IN SEARCH OF A GLOBAL, GODLY ORDER:
THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT AND THE ORIGINS OF THE LEAGUE OF
NATIONS, 1908-1918

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by

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Abstract

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This dissertation traces the origins of the League of Nations movement during the
First World War to a coalescent international network of ecumenical figures and
Protestant politicians. Its primary focus rests on the World Alliance for International
Friendship Through the Churches, an organization that drew Protestant social activists
and ecumenical leaders from Europe and North America. The World Alliance officially
began on August 1, 1914 in southern Germany to the sounds of the first shots of the
war. Within the next three months, World Alliance members began League of Nations
societies in Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Great Britain and the United States. The
World Alliance then enlisted other Christian institutions in its campaign, such as the
International Missionary Council, the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., the Blue Cross and the
Student Volunteer Movement. Key figures include John Mott, Charles Macfarland,
Adolf Deissmann, W. H. Dickinson, James Allen Baker, Nathan Söderblom, Andrew
James M. Donahue

Carnegie, Wilfred Monod, Prince Max von Baden and Lord Robert Cecil.

This dissertation is the first to examine the multinational, religious origins of the League of Nations. It shifts the focus off of the League’s most famous advocate, Woodrow Wilson, and places the designs of the League within a broader Protestant movement that recruited politicians and transformed churches into avenues for pro-League propaganda. The first three chapters outline the movement’s international scope and worldview, whereas the final four chapters focus on the movement in the national contexts of the United States, Britain, neutral Europe and Germany.

The World Alliance possessed two intertwined aims: firstly, a union of Christian churches that could complete the Christianization of the globe in their generation; and, secondarily, the establishment of an international federation of states, bound together by a free covenant before God, that would prevent Christendom from ever again descending into civil war. In the minds of the earliest advocates of the League of Nations, these two objectives were intertwined to the extent that many ecumenical organizations began to redefine themselves according to this new political orthodoxy, while the League movement became saturated in moral and pseudo-religious terms.
CONTENTS

Common Abbreviations........................................................................................................... iii
Acknowledgments.................................................................................................................... iv
Introduction.............................................................................................................................. 1
Chapter 1: Political Internationalism in a Religious Key, 1907-1909................................. 21
Chapter 2: Losing the Peace: The Antebellum Ecumenical Movement, 1907-1914................. 85
Chapter 3: The First World War As Catalyst for Protestant Internationalism, 1914-1918.......................... 161
Chapter 6: The League of Nations Movement in the Allied Nations and Neutral Europe, 1914-1918.............................. 429
Chapter 7: The League of Nations Movement in Germany and Its Ambivalent Ecumenical Base, 1914-1918.............................. 461
Chapter 8: Conclusion........................................................................................................... 542
Bibliography
  Archives................................................................................................................................. 550
  Primary Sources.................................................................................................................. 551
  Secondary Sources............................................................................................................ 570
# COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEIP</td>
<td>Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (U. S.)</td>
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<td>CODP</td>
<td>Central Organization for a Durable Peace (headquartered in Holland)</td>
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<td>CPU</td>
<td>Church Peace Union (U. S.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCCCA</td>
<td>The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America (U. S.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOR</td>
<td>Fellowship of Reconciliation (headquartered in London and New York City)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMC</td>
<td>International Missionary Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td>League to Enforce Peace (U. S.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LNS</td>
<td>League of Nations Society (Great Britain)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LNU</td>
<td>League of Nations Union (Great Britain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILPF</td>
<td>Women’s International League of Peace and Freedom</td>
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<td>YMCA</td>
<td>Young Men’s Christian Association (headquartered in Geneva)</td>
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<tr>
<td>YWCA</td>
<td>Young Women’s Christian Association (headquartered in London (1855 – 1930), and then Geneva (1930 – present))</td>
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<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>The World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches (headquartered in London (1914 – 1920), and then Geneva (1920 – 1946))</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSCF</td>
<td>World Student Christian Federation</td>
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INTRODUCTION

“A study of history from generation to generation constantly reveals God’s ways of creating the forces for recovery in the midst of disaster, and in the cycles of divine revelation and evolution, the forward sweeps are ever longer than the backward. The World Alliance started a long trail which has not reached its end and which still points the way to a new world order.”

-Charles Macfarland, Pioneers for Peace Through Religion (1946)

The YMCA missionary Sherwood Eddy famously quipped in 1924 that “the first casualty of war is the truth.”¹ He was wrong. Plans are the first casualties of war.

Case in point: As evening approached on July 31, 1914, seventy-six disoriented travelers converged on the southern German town of Konstanz exhausted from having had to negotiate a continent on the verge of a world war. Parliaments and monarchs across Europe had just declared martial law, giving military commanders the authority to seize command of the borders in order to carry out the meticulous, foreordained schematics demanded by modern mass mobilization. The delegation from France had been on the last car to pass through the Franco-German border before it closed. Meanwhile, at the Swiss-German crossing, Swiss soldiers awoke a group of Americans

and brusquely demanded they disembark the train because the Germans had blown up the tracks. While scrounging for an early breakfast at the nearest station the Americans witnessed a group of Frenchmen push a German woman to the ground and take her bags. A fistfight soon erupted that had to be put down by the local police. Once rerouted and across the border on a different train, the group witnessed German children pelting foreigners with rocks. A few even claimed to have witnessed German officers shooting two conscientious objectors against the wall of a train station.²

Those who entered Germany through the northern borders experienced even more harassment. Just outside of Cologne the German army seized control of an entire train line, forcing the British passengers to hitchhike into the city. Leaving Cologne the delegates had to share their car with German soldiers headed to the French border. One melancholic draftee sat next to Joy Hodgkin, an English Quaker headed to Konstanz, and relentlessly showed her pictures of his wife and newborn son. Joy remarked in her letter home that the rest of the soldiers, which had seemed so menacing at first, now seemed like “boys, lighthearted and happy, looking much more as if they were off for a holiday than starting out on the most serious job of their lives.”³

Not everyone made it. One hundred and fifty-three guests had been expected, but only seventy-six showed up. No one from Belgium, Denmark, Holland or Austria managed the journey.⁴ Two American pastors who stopped to take pictures of some

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² These accounts and others can be found in Frederick Lynch, *Through Europe on the Eve of War: A Record of Personal Experiences; Including an Account of the First World Conference of the Churches for International Peace* (New York: Church Peace Union, 1914), 1–25.


⁴ EZAB 51/D-1-b-2: “List of Delegates.”
German zeppelins found themselves in an army prison for the next several days. Many French delegates had to report to the military themselves, while many Germans found that the war precluded their ability to leave home. One German count felt he had to stay put after the army commandeered his Alsatian estate to quarter troops. The respected pacifist Otto Umfrid blamed his wife; she would not let him miss the last day with his son before he left for the front. Ernst Dryander, the head pastor of Berlin’s largest cathedral, also skipped the conference at Konstanz to spend a few days with his son stationed in the Black Forest. Some German delegates simply felt that the war itself made the conference at Konstanz an exercise in futility.

The original goal of the men and women descending on Konstanz on that warm Friday night had been to organize a “World Congress of Churches” for the summer of 1915. That assembly would be held concurrently with the Third Hague Peace Conference in order to demonstrate the support of the Christian churches for the erection of a world court. Many of the delegates had been at the previous Hague Conference in 1907 that had concluded many multilateral accords on the conduct of war and the rights of prisoners-of-war, but that assembly had failed to institute any meaningful way of enforcing those treaties. These delegates hoped that an ecumenical league of churches, meeting alongside its political counterpart, could pronounce Christ’s dominion over the

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6 Umfrid’s son spent most of the war in a British POW camp. Dryander’s son died on the Western Front. EZAB 51/D-I-1: telegram from Julius Richter to Siegmund-Schultze, 1 August 1914; EZAB 51/D-I-2: letter from August Wilhelm Schreiber to Siegmund-Schultze, 1 August 1914; EZAB 51/D-I-b-1: letter from Otto Umfrid to Siegmund-Schultze, 29 July 1914; Ernst von Dryander, Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben (Bielefeld: Velhagen & Klasing, 1922), 188.

7 See, for instance, EZAB 51/D-I-b-1: telegram from Wilhelm Lütgtart to Siegmund-Schultze, 3 August 1914; EZAB 51/D-I-b-1: letter from Theophil Mann to Siegmund-Schultze, 1 August 1914.
affairs of Christendom, wield its moral influence over the diplomats, and effectively move the Hague convention towards the institutionalization of peace on earth.

Unfortunately the rude realities of the summer of 1914 derailed these plans, as they would soon engulf the plans for the third Hague Conference that would never be, and forced the delegates to reconsider their purpose. This reorientation in the face of this new world war would launch the modern League of Nations movement in Europe and North America.  

Two British parliamentarians in particular had planned the event. Working together with their contacts in Germany and the United States for over seven years, this odd couple – J. Allen Baker, a Quaker industrialist from the Canadian plains, and Sir Willoughby Hyatt Dickinson, scion of the Conservative party and a devoted policy wonk – cajoled Protestant church leaders from thirteen countries to attend the event. In the days beforehand Dickinson considered canceling the conference in the wake of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, but instead he came to the conviction that while the “European situation. . .will cast a shadow over our Constanz [sic] conference,” it will show all the more “how necessary and urgent our work has become.”  

Baker agreed: “The situation has changed most ominously since the time when the Conference was planned. But obviously it is right. . .that the members of the Christian Churches as such may be enabled to make their voices effectively heard at such an hour as this on behalf of

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9 EZAB 51/E-II-b-1: letter from W. H. Dickinson to Frederick Lynch, 29 July 1914.
what is righteous and true, what is loyal to the suzerainty of the Prince of Peace.”\textsuperscript{10} The president of the conference, Randall Davidson, the Archbishop of Canterbury, supported their decision. He believed that the war could only “add additional solemnity to your meeting and additional significance to our prayers.”\textsuperscript{11}

The bedraggled group gathered at the Hotel Insel, situated on a small island just outside the old town of Konstanz at the headwaters of the Rhine River. The grand hotel is a peaceful locale: a former Dominican monastery, white, bright, and beachy with views of the Alps across the lake. It possessed historical significance for Protestants worldwide. Almost five hundred years earlier the reformer Jan Hus had spent his final days in the monastery’s dungeon awaiting his death sentence from the Council of Constance. There was also a more practical reason behind the site. The Hotel Insel lay a short distance from the island of Mainau, the estate of the conference’s hostess, the Grand Duchess Luise von Baden, great-aunt of the Kaiser. Luise’s connections proved crucial over the next few days as the delegates became trapped behind the Western front.\textsuperscript{12}

That first evening the travelers exchanged their impressions of the new European mood as well as speculations about how they were going to get home. At ten the next morning they gathered upstairs. This time later became known as the ‘meeting in the


\textsuperscript{12} The home is still privately owned by Luise’s grandniece. The beautiful, kid-friendly gardens are open to the public and worth the cost of the ferry. Clarissa von Platen and Count Lennart Bernadotte, \textit{Insel Mainau} (Konstanz: Stadler, 1993). For the history of the Hotel Insel, visit www.konstanz.steigenberger.de. The hotel was the birthplace of Count von Zeppelin, who had invented the dirigibles that hovered over the Belgian lines that summer.
upper room,’ or the ‘hour of Gethsemane,’ terms used to link this experience with the night of the Last Supper. Now as then, death waited outside, eager to tear apart the body of Christ. Now as then, those inside felt a deep communion with one another before the storm, a communion that would be resurrected – and reacted – in the church they hoped would follow. Now as then, they heard Christ urging them to, above all else, maintain their unity through the bloodshed to come. In the attic of the Hotel Insel, during the opening days of World War I, that assembly of Protestants relived biblical time and reveled in their common religious identity in the middle of militarism.\textsuperscript{13}

The meeting soon turned into an extemporaneous prayer service. J. Allen Baker stood up to speak with tears in his eyes. Millions of Christians worldwide were also praying that the “lightning and thunder might be stayed.” He compared the present mission of the churches to promote peace as the heir of the Protestant crusade against slavery.\textsuperscript{14} After a few others spoke on God’s “supranational Church,” two passages from the Bible were read out loud. First was Daniel’s prayer for Israel from Daniel 9, a lament that equates war with divine chastisement and peace with repentance:

\begin{quote}
I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed and said, ‘Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. . . . Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our father, because we have sinned against You. . . . All Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of
\end{quote}


God, for we have sinned against Him. Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity. . . . So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary. . . . O Lord, hear! O, Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name. (Daniel 9: 3 – 19)

Next they read Christ’s words from the Last Supper:

Little children, I am with you a little while longer. . . . You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13: 31 – 35)

John L. Nuelsen, leading bishop of the Methodist Church in Germany and Switzerland, led an open Eucharist as individuals came forward to pray and to read from the Bible in French, German, and English. People alternated between prayers for peace and confessions of their nations’ sins of pride, greed and militarism.15

That night the American missionary Sidney Gulick electrified the group with a speech that blamed the war on the “asleep churches” of the West for failing to “instruct rulers and judges and guides of the people to make everything they do Christian.” He charged the audience with the duty to “Christianize” international relations and emphasize the “the great truth of the equality and brotherhood of races” at the heart of Christ’s gospel. The churches had a distinctive and necessary role to play: “Let the

15 John L. Nuelsen, "Gottes Walten in Meinem Leben," Christliche Apologete (April 9, 1940). Interdenominational Eucharistic services were uncommon in 1914. Most churches forbade the practice; many priests or pastors who participated in such services faced defrocking or excommunication. In Christian tradition, the ritual is a reenactment of the Last Supper when, is the ultimate act of communion and strict prohibitions against sharing the rite with unbelievers existed in most Protestant denominations (which in turn were also national distinctions). By participating in this together, many of the delegates defied their own church orders.
statesmen, politicians, peace societies, and peace programmes go on; they will provide
the social machinery for adjusting the relations of society in nations and among races, but
they cannot furnish the motive forces which will transform the feelings. . . .”

Afterwards George Nasmyth, director of the International Bureau of Students, predicted
that the war would wipe away much of the political resistance to international
government: “I believe this is the time for the Christian Church to work out a plan for the
establishment of the Kingdom of God here on earth and in our time, and I believe that is
the significance of this conference. This is not only a problem of peace and international
affairs, but a great problem of social reconstruction along the lines of Christ’s

Frederick Lynch, a prominent leader within the Federal Council of the Churches in Christ of America, invoked Hus’ example and demanded a “second
Reformation” that would break through the staid religiosity of the West that was losing
its ability to transform the cultures of the world. He drew a sharp contrast between the
divisions of secular nationalism outside that room and the spirit of Christian
transnationalism inside the room: “Outside Germans, Frenchmen and Englishmen were
going out to fight one another; here, Germans, Frenchmen and Englishmen were kneeling
in prayer. Outside the people were calling for blood; here representatives of twelve
peoples were praying for increased love for one another. Outside Germans, Frenchmen
and Englishmen were hurling epithets of hatred and revenge at each other; here they were
pledging themselves in new ties of brotherhood in Christ’s kingdom of goodwill.”

\[\text{\cite{Dickinson} 31–34.}\]
\[\text{\cite{Lynch} 39.}\]
\[\text{\cite{Ibid} 25.}\]
Lunch consisted of cold cuts and sandwiches. The kitchen and wait staff had left to join their units. In the afternoon the delegates reassembled upstairs. British, French, and American delegates reported on their efforts within their national churches for the cause of peace. The delegates passed resolutions that established a slapdash committee charged with sustaining this network through the war years. National councils were to be established in each state to “enlist the churches” to use “their influence with the Peoples, Parliaments and Governments of the world. . .so that, along the path of peaceful civilization, they may reach that universal goodwill which Christianity has taught mankind to aspire after.” Baker closed the session by reading a telegram from Grand Duchess Luise: “Although everything is changed since the 1st of August, one thing can never change: . . .the firm belief that God will grant us peace when His time has come. Let us continue to pray – I can add no more. But I can only say and repeat that the unity of prayer is unchangeable.”

Despite the setbacks, the assembly voted to form an international league of Christian churches called the World Alliance of Churches for Promoting International Friendship Through the Churches. Invitations would be sent out to any and all churches within the Trinitarian tradition. It then agreed to disburse and reconvene at the Hague to

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20 For the entire text of the resolutions, see Dickinson, ed., The Churches and International Friendship, 45 – 48.

21 Baker and Noel-Baker, 228. Andrew Carnegie, the financier of the conference, also sent encouragement, though he was not nearly so pious. “We shall be with you all today in spirit, and full in the faith that our cause is righteous and therefore must prevail amid many deplorable catastrophes such as the present outburst. We know that man is created with an instinct for development, and that from the first he has developed to higher and higher standards and that there is no limit to his future ascent.” Quoted in Joseph Frazier Wall, Andrew Carnegie (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 1014.
decide the details. Siegmund-Schultze visited Luise to see what could be done. She in turn arranged for one of the private imperial rail cars to transport them to the border with passes from the Kaiser. The only catch was that the rail cars had to be sealed with the windows capped over, as was mandated for military cars during the mobilization, allegedly to prevent espionage. Everyone left Konstanz early Monday morning. At the last minute Luise also wired them DM500 after she found out that the government had declared a banking holiday, but the money never caught up to them.\textsuperscript{22}

In the morning the French left by themselves towards the Swiss border. Everyone else went north to Cologne aiming for the Netherlands. Despite the August heat, the windows remained closed on the orders of the train officials not eager to attract extra attention. Some onlookers, assuming they were troops headed to the front, cheered them as they passed. On the train everyone pooled their money and valuables.\textsuperscript{23} Somehow someone misplaced the sack lunches from the hotel. They were never found. Furthermore forty-eight pieces of luggage never made it on the coach at the hotel. Perhaps the porters left with the wait staff. John Clifford, president of the Baptist World Union, noted in his diary: “In this train we were almost piled on top of each other. Difficulty in getting food; only managed to get a German sausage and a bit of bread until I got to Cologne.”\textsuperscript{24} At Stuttgart some got off the car to find food, but failed. Instead Lynch found a local socialist assembly that supported the war. The image stuck with


\textsuperscript{23} Charles Macfarland, \textit{Across the Years} (New York: Macmillan, 1936), 99.

him: “We Americans all came to feel, I think, that the chief hope was in the workingmen of Germany, Russia and France, awaking to the fact that they were simply dupes, fools, pawns in the hands of avaricious and unscrupulous governments. . . .Poor fools, they will come to their sense some day and will not go.”25

At Cologne Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze and the British Baptist leader J. H. Rushbrooke split off from the main group and headed for Berlin in hopes of personally persuading Emperor Wilhelm to submit the emerging conflict to American arbitration. The majority of the group continued straight north, towards Liège and the English Channel, unaware that it was heading towards the future launching point of the German invasion of France.26

Belgium was in complete chaos. Baker and Dickinson had hoped to meet up with Alfred Vanderpol and Cardinal Mercier, two of their closest Catholic allies, to determine whether the scheduled conference about Catholicism joining in the plans for the ‘World’s Congress of Churches’ in 1915 was still feasible. They failed to make contact. They left for the coast on August 4, just ahead of the German Army, and caught a steamer to London. Later that night the remnants of the peace conference pulled into Victoria Station just as the last trains of German nationals were leaving. Baker and Dickinson met their families at the bustling train depot, but their reunions were drowned out by a boisterous rendition of Die Wacht am Rhein by the departing. Exhausted, Baker broke

down when he got home, repeating over and over again: “They’ve beaten us, they’ve beaten us; we were too late.”27

This dissertation hopes to prove that the League of Nations movement began in that crowded hotel attic room in Konstanz, Germany. Prior to that date there had never been a sustained effort to create an international government. At the conference’s close those present agreed to found an international society entitled the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship Through the Churches, a ecclesiastical association of ecumenically-minded Protestants with the political purpose of preparing the nations of Christendom by the war’s conclusion to covenant among themselves an international government that could enforce certain standards of international morality. Within just the first ten months individuals aligned with the World Alliance established extra-ecclessial League of Nations organization in six countries: France, Britain, the United States, Holland, Belgium and Switzerland. By 1918 individuals from the World Alliance had successfully spawned League societies in Canada, China, Japan and Germany as well. In the United States and the British Commonwealth this movement attracted sympathetic political figures such as Jan Christian Smuts, Robert Cecil and Woodrow Wilson, individuals who eventually set the League of Nations in motion at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.

