely on the subject of how to obtain a just and lasting peace. Considering that the peace brokered by the Big Four at Paris in 1919 did indeed fail to lay the conditions for a stable and lasting peace, it is useful to look again at some of the themes of the writings of the British Radical publicists in the Great War.

Seven major recurring themes emerge from the writings of the Radical publicists during the war. The first is that the achievement of a reasonable settlement and not one characterised by vengeance was essential to establishment of a lasting peace. Secondly, there was opposition to the expansion of war aims and the accompanying secret treaties. The third theme flowed logically from the first two: a revision of the Allied war aims resulting in a clear combined Allied statement of moderate aims. Fourthly, the Radical publicists lamented the poor statesmanship in the British government while contrasting this with Woodrow Wilson’s forthright leadership. The fifth major theme was the Radical publicists’ opposition to the idea of an indefinitely-prolonged war and the promotion of the idea of a negotiated settlement. The sixth major concern of the Radical publicists was the achievement of democratic control of foreign policy. Finally, the writings of the Radical publicists were underpinned by the hope that someone new and positive could, an indeed must, emerge from the war to justify the immense sacrifices and to avert another even more destructive war in the future. These seven major themes will be surveyed below.
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From August 1914, the Radical publicists pursued the idea that the outcome of the war must be a reasonable settlement, not one of vengeance. This was the only way to guarantee a lasting peace. While deploring the German invasion of neutral Belgium, the Radical publicists were adamant that Germany was not solely responsible for the outbreak of the war and therefore was not solely guilty. Rather, secret diplomacy, imperialism, the arms race and militarism, which were the hallmarks of the international system, had created the conditions in which poor statesmanship would have disastrous consequences. In the early months of the war, the Radical publicists feared a Russian victory as much as a German victory. The prospect that an Allied victory would be won at the cost of Russian occupation of much of Europe was one that alarmed the Radical publicists. The Radical publicists’ refusal to accept the proposition that Germans were the source of all evil led to their advocacy of moderate terms of settlement. In the Radical publicists’ view, there should be no punishment of Germany. G. L. Dickinson put the case for a fair treatment of Germany at the peace settlement:

Germany is not the only Power in Europe capable of making aggressive war. And even if she were wiped off the map, the anarchy of Europe, remaining as it is, and as it has been for centuries past, would certainly lead to other wars between other Powers. In the light of history I do not see how anyone can dispute this. To prevent future wars, some deeper and more radical change is required than the suppression of the competing Powers.1541

By the end of 1917 such sentiments had spread beyond the Radical circles. For instance, the Asquithian Westminster Gazette argued that there should not be ‘a mere smashing and pulverising’ but a ‘real and permanent reconstruction of the world-order.’1542 For the Radicals this meant, among other things, that there should be free trade, no protectionism and certainly no waging of economic war against Germany

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after the cessation of hostilities. The Radical publicists recognised that the only way to secure a lasting peace was to include Germany as an equal partner in a League of Nations. Wilson’s January 1917 speech, with its dispassionate description of the international forces that had led to war and its opposition to a peace of vengeance, remained, in the eyes of the Radical publicists, the best statement of the war. Villard called this the greatest speech of Wilson’s career. In 1939, Villard observed:

Had Woodrow Wilson lived up to these words the whole world today would be a happy and prosperous orb; there would be no Hitler and Benito Mussolini. Instead, we have a Treaty of Peace resting ‘not permanently, but upon quicksand’ – actually disappearing in the quicksand which Woodrow Wilson saw in his mind’s eye. 1543

The second major preoccupation of the Radical publicists was the expansion of war aims and the accompanying secret treaties. As the war progressed, Britain was no longer committed only to German withdrawal from Belgium and northern France, but also to Italy’s ambition to secure for itself an empire carved out of Austria-Hungary and Turkey, to Russia’s ambition to secure the Straits and Turkish Armenia, to Serbian nationalist plans to enlarge its territory, to Rumanian plans to annex Banat from Austria-Hungary, and to the Poles’ and the Czech’s desires to achieve independence from Austria-Hungary. In addition, Britain and France intended to carve up the Middle East between them, Japan intended to keep the Marshall, Carolines, and Marianas island chains as well as the Shantung peninsula in China, and the British dominions of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa desired to retain possession of the captured German colonies. 1544 The Radical publicists believed that the reasons for which the war continued were not the same as the causes of the war. The real war aims, to which the Allies were committed, were encapsulated in the

1543 Villard, Fighting Years, pp. 320-321.
1544 There is a huge literature on the enlargement of Allied war aims via ‘secret diplomacy’ during the war. One of the first scholarly studies was W. W. Gottlieb, Studies in Secret Diplomacy During The First World War (London, 1957). On of the most convenient summaries of this huge field is Stevenson, First World War and International Politics, Ch. 3.
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secret treaties. These expanded and imperialistic war aims required total military victory over the Central Powers to be realised. Such objectives placed the Allied governments on the same level as the German High Command. This meant that the Allies were fighting, not for noble ideals, but solely for material and strategic gain. All talk, therefore, of fighting to ‘crush Prussian militarism’ was a sham. Furthermore, if the soldiers knew that they were fighting to get Constantinople of the Tsar, for example, the war would have stopped ‘in an outburst of indignation and revolt.’

Therefore, the real reason why the diplomats and politicians make secret bargains is because they know that the purposes of these treaties ‘will not stand public scrutiny.’ The use of secret diplomacy was a major concern of the Radical publicists and one that had been highlighted by the U. D. C. since September 1914.

Despite I. L. P. and Radical Members of Parliament initiating numerous debates in the House of Commons, little headway was made in this area. The only progress that the Radical publicists observed on this principle was the prime position that Wilson gave to the ideal of ‘open covenants, openly arrived at’, as the first of the Fourteen Points.

The Radical publicists’ concern over secret treaties was linked to their on-going campaign for a revision of Allied war aims. However, this is where the ‘holy war’ Radical publicists parted company with the ‘war-aims revision’ Radical publicists. Massingham, Snowden, Hirst, Brailsford, the U. D. C., and many others, could not subscribe to the ‘holy war’ rhetoric of Scott or Gardiner or to H. G. Wells’ proclamation that this was a ‘war to end all war’. The Radical editors, Massingham,

1546 Ibid.
1547 Point ii) ‘No Treaty, Arrangement, or Undertaking shall be entered upon in the name of Great Britain without the sanction of Parliament. Adequate machinery for ensuring democratic control of foreign policy shall be created.’ See Martin, Peace Without Victory, pp. 57-58.
1548 Dickinson, ed., Documents and Statements Relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, pp. 119.
Snowden and Hirst, were convinced that the Allies needed to agree to moderate and reasonable war aims. The revision of war aims became the catch-cry of these Radical editors during the 1917. Revised war aims were an essential ingredient to achieving a negotiated end to the war, for as long as the German people and government believed that the Allied powers were out to destroy them, politically and economically, the more the extremist elements within Germany, who advocated that the war must continue, would be listened to. The ‘war-aims revision’ Radical publicists pursued this theme relentlessly and their agitation reached a climax with the Lansdowne Letter of November 1917 and the attempts to bring about a change of government in early 1918. Despite their continued campaign for a revision of war aims, a unified statement of Allied and American aims was never made during the entire war. The Radical publicists clearly became impatient at the failure of the Allied governments to consider a joint revision of war aims, as shown by Hirst’s outburst:

> Nothing could be more fatal than to have an official embargo laid upon the discussion of war aims and peace terms by meeting every question and every approach with an appeal to some worn-out formula such as ‘get on with the war’, or to ‘the last man and the last farthing.’

The Radical publicists continually urged the promulgation of a moderate statement of war aims to give the Allies the unmistakable moral high ground, and they blamed the fall of the Russian Provisional Government on the failure to do just this. Even if the revision of war aims did not result in making the Central Powers more amenable to a reasonable negotiated peace, at least it would galvanise the Allied nations for the continued struggle. Unfortunately, no common war aims program emerged; there was no equivalent in World War I of the Atlantic Charter between Roosevelt and Churchill in 1941. We can only now speculate what would have resulted from such a

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1550 James Chace, in the conclusion to his recent study on the 1912 Presidential Election, has observed that this eight-point broad statement of war aims was reminiscent of the Fourteen Points. The Atlantic
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declaration. As discussed above, Wilson’s Fourteen Points speech did succeed in eliciting cautious and conciliatory responses from both Hertling and Czernin. One wonders what the result would have been if the Supreme War Council conference of February 1918 had made a moderate declaration on behalf of the Americans and all the Allies. Instead, the conference issued its restatement of the ‘knock-out blow’ policy, making it easy for Ludendorff to argue for a last-ditch all-out offensive.

The fourth theme in the Radical publicists’ writings was what they perceived as the poor quality of statesmanship displayed by the Allied leadership. They were convinced that the war could have been shortened and millions of lives saved by pursuing a much more astute form of diplomacy. Even the Asquithian editor, Spender, came to this conclusion in late 1917. The Radical publicists despaired at the pitifully low quality of British leadership in 1917 and 1918, as Lloyd George and his advisers seemed to mismanage the many opportunities for exploring an early end to the war. Yet ‘poor statesmanship’ was really code for a lack of political will. Lloyd George’s ‘knock-out blow’ coalition government was willing to gamble all on an outright military victory over Germany to secure Britain’s strategic position, not only with its enemies, but also with its allies. What really disappointed the Radical publicists by the end of 1917 was that Woodrow Wilson, the only statesman to have progressive credentials, the President who had successfully negotiated the withdrawal of unrestricted warfare during 1916, had become hostile to attempts to achieve an early end to the war during 1917. Wilson had even assisted in neutralising several promising peace initiatives! Yet the Radical publicists retained some faith in Wilson from 1918 to mid-1919 in their lingering hope that he might yet achieve a reasonable

Charter echoed the Fourteen Points concerning collective security, national self-determination, freedom of the seas, and international free trade. Churchill and Roosevelt also declared opposition to territorial annexations and pledged to work towards the economic and social well-being of the peoples of the world. Chace, 1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft and Debs, pp. 281-282.
settlement and a League of Nations. However, this was because, in the Radical publicists’ view, Wilson had become the only surviving obstacle to a vindictive peace. They hoped that Wilson’s persuasive skills, coupled with American financial and military might, would ensure that all of Wilson’s progressive internationalist rhetoric could be translated into reality and a just settlement would be the result. Yet as the Peace Conference proceeded, and each one of the Fourteen Points was dealt a mortal blow, it became apparent that the Radical publicists most admired statesman could not restrain the Allied leaders’ plans for dismemberment and vengeance, as Brailsford had predicted in 1917:

If Mr. Wilson enables the Allies to crush Germany, will they renounce their plans of dismemberment and vengeance? Will he have the power to restrain them?1551