27 Noel-Baker and Baker, 229.
Throughout this dissertation one point remains clear. The borders of the World Alliance and its sister ecumenical organizations are the same borders of the League movement before 1918. Wherever the ecumenical movement thrived, the League movement rode on its coattails. Furthermore the League movement never developed in any nation or in any political party that existed beyond the reach of the World Alliance.

This ragtag band of refugees slouching home from Konstanz in 1914 in stuffy rail cars, lunchless, luggageless, might appear to be have been a hapless bunch of idealists saturated in haplessness and irony. Yet these men and women were not, as Baker despaired at the time, “beaten.” The organization that emerged from that horrific weekend played the pivotal role in the establishment of the League of Nations just five years later.

In the process the World Alliance coopted dozens of ecumenical and missionary organizations, including the Evangelical Alliance, the YMCA and the YWCA, until advocacy for the League of Nations became a type of “political orthodoxy” within mainstream Protestantism on both sides of the Atlantic. In a very real sense the League of Nations is a stepchild of the ecumenical movement. Its earliest protagonists conceived of it as the political counterpart to the Kingdom of God that in the early twentieth movement appeared to be just over the horizon. In the late nineteenth century Protestantism worldwide experienced a political revitalization due to a web of overlapping reform crusades devoted to such varied topics as abolitionism, temperance, urban reform and labor unions. Furthermore three self-identifying Protestant powers – the United States, Great Britain and Germany – controlled a disproportionate amount of the world’s territory, economy and population at the turn of the century, backed by a
robust missionary movement that promised the evangelization of the world in their generation. Protestant internationalism was interwoven with other dominant impulses of the time: the missionary impulse to Christianize the globe; domestic campaigns to bring the tenants of the Gospel to bear on social issues; and the decreased emphasis on denominational and doctrinal differences among liberal churchmen.

The founders of the World Alliance worried that a civil war within Christendom would irreparably soil their witness abroad, tempt the churches to abandon social concerns for national egoism and militarism, and spawn new internecine conflicts that pitted Christian against Christian. Protestant internationalists argued that peace between the Christian peoples was a litmus test of their religious faith. Theological convictions about mutual love, forgiveness, and authority were transferred onto the realm of international diplomacy. They applied Biblical passages in new contexts to support their religious commitment to political internationalism, passages such as Christ’s final prayer before the Last Supper, a particular favorite in the ‘upper room’ at Konstanz: “[Those who shall believe on me] may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:21).

Protestant internationalists thought about the spiritual reconciliation of the Christian churches and the political harmonization of Christendom as interrelated projects. Ecumenical union and the League of Nations were therefore seen as complementary projects. Today we might think of the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations, as an essentially progressive and secular method of handling international disputes. Yet its early advocates believed that the League was
would be a political manifestation of a spiritually united Christendom. It looked backward to a (mythical) past when Christian leaders kept medieval Europe together and it looked forward to a apocalyptic future when Christ himself would reign over the nations of the world in unity and in peace.

In thinking thusly they stood within a broad tradition of Western social thought that dates back to the Reformation. King Henry IV proposed a “Grand Alliance” of Western Europe that began with plans for a union of the Anglican and Gallican churches.²⁸ Georg Wilhelm Leibniz and Hugo Grotius, the founders of modern international law, turned to the natural revelation of God as a potential common ground for ecclesiastical and political federation; both men also considered the formation of a Council of Churches dedicated to the enforcement of this new international law to be an essential cornerstone of any peace capable of transcending the divisions of Europe.²⁹ In imagining a covenantal community of Christian nations capable of healing the divisions of Christendom in the twentieth century, Protestant internationalists invented our modern concept of international government.

The first chapter of this dissertation provides a rough sketch of the mindset of Protestant internationalism rooted in this post-reformational tradition of international law.


It uses the *Monument international de la Réformation* in Geneva, a elaborate concrete memorial erected to honor John Calvin’s four-hundredth birthday in 1909, as a key to mapping the terrain of Protestant political thought at the turn of the century. The chapter focuses on four themes: the covenantal nature of national and international societies, the complementary, though distinct, contributions of church and state to social order; the necessity of ‘just war’ for the punishment of outlaw states; and, finally, the eschatological ideal of a restored Christendom.

The second chapter traces the prehistory of the World Alliance from its first stirrings during the London Olympics and the Second Hague Conference in 1908 through the Konstanz Conference in 1914. During this time the movement existed primarily in Britain, the United States and Germany. Throughout these three national communities, a vibrant church of letters formed around the possibility of a trilateral “League of Peace,” wherein the three self-identified Protestant great powers would act together as one military and spiritual engine for worldwide moral reform.

The third chapter contends that the Great War acted as a catalyst on the nascent World Alliance. Unlike secular pacifist organizations after 1914, the Protestant internationalist movement grew exponentially in terms of numbers, funds and political influence. This chapter also relates how the leaders of the World Alliance invested themselves in organizing relief for POWs, rescuing the victims of the Armenian genocide, and caring for the spiritual welfare of the armies. In effect these impromptu actions acted as proto-NGOs, which in turn created resources that underwrote the League’s early years. Meanwhile the war also altered hopes for a “League of Peace.” The rift between Britain and Germany permanently ended any discussion of a pan-
Protestant alliance. What emerged in its place was a vision of a global League of Nations that would be ostensibly secular in its pursuit of a new world order.

Chapters four, five and six deal specifically with the three most important League organizations that came into being during the Great War: the Bryce Group (U.K.), the League to Enforce Peace (U.S.), and the Central Organization for a Durable Peace (an international body of neutrals with its headquarters in The Hague). In addition each chapter details how Protestant internationalists attracted popular support for the League through their ecclesiastical connections as well as prominent politicians in positions of political power. Particular interest is paid to how American ecumenists gradually wooed Woodrow Wilson into their orbit in 1915–1916. Contrary to many popular accounts, the League was not immaculately conceived in the mind of Woodrow Wilson. Rather it was an idea that was adopted by the American President through his association with the World Alliance’s American affiliation, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

The seventh chapter handles the German case. Although the war initially dampened what enthusiasm for the League there was in Germany, there did emerge a core of Protestant intellectuals and church leaders in Berlin that lobbied behind the scenes for a postwar League that remained in contact with the World Alliance. In 1918, once an armistice became an urgent reality, this core briefly came to power under Max von Baden, the Second Empire’s final Chancellor. This group did manage to form a German League of Nations Society but ultimately it failed to lodge the work of this organization within the German churches. In many ways the German case is the exception that proves the rule. Unlike its more successful sister organizations in other countries, the war did
not act as a catalyst on ecumenical Protestantism in the *Kaiserreich* for reasons that will be discussed in this final chapter. Even in Germany the borders of the World Alliance defined the borders of the League movement, but in this particular case the war curtailed the limits of both ventures.

Because this dissertation crosses over into so many historical fields, the relevant historiographies are divided thematically into each chapter. For instance the literature on Protestant internationalism and the early history of the ecumenical movement are handled in the first chapter. The second chapter includes a survey of the present works dealing with the antebellum peace societies and other internationalist organizations, most of which focus on the secular, feminist or socialist organizations that had little to do with the early history of the League of Nations. The third chapter contains a critical analysis of the historiography on Christianity and the First World War, almost all of which up until this point has focused on Christianity’s alleged complicity with the hypernationalism of the Allied and Axis powers. Finally chapters four, five, six and seven each deal with the different national literatures of Great Britain, the United States, Germany and the neutral European powers.

In general I can say that this study uniquely blends two understudied historiographies that rarely communicate with one another: that of the League of Nations and that of the ecumenical movement. Historical studies of the League of Nations are few and far between and almost none of them seriously study the origins of the concept beyond the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. The only two exceptions to this rule are two older American studies that do pay attention to mainline Protestant support for the
League without grasping the broader, international dimensions of that support.  

Recently there has been an excellent study on the religious reasoning behind Woodrow Wilson’s foreign policy, including the League of Nations, but this is purely a personal study that does not treat the broader League movement.

Meanwhile the historiography of the international ecumenical movement has been almost entirely generated by those involved in the modern World Council of Churches. It has focused almost exclusively on the religious aspects of that movement without pursuing any investigation of its political overtones. In any respect the World Alliance decided in 1946 to disband rather than join the emerging World Council of Churches, a decision that has sidelines the organization within current ecumenical discussion. Most histories of the ecumenical movement treats the World Alliance as a side dish, if they deal with it at all. There has only been one monograph written on the World Alliance, by the Dutch pastor Harmjan Dam, and it has unfortunately missed the implications of the organization for the League of Nations.

This dissertation therefore nicely fills a niche between a religious historiography of the ecumenical movement and a primarily secularized literature on the League of Nations. In doing so it hopes to force its readers to see the League anew as a site of faithful hope and of organized moral authority. This work will also throw light on certain

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elements of the First World War that are often overshadowed in Anglo-American circles by the horror of the trenches, such as the role of international relief organizations in the war, the belief on each side that they were truly fighting a “war against war”, and the role that religious connections played in the diplomacy of the Great Powers during this time. It is high time that the World Alliance merited a study of its own because of its international breadth, its social influence and its political connections. Without the World Alliance there would likely never have been any League of Nations.
CHAPTER 1:
POLITICAL INTERNATIONALISM IN A
RELIGIOUS KEY, 1907 - 1909

“The Church in all its branches should humbly and devoutly pray for recovery of the lost consciousness of its essential unity and universality in Christ, establishing in its membership the feeling of a fellowship that transcends the barriers of nation and race. . . . The Church should build in all its branches throughout Christendom a world-fellowship of goodwill and reconciliation. . . . The Church should teach mankind that God’s laws cover the whole of human life, individual, national and international. . . . It should vigorously press for a League of Nations.”

-Declaration by the American Branch of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship Through the Churches,” 15 November 1917.

1.1 Introduction: The Calvin Quadricentennial and the Monument international de la Réformation: Geneva, 1906 – 1909

On June 19, 1906 just over two hundred pedestrians converged on the auditorium at the University of Geneva. Many came from Old Town, where few residences have changed hands since the seventeenth century, down the steep slopes of the medieval city walls past the chestnut trees to the grounds of central quad. They were met there by several others, mostly professors and students from the new, modern homes on the level fields in the Plainpalais. Their purpose: to finalize plans for the four hundredth birthday
celebration of John Calvin, the renowned patriarch of the Genevan Reformation, just three years in the future.

The assembly felt that the stakes for the Calvin jubilee were high. In 1906 Geneva lacked any public memorial for the Reformer.\(^{34}\) Even Calvin’s grave lay without distinction in the municipal cemetery, marked only by the initials J. C. (The grave of Dostoevsky’s infant daughter, the grave of a pauper and a foreigner, a few rows away, displays more decoration.) The iconoclastic stubbornness of the Genevan Church’s refusal to memorialize its most celebrated member was a matter of some pride. Unlike other, lesser branches of the Christian faith, the Reformed did not spend money commemorating the dead. Abraham Kuyper, Prime Minister of the Netherlands from 1901 to 1905, listed Calvin’s civic anonymity as one of the peculiar virtues of the Protestant faith. “Calvinism has never burned its incense upon the altar of genius, it has erected no monument for its heroes, it scarcely even calls them by name,” he boasted. “One stone only in a wall at Geneva remains to remind one of Calvin. His very grave has been forgotten. Was this ingratitude? By no means. . . .The impression was vivid that it was One greater than Calvin, even God Himself, who had wrought here His work.\(^{35}\)

Still by 1906 many Genevan Protestants had changed their mind. The nineteenth century had not been kind to the old families of the town. Waves of Catholic immigrants preferred the socialist mayor James Fazy, who had transformed Geneva into a haven for

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\(^{34}\) A plaque commemorating Geneva’s acceptance of the Reformation had been installed on the City Hall in 1558. However it was removed in 1814 for a commemoration of those who died in the liberation of Geneva from Napoleonic France. 26 – 27.

revolutionary refugees from France and Italy. In 1834 a local socialist party erected an unpopular statue of Rousseau on an island just outside of the city; just beyond that site Voltaire’s manor had been turned into a secular shrine. One of the pressing interests of the Calvin Jubilee had to be the reaffirmation of Geneva’s Protestant identity as the so-called Protestant Vatican. Since the Reformation, Calvin had attracted Protestants from across Europe to this small Alpine fortress to translate the Scriptures and to hatch political intrigues against their Catholic rulers. In the nineteenth century, Geneva became home to ecumenical agencies, such as the Evangelical Alliance, the Blue Cross, and the Young Men’s Christian Association. Particularly among Anglophone churches, Reformation Geneva held the status of a prototype of the ideal Christian commonwealth and the seedbed of a distinctively Protestant political modernity.

Many persons on the executive committee in charge of the monument proposal later held positions in the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches and/or the League of Nations. For instance Charles Borgeaud, professor of international law and historian of the Calvinist legacy, participated in both organizations as did Guillaume Fatio, an amateur theologian, international banker, and eventual treasurer of the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches.

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36 Since the Reformation Genevan identity has wrestled with the challenge of immigration. During the French Wars of Religion, Protestant refugees from France and Spain doubled the size of the small town. However in the nineteenth century, immigrants brought religious pluralism along with them. Many socialists and liberals fled to Geneva after the failed revolutions of 1848-1851, including the French poet-cum-president Lamartine, whose house sits on the shoreline below the League of Nations. In the 1880s and 1890s Catholic workers from Italy and France filled newly constructed watch and chocolate factories. In 1888 the census numbered just over forty thousand natives and just under forty thousand aliens. By 1914 the local population had swelled to over fifty thousand, but the foreign sections of the city now numbered over seventy thousand; Catholics outnumbered Protestants in the canton by at least ten thousand souls. Paul Guichonnet, *Histoire De Genève* (Toulouse: Edouard Privat, 1974), 321. Two new waves of foreigners still sit uncomfortably within Genevan society: one African and Moslem, many of whom are seeking asylum through the Red Cross; the other, the set of young cosmopolitans working at the international institutions in town, such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and the Red Cross.
Eugène Choisy, the representative of the Evangelical Alliance for the Calvin quadricentennial, later helped found the French League of Nations Society, while Adolf Keller, a local pastor, did likewise for the Genevan League of Nations Society. Both men were also among the more visible proponents of ecumenical cooperation in their respective homelands. Other members of the executive committee included Christian Philidias, secretary of the World’s YMCA; Gustave Moynier, president of the International Red Cross; René de Saussure, a professor of mathematics at the university and a fervent advocate of Esperanto; Emile Doumergue, a renowned Calvin biographer who was also active in French politics; and Gustave Ador, who in 1919 was the Swiss representative at the Paris Peace Conference.

On that night in 1906 in the university auditorium, Charles Borgeaud presented the executive committee’s proposal for a massive, concrete memorial to be unveiled at the Calvin Jubilee. The monument would forego any individual hagiography of Calvin, depicting instead a series of scenes on “international history of the Reformation” from a “universal point of view.” No mention would be made of the theological peculiarities of the Reformed faith (i.e., no references to predestination or infant baptism) so that the “universal” aspects of Protestantism’s “political legacy” might be portrayed. Borgeaud then outlined his belief that Calvinism was the spiritual edifice at the foundation of the world’s modern nations:

The monument to Calvin already exists, even more imposing and more durable than anything that could be fashioned by the hands of men. It has been being built over centuries. It is the prosperity, the culture, the continual ascension up the social scale of the nations and the peoples among whom Calvinism, in its diverse forms, has filled with energy (soufflé l’énergie).\(^{37}\)

The Protestant identity carved into the *Monument international de la Réformation* was at once political, social and theological. These men cherished their Protestantism, the Calvinist strands of Protestantism in particular, because they saw it as the engine of modernity. As we shall see, this identity included a notion of international relations that they considered to be a uniquely Protestant gift to the world.

The idea that Protestantism was the engine of modernity that suffused the *Monument international de la Réformation* also animated much of the Western scholarship on Protestantism of the time. 38 Charles Borgeaud and Eugène Choisy, two professors at the University of Geneva who authored much of the original proposal for the *Monument*, had secured international reputations for themselves for authoring a series of books, translated into over fifteen languages, that presented “Calvinist theocracy” as the precursor to “political modernity.” 39 Other well-known scholars had recently buttressed his work through investigations into the genealogy of modernity that focused on the legacy of the Reformation. In a very popular lecture series on the “Calvinist life-system” Abraham Kuyper’s represented his subject as “neither an ecclesiastical, nor a theological, nor a sectarian conception, but one of the principal phases in the general

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development of our human race.” The German sociologist Max Weber identified the origins of modernity in Calvinism’s “inner-worldly asceticism” in his landmark study on the Protestant work ethic in 1904. His colleague Ernst Troeltsch also argued that Reformed Christianity “established freedom upon a foundation, which an all-too-human humanism cannot destroy, upon faith in God as the power whence freedom and personality come to us – namely, Protestantism.” Historians of foreign policy also commonly identified the Reformation as the origin of modern international relations. James Anthony Froude, the Regius Professor of History at Oxford, contended that Calvin had “obliterate[d] the distinction between sins and crimes” and made “the moral law the rule of life for States as well as persons.” The American historian and internationalist George Bancroft regarded Calvin as the intellectual father of American republicanism and Calvinist Geneva as “the impregnable fortress of popular liberty, the fertile seed-plot of democracy.”