The fifth area of concern to the Radical publicists, particularly from the summer of 1916, was that the indefinite prolongation of the war, involving the continued depletion of manpower and treasure, would not be worth the cost, even if Britain were victorious in the end. This was the crux of Lansdowne’s secret memorandum to the War Cabinet in November 1916 and his Letter in the Telegraph in 1917. The Radical publicists believed that the indefinite prolongation of the war merely ensured that famine, chaos and violence would eventually ravage Europe and that civil liberties would be lost everywhere. Phillip Snowden was particularly scathing of the ‘fight to the finish’ mentality:

The continuance of the war is a gamblers reckless adventure, and it is now quite evident that the only result of this continuance will be to make the position worse, the losses still greater, and the final ruin more complete.1552

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1552 Labour Leader, Phillip Snowden, Review of the Week, 7 Dec. 1916.
Similarly, Emily Hobhouse believed that perhaps it was lack of moral courage on the part of their leaders that prevented them from seeking a negotiated peace:

> If the moral courage of the government equalled the immortal military courage of their soldiers, private conversations between ministers might begin, and a basis for an honourable peace be found by nobler, saner methods than those that shock the world today.\textsuperscript{1553}

Worse still, the failure to achieve a satisfactory settlement would sow the seeds of future wars of an even more destructive character. Therefore, the Radical publicists viewed an early-negotiated settlement, before Europe was fully in the grip of destructive forces, as the means most guaranteed to bring about a satisfactory settlement. An early-negotiated peace would have given the fledgling democracy in Russia a greater chance of survival and perhaps have strengthened the democratic parties in Germany. However, crucial to the securing of a negotiated peace was the intervention of a mediator. That the American President was best situated to mediate an end to the war was acknowledged by the Radical publicists and American peace activists. According to Dickinson:

> If the neutral powers, headed by the United States, could but make representations on the basis on which those who care about peace are generally agreed, it would be the best hope.\textsuperscript{1554}

The Radical publicists displayed a faith in President Wilson’s ability to come to the rescue of Europe from the earliest days in the war. For example, in 1914, Morel declared:

> Wilson may yet save Europe from utter collapse. No one else can. I would give a year of the my life to have an hour’s private talk with him.\textsuperscript{1555}

\textsuperscript{1553} Nation, Emily Hobhouse, ‘A German Official’s View of the Peace’, Letters to the Editor, 21 Oct. 1916.
\textsuperscript{1554} G. Lowes Dickinson to ‘Sir’ [possibly one of Julia Grace Wales’ backers, then given to her], 27 Dec. 1914, Wales Papers, Box 1.
\textsuperscript{1555} Morel to Nasmyth, 10 Nov. 1914, Nasmyth Papers, Box 2.
Both the Radical publicists and American peace activists were amazed that Wilson did not make American intervention in the war conditional upon the Allies signing up to a programme which included moderate war aims. This aspect of Wilson’s approach is still puzzling to historians today.\footnote{For example, discussing Wilson’s decision on U. S. intervention in March 1917, Arthur Link, in his magisterial biography of Wilson, wrote: ‘The idea of laying down terms to the Allies for American participation never seemed to have occurred to Wilson at this time. See Link, Wilson: 
\textit{Campaigns for Progressivism and Peace, 1916-1917}, p. 409.}

The sixth major theme pursued by the Radical publicists was the advocacy of democratic control of foreign policy. This preoccupation was a result of the sense of betrayal that many Radicals had as a result of suddenly finding that their nation was committed to a European war due to the tangled web of Grey’s foreign policy that was conducted away from the scrutiny of parliament. The conviction that ultimately the people, through parliament, should be in control of foreign policy was, of course, the \textit{raison d’être} of the Union of Democratic Control. The Radical publicists continued to advocate openness and democratic control of foreign policy throughout the war. Morel, voiced the beliefs of many Radical publicists that the lack of democracy in the area foreign policy was an unacceptable state of affairs in the modern world:

\begin{quote}
I believe that war between modern civilised states has become a crime and an absurdity: a crime because it involves virtually the whole population, the great bulk of which is opposed to war but has no effective control over the men and the policies responsible for permitting it; absurdity because it is unable to provide a solution for any single problem or combination of problems which may give rise from time to time.\footnote{E. D. Morel to William Cadbury, nd, Morel Papers F8/13.}
\end{quote}

It always seemed rather hypocritical of the Allies, in the Radical publicists’ view, to insist upon democratic changes in Germany when there was no democratic input into Britain’s own foreign policy. The population of Britain had little opportunity to express opinions while the war was on, so the electorate had little chance to influence Government policy on the war. Influencing government policy became the domain of
various pressure groups on both Left and Right – with the Right easily more successful. The press exerted by far the most profound influence on the British Government. Lord Northcliffe particularly wielded enormous power and influence and was not averse to throwing his political weight around. Not only was he an immensely powerful press baron but he also occupied a seat in the House of Lords, along with his brother, Lord Rothermere. Northcliffe was sent as the chief of an official mission to the United States in 1917 and he was placed in charge of British propaganda in 1918, while Rothermere was made Minister for the Air Force. The large circulation of Northcliffe’s *Daily Mail* and *Times* newspapers gave him immense influence with both the population and the politicians. The influence that such powerful men exerted over government policy was extremely distasteful to the idealistic editors of the Radical press. The idea that the control of foreign policy in all nations should ultimately be in the hands of the people via their democratically elected representatives, and not the privileged elites, remained a major preoccupation of the Radical publicists throughout the war. The Radical publicists would surely have agreed with Julia Grace Wales’ exclamation that ‘some sane method of concentrating the moral forces of the world must be secured.’ According to the Radical publicists, one way that the moral forces of the world could influence world affairs was to give ordinary people everywhere a say in how their governments behave.