Borgeaud and Choisy wanted a memorial that would spotlight the relevance of Calvinism for international politics in the twentieth century. Anything less, Borgeaud argued, “will only interest Genevans to the exclusion of any foreigners.” The humility of the Reformed faith too often caused it to be overlooked by others. “One cannot

40 Kuyper, Calvinism: Six Stone Foundation Lectures, 34.
emphasize enough to Geneva – because one is used to this from their childhood on – the effect that the complete absence of visible commemoration of the heroes of the Reformation has on the visitor from abroad, within the city which he has visited because of them.”\textsuperscript{45} Borgeaud planned to invite Protestants from around the world to the celebrations. He proudly announced that several German Reformed congregations had already conveyed their approval.

After the Genevans ratified the executive committee’s plan, enthusiasm for the celebration caught on across Western Europe and the United States. Luminaries such as James Bryce and Theodore Roosevelt presided over fundraising campaigns in their respective nations. In Geneva Guillaume Fatio reported that the coffers for the project exceeded seven hundred thousand Swiss francs, a third of which came from abroad.\textsuperscript{46} Waves of new books about the filial relationship between ‘political modernity’ and

\textsuperscript{45} Borgeaud, ed., \textit{Association du Monument de la Réformation Genève}, 20, 22.

Calvinism/Protestantism washed over both shores of the Atlantic. Derivative memorials replicated the themes of the Genevan project in other countries: memorials such as the Pilgrim Monument in Provincetown, Massachusetts (est. 1907-1910), a William III statue in Kensington (a gift to England from the Kaiser in 1907); and a memorial shrine in Jamestown for the first Protestant church service in North America (est. 1907).

Soon the project grew large enough to attract dissenters. A Parisian society of freethinkers commissioned their own counter-memorial, a statue of a suffering Servetus facing his execution. The choice of subject – Servetus denied the doctrine of the Trinity and executed for heresy in Reformation Geneva – was specifically crafted to undercut the celebration of Protestantism’s civic heritage. The city council refused the ‘gift,’ which


48 Servetus (1511-1553) was a Spanish intellectual who wrote works of theology, philosophy, astronomy, and anatomy. In 1531 he published De trinitatis erroribus (On the Errors of the Trinity), the first of a series of books that refuted the doctrine of the Trinity. In 1553 the Catholic Inquisition arrested Servetus in Vienne, a small French town near the Genevan border. Servetus escaped and fled to Geneva with the intention of passing through to Italy. There he was recognised, re-arrested, and condemned to death by the city authorities with Calvin’s personal support. Servetus is still a hagiographic symbol on the European left for the freedom of thought and Protestant intolerance. For example, Stefan Zweig used Servetus’ death to cast Calvin as a “spiritual despot” and “sinister zealot” a “priestly dictatorship.” Stefan Zweig, The Right to Heresy: Castellio against Calvin, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (New York: Viking Press, 1936), 43, 187. For the symbolic appropriations of Servetus since the sixteenth century, see Roland Bainton, Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960).
eventually found its home just a few miles outside of Geneva in the French village of Annemasse.\textsuperscript{49} Still, if the purpose of the gift was to needle the faithful and provoke controversy, it achieved its objective. Émile Doumergue felt that the Servetus episode was a solitary aberration that did not reflect the soul of Calvin’s political thought. In 1903 both Choisy and Doumergue erected an “expiatory” plaque to Servetus in Geneva as an act of “public repentance.” The inscription begged God’s forgiveness for the city’s imposition of state power over individual conscience, yet it also contextualized Calvin’s support for the execution as “an error characteristic of his century.”\textsuperscript{50} (In contrast, the new statue of Servetus, the “apostle of free faith \textit{[libre croyance]} and martyr of free thought \textit{[libre pensée]},” depicts a Christlike sufferer facing his unseen persecutors. Its cites Voltaire’s judgment that Calvin’s actions were “an act of barbarism and an insult to the law of nations.”) The quarrel reinforced the committee’s desire to use the jubilee as the means to do more than just commemorate Calvin. It would be a stage on which to present the history of the Reformation’s political legacy and defend it against its secularist critics.

As 1908 arrived, plans grew grander and grander. An open competition for the design attracted submissions from across Europe. Yet the contract went to Eugène Monod, son of a famous French evangelist and classmate of Guillaume Fatio, and his partner Alphonse Laverrière. Accusations of nepotism abated only after Monod and


\textsuperscript{50} Eugène Choisy, \textit{Calvin et Servet: Le Monument expiatoire de Champel} (Neuilly: Éditions de la Cause, [1903?]), Émile Doumergue, \textit{L’Emplacement du Bücher de Michel Servet} (Genève: A. Jullien, 1903).
Laverrière won the gold medal for architecture at the 1912 Olympics. The committee hired the illustrious sculptor Paul Landowski to carve the memorial.

The scale of the prototype demanded a substantial amount of public space. The project had outgrown Old Geneva’s cramped homes and serpentine streets. The city approved the committee’s proposal to lodge the monument in a remnant of the medieval city walls that overlook the university commons. The committee discovered symbolism as well as pragmatism in this solution: the location reaffirmed Geneva’s reputation as the “fortress of the Reformation” and the “foundational” role it plays (or should play) in the modern world.

Contemporary visitors to the Monument immediately feel overwhelmed by its sheer size. The memorial is over a hundred meters in length and thirty meters tall of Mont Blanc granite. The wall stretches beyond any single vantage point. To view the entire edifice requires a visitor to move up and down the grassy mall, dodging in and out of trees, undertaking what is virtually a miniature pilgrimage in order to view all of its statues and scenes. In front of the wall two long rectangular pools travel down both

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51 Charles Borgeaud, ed., *Le Groupe central Monument International de la Réformation à Genève: Conférence faite à L’Assemblée générale de l’Association, le 27 Mai 1911* (Genève: A. Kündig, 1911), F. F. Roget, *The Projected International Monument to the Heroes of the Protestant Reformation at Geneva: A Plea for Anglo-Saxon Support* (Geneva: W. Kündig & Son, 1907). Guillaume Fatio also entered an unknown design in the competition but did not place. The 1912 Olympic Games was the first to award medals for also painting, music, literature, sculpture, and architecture. Categories as diverse as lyrical composition, drama, aeronautic, town planning and alpinism followed. All of the artistic and cultural competitions ceased after the 1948 summer games. See Richard Stanton, "In Search of the Artists of 1912," *Journal of Olympic History* 9, No. 2 (Spring 2001).

52 In the 1920s Landowski created another iconic twentieth century work of religious art: statues: *Christ Redeemer*, which looms over the city of Rio de Janeiro.

53 Guillaume Fatio, *La Promenade des Bastions et le Monument de la Réformation* (Genève: Imprimerie Atar, [1908?]).
wings of the memorial. The designers believed that the water would produce a sense of reverential distance.  

Monod and Laverrière’s blueprints called for the central piece of granite, whose front measures roughly one hundred square meters, to remain uncut, another symbol for Christ who remains the true church’s “chief cornerstone, chosen and precious.” The motto of the Reformation - *Post Tenebras Lux*: “After the darkness, light” – stands in large block letters over this central stone. Rays of light radiate up towards a christogram that are meant to symbolize the fact that the light of Christ permeates all of the other narratives depicted on the monument. Just below the uncut centerpiece stands four robed statues, each six meters high. These four fathers of the Calvinist Reformation are meant to represent four essential characteristics of the Reformed faith: Guillaume Farel, the evangelist; Calvin, the theologian; Théodore de Bèze, the scholar; and John Knox, political agitator and Scottish nationalist.

Three of them hold a Bible, a central motif in

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55 The phrase is taken from I Peter 2:6, a New Testament passage that reflects in turn Psalm 118.

56 Guillaume Farel (1489-1565) preached the Reformation across France, southern Germany and Switzerland. In 1535 Geneva voted to leave the Catholic Church and invited Farel to reside there as a minister. He in turn convinced Calvin to join him. Farel later resumed his itinerant evangelism until settling down in Neuchâtel.

57 Jean Calvin (1509-1564) first published the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1535 as a short defense of the Huguenot doctrine. Over his lifetime this work evolved into a four-volume magnum opus that set the groundwork for Reformed thought around the world. In 1559 Calvin founded the present-day University of Geneva. Although it is not apparent at first glance, Calvin’s statue stands a little bit in front of the other three.

58 Théodore de Bèze (1513-1605) was one of the first scholars to follow Calvin to Geneva. He taught Greek, law, and natural science for his living, yet authored plays and translated books into French and German on the side. In 1564 he assumed control over the university and brought intellectual talent from abroad to the institution.

59 John Knox (c.1510-1572) spent two years as a French galley slave for his participation in a Protestant rebellion. He then fled England during the rule of “Bloody Mary” for Geneva. There he became a political agitator against the Catholic monarchies of Europe. Knox returned to Scotland in 1560 where he waged a verbal war against Queen Mary Stuart until her political fall in 1567.
almost all of the scenes. Farel, known primarily for his oratory, has empty hands, while Calvin is the only figure depicted with an open Bible. The designers wanted to convey Calvin’s status as the foremost scholar of the Scriptures among the early Reformers.

These four figures gaze sternly down onto a mosaic floor which displays three coats of arms: the key and crowned eagle of Geneva under the name of Jesus, the bear of Berne across diagonal stripes of red and gold, and the roaring red lion of royal Scotland. This is also not accidental. It was meant to convey the impression that the Protestant nations are the beneficiaries of the Reformer’s recovery of Christ’s Gospel through the study of the Scriptures. They are also the agents for the rest of the Monument’s narrative. Both wings extend horizontally from the center relate the progression of Christianity through the fortunes of those nations that have been stamped by the Reformation. The centerpiece of the wall deals with the theological and the individual, but the rest of it treats the political and the national.

Overall then the Monument celebrates the Reformation through its effect upon the Protestant nations. Alternating statues and bas-relief scenes depict an evolving civic legacy as it was transmitted from Geneva to France, England, Scotland, Holland, Prussia, and the United States. For each, a pattern of collective salvation is presented: a nation accepts Christ in acts of national covenant, experiences political and spiritual emancipation from priests and empires, and then grounds it domestic politics in the rule of law and the practice of mutual charity. Combined, these nations form an international league of states dedicated to the renewal of Christendom. This vision of a band of free nations, which freely submit to Christ in their domestic affairs, and yet cooperate in a
mutual covenant to extend the Kingdom of God, later motivated Protestants to create the League of Nations.

A closer look at the individual elements of the wall will reveal how Protestant internationalists rooted their political identity in their history. Six statues provided bookends for the more elaborate bas-relief scenes. Unlike the four central figures, none of the individual statues represented religious or scholarly virtues. These men – and they are all men – were chosen because they infused the political ethos of Protestantism into their own national cultures. Five out of the six were martial champions of armed national rebellions against their Catholic rulers: Gaspard de Coligny (French Wars of Religion, against the Houses of Valois and Guise)\(^60\); William the Silent (Dutch War of Independence, against Phillip II)\(^61\); István Bocskay\(^62\) (Transylvanian Revolt, against the Viennese Habsburg dynasty); and Oliver Cromwell (English Civil War, against the Stuart monarchy).\(^63\) Three of these generals died by assassination in their campaigns, often by means of deceit or betrayal, which gives them the scent of martyrdom in the service of

\(^{60}\) Admiral Gaspard de Coligny (1517-1572), a Grand Admiral loyal to the Bourbon-Huguenot cause, also aligned himself with the Reformed revolt in the Netherlands and sponsored the first Huguenot settlements in North America.

\(^{61}\) Being the most successful commander in the early stages of the Dutch Revolt, the National Assembly elected William of Orange, also known as William the Silent (1533-1584) as the head of the rebellion in 1572, one year before he had even converted to the Reformed faith. He kept this position until his death in 1584. His son preceded him and the House of Orange still retains the throne of Holland.

\(^{62}\) István Bocskay (1556-1606) commanded an army of Hungarian Protestant noblemen against Rudolf II, the Habsburg ruler of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1604 Bocskay negotiated a treaty with the Ottomans against the Holy Roman Emperor that gave Transylvania its own constitution and religious sovereignty. He then used his independence as leverage against the Habsburgs. In 1606 Transylvania returned to the Habsburgs as a semi-autonomous nation in exchange for military aid against the Sultan.

\(^{63}\) Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) was dictator of England from 1653 to 1658 following the English Civil War. His skills as a general pushed him up from the ranks of the middle gentry to the post of Lord Protector of Realm. Although a harsh ruler, especially in his martial rule over Scotland and Ireland, Cromwell was esteemed by future generations of Protestants as the builder of a centralized, modern English state, nemesis of the tyrannical Stuarts, and proponent of religious tolerance. In 1899 English Nonconformists erected a statue of Cromwell outside of Parliament as a symbol of English freedom.
their nations. The remaining two statues commemorate Protestant statesmen: Friedrich Wilhelm, the Great Elector of Prussia, and Roger Williams, founder of the colony of Providence, Rhode Island. Williams, the founder of one of the first Baptist churches in New England, is the only minister in this group. Yet he was not chosen because of his ecclesial status, but rather for his role in proclaiming the religious independence of the American churches from the Stuart monarchy. The designers of the Monument featured Williams for clearly delineating the separate roles of church and state and advancing the cause of religious freedom, an idea that would eventually occupy much of the attention and resources of the League of Nations.

These figures displayed the political ideals important to early twentieth century Protestantism that undergirded the League of Nations movement in the years to come. Rather than highlighting Reformed theology, it projected an evolution of Reformed politics. If the statues show individual heroes, the bas-relief sculptures surrounding them portray the history of an international political revolution as it spread through the

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64 An unknown Guise assassin shot de Coligny in 1572, but only wounded him. He died two nights later while recuperating at home during the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre. In 1584 both the Inquisition and Emperor Philip II condemned the inhabitants of Holland to death for heresy in absentia. A few months later Balthasar Gérard, a Catholic Frenchman serving undercover in the Dutch, shot William of Orange in the chest during a private meeting in his home. István Bocskay’s chancellor poisoned him in 1606 just three weeks after the Peace of Vienna on the orders of Vienna.

65 After the brutalization of the Thirty Years’ War, Friedrich Wilhelm (1620-1688) transformed Prussia into Europe’s smallest powerhouse. He created the first professional Protestant army in Europe, promoted trade and industry, and closely aligned the state with the Protestant churches. The Great Elector also married a wife from the House of Orange and welcomed Reformed refugees from Western Europe. From his rule up until the Great War, Prussia was the protector of Protestant interests in central Europe.

66 Roger Williams (1603-1683) emigrated to New England because of his views on disestablishmentarianism. In Massachusetts Williams developed his views on the “wall of separation” between church and state, arguing that civil authorities had no right to punish religious transgressions or enforce orthodoxy. Williams believed that the intermingling of political and spiritual authority, of law and gospel, prevented the churches from maximizing their influence on the people. He was exiled in 1636 for refusing to recognize the ecclesiastical authority of Charles I, after which he established the city of Providence, later united with the colony of Rhode Island, which became the first Western government to disestablish all of its churches in 1647.
Protestant nations. The executive committee selected eight historical events where nations committed themselves to God’s will. The Gospel appeared in each scene, whether in the form of a person or as the Holy Book. Center stage belonged to the nations themselves as they accept the Gospel and express a collective transformation into one of God’s peoples. The international character of Protestantism is most apparent just above and below these tableaux, where sculptors carved quotations related to each scene in their original languages: French, English, Dutch, Hungarian and German.

The first two pictures portray moments of national conversion. In one the citizens of Berne and Geneva vote to accept the Reformation, while Guillaume Farel preaches from an open Bible. On the far left a baptized newborn symbolizes the regeneration of these two Swiss cities. In the second the Scottish court responds to the preaching of John Knox with the important exception of Queen Mary Stuart, who remains impervious. The quotation by Thomas Randolph, Queen Elizabeth’s ambassador to Edinburgh, emphasized the role of the evangelist as the midwife of his people: “The voice of this one man is able in one hour to put more life in us than five hundred trumpets.”

The next two tableaux display moments of national emancipation. After accepting Christ as their King and becoming freed from the powers of sin, the Protestant nations rebelled against the foreign despotism of their Catholic rulers. One scene depicted the Dutch Parliament listing their grievances against Philip II, King of Spain, including his forcible imposition of the Catholic Inquisition, as they vote for independence. Inscribed above is William of Orange’s pledge to respect the national sovereignty of the Netherlands: “That which you resolve to do, I will uphold with your help and the grace of God.” The adjacent illustration presented István Bocskay
successfully presenting the Peace of Vienna, which guaranteed the religious and constitutional sovereignty of Protestant Hungary, to the Transylvanian Diet in 1606 underneath an excerpt from Bocskay’s address: “The independence of our faith, our liberty of conscience and our ancient rights are of greater value to us than gold.”

Protestants commonly located the beginnings of the modern rule of law in the Reformed rebellion against Catholic absolutism. Scholars of modern international law such as Herbert Darling Foster traced their heritage back to the “seventeenth-century Dutch cradle” of Hugo Grotius and William of Orange. This theme defines the next pair of engravings. The first depicts Henry IV signing the Edict of Nantes in 1598, a document that ended the French Wars of Religion and created a distinct legal space for the Reformed faith under the new Bourbon monarchy. The inscriptions highlight the Edict’s guarantee of religious liberty and Henry IV’s fond address to the Genevan embassy just before his death. The sculptors created a lone figure on the far left of this scene that is exiting the room overcome with anxious emotion. This figure is Agrippa d’Aubigné, a respected Huguenot writer, who is credited with foreseeing the Bourbon monarchy’s revocation of the Edict and expulsion of the Huguenot community in 1685. France was only a temporary victory for God’s politics because Protestantism stopped short of placing one of its own on the throne. The second picture displays Parliament’s presentation of the Bill of Rights to William and Mary in 1689, a document that not only solidified constitutional rule in England but also prohibited a Catholic from claiming the

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67 Herbert Darling Foster, "The Political Theories of Calvinists before the Puritan Exodus to America,” The American Historical Review 21, No. 3 (April 1916), 481 – 503.
throne since “it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this protestant kingdom to
governed by a papist prince.”