Finally, the Radical publicists consistently held to the belief that this war could not be left to run the usual course that wars run. Their conviction was that something better must come out of the war. According to the *Nation*, it was no ordinary conflict:

> There is a shallow and dangerous element in the thought that would belittle the vast peril of this war. It is no ordinary conflict; it is almost the last chance for civilization. All the ideas that centuries of struggle and growth have brought to a head are at issue in it. Therefore the only world

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that can bring hope to emerge from such an ordeal must rest on a broader basis of ideas and organization, and a finer conception of State life, than the one which we know.\textsuperscript{1559}

Dickinson agreed:

If we are to do anything worth doing we have to remodel our ideas and prejudices in international politics, and to construct international machinery to embody the new policy.\textsuperscript{1560}

For Dickinson, and for all of the Radical publicists, despite their differences, there was no way but ‘the way of internationalism.’ And internationalism meant equal treatment of all nations, including those with which Britain was at war.\textsuperscript{1561}

In pursuing these various themes over the course of the war, the Radical publicists were not just observers and commentators of the political process but also active participants. Through the pages of the \textit{Nation}, \textit{Common Sense}, \textit{Labour Leader}, \textit{Manchester Guardian}, \textit{Daily News} and the \textit{U. D. C.} journal, the Radical publicists attempted to convince not only the public, but also the politicians about the need for a revision of war aims and a negotiated peace. Their writings were also directed at encouraging democratic forces overseas and in private correspondence and conversations, they did all they could to influence President Wilson to further the liberal internationalist cause. The Radical publicists also did everything they could to lend their weight to the various peace initiatives and to encouraging the British Government to give a sympathetic hearing to the Russian Government’s request for a revision of war aims. The Radical publicists also had a peculiarly unique relationship with President Wilson. As we have seen, Wilson looked to the Radical branch of Liberal political thought for his inspiration. During the war, the President often took his ideas for his major speeches from the writings of the Radical publicists. The


\textsuperscript{1560} \textit{Nation}, G. Lowes Dickinson, Letters to the Editor, 16 Sept. 1916.

\textsuperscript{1561} Ibid.
Radical publicists wholeheartedly applauded Wilson’s ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech of January 1917, as it encapsulated the program of the U. D. C. As noted previously, even the term ‘League of Nations’ was borrowed from a Radical publicist, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson. Wilson chose to use this term for his proposed international organisation rather than the title preferred by the American League to Enforce Peace. The Radical publicists also had an influence on both American peace groups and pro-League groups. Radicals such as Angell and Dickinson toured the country giving speeches promoting the progressive internationalist agenda. In addition, the writings of British Radicals appeared in the pages of the newspapers in the United States such as the Atlantic Monthly and the New Republic. The British Radical publicists were, in many instances, the inspiration of the progressive American editors. As noted above, in 1918, after the Armistice, Oswald Garrison Villard went to England and met all the British publicists who had been his inspiration during the war years. He recounted, in memoirs, how he was ‘badly frightened by all the distinguished people crowded at the tables in front of me’ as he began to speak to a gathering in the 1917 Club that included Ramsay MacDonald, ‘the saintly’ George Lansbury, J. A. Hobson, ‘the very able and lovable editor of the Nation’, Henry Massingham, Lady Courtney, and Philip and Ethel Snowden. Villard described these people as the men and women he most admired in English life. Villard was later invited to one of the regular Nation lunches where he met Francis Hirst,

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1562 Villard, Fighting Years, p. 376.
1563 Villard was envious of Massingham whom he described as living in an editor’s paradise, because he had such literary talent to draw upon with such excellent writers contributing to his paper. Villard cites, as examples, people such as the Buxton brothers, Henry W. Nevinson, L. T. Hobhouse, Hirst, Dickinson, George Bernard Shaw, S. K. Ratcliffe, J. L. Hammond, H. N. Brailsford, Augustine Birrell, Robert Lynd, Robert Dell, Delisle Burns, Hobson, Charles F. G. Masterman, Bertrand Russell, Graham Wallas, Wilson Harris, Ramsay MacDonald, Sir Sydney Olivier, H. J. Laski, Leonard Woolf, H. G. Wells, and still others to call upon. Ibid.
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Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson and Charles Roden Buxton. Villard was effusive in his praise for these British publicists:

To meet such kindred souls as I have described has always been one of my happiest and richest experiences. I have encountered them in nearly every country though not in such numbers as in London. Somehow, I cannot believe the Tories, or Rotarians, or imperialists can feel anything like the same deep satisfaction in contacts with their kind. For one thing, there is the joy of being instantly on the same footing of an old comrade or friend; we can take many things for granted at once. Our conversation does not start from the usual beginnings; we do not have to probe to ascertain just how we feel before reaching real communion. To be opposed to war; to hold no hate for any peoples; to be determined to champion a better world; to believe in the equality of all men and women; and to be opposed to all tyrants and all suppression of liberty and conscience and beliefs. When one stands on this platform, one has a ready key to priceless friendships. We may not see these men often; when we do, we begin not just where we left off, but where we left off plus all the joint experiences given to us since we last met by our keen mental and moral participation in the world’s events.¹⁵⁶⁴

These men and women were part of the political press in much the same way as Lords Northcliffe, Rothemere and Burnham, yet there was a qualitative difference between these Radical publicists and the conservative press barons. While the press barons revelled in the exercise of political power through their newspapers, the Radical publicists sought to use their influence to further progressive causes, not for wealth or prestige, but rather to promote common sense policies that in the long-run would benefit, not only Britain, but all humanity. All their energies were directed towards uncovering the root causes of international strife and to finding lasting solutions based on principles rooted in British Radicalism. The Radical publicists wanted to ensure that, as a result of the war, the world would be reformed to prevent a recurrence of the horror. They believed that only by attacking the root causes of war would there be any chance of success.