The next relief illustrates two characteristics of Protestant international relations: international charity and global expansion. The designers placed next to the statue of
Friedrich Wilhelm his sympathetic response to the Huguenot exiles pouring out of France
in 1685: “Rather than leave these poor people without succor, I will sell my vessels of
silver.” The Prussian ruler gave financial incentives for them to move to Berlin,
established French language churches and schools, and guaranteed them religious
freedom. More than 40,000 responded. The tableau depicts Friedrich Wilhelm and his
wife Sophie welcoming the refugees.

The final scene on the Memorial portrays the “Puritan fathers” kneeling in prayer
around a copy of the Geneva Bible on which rests the Mayflower Covenant. The words
of the pact, which bound its signers to “covenant and combine ourselves together into a
civil Body Politik,” reside above the scene.

Taken all together the monument presents a narrative of Protestant politics that
revolves around the central themes of a national-collective commitment to Christ,
national liberation, constitutionalism, and international solidarity. These themes
resounded with the celebration of Calvin’s four-hundredth birthday in 1909.

On November 10, Calvin’s birthday, visitors poured into Geneva from around the
world The main ceremony took place on Sunday in the great hall at the headquarters of
the Evangelical Alliance, the so-called Salle de la Réformation, which in 1920 became
the first home of the League of Nations. The ecumenical agencies scheduled a mass
picnic for the afternoon, though many probably opted instead for the chartered tours of
Lake Léman on the picturesque steamboats that slowly troll up and down the mountain valley. Émile Doumergue published special issues of local histories and tour guides to accommodate the influx of curious tourists. Many went the length of the lake to a medieval castle by Montreux, the Chateau de Chillon, where residents staged a production of Théodore de Bèze’s play *Abraham sacrifiant*. At night the cathedral staged a cantata, *Post Tenebras Lux*, composed for the occasion.

Eugène Choisy and Adolf Keller presided over a bilingual service in German and French at the main cathedral on Sunday morning. Karl Barth, Keller’s intern who had just graduated from the University of Berlin, described the entire week as a “celebration for pastors and professors.” He regretted the fact that although the sermons and lectures elicited glee from the visiting Calvinophiles, they drew little response from the lower classes in Geneva.

The content of the quadricentennial repeatedly turned to the central theme of political consequences of the Protestant faith. Many of the lectures in particular focused on the Protestant heritage as manifested in the contemporary movement to ‘Christianize’ international relations. Several speakers extolled the Reformed nations as blueprints for Africa and Asia and urged them to devote themselves to the missionary cause of

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Christianizing the globe. Still others endorsed the Hague Conference and the Red Cross as recent manifestations of the Protestant spirit.

One clear example of this type of thought was a keynote address titled “Calvinist Diplomacy” delivered by August von Daehne van Varick, a Dutch diplomat who had been the secretary of the First Hague Conference. In his lecture he clearly identified his political vocation with his religious heritage. He urged his fellow Protestants to fulfill their “truly providential mission” to create a “Reformed diplomacy” for the twentieth century that would build upon modeled on the seventeenth-century association of Protestant nations, grounded in the principles of national self-determination, religious freedom and international morality, against the French and Habsburg empires that had tried to force them back into the Catholic fold. “By Reformed diplomacy,” von Daehne van Varick clarified, “I mean a system that transforms the league of princes against the temporal power of the Papacy and the [Holy] Roman Empire into federations of states erected against any power that aspires to universal domination, be it religious, or be it political. In other words, Reformed diplomacy is the organization of the shared struggle against religious oppression and political domination. . . .”

He contended that many politicians were mistaken in their belief that democracy or free trade alone could produce a perpetual peace. Only the Gospel of Christ could regenerate a nation so that it would be willing to sacrifice its own selfish interests for the common good. His speech called for a loose union of these redeemed nations that could militarily ensure the application of international law. Only their combined power could ensure a peaceful future and the

moral development of the world. The alternative was disaster. “Gentleman, if the Protestant world remains a kingdom divided against itself, it will descend into servitude, and the civil and political guarantees of all of the progress due to the Reformation will be called into doubt. . . . We must reunite Berlin and London, and how can this be done without another Reformation and another return to the Gospel?”73 The churches, working through Christian statesmen, must “realize and internationalize” their political heritage through a “historical alliance renovated (renouvelée) by Protestant evangelical Christianity.”74 Von Daehne van Varick’s address was a succinct presentation of the line of thought that would soon undergird the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Nations and its quest to erect the League of Nations.

Ecumenists in the United States and Germany echoed Daehne von Varick’s prescriptions. In New York William Adams Brown admitted that Calvin’s emphasis on human depravity and predestination “repelled” him. Yet he still recognized the Reformer as the father of the first distinctively Christian politics. Calvinism “broke tyranny” (i.e., the Catholic political structure of the Middle Ages) because the Reformation offered “an end worthy to engage the uttermost energies of men of power. The God whom Calvin worshipped was not Saviour only, but lawgiver; and the task He set was not simply the reformation of individual character, but the transformation of society as well.”75 In Berlin Karl Holl delivered an address on Calvin’s birthday that urged the reclamation of

73 Ibid., 13.
74 Ibid., 15-16.
an “ecumenical consciousness” (ökumenischen Bewußtsein) that could restore
“international morality.” Calvinism was able to achieve the “complete penetration of
national life” (Durchdringung des ganzen Volkslebens) because of its ability to
emancipate the church from the “authority of the state.” Lutheranism has always had
before it the ideal of a church of the people (Volkskirchen), but had not been able to
achieve it because of its continued ties to the state. On the other hand, modern Calvinism
had become too dogmatic – Holl described them as Bekenntniskirchen - and thus unable
to maintain its influence on the lower classes. The ideal church then would be an
ecumenical union combining Lutheran nationalism and Calvinist freedom. Holl believed
that recent denominational alliances in Prussia, Switzerland, France, and the United
States were the seeds of a world federation of churches that could assert Christ’s claims
on the international world.

The Calvin jubilee captured the desperate hopefulness of Protestantism in 1909.
The coming century would either usher in a new era of Christian unity, missionary
expansion, and national fraternity, or else it would oversee the termination of the
Reformation and its political blessings. Calvin still mattered because so many Protestants
longed for a new Reformation that would unite the older nations of Christendom in
mutual purpose while awakening the younger peoples of Africa and Asia. Their own
history revealed a blueprint of how to harness the demonic forces of absolutism and
disorder and release Christ’s spirit of liberty.

76 Karl Holl, Johannes Calvin: Rede zur Feier der 400. Wiederkehr des Geburtstages Calvins
gehalten in der Aula der Königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin am 10. Juli 1909
77 Ibid., 25.
The *Monument international de la Réformation* embodied the mindset of Protestant internationalism before the Great War. The remainder of this chapter probes four of its most central concepts: the covenantal nature of national and international societies, the complementary, though distinct, contributions of church and state to social order; the necessity of ‘just war’ for the punishment of outlaw states; and, finally, the eschatological ideal of a restored Christendom. The conclusion of this chapter will then return to de Daehne von Varick’s vision of a league of redeemed states.

One final note: This chapter is trying to construct something like an ‘ideal type’ of Protestant internationalism. The World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches included within itself many competing strands of thought, quarreling nationalities, and rival church traditions. Like the label of ‘Protestantism,’ I am trying here to find common general principles that will flatten out the rough texture of my subject.

This chapter merely sets the table. The main course is coming. These four concepts were carved not just into the granite of the *Monument international de la Réformation* in Geneva, but, later on, into the League of Nations when it was called into existence a decade later in the same building that had once housed the Calvin quadricentennial.

1.2 Covenantal Nationhood and Biblical Nationalism

Theories of nationalism resemble snowflakes: thousands fall from the sky, yet no two are quite alike. Still, two themes persist throughout much of the literature.
The first, as argued by Eric Hobsbawm, asserts that the nation “belongs exclusively to a particular, and historically recent period.”78 Thus he interprets nationalism as a collective reaction to the deracinating processes of modernization and secularization. Historians often interpret the sentiments of nationality as an “ersatz religion” that, in the words of one historian, translates the “religious ideal of the congregation of the faithful” into the “the political community of the nation.”79 Benedict Anderson is another excellent example of this approach. In Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (1983), he writes: “With the ebbing of religious belief, the suffering which belief in part composed did not disappear. What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning. . . . Few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation.”80

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For Anderson, nations are not, strictly speaking, real. They are instead “imagined political communities” that adopted the displaced projections formerly reserved for ecclesiastical communities.\(^8^1\)

Protestant internationalists could not have agreed with such purely psychological approaches to the subject of nationality. They viewed nations as creations of God as a natural means of establishing human society. National ties, like families, drew the depraved individual out of his solipsism and inspired him to care for those around him. Nationalism was thus an appropriate response to God’s design as long as it did not become chauvinistic. They did not see nationalism as a secularized substitute for Christian faith. Instead they believed that both of these moral forces worked together, one on the natural plain, the other on a supernatural level, to create a redeemed national culture. How could they conceive of nationalism as a purely mental construct developed in the very recent past when they saw the concept of nationality on the pages of the Old Testament?

*The Concept of Nationhood* (1997) by Adrian Hastings, one of the best studies on the interconnectedness between Christianity and modern political identity, targets the central role of the Bible in the formation of modern nationalism. The Bible provided “the original model of the nation” in Old Testament Israel. Since the Reformation, the Protestant churches patterned their national life on the perceived successes and failures of the Jewish people. Therefore nationalism is not a replacement for religious faith, but an imaginative expression of it. “Without [the Bible] and its Christian interpretation and

\(^8^1\) Ibid., 4.
implementation, it is arguable that nations and nationalism, as we know them, could never have existed.”\textsuperscript{82}

The theologian Oliver O’Donovan delved deeper into this insight in \textit{The Desire of the Nations} (1996), his excavation of Christian political thought since the Reformation. He too begins with the centrality of Biblical narrative.

In the church’s understanding Israel’s political categories were the paradigm for all [other nations]. Jesus belonged to Israel; and Israel was, for him as for his followers, the theatre of God’s self-disclosure as the ruler of nations. Always implied in the hope of a new national life for Israel was the hope of a restored world order. The future of the one nation was a prism through which the faithful looked to see the future of all nations.\textsuperscript{83}

Protestant states believed themselves to be newly “chosen peoples”: chosen to inculcate God’s ways and to spread the Gospel (and its socio-political effects) to every nation. As Linda Colley puts it, the Protestant nations believed they were “nothing less than another and a better Israel.”\textsuperscript{84}

The Bible offered a remarkably protean pattern of nationality. The Old Testament follows the Jewish people through a myriad of forms and contexts: Egyptian slavery; the establishment of a civil-religious law in the desert; the possession of the Promised Land through a theocratic war; the establishment of a loose, tribal state, followed by the institution of a hereditary monarchy; conquest by Eastern Empires as punishment for its


religious infidelity; all followed finally by repentance, political redemption, and the return to Jerusalem under Ezra before falling to the Roman Empire. The Bible may have been the “lens through which the nation is imagined by biblically literate people,” but that lens has enough mirrors to give quite a kaleidoscopic view of ‘the nation.” In several passages God guides all the other nations as well, an aspect that did not go unnoticed by Protestant internationalists. In Genesis 11 God scattered the builders of the Tower of Babel by cursing them with a multiplicity of languages. Prophets like Isaiah and Amos revealed the Divine Hand behind the rise and fall of the world’s empires. Chosen or not, God guided and called all of the nations, even those that occupied and ruled over Israel.

Protestant internationalists believed that nations were creations of God. Yet this does not mean that they considered nations to be immutable. Most adhered to theories of social evolution that located God’s creative power within the flow of history. Nations had metaphysical origins, but still possessed an existence that was profoundly temporal. God called them into being, caused them to rise and fall, and could even bring about their destruction. Just like individuals whom God had touched, Christian nations had to live out their calling in the world if they wanted to be worthy of their calling. Failure could lead to national annihilation.

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85 Hastings, The Construction of Nationhood, 12.
The centerpoint of Biblical nationalism was the concept of the covenant, a mutual bond between God and a people. In Genesis there are several covenantal ceremonies involving Adam, Noah, Ishmael, and Abraham. Most Protestant internationalists however focused on Exodus where God enters into a collective covenant with the Jews. There, in the Sinai desert just before Moses presented Jehovah’s civic law, the Torah, God commanded Israel to set themselves as a nation apart from their neighbors: “Now therefore if ye will hear my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be my chief treasure above all people, though all the earth be mine. Ye shall be unto me also a kingdom of Priests, and a holy nation.” At that moment the Israelites became a body politic with the Torah as its constitution, no longer a people merely united only by a shared genetic heritage and a common history.

Since the Reformation all of the major streams of Protestant theologians reasoned that true nations had a spiritual core to them. Ethnicity and race might be products of nature, and subject therefore to the mechanics of natural law. Civil society depended on mere contracts. Yet a nation, like a church, was born out of an act of a divine act of regeneration and maintained itself through faithfulness to this bond with God. In his 1954 lecture on “The Idea of Covenant and American Democracy,” H. Richard Niebuhr described how covenants “added to and transformed the natural.” Just as marital covenants transformed sexual relationships into metaphysical unions, national covenants

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transmogrified natural forms of kinship and society into supernaturally constituted nations. His explanation is worth quoting at length.

Even when their basis was in nature, as in the case of the relationship of the sexes, [all societies] now were seen to become truly human societies only when promise or covenant was added to and transformed the natural. The question was not whether society has a natural or a contract origin but to what extent every society becomes truly human and truly a society within the cosmic society by having the moral dimension, or the covenant character, added to it. Religious society so regarded could no longer be merely a community of those who had similar interests in the supernatural or a society of those who held the same religious beliefs, though it was that. It did not become complete society until interest was disciplined by promise, obedience to external laws internalized by the oath of fealty, duties to God associated with freely accepted, promised duties to one another and, in general, belief supplemented and transformed by the will to be loyal . . .

Covenant meant that political society was neither purely natural nor merely contractual, based on common interest. Covenant was the binding together in one body politic of persons who assumed through unlimited promise responsibility to and for each other and for the common laws, under God. . . .It was not natural birth into natural society that made one a complete member of the people but always the moral act of taking upon oneself, through promise, the responsibilities of citizenship that bound itself in the very act of exercising its freedom. . . .Contract always implies limited, covenant unlimited commitment; contract is entered into for the sake of mutual advantages; covenant implies the presence of a cause to which all advantages may need to be sacrificed.  

Ecumenists like Niebuhr rejected modern cosmopolitanism, a utopian fantasy that failed to recognize the spiritual reality of nationalities, much as the Catholic Church had done during the medieval era, and they regarded the modern reawakening of nationalism and civic sentiment as part and parcel of their Protestant heritage.

Since the Reformation Protestants applied the Old Testament idea of covenant to themselves as they constructed their own modern national communities. For example, in 1525 Heinrich Bullinger was the first Reformer to argue that his own nation, Switzerland,

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should enter into a formal covenant with God. Although this was not done on a national level, many Swiss cantons, including Geneva, did stage public holidays where the crowds and/or the city leaders took vows to God and the Reformation that aped Exodus. Still Switzerland is a unique case. Multiconfessional, multilingual, and multicultural: a statewide identity has always been held hostage to what the Swiss refer to as their ‘local patriotism.’ In the nineteenth century many leaders of the Protestant awakening, or Reveil, romantically reimagined the Eternal Alliance of August 1, 1291, when three cantons formed a pact against the Habsburgs, as their covenantal moment of origin. On that date, celebrated today as the national birthday, Switzerland was bound together under God, despite its lack of a common natural ethnicity, a common creed, or even a common language.


The Monument international de la Réformation depicted covenantal moments in the history of Geneva (an independent state until 1815), Scotland, England, the Netherlands, and the United States. Political covenantalism did in fact play a strong role in shaping nationalism in these countries, particularly in Reformed communities, even beyond the eight examples selected by the designers in 1909. Scottish nationalists created a national iconography out of the failed Covenanter rebellions of the century before. In 1838 Afrikaners in Africa performed a ritual based on Exodus before a battle against the Zulus for the possession of their ‘promised land.’ That date, December 16, or Covenant Day, was celebrated annually as the national birthday until 1994. (The holiday is now the “Day of Reconciliation” and commemorates the end of apartheid.)

Many Protestants in the United States recognized the Mayflower Covenant as the origin of the American nation, not the Declaration of Independence.

Being a covenantal nation did not guarantee God’s blessing. A failure to live up to its divine calling could result in catastrophe. Conor Cruise O’Brien, an Irish intellectual who worked for Dag Hammarskjöld in the 1960s, has remarked that: “The idea of ‘chosen people’ contains within itself not only national pride, but also national humility, anguish, fear, and guilt. The chosen people can rightly be punished, and God


can use other peoples as instruments of their punishments.”

This explains why the nationalism of the ecumenical movement was at the same so strident and so tortured. Protestant internationalists interpreted their relationship with God as a burdensome task to fulfill. Charles Macfarland, one of the most forceful exponents of the so-called Social Gospel, always tied his belief in American exceptionalism with demands that Americans actually become exceptional. Writing for the League movement in 1915, he urged the churches to purify their love of country so that it might be exported to Europe after the war. “Before we reach the New Internationalism we must create a New Nationalism, and the creation of both must come, not by the trivial simulation of a neutrality that adds God and the devil together and divides by two, but by a profound repentance, by a national atonement, by a new status in international diplomacy, the status of unselfish reconciliation.” The ecumenical movement promised to be “one of the greatest revivals that this world has ever known” that would renew the Western nations’ covenants with God and push them towards “the second blessing.” He added, “This application of the Gospel to the needs of the world is giving us our unity.”

The alternative was stark: not only disunity, as churches and nations swallowed one another, but spiritual impotency, as God would abandon the Christian nations.

Here Biblical Israel provided the movement with a model of an unfaithful nation that had fallen away from its divine calling. Protestant internationalists frequently applied the lamentations and the calls for national repentance of the Old Testament


prophets to their contemporary situation. E. Richard Cross, editor of The Nation and founding member of the British League of Nations Society, wrote a popular commentary on Amos that transferred the ascetic’s screeds against “narrow ritualism” and selfish Jewish “nationalism” as appropriate condemnations of the British churches.

The prophet [Amos] believes in the divine guidance of his own people, the deliverance from Egypt, the overthrow of the Canaanites. But he especially recognises that Jehovah superintends the migrations and directs the destinies of other nations. The children of Israel are as the children of the Ethiopians unto Him. It is He who brought the Philistines from their island home in Crete, the Syrians from the distant North. Amos has moved away from the idea that Jehovah was a God whose power was limited to ruling the destinies of the Israelite nation.  