¹⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.
The Radical publicists held to the belief that the war was the result of major faults in the international system and that the root causes of the war were secret diplomacy, militarism, imperialism and the arms race. Therefore, only by addressing these root causes would there be a chance of averting future wars. A world order dominated by balance-of-power diplomacy was inherently unstable, according to the Radical publicists. Therefore, fighting the war merely to create a new balance of power was not going to prevent a recurrence of war. Rather, a system of collective security and free trade, based on a League of Nations, was needed. What the Radical publicists sought was neatly encapsulated in a statement by Henry Massingham in 1916:

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\text{All the nations must perish unless they devise a means of living together under a form of law approaching at least the degree of security they obtain under national law.}^{1565}
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The fulfilment of this bright hope of the Radical publicists rested on two things, American intervention and a negotiated peace. From 1914 to early 1917 the Radical publicists hoped that American intervention would help secure a negotiated peace followed by the establishment of collective security in a League of Nations. However, the strategy pursued by President Wilson after April 1917, when the United States entered the war as a belligerent, negated all opportunities for a negotiated peace. Wilson’s strategy of unilaterally pursuing a progressive agenda, counter to the agenda of Allied leaders, and opting to impose that agenda by the use of military force and financial muscle only at the end of the conflict, ultimately failed. Writing in 1919 during the Peace Conference, Snowden’s disillusionment with Wilson was so complete that he believed that President Wilson’s

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intervention in the European War has been disastrous from every point of view. If he had not brought America into the War a decent peace would probably have been secured.\footnote{Carl F. Brand, \textit{British Labour's Rise to Power}, (Stanford, 1941), p. 160.}

With Wilson’s dramatic fall, the bright hope faded. The establishment of the League of Nations should have been that landmark achievement that would justify the years of suffering. Yet the League was to be forever blighted by the Versailles settlement and the initial exclusion of Germany and the other defeated powers from its membership, and by the total absence of the United States. The League could not expect to succeed without the initial backing of all the significant powers. In 1919, the Radical publicists’ hope for a reformed world order dimmed significantly.

The Radical publicists’ bright hope was that a landmark achievement, an advance in international law, something like the Geneva and Hague Conventions, would emerge from the Great War. Such an achievement would have ensured that all the sacrifices of the war had not been in vain. The Radical publicists believed that this goal of a negotiated peace and a reformed international order had been possible in 1917. This hope burned brightly from December 1916 to March 1918, but then faded and flickered until finally being snuffed out at Versailles. However such ideas were not forgotten during the twenties and thirties. When the world was once again beset by horrific war in 1939, the bright hope flickered again. The conviction arose that the Radicals and Wilson had been right. The alternative to a reformed world order had been international anarchy followed by tyranny and military aggression. In 1941, the Anglo-American leadership did not need to be convinced of the sheer common sense of promoting collective security, democracy and multilateralism as the antidote to tyranny, chaos and aggression. The Atlantic Charter of August 1941 was the sort of
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landmark agreement for which the Radical publicists had sought in vain in 1917. This was the bright hope revisited.

The Atlantic Charter was a commitment to ensure that something positive and lasting would emerge from the second great conflagration of the century. A new vision for the post-war world emerged. This vision led not to a rejection of a world body (since the League had failed miserably) but a reaffirmation of the need for a better world organisation and a wholehearted commitment to ensuring the United Nations would not be crippled with obvious flaws in the way that had beset the League from its inception. From this vision a spirit of multilateral cooperation flourished and durable multilateral institutions have emerged, such as G. A. T. T., the World Bank, the I. M. F., the European Union and N. A. T. O. Since World War II, a vast body of international treaties and conventions has sprouted along with over 30,000 Non-Government Organisations which represent the conscience of the world. The principle elements of the international architecture which emerged after 1945, the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Nuremberg Trials’ principle of individual responsibility for crimes against humanity, have survived the perils of the Cold War. The nineties gave birth to an unprecedented mood of global cooperation due to the re-ignition of the forces of globalisation that had been abruptly halted in 1914.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century there is a far superior structure of world order than that which existed in 1914. Avenues are now in place for unprecedented cooperation between nations. There are multi-levels of cooperation being spawned through trade, businesses, humanitarian organisations and facilitated by the global revolution in information technology. International law has also become far more sophisticated than it was in 1914. Bill Emmott, editor of the contemporary
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_Economist_, in the shoes of Francis Hirst, has cited a number of grounds for optimism for the twenty-first century in his recent work. However, he argues that there must be a balance between positive expectations and a keen awareness of risk. This attitude he calls ‘paranoid optimism.’ This is optimism tempered by fear that something unexpected such as nuclear terrorism, floods, refugees, economic depression, natural disasters, climate change, revolution, civil wars or genocide may totally disrupt world order. The Asian Tsunami at the end of 2004 is a tragic reminder that a massive disaster can, seemingly, appear from nowhere. This ‘paranoia’ should ensure that we make preparations to try to limit and cope with the dangers while not altering our basic optimism. However, the most unpredictable factor in the quest for a stable world order is human nature. As Emmott reminds us, no matter what structures are in place to maintain the peace, security and stability of the world order, there will always be those individuals and organisations, whether they are terrorists, criminals or world leaders, who will seek to exploit power for their own ends.

In 2005 the world may not be threatened with great power rivalry as it was in 1914. The spectre of nuclear war may have receded with the end of the Cold War, and the return of international cooperation and the spread of democracy may give some ground for optimism. However, there is unease expressed in world opinion at how easily a world crisis could unleash the forces of chaos and anarchy. Within the first few years of the twenty-first century, this unease has come to the fore with the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the U. S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, genocide

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1568 Ibid., p. 278.
1569 Ibid., p. 296.
1570 However, Charles Kupchan argues that _Pax Americana_ will be short-lived. He predicts that, given recent trends and current U. S. foreign policy, a deep divide will emerge between the U. S. A. and the European Union. Furthermore, there will be a return to a multi-polar world and great power rivalry with the increasing economic power of China, Russia and Japan, giving way to a much less predictable and dangerous global environment. See the introduction in Charles A. Kupchan, _The End of the American Empire_ (New York, 2002).
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in the Darfur region of Sudan, and the Asian Tsunami at the end of 2004. Whatever challenges the world may face in the twenty-first century there is far more international machinery and established conventions to deal with them than there was in 1914. Also, there is a greater popular awareness of world issues and an increased readiness by many people to make their voices be heard, as demonstrated by the large worldwide popular protests against the Iraq War in 2003. Furthermore, there is a widely-held desire that the conventions of international law and international institutions that have been built up since the Second World War be respected. Popular opinion in the western world has proven to be as uncomfortable with unilateralist actions in defiance of international law as it is with the rise of Islamic terrorism. There is a realisation by many that a ‘clash of civilizations’ mentality, as articulated in the Huntington thesis, is a recipe for disaster; and as Huntley has argued, ignores all progress towards a global community based on democracy.\textsuperscript{1571} On the other side of the ledger, there are hardline ideologues, such as the neo-conservative commentators in the United States, who advocate the rejection of international law and multilateral action, and who prefer to base their idea of security on brute force alone. The bright hope of the Radical publicists has re-emerged in the post-World War Two era and has borne fruit but the world is still a long way from achieving that level of security that is expressed in Massingham’s epigraph at the beginning of this chapter. Though there is considerable popular acceptance of the principle expressed by Massingham that there should be a true rule of law in the international sphere, there is also formidable opposition to this idea. There is still a battle of ideas.

If the Radical publicists were here today, on the one hand they would be pleased with the strengthened international architecture that exists at the beginning of

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the twenty-first century, compared to that which existed at the beginning of the
twentieth century. However, on the other hand, they would surely agree with many of
the concerns voiced by commentators about world order at the beginning of the
twenty-first century. Like the Radical publicists in 1914 contemporary observers have
noted that globalisation and the cooperation it breeds is a basis for optimism for the
twenty-first century. Yet, there are critics today ready to point out the
shortcomings of this unprecedented period of global economic activity. Joseph
Stiglitz, in his recent work reminded us that all is not well with globalisation and that
the World Bank and I. M. F. have failed to deal with the massive problems of world
poverty and inequality, and that globalisation has been for the benefit of the few at the
expense of the many. George Monbiot has taken this analysis of the downside of
the global economy further. According to Monbiot, there is a global dictatorship of
vested interests and a lack of democracy at the global level and ‘everything has been
globalised except our consent.’ His answer is that we must capture and
democratise globalisation and use it as a vehicle for global democratic revolution.
In the twenty-first century it is perhaps in this area in which the battle for democratic
control needs to be fought. People like Stiglitz and Monbiot may well be
representative of the true heirs of the Radical publicists today.

Commentators today have also voiced concerns about the potential for chronic
problems, such as the presence and proliferation of nuclear weapons, to destroy world
order as we know it. Robert McNamara has called this a ‘crisis in slow motion,’

1575 Ibid.
arguing that the world is apathetic and has conveniently forgotten what can happen if nuclear weapons are resorted to in a crisis.\textsuperscript{1576} Similarly, Richard Butler has warned of the consequences for international security of the breakdown of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty,\textsuperscript{1577} while Joseph Nye has argued that nuclear deterrence will not be enough to provide national security if proliferation persists.\textsuperscript{1578} International commentators are in agreement that international law is still crucial for economic prosperity, world peace, security and the safeguarding of human rights, and that multilateralism is the best basis for actions by nations. However, McNamara has warned that the United States often reflects the same insensitive self-righteousness and unilateralism that Woodrow Wilson displayed.\textsuperscript{1579} McNamara has gone as far as accusing Wilson of being ‘unilateralist to the core’ and ‘hypocritical and insensitive’ and a ‘unilateralist wolf in multilateralist clothing.’\textsuperscript{1580} Nye’s analysis is similar, maintaining that America’s enormous ‘soft power’ is undermined by arrogance, indifference to the opinion of others, and a narrow approach to national interests advocated by the new unilateralists.\textsuperscript{1581} In Nye’s estimation, the U. S. A. has squandered its enormous ‘soft power’ by its heavy-handed unilateralism.\textsuperscript{1582} Nye has pointed out the futility of this contemporary trend in American foreign policy by warning that ‘unilateral actions cannot produce the right results on what are inherently multilateral issues.’\textsuperscript{1583} McNamara, similarly, has argued passionately for a reverse in this policy. The United States is bound to lead but it must practice ‘zero tolerance multilateralism’\textsuperscript{1584} because multilateral intervention has the sanction of international