As a modern prophet Cross pleaded with Britain to repent of its jingoism and accept a “living, universal faith” or else share Israel’s final fate. Like many of his peers, Cross believed that the Jews let their desire for a political liberator blind them to the spiritual mission of Christ. They could not see that their “God-given mission” was to establish “a lasting moral government of the world” through the internal rebirth of every nation, and not “just for themselves.”

William Temple interpreted Amos in the same vein in 1915. He too worried that the Britain would squander its standing with God in pursuit of imperial glory. He regarded modern Judaism as the anachronistic remains of a once vital faith and felt it an appropriate dystopic warning for modern believers. At the same time he cautioned against cosmopolitan approaches to international reform that denied national identity.

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96 Ibid., 174.

Adolf von Harnack presented the same picture not only of Judaism but of Islam as well. He argued that Christianity retained its vitality in the modern world precisely because it remained transnational. “Islam rose in Arabia and has remained upon the whole an Arabian religion. . . .” he wrote in 1904. “But Christianity, almost immediately after it appeared, was dislodged from the nation to which it belonged; and thus from the very outset it was forced to learn how to distinguish between the kernel and the husk.” Christ’s Gospel, he added, “shattered Judaism, and brought to light the kernel of the religion of Israel.” The Apostles “emancipated and transformed the Jewish religion into a religion for the world.” The early church “laughed at the barriers of nationality” and became itself a “New People” and a “Third Race.” Harnack argued that the national rigidity of Islam and Judaism was incapable of establishing international peace, whereas Christianity could freely cross ethnic barriers and knit diverse peoples into one “family of God.”

Both Temple and Harnack based their objection to Catholicism on similar lines. Harnack saw the “Roman Church” as simply the “old Roman Empire consecrated by the gospel.” Medieval Catholicism turned into a “world state” interested in only temporal power. It hardened into a rigidly dogmatic and authoritarian institution that oppressed evangelical revival and national particularity. Christendom stiffened and lost its standing before God. Temple taught that the fundamental error of Catholicism was it false


99 Ibid., 28, 82, 351 – 352.
cosmopolitanism. Because it equated the Roman and the universal, Catholicism was forced to “impose Christian standards rather than permeating national life with them.”

The Reformation unleashed both the social forces of nationalism and the transnational power of the Gospel. Temple esteemed the creation of national churches and the interpretation of the Bible into vulgar languages as the two signature achievements of early Protestantism. Once freed from the “foreign yoke,” believers could study the Scriptures for themselves and experience God in their own national communities. Harnack shared the same view. Martin Luther restored the “spirit of Christianity” by stripping away the “accretions of Roman religiosity.” He freed the church from Rome so that it might nest itself within the German people. Or, to use Harnack’s most renowned metaphor, Luther separated out the “kernel” of the Gospel from its medieval “husks” so that Protestantism and Germany might become “inseparably connected.”

Protestantism was “a stupendous reduction” and “an emancipating simplification” to its core essence. “The Christian religion is living faith in the living God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ and laid bare his heart – nothing else. Objectively it is Jesus Christ, subjectively it is faith; its content, however, is the gracious God, and therefore the forgiveness of sin which includes sonship and blessedness.”

Harnack saw himself as Luther’s successor. Modernity required scholars and church leaders to sift through Christianity and to once again distinguish the “kernel” and the “husks” of Christianity. The churches cannot simply rest on the laurels of sixteenth-

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100 Temple, *Church and Nations: The Bishop Paddock Lectures for 1914 – 15*, 43.

101 This is the central argument of Adolf von Harnack, *Outlines of the History of Dogma* (Boston: Starr King Press, 1957 [1893]).

century Protestantism if they were to achieve contemporary victory over the world. “Such a triumph rather depends upon the simple elements of the religion, on the preaching of the living God as the Father of humanity, and on the likeness of Jesus Christ. For that very reason it depends also on the capacity of Christianity to strip off once more any collective syncretism and unite itself to fresh coefficients.” Harnack perceived that after four hundred years of ecclesial and dogmatic institutionalism Protestantism itself had hardened. His own scholarly pursuits as a critical historian were intended to liberate the power of Christ in the modern world through a “second Reformation.” His political activity, both domestically and internationally, must be seen as part of this same quest.

When I began identifying what type of individual composed the early ranks of Protestant internationalism, it struck me that many were practitioners of biblical criticism and advocates of theological liberalism. (Other chapters will even argue that conservative evangelicals in the United States and Germany rejected the League of Nations in part because of its association with theological modernism.) At first I thought this fact might have a social explanation. Biblical scholars at that time worked in a dense international network, cooperated on joint expeditions in the Near East, and even shuttled their students back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean. Later on I began to see that both movements shared the desire for a second Reformation. Just as dogmatism dampens the inner vitality of Protestant faith, so the Protestant intimacy of church and nationality

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104 Both Temple and Macfarland, for example, began their careers as New Testament critics. A partial list would also include Adolf Deissmann, Martin Rade, Wilhelm Lütgert, Auguste Sabatier, Wilfred Monod, Shailer Mathews, Charles Macfarland, Adolf Keller and Nathan Söderblom.
threatened to occlude the transnational ability of Christ’s Church to transcend the barriers of nationality. Political internationalism required a second Reformation, or, in other words, a rediscovery of the primal social power of the Gospel, that would unleash the energy to once again redefine a new world order for the twentieth century.

Protestant internationalists thus believed that Christianity needed to rediscover its transnational simplicity and curb the potential for militaristic nationalism present in the post-Reformational churches. Yet it had to do so without forfeiting its modus operandi of reaching the masses through the penetration of national cultures. In stark contrast to socialist and other cosmopolitan visions of global order, Protestant internationalism never abandoned its core belief in the indispensability of nations as the building blocks of world peace. “...The world is by divine appointment a world of nations, and it is such a world that it is to become the Kingdom of God. Moreover, if it is by God’s appointment that nations exist, their existence must itself be an instrument of that divine purpose which the Church also serves.” Protestant internationalism was always already enmeshed in the various missionary projects of the early twentieth century that relied on the same base concepts of spiritual “kernel” and cultural “husk.”

Missionaries formed the second substantial component of the World Alliance for International Fellowship Through the Churches. Many of its top leaders helped found the International Missionary Council (IMC), a product of the celebrated Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910. This event involved twelve hundred delegates from missions societies around the world (although nearly eighty-four percent were Anglo-American) who were interested in a loose federal union of their forces for the common

105 Temple, Church and Nations: The Bishop Paddock Lectures for 1914 - 15, 43 – 45.
goal of “evangelization of the world in this generation.” The catchphrase was the title of a bestselling book printed in a dozen different languages by John Mott. Mott, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946, presided over the elaborate spectacles of the Edinburgh conference, many of them patterned after the ecumenical church councils of the late Roman Empire, though designed with an eye to attracting the admiration of the modern media. They also conveyed to the delegates themselves the global scale and the world mission of their own faith. For example, William Temple dated his first awareness of the truly global scale of his faith to the Edinburgh Conference.\(^\text{106}\)

Just like the World Alliance, the IMC never doubted the reality of nationalities. Instead its leaders struggled about how to remove the transnational “kernel” of the Gospel from the “husks” of Western culture so that it might be planted in Africa and Asia. The primary intellectual force behind Edinburgh was Gustav Warneck, the first person to meld the varied skills of theology, linguistics, and the humanities (\textit{Geisteswissenschaften}) into the discipline called missiology. Warneck’s central contention was that missionaries would only achieve the conversion of individuals (\textit{Einzelbekehrung}), and not entire societies (\textit{Volkschristianisierung}), unless they learned how to translate the basic concepts of their faith into those of indigenous cultures. He borrowed Harnack’s insight that the early church tapped into the transnational power of

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the Gospel through missions. The Edinburgh Conference adopted what they called the “Three Selves” strategy for the non-Christian churches:

- **Self-Propagation**: “The great duty of evangelization must rest upon the native Churches,” such that missionaries must first “form the national character and inspire the national character” as the preliminary to mass conversion.

- **Self-Support**: The “younger churches” must become financially independent so that they can be rid of “our foreign funds, institutions, or ideals” that are “not only alien but crushing to the native Church.”

- **Self-Government**: The final product must be a “truly independent national Church . . . which is as free and autonomous as the nation is or would be. . . .”

Missionaries had to repeat Luther’s achievement. They wanted to commandeer national cultures for the Gospel, even if that first meant they had to create them. The future international church would be composed of autonomous national churches, each of whom expressed a common Gospel in its own unique way.

Protestant internationalism tried to pay attention to both the transnational “kernel” of Christ and the cultural “husks” that necessarily enfolded it and utilized the methodologies of biblical criticism and missiology to determine which was which. It tried to tame nationalism, not eradicate it. Inazo Nitobe summarized this philosophy in 1930 when he wrote: “The antithesis of patriotism is not internationalism or even

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cosmopolitanism, but Chauvinism. Internationalism is the extension of patriotism. . . .If you love the world, you must, perforce, love best that part of it which is nearest to you.\textsuperscript{109}

Inazo Nitobe is a good final example of the nationalist foundation of Protestant internationalism. He is particularly relevant to this study since he was both a high-ranking officer in the YMCA and an Under Secretary-General of the League of Nations in the 1920s. Nitobe joined the Society of Friends while a student at Johns Hopkins from 1884 to 1887. He was also a supporter of Uchimura Kanzo and the Nonchurch Movement, an assembly of prominent converts who covenanted themselves to create a national church consonant with Japanese culture. Both Nitobe’s diplomatic career and his Christian faith were predicated on the harmony of nationalism and internationalism.

Inazo Nitobe first attracted attention in 1900 with the publication of \textit{Bushido: The Soul of Japan}.\textsuperscript{110} The book presented bushido, the moral code of the ancient samurai class, as the spiritual core of the Japanese people. Nitobe began by listing values held in common with the Protestant West (e.g., justice, courage, honor) and then built upwards from there towards values that were unique to the Japanese. Each chapter treated one particular virtue, such as “Benevolence, the Feeling of Distress,” “The Duty of Loyalty,” and “Self-Control.” The tone was apologetic, but not exculpatory. Nitobe wanted his viewers to understand aspects of his culture that Westerners thought of as barbaric (e.g., ritual suicide, the Japanese treatment of women) as coherent within the code of bushido.


\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Bushido} first appeared in 1900 to little fanfare. However two later editions became bestsellers: a Japanese edition in 1903 and a second English edition in 1905, released to take advantage of rising interest in Japan since their defeat of Russia. Inazo Nitobe, \textit{Bushido: The Soul of Japan} (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2002 [1905]), 6-9. William Elliot Griffis, who helped Nitobe publish this book and even wrote the introduction, was also an American board member for both the International Missionary Council and the \textit{Monument international de la Réformation}. He also wrote a series of popular political histories on the Reformed churches of Holland, France, and the English colonies.
They were no more barbaric than those of medieval Europe and as ripe for modern refinement.

_Bushido_ challenged the assumption of Mott and other Western missionaries that Christianity was the only ethical foundation of a godly national culture. Nitobe expressed appreciation for the Christian contribution to Japan’s “moral education.” Yet he insisted that the missionaries themselves “have effected but little visible in moulding the character of New Japan. No, it was Bushido, pure and simple, that urged us on for weal or woe.” Modernity in Japan remained – and would remain – a fundamentally Japanese modernity: just as Christianity in Japan would be a fundamentally Japanese faith. This necessitated a purge of the “husks” of Western Christianity. Nitobe assured his readers that his “attitude toward Christianity itself” should “not be questioned”; he just had “little sympathy” for the “ecclesiastical methods” and “the forms which obscure the teachings of Christ.” For Christianity to pair itself with the Japanese ethos, it had to first jettison its European baggage.

Nitobe interpreted the Japanese samurai code as a parallel to the Hebrew prophets. Both shaped their nation’s ethical character through denunciations of ritualism and the imposition of social discipline. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul considered the Mosaic Law as a preparation of the Jewish people for Christ. Nitobe thought bushido had likewise created a “law written in the heart” for Japan. He also


112 Nitobe, _Bushido: The Soul of Japan_, 142.

113 Ibid., Preface to the 1899 edition.
posited that other nationalities might have the same resources. “Further, I believe that
God hath made a testament which may be called ‘old’ with every people and nation, –
Gentile or Jew, Christian or Heathen.” The Gospel completed bushido, just as it completed the Hebrew prophets.

The nation was thus the basic element of the international vision of such diverse examples of Protestantism as Adolf von Harnack, John Mott, William Temple, and Inazo Nitobe. For all of them, the Gospel bore witness to the transnational Christ who shatters the pretensions of religious ethnocentrism, but nevertheless works through human nationality for the salvation of the entire world. This belief had similar effects on their religious and political visions of an international order of distinctly national units, effects that will become more apparent as we turn to examine Protestant internationalism’s views on the complementarity of church and state.

1.3 Church and State: Complementary Servants to the Nation

Protestant internationalism differentiated sharply between the functions of church and state. The church concerned itself with the spiritual development of the faithful, whereas the state operated on a temporal, legal plane for the benefit of all of its citizens. Yet the aim of both institutions was to minister to the nation and contribute to its continuing perfection. Church and state had to remain independent from one another. If either the state began to assume power over people’s souls and consciences, or if the church began to govern its members with the force and the legalism of the state, then the

114 Ibid., 20 – 21.
nation would lose its way. Each sphere had to be in harmony with one another if the nation was to fulfill its covenantal calling.

William Temple distinguished the roles of the church and state by reference to the different between the natural and the spiritual. This type of binary logic was quite common within the early ecumenical movement. Temple defined the state as a natural institution, as a “natural growth with a spiritual significance.” By contrast the church is “a spiritual creation working through a natural medium.”

Temple used this distinction to reason about the different methods of each realm. The state used material, natural means to enforce the law, a category that for Temple included bodily discipline and violence, while the church utilized intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual tools to reach the soul. “Justice is [the state’s] highest aim and force its typical instrument, though force is progressively less employed as the moral sense of the community develops: mercy can find an entrance only on strict conditions.” By contrast the Church “is primarily spiritual; holiness is its primary quality; mercy will be the chief characteristic of its judgments, but it may fall back on justice and even, in the last resort, on force.”

According to Temple, the state could only enforce an outward conformity to morality. It “restrains the lower man,” but the church could transform individuals from the inside out. Christ reshaped the Christian’s will and allowed them to be moral out of “self restraint.” This dichotomy is worth exploring at length.

The State’s action for the most part takes the form of restraint; the Church’s mainly that of appeal. . . .When a man reaches a certain pitch of development, he

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116 Temple, Church and Nations: The Bishop Paddock Lectures for 1914 – 15, 52.
scarcely realizes the pressure of the State, though he is still unconsciously upheld by
the moral judgment of society; but he can never outgrow the demand of the Church.
On the other hand, if a man is below a certain standard, the appeal of the Church will
not hold him and he needs the support of the State’s coercion.
Neither State nor Church is itself the Kingdom of God, though the specific life of
the Church is the very spirit and power of the Kingdom. Each plays its part in
building the Kingdom, in which, when it comes, force will have disappeared, while
justice and mercy will coalesce in the perfect love which will treat every individual
according to his need.\textsuperscript{117}

By curing selfishness and binding a people together through a shared faith in Christ,
Christianity prepares nations for self-governance.

Temple’s position explains the view, common among Protestant internationalists,
that while other nations might have their own ethos (such as bushido), Christianity was
nevertheless an essential precondition of modern political life. For only the church could
sharpen a nation’s conscience and free it from the social effects of sin, thereby allowing
the body politic to maintain itself by some means other than force and authority.

The church thus had a vital political role to play, even if it could only act
indirectly through culture. Before the German Evangelical-Social Congress in 1903,
Adolf von Harnack limited the church’s political horizon to preaching the “message of
redemption and of eternal life. . . . It has to testify of the redeeming Lord, whose person
still wins reverence and love even from those who are most alienated. Zealously and
earnestly it must teach that sin is the ruin of mankind and the strongest root of all
misery.” When this is done well, “the main part of its social mission will already be
fulfilled.”\textsuperscript{118} Harnack positioned himself against those in the audience who wanted the
church to become more explicitly political. He argued that the church was “not

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 53-54.
qualified” to deal with the complicated economic or diplomatic realities of policymaking. These were “external matters,” or, if you will, secondary husks.

Yet this did mean that the church bore no political significance, just that its mission was, so to speak, prepolitical. Rightly preached the Gospel should “rouse the individual conscience, in such a way as to awaken self-sacrificing personalities.” When the Gospel permeates a political body it creates a nation. “The kingdom of God must be built upon the foundation, not of institutions, but of individuals in whom God dwells and who are glad to live for their fellow men.”119 This “brotherhood full of active life, . . . a great association of willing helpers” would produce an politics, an economics, or a foreign policy that can embody Christian principles within a specific cultural context.120

This particular view on the complementarity of church and state could fit monarchists, such as Adolf von Harnack121, and republicans alike.” Consider once again the thought of Abraham Kuyper, the founder of the democratic Anti-Revolutionary Party in the Netherlands. In his landmark Stone lectures (1898), Abraham Kuyper defined the separate political functions of church and state in a very familiar way.

…Whether you are dealing with the will of a single individual [as in monarchy], or with the will of many men, in a decision arrived at by a vote, the principal thing remains that the government has to judge and to decide independently. Not as an appendix to the Church, nor as its pupil. The sphere of State stands itself under the majesty of the Lord. . . . Both Church and State must, each in their own sphere, obey God and serve His honor. And to that end in either sphere God’s

119 Ibid., 16.
121 Harnack was also a close personal friend of Wilhelm II. For more on this relationship, see Rüdiger vom Bruch, "Adolf von Harnack und Wilhelm II," in _Adolf Von Harnack: Theologe, Historiker, Wissenschaftspolitiker_, ed. Otto Gerhard Oexle and Kurt Nowak (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001).
Word must rule, but in the sphere of the State only through the conscience of the persons invested with authority.\textsuperscript{122}

Kuyper contended that the church’s political role was to cultivate the “mature conscience” of a national community.

Markku Koskenniemi, currently one of the more insightful historians of international law, has noted that the Protestant approach towards international peace was symptomatic of the entire internationalist phenomenon before 1914. “The founding conception of late nineteenth-century international law was not sovereignty, but a collective European conscience – understood always as ambivalently either consciousness or conscience, that is, in alternatively rationalistic or ethical ways.”\textsuperscript{123}

International law was the embodiment of a preexisting system of morals grounded in divine will and thus more than just a collection of mutual treaties created by the combined will of the Great Powers. By grounding international law in the consciences of the nations, its (primarily Protestant) advocates could claim that it was both universal and yet most present in the “awakened” states of Europe and North America. It also dovetailed the belief in international law into the aggressive Western imperialism of the late Victorian period, since unawakened nations still required the forceful hand of the state.

\textsuperscript{122} Kuyper, Calvinism: Six Stone Foundation Lectures, 104.

\textsuperscript{123} Cited in Martti Koskenniemi, The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870-1960 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 51. He later adds: “In their legal theory, [early internationalists] turned inwards to look for a law that they believed existed in their moral conscience, cultivated by a humanitarian sensibility whose outward expression was their alignment with the political liberalism of the day. . . .Emphasis was less on the construction of personal systems – this was an old-fashioned idea – than on the development and cultivation of appropriate personal attitudes – on becoming ‘civilized,’ in a word. The founders of the Institut [de droit international: the first internationalist agency] were all active Protestants whose activism also constituted a demonstration – to oneself at least as much as to others – that the internal qualities needed for salvation were indeed present.” Ibid., 53 – 54.
Political internationalism, in both its religious and secular forms, often considered Roman Catholic nations as unfit political partners. As early as 1868, the father of German international law, Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, proposed a European “commonwealth of nations,” joined by mutual covenant to respect “‘the restraint and protection of the law of nations.” United they could “teach the nations to co-exist through one international law, one religion, and one education (Bildung) – but nevertheless persist as nations.”

His plan included Dutch South Africa and the United States, both (allegedly) Calvinist although decisively not European, even though it ignored all of the Catholic countries of southern and eastern Europe. Bluntschli justified their exclusion because he reasoned that no nations “dominated by intolerant religious creeds” possessed the necessary “common ethical consciousness” (gemeinsames Rechtsbewusstsein) to follow international law. The Syllabus of Errors, the 1864 papal encyclical that condemned modern liberalism and the separation of church and state, was a “manifesto of war by ecclesial Absolutism against the modern world. . . .”

Bluntschli, who was also a founding member of the Protestantenverein and the Evangelical Alliance, openly associated international law with the “proud manliness” and “self-governance” of the Protestant powers.

Although some in England and the United States hoped for closer cooperation with individual Catholics, antipathy to “Romanism” remained essential to the internal harmony of the ecumenical agreement until the second half of the twentieth century. Although there might be disagreement about the proper politics of Protestantism, no one

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124 Cited on: Ibid., 74.
125 Cited on: Ibid., 66.
dissented from the condemnation of a system that confused the domains of church and state. Adolf von Harnack considered himself a Bluntschli disciple and inherited his judgments regarding “ecclesial Absolutism.” Catholicism was

. . . a case, not of distortion, but of total perversion. . . . To contend, as it does, that Christ founded a kingdom; that this kingdom is the Roman Church; that he equipped it with a sword, nay, with two swords, a spiritual and a temporal, is to secularise the Gospel. . . . The Gospel says, “Christ’s Kingdom is not of this world,” but the Church has set up an earthly kingdom. Christ demands that his ministers shall not rule but serve, but here the priests govern the world. Christ leads his disciples away from political and ceremonious religion and places every man face to face with God – God and the soul, the soul and its God – but here, on the contrary, man is bound to an earthly institution with chains that cannot be broken, and he must obey. . . . There was a time when Roman Christians shed their blood because they refused to do worship to Caesar, and rejected religion of the political kind; to-day they do not, indeed, actually pray to an earthly ruler, but they have subjected their souls to the despotic orders of the Roman papal king.126

Just as the Jews had lost sight of “pure, internal (geistische) religion” in the Old Testament, modern Catholicism had traded in the Gospel for “state power” and “thoughtless submission to forms and empty symbols.” The Church was “threatened with bankruptcy within.”127 It no longer had the power to awaken the conscience and therefore had to rely on the tools of the state, “including, therefore, crafty diplomacy and force.”128

James Bryce’s history of the Holy Roman Empire offered the same caricature of Catholic history. It first appeared in 1864 and quickly became the standard work on medieval Catholic culture for its Anglophone audiences. Bryce himself was an active internationalist, both as an academic and as a diplomat, though a somewhat lax Presbyterian. He also maintained a foothold within the missionary movement and the

127 Ibid., 284.
128 Ibid., 273 – 274.
World Alliance. Most importantly for our purposes, Lord Bryce co-founded and directed the British League of Nations Society along with W. H. Dickinson during the Great War. (See chapters 3 and 4).

Like Harnack, Bryce argued that the primary error of Catholicism was the confusion of church and state. “The Church, who to work out her purposes had assumed worldly forms, became by the contact worldlier, meaner, spiritually weaker. . . .” The “Holy Roman Church” and “Holy Roman Empire” became “one and the same thing, in two aspects.”\(^{129}\) The effects for Christianity were pernicious. Although it had once provided the spiritual core for a unified Christendom, the absolutism of the Church provoked national and religious rebellion. In these nations religion regained its proper place and was able to recreate a healthy body politic. In his essay “Democracy and Religion,” Bryce agreed with Harnack’s condemnation of the medieval Church. “The more the Church identified itself with the world, the further did it depart from its own best self.” Catholicism forgot that the Gospel “has nothing to do with governments, but looks forward to a society in which law and compulsion will have been replaced by goodwill and the sense of human brotherhood.”\(^{130}\) In his masterpiece *The American Commonwealth*, Bryce favorably contrasted the Protestant inflected American Revolution with its French counterpart. The U. S. Constitution was the product of a “hearty Puritanism” and “the work of men who believed in original sin.” In contrast to the “enthusiastic optimism” of the French who thought that the state could become “a great


ideal power, capable of guiding and developing a person’s life,” the American founding fathers’ maintained a deep “distrust” of the state. The American government was strong enough to punish immorality, yet not quite “strong enough to threaten the pre-existing communities or the individual citizen.”\textsuperscript{131}

Religious faith glued nations together, not politics nor economics. Living Christianity always already created community. Harnack therefore always presented church history so that “union and brotherhood” was an “essential,” and not “accidental,” characteristic of true faith. “The gospel aims at founding a community among men as wide as human life itself and as deep as human need. As has been truly said, its object is to transform the socialism which rests on the basis of conflicting interests into the socialism which rests upon the consciousness of a spiritual unity.”\textsuperscript{132}

Protestant internationalists disavowed the union of church and state, but openly pursued the union of Christianity and national culture. Although they felt squeamish about the direct intervention of the church into policymaking, this did not mean that they felt that their faith was politically irrelevant. On the contrary: for only Christianity could create nations in the first place, and only the churches could open the conscience to the Kingship of Christ. Meanwhile the state had to content itself with the use of force for the mere maintenance of order.

As we shall now see, this division placed the responsibility for the development of human brotherhood on the churches, yet it left the authority to declare war firmly within the hands of the state.

\textsuperscript{132} Harnack, The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries, 184 – 185.
1.4 Just War and the Formation of an International Society

Protestant internationalism was a movement with its roots in the so-called just war tradition. Those within the fold of the World Alliance accepted the traditional Protestant view of the state, which held that it alone had the right to use force to maintain social order. This conviction applied diplomatically as well as domestically. Although World Alliance leaders referred to themselves as ‘pacifists’, they did not use the term the same way that we do today. Specifically, they did not dispute the necessity of war as a check on international immorality. In fact, a central idea behind the original conception of the League of Nations was the consolidation of the armies of Christendom behind international law. This martial aspect was front and center in the American movement, which called itself the League to Enforce Peace.

Although several Protestant denominations did not subscribe to the idea of a just war (e.g., the Society of Friends, Mennonites, Brethren, etc.) \(^{133}\), these were not prominent within the ecumenical movement – with only one exception. Many Quakers were involved in the World Alliance and the Anglo-American League movement, including J. Allen Baker. However, as will be seen in Chapter 2, these Quakers rejected the absolute pacifism of the Society of Friends. Chapter 3 will in turn show how the Great War magnified these issues. From 1914 to 1919 Baker and his allies left the Society of Friends after it refused to endorse the League. Conversely the World Alliance and its various organs purged advocates of non-violence from its own ranks, many of

\[^{133}\text{On the relationship between the peace churches and the modern peace movement, see Peter Brock, Pacifism in the United States from the Colonial Era to the First World War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968) and Peter Brock, Pacifism in Europe to 1914 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).}\]
whom left and joined a rival ecumenical organization, the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Absolute pacifism did not become an accepted position within the World Alliance until the mid- to late 1920s.

The just war tradition predates the advent of Christianity. St. Augustine adapted arguments from Plato and Cicero about the rules of war to the Christian West as it sought to defend itself against invading northerners. Because of its rational foundation Augustine believed that the tenets of the just war tradition were part of natural law and therefore accessible even to non-Christian peoples. The universal and rational basis of just war theory appealed strongly to religious thinkers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The religious wars revealed a desperate need for secular diplomacy grounded in the dictates of natural law and reason instead of religious authority and dogma.

International law, established upon the just war tradition and first codified in the Peace of Westphalia (1648), satisfied that need for both Catholics and Protestants. Prominent just war theorists on the Protestant side included Samuel von Pufendorf, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and Hugo Grotius. These men considered it as a fundamental component of a rational set of rules regarding the conduct that could transcend the dynastic and confessional conflicts of modern Europe.$^{134}$

The central idea at the heart of the just war theory is that states can use force against other states if the overall effect is the reduction of disorder, immorality, and

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violence. It recognizes violence as inevitable and therefore sanctions state violence, circumscribed within a certain set of limits, as a means of curtailing greater violence.

There are several rival versions of just war theory within the tradition, enough that an exhaustive survey would be its own multivolume work. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will simply present a generic version that focuses on four criteria that must be met for a state to consider itself to be in a just war.

• First, all wars must be conducted by a legitimate, secular state. Part of the rationale here is a theological conviction that God determines the rulers of the world and equips them with the so-called ‘power of the sword’ (Romans 13:1). However there is also a pragmatic aspect to this restriction. By limiting the number of agents that can declare war, it prohibits individuals and private associations from pursuing violence on their own initiative. It also reinforced the prohibition against churches assuming the power of secular force.

• Just wars must be in reaction to a specific act of aggression by another state. Conversely, any war is immoral if it is fought for material gain or self-interest. Wars are just when they can prevent or punish specific acts of evil and they must end when that goal has been fulfilled.

• A decision for war must be made only as a last resort. First states must attempt to find peaceful resolutions to conflicts. Before a war can be declared just, it must be considered necessary.

• Lastly, a state must take precautions that the war’s violence is not disproportionate to the acts that are being punished. In other words, it is immoral to destroy more lives and properties in punishing an offense than were taken in the offense itself. A corollary to this is that it is wrong to inflict violence on innocent countries or, if possible, on innocent civilians.
Only if a state could honestly meet these four criteria in their conscience could they resort to the brutality of war. Conversely, however, states could be obligated to fight if they were confronted by an international evil that it had the power to prevent or punish.135

Nineteenth century internationalism worked within the parameters of the just war tradition. The movement did not seek to eradicate the phenomenon of war; instead it tried to rationalize and humanize the processes of war. The Geneva Convention (1864) and the initial Hague Conventions (1899) secured certain rights for bystanders and captured soldiers. They also illegalized certain modes of warfare, such as the dum-dum bullet or aerial bombing, which inflicted unnecessary damage on soldiers and civilian populations. The International Red Cross acted as an independent watchdog to guarantee these agreements. These agreements still legally defined soldiers according to the just war tradition. Non-state combatants were not covered.136


136 In the early twentieth century this became a serious issue as a growing number of anarchists, nationalists, and revolutionary socialists challenged the states’ monopoly on violence. The tenuous nature of ‘legitimate’ political authority during the age of imperialism was suspicious at best. During the Franco-Prussian War, self-proclaimed terrorists (or franc-tireurs) continued guerilla warfare against the occupying German armies after their state surrendered. In response the German government declared them outlaws outside of the protection of international law. The Hague Conventions tried, but failed, to find a workable solution to this problem of defining the ‘state’ in these situations. Delegates concentrated on new conventions that would secure the humane treatment and legal integrity of subject populations. However some states, including Germany, insisted that civilian populations must in turn forfeit all guerilla activities, an impossible standard. Individuals who fought without the authority of a legitimate state, or members of a civilian population accused of fighting on after surrender, were subject to unrestrained martial law. See Jost Dülffer, Regeln gegen den Krieg? Die Haager Friedenskonferenzen von 1899 und 1907 in der internationalen Politik (Berlin: Ullstein, 1981); Arthur Eyffinger, The 1899 Hague Peace Conference: "The Parliament of Men, the Federation of the World" (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1999); and Peter van den Dungen, The Making of Peace: Jean De Bloch and the First Hague Peace Conference (Los Angeles: Center for the Study of Armament and Disarmament, 1983).
Arbitration became the darling of internationalist circles in the decades before the Great War. From the first successful case involving Great Britain and the United States (settled in the Genevan city hall) in 1871 to 1900, one-hundred and fifty-three international disputes had been successfully settled by arbitration.\footnote{Sandi E. Cooper, Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 1815 - 1914 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 91.} Although most bilateral treaties of obligatory arbitration failed to emerge, that concept received new life under the early Wilson administration. No diplomat signed more arbitration treaties than William Jennings Bryan, whose long history of ecumenism included a notable speech in favor of arbitration two years earlier at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference.\footnote{At each signing Bryan handed out small metal plowshares made from refashioned swords, an homage to the Biblical image of peace from Isaiah 2:4: “They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.” Michael Kazan, A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 217 – 218.} Yet none of these pacts prohibited war. Instead they increased the possibility of peaceful resolution through recourse to third parties. Proponents of the Hague Court wanted the institution to evolve into an independent body that could evaluate conflicts according to a set body of international principles. The Court remained purely optional (and fairly unused) however after 1907. Its advocates, including Daehne van Varick speaking at the Calvin jubilee in 1909, had hopes that its jurisdiction might be made more obligatory for the Western powers at the Third Hague Conference, finally scheduled for the spring of 1915.

The ‘War on Terror’ has brought this issue back into play. The United States refuses to recognize ‘terrorists’ as POWs, a categorization that allows it to deny them the protection of international law. For various positions on this resurrected debate by Christian intellectuals, see Jean Bethke Elshtain, Just War against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World (New York: Basic Books, 2003). A perceptive ‘outside voice’ on the Christian roots of this debate is Talal Asad, On Suicide Bombing (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).
Protestant internationalists translated domestic theories of social harmony *within* a state into plans for harmony *between* the states. The political scientist Hidemi Suganami calls this mode of analogical reasoning the “domestic analogy” of world order and shows its predominance within the development of international law from the era of Grotius and Pufendorf up until the dawn of the so-called ‘realist’ school of political theory in the 1940s.\(^{139}\) The domestic analogy interprets the anarchic relations between the states as the equivalent of isolated individuals stuck in a Lockean state of nature. Like precivilized persons, the states are incapable of protecting their life, liberty, and property in the absence of any set world order. To continue the analogy: just as individuals form societies through a mutual submission to the lawful state, so states must begin mutual compacts to protect themselves from potential conquest.

Acting as legal ‘persons,’ states can create a ‘social contract’ that will establish an international order that would provide security against one another. A common pledge, or covenant, to the supranational authority of law would protect the states. They need not rely on the brutal force of a Hobbesian dictator. Still this system would not eliminate the need for war. Social contract theory limits violence by granting the state a monopoly on violence and tying the state’s actions to the law. Therefore domestic peace rests upon the state’s use of legal force to protect the life, liberty, and property of its citizens. By the same reasoning, international government would limit violence by punishing individual states that act outside the bounds of international law.

Protestant internationalists favored the “domestic analogy” strategy and its conservative emphasis on international law and the preservation of each state’s property and liberty. Their nationalism prejudiced them against schemes for a world state. Neither the limited jurisdiction of the Hague Court nor the covenantal order of international society promised to subsume the autonomy of its member states. Neither threatened the churches. In fact the churches’ mission to create self-disciplined citizens fit for civilized society could be easily internationalized. By calling the peoples of the world to Christ, Protestantism could transform the nations into willing participants in the society of nations.

Until Christ came again to rule directly over the earth, wars would not stop. In fact they would be necessary if the world was to experience any type of international order. Therefore the object of Protestant internationalism was simply to create institutions that would embody the tenets of the just war tradition. A true peace required the Christianization of the nations, but until then the moral and just use of force, codified by international law and embodied in international society, would be an unfortunate necessity.

1.5 Conclusion: Christendom as International Order

If we pull the themes of this chapter together, we can begin to see the internal logic of a league of nations within the worldview of Protestant internationalism. A multinational covenant would bond together those states that possessed a quickened conscience and a sense of natural law into an international society. This would keep Christendom from self-annihilation and preserve Protestant hegemony in the face of new
threats. A covenantal bond would bring the nations into an effective military alliance without creating a world state that might degenerate into a pseudo-Catholic imperialism or a socialist cosmopolitanism. A common sense of duty and self-sacrifice, enshrined in a covenant of the nations under God, could preserve national individuality while at the same time allowing them corporately to extend the Kingdom of God throughout the entire world.

The religious and political leaders of the World Alliance believed that the time for a league of nations had come. But how could they believe in such a utopian dream? And then enact it?

The answer to this question lies in their interpretation of history. Protestant internationalists interpreted their own crusade by reflecting upon Protestantism’s storied past (as at Geneva in 1909). They then referenced their own past within the larger patterns of God’s involvement with His chosen peoples as revealed in church history and the Bible. This chapter has presented a categorical survey of the fundamental concepts of Protestant internationalism. Now it will recap these concepts within the framework of a brief theological sketch of world history that should enable us to see the League movement from a fresh angle.

- God created humanity without nationality in Adam and Eve. (The name Adam means “humanity” in Hebrew.) After Adam and Eve sinned, God separated their descendants into distinct nations with their own languages. The nations kept humanity from reuniting, but they were also a natural means of cultivating human sociality and benevolence. Like families and marriages, they were omnipresent aspects of social order. Fighting nationalism was as hopeless as fighting the law of gravity. Any attempt to create a homogenous, cosmopolitan humanity was not only immoral but impractical.

- God entered into a covenant with Israel, most notably in the Book of Exodus, which then became the first ‘chosen people’ to receive God’s civic and social law and to live in His presence. The covenant elevated a nation’s ‘natural’
sociality to a higher plane of self-sacrifice and mutual care. It experienced a collective awakening of its conscience and a new awareness of the divine commandment to heal humanity through love and the eradication of sin. Israel’s mission was to remain faithful to the covenant and thereby gather all of the nations (as nations) together under God’s rule.