\textsuperscript{1576} McNamara and Blight, \textit{Wilson’s Ghost}, p. 214.
\textsuperscript{1577} Butler, \textit{Fatal Choice}, pp. 67-68.
\textsuperscript{1578} Nye, \textit{The Paradox of American Power}, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{1579} McNamara, \textit{Wilson’s Ghost}, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{1580} Ibid., p. 49 and 53.
\textsuperscript{1581} Nye, \textit{The Paradox of American Power}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{1582} Ibid., p. 40.
\textsuperscript{1583} Ibid., p. 105, 136.
\textsuperscript{1584} McNamara, \textit{Wilson’s Ghost}, p. 132.
law and counteracts the biases that exist when deliberations are made by one government.\textsuperscript{1585} Charles Kupchan adds weight to McNamara’s arguments in his assertion that this century will see a return to a multi-polar world. Therefore, the United States needs to imagine life after \textit{Pax Americana} and so should work to bequeath the best of the American era to the world of the twenty-first century.\textsuperscript{1586}

Even on the political Right there is a recognition that unilateralism is unsustainable in the long-run. Niall Ferguson in his recent spirited defence of the American Empire in his latest book, \textit{Colossus}, believes that American must learn from the history of other world empires and act with humility and not arrogance.\textsuperscript{1587} Even if the United States chooses to act unashamedly as a modern imperial power, Ferguson argues that it still needs to cooperate with other great powers because ‘unilateralism, like isolation, is not so splendid after all. Indeed, it is seldom a realistic option for an empire.’\textsuperscript{1588}

The idea that it was possible, and indeed essential, to build a world order based on cooperation for mutual benefit, had its genesis in the writings of the Radical publicists in the First World War. The wisdom of their approach to world order has been borne out by the successful reformation of the international system at the end of the Second World War. Despite all the massive flaws in the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century there are now 120 democracies in the world.\textsuperscript{1589} Furthermore, with the intensification of globalisation there is a recognition among many nations that peace and prosperity are best obtained through mutual cooperation. Nations like China, which were once pariah states now have an interest in the stability of the international system. With the collapse of communism, the spread of democracy and the intensification of globalisation there are grounds for hope that peace and stability

\textsuperscript{1585} Ibid., pp. 136, 144.
\textsuperscript{1586} Kupchan, \textit{The End of the American Era}, Ch. 7.
\textsuperscript{1588} Ibid., p. 297.
\textsuperscript{1589} Kupchan, \textit{The End of the American Era}, p. xvi.
Conclusion

will last into the future. However, what has been gained in the past cannot be taken for granted. As the world proceeds into the twenty-first century there are two visions for the future.

The first alternative is based on the post-Second World War reformation of the international order. This is perhaps best exemplified by the ‘success stories’ of multilateral cooperation the last fifty years, the European Union and N. A. T. O.¹⁵⁹⁰ These organisations are still attracting new members because of the prospect of prosperity and security that comes from being a member state. Yet to be a member the bar is set high. Any nation can be a member of the United Nations, but only democratic states that demonstrate competent economic management and have a high regard for human rights can apply for membership to the European Union. James Huntley envisages a future in which the growing number of democracies in the world will increasingly work together for mutual benefit and security in the context of a robust body of international law.¹⁵⁹¹ In this regard, the experience of Europe shows the way forward, argues Kupchan, by blending realism and idealism and by ‘binding those states to each other in a manner that replaced the logic of rivalry with that of cooperation and mutual gain.’¹⁵⁹² This is what Massingham argued for in 1914:

The provision both of a Central European Parliament for the determination of general political questions, and of an organ of conciliation and of arbitral law to decide disputed points and enlargement and re-endorsement, in fact, of the Hague Tribunal. … We could then image a federation of European democracies to the borders of the Poland that is to be, possibly further, taught by the most dreadful of its memories to shun the ruin of its past.¹⁵⁹³

¹⁵⁹⁰ Kupchan asserts that the E. U. is erasing the geo-political fault lines among Europe’s nations states, ‘holding out the prospect of banishing war from the continent.’ Kupchan, *The End of the American Era*, p. 37.
¹⁵⁹³ *Nation*, ‘The Character of Modern War’, Politics and Affairs, 28 Nov. 1914
Conclusion

Looking beyond Europe, Huntley proposes that the best way forward would be for the democracies to work together as a bloc both within and without the United Nations to make advances in the political, economic and military spheres. The strength of this ‘Intercontinental Community of Democracies’ would come from their like-mindedness and shared values emanating from their democratic credentials.1594 Even more visionary is George Monbiot’s argument for a global democratic revolution to deliver us from the ‘global dictatorship of vested interests,’1595 and the building of a world parliament (separate to the United Nations). This would also be compatible with the proposals outlined by Huntley, and very much in Radical tradition of the democratic control of foreign policy. What should America’s role be in this? According to Kupchan it is to learn from the experience of Europe and to design a grand strategy for overcoming the fault lines on the [world] map by blending realism with idealism, and to lay out the discrete steps needed to realize that grand strategy and establish a new and peaceful international system.1596

The alternative is less appealing. The twenty-first century could see the United States pursue an increasingly unilateralist path using its overwhelming military dominance to intervene when and where it sees fit regardless of what the international community thinks.1597 Such behaviour risk alienating large sections of the international community and could hasten the return of geopolitical fault lines and of a multi-polar world. There are already strong indications that this is where the world is heading. American could ignore the rest of the world and simply see itself as the 68\textsuperscript{th} world empire in the history of the world, as Niall Ferguson suggests. However,

\footnotesize

1594 Ibid.
1595 Montbiot, The Age of Consent, p. 66.
1597 Both Noam Chomsky and William Blum has made a strong case that constant intervention in other nations has been a dominant aspect of the behaviour of the United States in the last fifty years, despite its rhetoric of fighting for ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’. See Noam Chomsky, Hegemony or Survival (Sydney, 2003), Noam Chomsky, Power and Terror: Post-9/11 Talks and Interviews (Toronto, 2003), and William Blum, Rogue State (London, 2002).
even if America did behave unashamedly as an empire it would still need to learn from the mistakes of past empires to ensure its survival and the peace and stability of the world, and there is no guarantee of this. An American foreign policy characterised by such an approach disturbs many people who have an interest in world order issues because, even more than in the years after 1914, America’s leadership is seen as crucial for the future peace and security of the world. The world has gone down the path of world empires and wars many times before. A new approach is needed. Perhaps for those who believe in a multilateral approach to world order issues it would be beneficial to have a fresh look at the ideas of the Radical publicists.

Many commentators on world order issues today keep a hope alive that a strengthening of international law and institutions and greater multilateral cooperation are the best way to ensure that the world community is able to deal effectively with the challenges of the twenty-first century. Also, like the Radical publicists, these commentators are unanimous that wise actions and leadership on the part of the world’s only hyper-power are more crucial than ever to a stable and secure world in the twenty-first century. Perhaps the last word in this thesis should be that of one of the Radical publicists who pointed out the way forward nearly four weeks after the First World War had started:

Here then lies the first future task of statesmanship; modes and instruments of policy must be formed for all ideals. The creation of a United States of Europe constitutes the only way out of this European State war. The extension of democracy...the demand for a full communication of the lines of foreign policy, the growth of international exchange by the disappearance of tariff frontiers, and the cutting down of purely national forces in favour of something that we can truly call an international police, controlled by an international Parliament.

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BRIGHT HOPE
British Radical Publicists, American Intervention, and the Prospects of a Negotiated Peace, 1917

Ph. D. Thesis

Daryl John Le Cornu

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2005

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For Kieren, Jared, Brent and Evan
All the nations must perish unless they devise a means of living together under a form of law approaching at least the degree of security they obtain under national law. ….Give society hope and it will outlast worse horrors than it is enduring and even be the stronger for them. Base it upon hatred, and build on that idea a wall of economic barriers, and hope will not come.

Henry Massingham, August 1916

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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

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(Signature)
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>A. U. A. M.</td>
<td>American Union Against Militarism</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. S. P.</td>
<td>British Socialist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. R. A.</td>
<td>Congo Reform Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. O. R. A.</td>
<td>Defence of the Realm Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. A. T. T.</td>
<td>The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>H. of C. Debs.</td>
<td>House of Commons Debates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. C. W. P. P.</td>
<td>International Committee of Women for a Permanent Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>I. C. W.</td>
<td>International Congress of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. L. P.</td>
<td>Independent Labour Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>I. M. F.</td>
<td>The International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. S. B.</td>
<td>International Socialist Bureau</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. N. U.</td>
<td>League of Nations Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. N. S.</td>
<td>League of Nations Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. T. E. P.</td>
<td>League to Enforce Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. P.</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>N. A. T. O.</td>
<td>The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
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<td>N. C. F.</td>
<td>No Conscription Fellowship</td>
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<td>O. H. L.</td>
<td>Oberste Heeresleitung (German High Command)</td>
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<td>U. D. C.</td>
<td>Union of Democratic Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. I. L.</td>
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<td>W. S. P. U.</td>
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is about a group of influential British publicists on the left-wing of the Liberal Party known as ‘Radicals.’ The focus is on the year 1917 during the First World War and the Radical publicists’ belief in the necessity of a negotiated settlement as an essential ingredient to achieving a just and lasting peace. These publicists also believed that the United States could play a unique role in mediating an end to the war and reforming the international system.

Chapter One details how the Radical publicists tirelessly campaigned for a revision of Allied war aims. These publicists were convinced that alliances, the arms race, secret diplomacy, imperialism and militarism, played a large part in the outbreak of war and its prolongation. They believed that when the peace settlement came, it should not be a peace of vengeance but a just peace that addressed these flaws in the international system. The Radical publicists looked increasingly to the American President Wilson for leadership, while Wilson was drawn to the Radical publicists’ progressive internationalist ideas, particularly the concept of a ‘league of nations.’

Chapter Two begins with the dramatic developments at the end of 1916: the German Peace Note, the American Peace Note, President Wilson’s ‘Peace Without Victory’ speech, Germany’s resumption of Unrestricted Submarine Warfare, and the formation of a more Right-wing coalition government in Britain with Lloyd George, resolutely opposed to a negotiated peace, as Prime Minister.

Chapter Three explores the impact of the March Revolution in Russia, the American entry into the war and the Radical publicists’ concern at President Wilson’s opposition to the various opportunities for a negotiated peace in 1917, most notably, the proposed socialist conference at Stockholm and the Papal Peace Note.

Chapter Four focuses on President Wilson’s Reply to Pope Benedict XV and his new condition of peace with Germany – the democratisation of its government, through a revolution if necessary. Many Radical publicists were dismayed at Wilson’s changed strategy since they believed it made a negotiated peace less likely and would involve a prolongation of the war.

Chapter Five starts with publication of the controversial Lansdowne Letter in the press at the end of November 1917. Lord Lansdowne called for reformulation of Allied war aims to make it easier for moderates in Germany to pressure their government to consider a negotiated peace. In January 1918, President Wilson made his Fourteen Points speech and Radical hope was restored once again as the American President forthrightly took the lead in championing a progressive internationalist agenda. However, in March 1918, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the March Offensive ended all peace talk until the new democratic German government asked President Wilson for peace on the basis of the Fourteen Points in October 1918.

The Conclusion examines the reason for the failure of the Wilsonian strategy to achieve a just and lasting peace in 1919, but points to the enduring legacy of the Radical publicists’ ideas about creating a stable world order. This dissertation finishes by looking at contemporary commentators who advocate an approach to world order in the tradition of the Radical publicists of the First World War.