• However Israel was unfaithful to the covenant, as portrayed throughout most of the Old Testament. It substituted an immediate awareness of God for empty ritualism and superstition. The Jews ignored the prophets’ warnings to purify themselves from sin and reclaim their world mission. Their status as a ‘chosen people’ descended into unthinking nationalism. To use Harnack’s language: Israel’s faith hardened into a ‘shell’ and consequently lost the “kernel” of the transnational, spiritual Gospel.

• The prophets warned Israel that if it neglected its purpose, God would revoke its covenantal status. Most Protestants believed that this finally happened when the Jews rejected Christ. Instead of fighting for Israel’s political independence, Christ stubbornly maintained a purely spiritual ministry. He forgave sins and preached against the sins of the heart. He also transgressed the rigid sexual and ethnic boundaries that had covered over the spiritual core of the Old Testament faith. Because Israel rejected Christ, the church took upon itself Israel’s covenantal blessings and responsibilities. To recall once again Harnack’s phraseology: The early church ‘laughed at nationality’ and ‘emancipated’ the Gospel from the dormancy of Judaism.

• The Church spread the Kingdom of God to all of the nations of the Roman Empire and thereby began to fulfill Israel’s mission of gathering all the nations under God. However it eventually followed in the steps of its predecessor. Catholicism adopted the mentality of the Empire and, as the political institutions of Caesar disintegrated, the Church itself assumed the violent prerogatives of the Roman state. It relied on force instead the Gospel and therefore lost its ability to redeem the internal soul from sin. Like Judaism before it, ‘Romanism’ hardened into empty ritualism.

• Catholicism did however differ from Judaism in one crucial respect. While Israel succumbed to nationalism, the Church never lost sight of its world mission. Unfortunately, because it was a theocracy, Roman Catholicism acted like a world empire. The Vatican propagated the faith abroad through war in the Crusades and at home through the brutal repression of national life. It imposed a universal language and dogma that stifled genuine, spontaneous belief. As Temple put it: “Romanism. . .impose[d] Christian standards rather than permeating national life with them.”
• The Reformation recovered the spirituality of the original covenant and the early church. It freed the Gospel from Catholic dogma, just as it liberated the nations from imperial rule. The Reformers returned the Bible to the people by translating it into vulgar languages. It encouraged folk expressions of the faith and simplified faith by pruning back ‘husks.’ Protestantism recovered the Biblical concept of nationality. Each nation could become a ‘chosen people’ through covenanting itself as a body politic to follow God’s civic designs. The Genevan Monument depicted the political effects of the Gospel through the nations of Europe: Covenantal, collective rule replaces the sovereignty of the monarch with that of the nation; religious freedom ends the hegemony of the state church; international bonds of charity and a mutual recognition of the divine natural law allows the nations to defy the might of Catholic empires. Protestantism was at one and the same time a political and a spiritual revolution of the nations as they gathered themselves together under God.

• Yet by 1900 it was apparent that Protestantism was in danger of repeating the errors of the past. Spiritually the churches needed to renew their spiritual zeal for the Lord. They needed a second Reformation. Harnack believed that this involved a thorough deconstruction of creeds and institutional authority. It was a radical project. Yet even Harnack’s most conservative defenders of dogma agreed that modern Christianity needed to feel once again the flames of revival. Both sides of this debate agreed however that Protestantism needed to break loose of its nationalist confinements. The missionary movement promised to liberate the spiritual power of the Gospel through the immediate evangelization of all of the nations. The ecumenical movement hoped to break through the churches’ social impotence by eliminating denominational rivalry and inefficiency. Meanwhile Protestant internationalism believed that Christendom needed to renew its commitment to international law and the transnational Kingdom of God.

The future depended upon the spiritual vitality of Protestantism. If the churches continued to fall into nationalism and denominationalism, the result would be the dechristianization of the West and perpetual warfare, perhaps even a return of the theocratic world empires of the medieval era. God would remove His blessing from the Protestant nations, as He had in the past with Israel and Catholicism, as they hardened their faith and descended into barbarism. However, if the churches lifted the heads of the Christian nations towards the transnational Christ, the West could lead the world
forward to the endpoint of human history: the gathering of all of the nations (as nations) to dwell together in the Kingdom of God.

The World Alliance’s secular counterparts often grounded their internationalism on evolutionary sociology. Luminaries such as Leonard Woolf and Alfred Fried believed that a peaceful world order would be the inevitable culmination of modernization. They shared W. E. Gladstone’s sentiment that “each train that passes a frontier weaves the web of the human federation.”\(^\text{140}\) The modern ease of travel; revolutions in communication, the introduction of standard time zones, financial institutions, and measurements; imperialism’s extension of political uniformity; the exponential expansion of world trade: these phenomena inspired confidant forecasts predicated on the uninterrupted evolution of socioeconomic globalization. They saw war as an anachronism and equated liberal political economics and technological progress with pacifist activism.\(^\text{141}\)

Pacifism in Protestant circles was both more and less optimistic. Because they placed their hope on the spiritual fidelity of the Western nations, and not their socioeconomic advancement, Protestant internationalists maintained a rigorous optimism in the face of the Great War because of their religious belief. The perpetual depravity of humanity brought anxiety, but the power of Christ to redeem the sinful provided hope. Failure might come, but not because of practical reasons. As John Mott declared in his 1910 invitation to Edinburgh, the only factor that mattered was “whether


the Church really possesses Christ’s thought about God, and, if not, whether it can get it back.” 142 The socioeconomic devastation of the First World War had little effect on this peculiar conception of human progress.

Whereas international lawyers and diplomats conceived of peace as essentially a lateral *contract* between states, Protestants believed that peace required a triangular *covenant* between the nations, and between the nations and God. In contrast to their secular counterparts, Protestant internationalists did not believe that the rationalization of international relations would bring about world peace. Instead they preferred to talk about the Christianization of diplomacy and war. The success of any institutional approach to peace had to come alongside fundamental spiritual renewal.

Although not completely dismissive of an Enlightenment heritage that emphasized the legalization of diplomacy and that equated reason with peace, Protestants looked elsewhere for the roots of world conflict. They insisted that war began in the human heart, in the selfishness and brutality inherent in the unredeemed wills of the nations. They remained skeptical about socialist brands of pacifism and often interpreted such ‘materialistic’ endeavors through the lens of anti-Catholicism. For instance, James Bryce rejected modern cosmopolitanism as the doomed attempt to resurrect ‘Caesaro-papism.’ “No one who reads the history of the last three hundred years, no one, above all, who studies attentively the career of Napoleon, can believe it possible for any state, however great her energy and material resources, to repeat in modern Europe the part of ancient Rome: to gather into one vast political body races whose national individuality

has grown more and more marked in each successive age.” To succeed the League of Nations had to avoid the anti-national and theocratic pretensions of the past.

In each of its manifestations the ecumenical movement saw itself as an avant-garde movement within world Christianity. The World Alliance consisted of individuals who wanted to unite and discipline the disparate Christian churches into one solid pillar of international law. Because the ecumenical movement was not a political organization, it avoided usurping what it saw as the distinctive role of the state. Instead the World Alliance stimulated the consciences of their respective constituencies and reawakened the churches to the transnational significance of the Gospel. Unlike the pacifist movement as a whole, whose elitism often stopped short at the compilation of data or debates over political policy, Protestant internationalism attracted a large popular following because it saw the molding of a moral public opinion as its first priority.

The original goal of the World Alliance was the simultaneous creation of a worldwide church and the covenantal federation of the Christian states. One of its American leaders, W. H. P. Faunce, president of Brown University, pushed the Christian churches to get their own houses in order so that it could rejuvenate the world.

“Christianity must unite its own forces before it can effectively urge the nations to unite. It must federate its own sects before it can demand the federation of the world. There must be peace in the church before there can be peace on earth.”

Writing in the fall of 1914, a full sixteen months before Woodrow Wilson ever uttered the phrase ‘League of Nations,’ William Temple demanded the creation of a

143 James Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 395.
“League of Churches” under the “sole Kingship of Christ” that would be the forerunner of the peace. This League would manifest the reality of the Kingdom of God as a “society of nations.” It would be organized in national provinces, and in each such province will try to act like leaven in the lump, confessing its failure in so far as the nation remains unchristian and calling on its members, who are also the nation’s citizens, to use their national allegiance so as to make their nation Christian, both within itself and in its dealing with other nations.

Nothing but such a spiritual society can secure fellowship among nations. Schemes of arbitration, conciliation, international police, and the like presuppose, if they are to be effective, an admitted community of interest between the nations. But this must be not only admitted but believed in sufficiently to prompt a nation which has no interest in a particular dispute to make sacrifices for the general good, by spending blood and treasure in upholding the authority of the international court or council. What will secure this, except the realization of common membership in the Kingdom of God, and in the Christian Church, its herald and earnest?145

This Church had to become “the channel and vehicle of the life of the Kingdom [of God], until at last the Church includes mankind, and all nations, coming into the Church, make Christendom co-extensive with the world, when at last the Kingdom of God will be come.”146

Temple knew that world peace would never come until Christ’s reign at the end of time. Still he urged the Church (a term that was always singular and capitalized in Temple’s work) to work together as one ecumenical testimony to a world still divided into competitive political bodies. Adolf von Harnack expressed the same sentiment when he wrote,

Jesus opens up to us the prospect of a union among men, which is held together not by any legal ordinance, but by the rule of love, and where a man conquers his enemy by gentleness. It is a high and glorious ideal, and we have received it from the very foundation of our religion. It ought to float before our eyes as the goal and

145 Temple, Our Need of a Catholic Church, 18 – 19.
guiding star of our historical development. Whether mankind will ever attain to it, who can say? But we can and ought to approximate to it, and in these days – otherwise than two or three hundred years ago – we feel a moral obligation in this direction. Those of us who possess more delicate and therefore more prophetic perceptions no longer regard the kingdom of love and peace as a mere utopia.\footnote{Harnack, \textit{What Is Christianity?}, 115.}

Without the sacrificial spirit of Christ becoming incarnate within Christendom once again, and transforming the souls of the nations as it had in the Reformation, there could be no viable prospect for world peace.

In conclusion I would like to return to Benedict Anderson’s definition of nationalism as an ‘imagined community’ in order to co-opt it. The ecumenical church was an imagined community, one capable of competing in the minds of its proponents with the attractions of nationalism. Protestant internationalists believed themselves to be simultaneous members of their national community and a transnational Kingdom of God. They promoted a faith that was national in its application, but transnational in its devotion. Although a universal Church did not in fact exist, many of the League of Nation’s earliest and strongest supporters first imagined themselves as citizens of this spiritual Kingdom. This imagined community was reimagined at the Calvin quadracentennial and inscribed into the granite of the \textit{Monument international de la Réformation}. Furthermore it sustained the World Alliance’s impossible struggle to purify members’ own nations from sin, send out missionaries armed with the Gospel, and construct a more moral international order.
CHAPTER 2:
LOSING THE PEACE:
THE ANTEBELLUM ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT,
1907 – 1914

2.1 Introduction: London in the Summer of 1908

London was a hub of internationalism in 1908. Eager to reclaim the spotlight after the success of the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, London built its own White City on empty farmland north of the metropolis: one-hundred and forty acres of classical white buildings, decorated with faux Oriental touches and ringed by little reconstructed villages from around the world. The world’s fair was the first to be jointly sponsored by two countries; both France and Britain captained the event in honor of their new Entente Cordiale. At the center of the White City sat the appropriately named Great Stadium, the largest venue of its time at sixty-eight thousand seats. Its builders designed and constructed the modern bowl in under ten months, a hurried affair after the International Olympic Committee chose London as a stand-in for Naples after Mt. Vesuvius buried its original plans. On London’s south side, the fifth Lambeth Conference, a decennial council of the Anglican hierarchy from around the world, added an exotic religious flair to the capital.

In July heads turned towards Westminster Hall and the seventeenth convocation of the Universal Peace Congress. The Congress was an annual gathering of the national
peace societies to debate strategy and exchange information. This particular one boasted representation from two hundred and fifty organizations from twenty-five different countries, the largest to date. Fresh on the heels of the Second Hague Conference the previous summer, political internationalism revealed in its new chic. The political celebrities of London – Prime Minister Asquith, Ambassador James Bryce, David Lloyd-George, and even King Edward VII – had to see and be seen at the event.

Yet the spectacle of the Congress masked uneasiness within the internationalist movement. Although diplomats extolled the virtues of universal brotherhood and arbitration at the 1907 Hague Conference, indeed much more than they had in 1899, its concrete results were few. The delegates ordained a new international court, but it had no clear mission and no ability to compel states to come under its jurisdiction. Lip service was paid to assuage electorates back home, but there had not been any noticeable advances. It was clear to the experts that success had only been skin deep.

Therefore the dominant theme of the sessions was how the peace movement could better prepare itself for the next Hague Conference. Jacques Dumas, the leading French expert on arbitration and disarmament, led a detailed debate about the states’ re-legislation of aerial warfare. The Boston educational reformer Lucia Ames Mead joined dozens of other speakers who presented plans to change school curricula, sponsor cultural exchanges, and penetrate the anti-pacifist veneer of the newspapers. W. T. Stead and W. H. Dickinson worried in particular about the English newspapers’ “jihad against Germany.” The delegates realized however that they needed to do more than just communicate to the people. Speakers placed the strongest possible emphasis on the necessity of shaping public opinion in the next few years. J. Estlin Carpenter, principal
of Manchester College in Oxford, summed up the logic behind this new accent: “War is a people’s question. It is no longer made by statesmen, financiers, and journalists, but begins in the heart of the people. We must teach that it is possible to prevent war and must try to overcome men’s hopelessness of this possibility by diffusing them, with moral ardor, all the information and optimism that are needful for the task.”

The first day of the Congress was entirely devoted to “Christianity and International Peace,” although throughout that week speakers continued to remark on the need to align the peace movement with the churches.

This topic had not been discussed at previous Universal Peace Congresses. Why was it so prominent in 1908? There are two reasons. Sandi E. Cooper identifies one reason in her magisterial survey *Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 1815 – 1914*: the British hosts resented the areligious nature of the Continental peace societies and wanted to reaffirm the Christian foundation of pacifism for their guests. By 1908, the peace movement was split between, on one hand, Anglo-American societies that effortlessly blended Christian moralism with internationalism and, on the other, European chapters that based their internationalism on secular and social-scientific reasoning. Cooper traces this difference back to the early nineteenth-century, when the peace movement was an explicitly Christian endeavour. In 1815 evangelical churches formed the first societies in Boston, New York City, Ohio, London, and Geneva. In 1820 they inspired the first French organization, the Société de la moral chrétienne, composed mainly of Reformed ministers and liberal Catholic laity. The first challenge to Christian

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pacifism did not come until the early 1840s. Sandi E. Cooper pinpoints the Paris Peace Congress of 1849 as a turning point. For the first time socialists and nationalists dominated the agenda. They envisioned a harmonious United States of Europe, but only after the bloody overthrow of the current regime. Speaking at the 1869 congress, Hugo connected revolution and peace:

The first condition of peace is liberation. For this liberation, a revolution is needed which shall be a great one, and perhaps, alas a war which shall be the last one. Then all will be accomplished. Peace. . .will be eternal; no more armies, nor more kings. The past will vanish.

Most Christians could not imagine a more frightening and repellent prescription. In the 1880s and 1890s other secular theories of peace hailed the unifying powers of free trade, democratization, and national self-determination. Each ignored the internal and moral discourses of the clergy for structural and political analysis.

By 1908 Christian activists had lost their moral monopoly on the topic of internationalism. Yet they still held played central roles within the movement in Britain, France, Geneva, and the United States. Cooperation continued, though sometimes not very comfortably. However the churches were conspicuously silent wherever local movements began in the late nineteenth century, such as Germany, Austria, Italy, and Russia. This resulted in what Cooper calls “two distinct currents” of internationalism,


150 Cited on Sandi E. Cooper, Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 41.
one predominantly Protestant and Anglo-American and another aggressively secular and Continental. 151

The second reason for the stress on the potential contribution of the churches at the Congress of 1908 was pacifism’s newfound need to mold public opinion in the wake of the Second Hague Conference. Faced with reluctant statesmen and hostile newspapers, the peace movement believed that the churches could become an ideal medium between itself and the people. In turn Protestant pastors and bishops from Germany, Britain and the United States took turns execrating their churches for not having done more much sooner.

Because world peace was a moral issue, it was just as much a subject for the preacher as it was for the diplomat. How could the churches not fulfill their responsibility to the Christian nations to inculcate in them the virtues of peace and ecumenical harmony? International morality was but an extension of individual morality. This point was the centerpiece of a speech by Frederick Lynch, a young pastor from the New York Peace Society: “We never use force now between two individuals who are really Christians. Christians settle all their differences by the law of love and

forgiveness, or at least they go no further than a Court. . . .If it is wrong for two individuals to use force one against the other, it is wrong for two nations to do it.”

Theodore Rohleder, a pastor from Württemberg, tied the Christian renewal of the West to the possibility of rising above militarism and international rivalry: “Material interests. . .are the force of gravity, which drags downwards; and Christian Love is the motive power which urges upwards.” The spiritual effects of war “morally bound” the churches to intervene in politics, for, as another pastor remarked: “Here silence on the part of the Church is treason to her Lord. . . .[Our Churches] owe it to their people, above all to their youth, that they should know the dehumanising influence of war upon the nation itself, and the nature of the perils that threaten the moral and spiritual life of the soldier.”

H. H. Asquith, the British Prime Minister, scolded the churches in his address for the current lack of morality in foreign affairs. He too linked the denominational divisions of Christendom with the churches’ lack of an effective peace witness: “Is there anywhere. . .where [the churches] have a better or more fruitful opportunity than here, if only they could be induced to think less of the differences that divide, and more of the simple text of the Gospel message of which they are the appointed vehicles?”

Faithlessness to Christ’s call would mean the end of Christianity as a practical influence on the West. Frederick Lynch fretted that “some organisations in the world

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153 Ibid., 15.

154 Ibid., 18

155 Ibid., 212.
might out-Christian the Christian Church.”

Several speakers at a plenary session on “The Practical Work of the Churches” warned that European militarism hampered the effectiveness of Christian missions in Asia and Africa. John Clifford, president of the Baptist World Alliance, thundered out to applause: “Jesus Christ never meant us to take a second place in self-sacrifice, self-suppression, in leading the people on to His high ideals. We have to be in front, not to be conformed to the world and be measured by it, but to conform the world to Him and His ideals.”

At the 1908 Congress the British churches modeled what the future support of the churches could mean for the next Hague Conference movement. A delegation from Lambeth delivered the news that the Anglican episcopacy “rejoices” in the successes of the Hague Conferences and its “principles of international responsibility.” The resolution continued: “[The Conference] earnestly urges upon all Christian peoples the duty of allaying race-prejudice. . .and of promoting among all races the spirit of brotherly cooperation for the good of all mankind.”

Nonconformist delegations brought thousands of petitions to the Congress. Paul Allegret reported on the Christian peace groups in France who worked in cooperation with the YMCA and YWCA “to establish a new conscience amongst the people, destroy false notion relative to the necessity and the divine sanction for war [and] modify the teaching given to children and others in historical books. . . .”

The most attention was paid however to a recent visit of Catholic, Lutheran and Evangelical church leaders from Germany to London for a week

156 Ibid., 36.
157 Ibid., 91.
159 Ibid., 33.
devoted to “Anglo-German understanding.” At the end of the first session, Eduard de Neufville and Benjamin Trueblood praised two British Parliamentarians, Joseph Allen Baker and Willoughby Hyett Dickinson, for spearheading the ecumenical movement for peace: “If two men can do this, what could not the whole Church do if it were only faithful to its high calling?”

A new mood of cooperation was in the air, largely thanks to the efforts of these two laymen. Beginning in 1907, Joseph Allen Baker and Willoughby Hyett Dickinson transformed churches into funnel through which internationalism might be poured onto a receptive mass audience. They coordinated the demonstrations of support by the churches for the Congress. Even more impressively they organized the first Anglo-German church summit. Londoners housed one hundred and thirty-one Germans, Protestant and Catholic, in their homes. The British churches committed themselves to the spiritual solidarity of the two Christian peoples, even while surrounded by the marble-plated glorification of the French Entente at the World’s Fair, the physicality of the Olympic Games and the new demands of the Universal Peace Congress.

Baker and Dickinson set two goals for the movement. First, they hoped to create a League of Peace that would unite the three Protestant great powers – Britain, Germany, and the United States – behind their common world mission. Secondly they hoped to convene an ecumenical council of all of the world’s churches, the first (in their Protestant eyes) since the eighth century, at the same time as the upcoming Hague Conference. In Baker’s judgment, the work of the statesmen would “be made easier and more successful.

160 Ibid., 22.
. .if those in every nation who profess to follow the teachings of the Prince of Peace would put their faith into practice.“\textsuperscript{161}

Of course we know, looking backwards, that they did not reach either of these goals. No League of Peace overcame Anglo-German hostility. No ecumenical council accompanied the next Hague Conference, which, scheduled for the spring of 1915, never happened anyway. How can we as citizens of the twenty-first century look back upon these events except with a knowing smile? From our vantage point their cheerful optimism is stained by the shadow of the Great War. Yet I do not want us to think of their movement as a doomed, or even failed, venture.

In the first place we should refrain from judging religious movements solely by their pragmatic results. Despite their public bluster, Protestant internationalists were never all that optimistic about its prospects. Adolf von Harnack remained impeachably confident that war was coming; his concern was not avoid it, but to make sure it did not destroy Protestantism. Even committed pacifists like Edwin Mead knew that the cards were stacked against them. At the London Peace Congress he chided the assembly for its optimism: “The development of the machinery for the arbitration of differences by law in recent times has been very great but we cannot blind ourselves to the fact that the increase in the machinery of war has kept pace.”\textsuperscript{162} Although many pacifists believed international harmony was inevitable because of the socio-economic forces of globalization, Protestant internationalists still maintained their belief that war was caused by the perpetual sinfulness of the human heart.


\textsuperscript{162} Cited on Cooper, Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 133.
Protestant internationalists were not driven by pragmatism, but by religious obligation. The concept of duty recurs over and over again in their writings. At a second Anglo-German summit in 1909, the royal chaplain Ernst von Dryander preached about the need to give an accounting of the universal church’s accomplishments one day before Christ. “Every arm of the church has the duty to be the salt and light out there in the world and to always fulfill its duty. Even the slightest of us shares in the task before us to change the world.”  

From our perspective the Great War seems to delegitimize, or at the least, trivialize, their efforts. Yet from their viewpoint the Great War could not annul the knowledge that they had tried to fulfill their duty to Christ.

In addition, a perspective that takes into account the longue durée should take into account the eventual success of the Protestant internationalist movement. By 1948 the World Council of Churches, the United Nations and the seeds of European union were all realities. The path begun in London during the summer of 1908 did not terminate in the trenches of Europe. If the First World War awaited them in the future, so did the League of Nations.

2.2 J. Allen Baker, Willoughby Hyett Dickinson, and the Search for “Anglo-German Understanding”

The early life of Joseph Allen Baker resembled a Horatio Alger novel. Born in 1852 on a Canadian farm, Baker’s origins were humble, though devout. Baker’s parents left him an intense Quaker faith and a commitment to social activism. He also inherited a

patent for a mechanical flour sifter that Baker turned into a multimillion-dollar enterprise. From sales of the sifter he built factories that also manufactured small household engines and appliances. The firm later expanded into automobiles, bread machines, and chocolates.

In 1878 Baker married an Englishwoman and moved to London, though he insisted on maintaining his identity as a Canadian. He had the habit of carrying Canadian apples and coins in his pockets as impromptu gifts for his workers and neighbors. As a wealthy industrialist, Baker tried to merge his reformist faith with his new social position. He taught classes for the Adult School Movement on weekdays and classes for East End boys on Sunday morning. The ever-growing profits from the flour sifter funded a non-alcoholic coffee tavern for his workers with adjoining youth rooms and classrooms. His wife, Elizabeth, worked for the YWCA and various temperance unions. By the turn of the century Baker had taken his progressivism into the political realm.

Baker belonged to an influential group of Quakers that saw themselves as the spiritual vanguard of the Liberal Party and the moral conscience of the Empire. This coterie formed in the late Victorian era what Brian Phillips has termed the “British peace elite,” which married the traditional Quaker emphasis on peacemaking with the new political realities of Gladstonian imperialism. Baker tried unsuccessfully to win election to Parliament in 1901 on a ticket that opposed the Boer War. His campaign—including his slogan: “The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he

166 Brian David Phillips, “Friendly Patriotism: British Quakerism and the Imperial Nation, 1890 - 1910” (University of Cambridge, 1989).
stand” (Isaiah 32:8) – was rooted in the moral language of the Old Testament Prophets. He did not win at a national election until the Liberal landslide of 1906, when eight other like-minded Friends gained entrance to the House of Commons.167

Until then Baker’s political career was entirely domestic. In 1895 he accepted an appointment to the London County Council, at that time a refuge for many unelectable progressives such as Graham Wallas and Sidney Webb. Baker played a key role in the construction of London’s first electric tramway system and developed a reputation for urban reform with particular passion for the causes of public transportation. He also befriended another green councilmember, Willoughby Hyett Dickinson, who would later become his partner in building the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches.

In many ways Dickinson was the opposite of Baker. Their individual strengths and weaknesses complemented one another. Baker was a social lightening rod, a charismatic and passionate personality. He loved to travel and to network. Dickinson preferred staying at home and working behind the scenes. He was a poor orator, slow when trying to think on his feet, with a reputation as a bit of a policy wonk. Dickinson’s passion on the London Country Council was urban planning; he considered his rescue of the trees and parks of Piccadilly Circus one of his greatest achievements. Baker was a liberal Quaker, an immigrant, and an industrialist. Dickinson’s parents were landed within the lower Anglican gentry. His father was a Conservative whip in the Commons; his mother founded some of Britain’s first institutions for mentally handicapped girls. Educated at Eton and Trinity College, with the obligatory years abroad in Germany and

France, Dickinson was groomed for a career in politics and law. Yet he never seemed to live up to his heritage. The newspapers blamed Dickinson’s inability to climb the party ranks on his virtue: “Just as there are parsons whose piety disqualifies them from becoming bishops, so there are politicians who are too sincere to be Cabinet Ministers.”\textsuperscript{168} His saintly simplicity also comes through in the memoirs of his lifelong secretary Ivy Marks, who describes him as a “generous, affectionate heart” that was often covered over by his “shyness and sensitiveness.” She, too, reckoned that his deep religious conviction, described as “childlike in its simplicity, uncomplicated, even naïve,” kept him from repeating the political success of his father.\textsuperscript{169}

Yet Baker and Dickinson’s career paths followed the same trajectory. Dickinson’s first political post was also on the London County Council because he also failed to appeal to the electorate on national issues. In 1895 he ran as a Conservative who endorsed the Liberal Prime Minister. In 1900 he tried the Liberal ticket, but fought against the disestablishment of the Church of England. Dickinson also secured admission to Parliament in 1906, where both men actively participated in a coalition of ‘backbenchers’ interested in arbitration and disarmament. Domestically Baker and Dickinson campaigned for the eight-hour workday, the Coal Mines Minimum Wages Act, urban reform, temperance, and women’s suffrage. They also backed Henry

\textsuperscript{168} Costley-White, \textit{Willoughby Hyett Dickinson}, 174.

Campbell-Bannerman’s foreign policy and his plan to establish an international coalition to back the new Hague Court.170

Both men also participated in the nascent ecumenical movement in Britain. Dickinson was a liberal layman working with the London episcopacy. Baker was elected chairman of the London Federation of Free Churches in 1906. In his first presidential speech he convinced the Federation to send a memorial to the Hague Conference. Both men collected prominent signatories and then traveled together to deliver the petition to the conference. This trip derailed both men’s political careers by opening their eyes to the opportunity to work for internationalism through the churches instead of Parliament.

Without a prescribed slot on the docket at The Hague, Baker and Dickinson could not present their memorial in person. To avoid embarrassment, the states prevented private pacifist organizations from speaking on the floor. Alexander Nelidoff, the Russian president of the assembly, did agree to meet with them in private, but he seemed too discouraged to be heartened by the endorsement. The Conference of 1907 was staggering into stalemate. “Too much should not expected at this Conference,” he cautioned them, “it has taken nineteen hundred years of Christianity to give us the first International Peace Conference, and this is only the second that has been held.”171


that moment the two resolved to organize the European churches into a permanent pacifist institution that would be able to influence the next Hague Conference. The first step would be to bring the English and German churches together. Their aim was to create a political coalition, which they hoped might help them avoid the sticky theological and institutional traps of church union. As Baker put it: “I have simply regarded the German pastors as well as the clergy of the country and the ministers of the Free Churches, as a section of the community who have great opportunities for influencing public opinion in their respective countries, who have at any rate certain common interests, and whose religious duty, inclinations, and convictions are all for peace.”

Baker located an amenable German collaborator in Baron Eduard de Neufville. The German banker was at The Hague Conference as a representative of the International Peace Bureau. His family had deep connections to the social Protestant movement in Geneva and the Rhineland. His brother Carl, who quickly signed on, was the president of Evangelical Alliance in Germany as well as being a leader in the German YMCA and Blue Cross. He already possessed key personal ties to Anglo-American evangelical leaders from his youthful apprenticeship with the Chicago-based revivalist D. L. Moody. In just one year these men organized the visit of the German churchmen to London during the summer of 1908.

Baker and Dickinson had little trouble rounding up support back in London. They began at the top. Baker first secured the support of the prime minister. Then he worked

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173 My sole source of knowledge on the lives of Carl and Eduard de Neufville is: Carl de Neufville, Erinnerungen und Zeugnisse (Wiehl: Reuter, 1935).
through the London Federation of Free Churches to woo Baptist and Methodist leaders such as John Clifford and J. H. Rushbrooke. Dickinson brought the Anglican episcopacy around to the idea, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, who was typically cautious about political pronouncements. Even Francis Bourne, the Catholic Bishop of Westminster, agreed to participate. Several figures from the government served on the planning committee, many of whom later held posts alongside Dickinson in the British League of Nations Union, including Lord Robert Cecil, Arthur Henderson, and David Lloyd-George. (In what was perhaps a premonitory omen, Lloyd-George reneged on his commitment to give an address shortly before the visit.)

In Germany cooperation was initially tougher to find. Compared to the situation in Britain, the German churches had more tightly disciplined structures that remained bound to the Reformation confessions and the various German states. They lacked a tradition of social activism and, in most places, equated pacifism with socialism, atheism, and cosmopolitanism. Unlike its Anglo-American and French counterparts, the German peace movement never attracted more than a handful of clergymen, very few of whom could be considered orthodox. Friedrich Sieg mund-Schultze, the future leader of the World Alliance in Germany, reasoned that the internationalist organizations never

succeeded in reaching the German churches for three reasons: the close relationship between political conservatism and the ecclesiastical hierarchy; the lack of an “international view” in the churches because Germany had only recently acquired colonies and mission fields; and, lastly, because of the “socialist” and “antinationalist” composition of the German Peace Society, which often spoke strictly in sociological and legal terms. German internationalism had numerous “advocates,” but it lacked any “apostles.”

The German response did not come from the church hierarchy. It came instead from ecumenical institutions and missions societies that operated independently of the institutional churches. In particular it arose from these types of parachurch organizations that had ties to the imperial Hohenzollern dynasty. Luise von Baden became an ardent admirer of Baker, who began visiting her at Konstanz about this time. The Grand Duchess was the very modern model of a maternal monarch. She devoted herself to social philanthropy and domestic missions. During the German Wars of Unification (1866 – 1870) she established the core of the German Red Cross. Her devotional book *Ich weiss, dass mein Erlöser lebt!* passed through fifteen editions. Luise quickly pushed the Badenese church to support Baker and de Neufville, but she also helped connect them to influential Protestants in Prussia, for she was also the daughter of Kaiser Wilhelm I.

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175 EZAB 51/G-I-a: untitled speech by Siegmund-Schultze at the Lake Mohonk Conference on Arbitration in 1911.
The current German Emperor, and therefore the head of the Prussian Protestant Church, was her nephew. In 1907 the German Emperor felt pressure to support the Anglo-German church conference – but not just from his aunt. The British Foreign Office arranged for Baker to meet with the German Chancellor, Prince Bernard von Bülow, and let it be known that the British Prime Minister had given the plans his full endorsement. Cardinal Bourne lobbied a fellow Catholic prelate, Cardinal Anton Hubert Fischer, to participate. Protestant scholars like Adolf von Harnack and Adolf Deissmann, who had connections with intellectuals at Oxford and Cambridge, also received pressure to attend. All of these different groups slowly came on board.

Many of the one hundred and thirty-one delegates who arrived in London during that summer of 1908 later formed the core of the German ecumenical movement. The group was disproportionately from Baden and Prussia and tied to the Hohenzollern family. They included academics (not only Harnack and Deissmann, but Paul Althaus (Senior), Martin Rade, Julius Kaftan, and Hans von Soden), missions leaders (such as Julius Richter, August Wilhelm Schreiber, and Johannes Warneck), and a few other heads of the ecumenical agencies. Although the British committee included women, no German women made the trip. Ernst von Dryander was the Protestant leader with the closest relationship to Wilhelm. Dryander served as the Emperor’s personal chaplain and

the senior pastor of the Berliner Dom, the royal cathedral in Berlin. He was also a lifelong friend of Randall Davidson, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Dryander invited along his godson, Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, who later became the most visible representatives of ecumenism and a pillar of the German League of Nations movement. Siegmund-Schultze had just graduated from the University of Berlin, where he had written a thesis on Schleiermacher under the guidance of Rade and Harnack. In 1908 he took his first pastoral post as an adjunct at the Dom.

The 1908 visit started off on the wrong foot. The ocean liner arrived several hours late. The delay could not be helped – the ship had hit a sandbank – but perhaps Baker and Dickinson experienced last-minute fears that the Germans would not come. All of the visitors roomed in English homes, which saved expense and also cultivated closer personal ties. King Edward received them twice and attended a special service at Westminster Abbey. The next few days were filled with tourist excursions, public ceremonies, and mutual declarations of goodwill. There were a lot of feasts and – as befits a conference of clergymen – even more speechifying. Speakers exhaustively recited the common bonds of language, culture, and religion between the two nations. Yet it was also a success. Baker felt like the event displayed “what relations between England and Germany, between England and Germany, ought to be and might be.”

Afterwards the House of Commons received over four thousand petitions from churches

177 This thesis was later published: Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, *Schleiermachers Psychologie in ihrer Bedeutung für die Glaubenslehre* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1913).

calling for harmony between the two empires.\footnote{179}

After the Germans returned home, they invited their hosts to come visit them in the summer of 1909. Siegmund-Schultze agreed to handle the arrangements. The young pastor was becoming the anchor for Protestant internationalism in Berlin. Baker had taken the young German pastor around working class London and given him a tour of the evangelical settlement houses that pocketed the East End. After his return he felt compelled to translate that kind of operation into the slums of Berlin. Siegmund-Schultze left the Dom and accepted Wilhelm’s offer of a sinecure at the Friedenskirche at the royal palace in Potsdam. From there he could devote his life to the emerging World Alliance and his work with the poor. Yet he felt compelled to still do more. In 1911 he resigned and founded a settlement in northern Berlin. This mission recruited students from the university to live in the house and provided free housing, meals, and adult education to the poor. Without a parish salary he accepted secretarial duties with the YMCA and the Student Christian Movement in order to pay his expenses. Siegmund-Schultze became the key figure in Berlin for most of the major international Protestant agencies.\footnote{180}


Wilhelm II took a personal interest in the event and planned to invite the entire group to Potsdam for a personal audience. Baker and Dickinson both believed that the Kaiser would play a premier role in any future League of Peace. This trust may seem untenable to us, since the Kaiser now enjoys a reputation as a hopelessly impetuous sword-rattler. It is true that as a monarch Wilhelm acted too often like a weathervane who had the unfortunate habit of creating his own storms. Yet before 1914 he did enjoy a certain reputation in internationalist circles. Berlin was often the site for international conferences on labor or arbitration. Wilhelm courted key internationalists, such as Andrew Carnegie. Conservatives at home mocked his new image as the Friedenskaiser, but the moniker soon became a badge of honor. Alfred Fried, the first German recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, dedicated an entire book to the ‘Emperor of Peace’ that predicted that Wilhelm would seize the lead in creating a peaceful federation of Europe.181 Baker agreed. His son later recounted how his father was convinced that “in the Kaiser’s hands might lie the destiny of Europe. . . .and that if only he would do so, he was of all living men the one best able to take the lead in setting up a League of Peace that would establish arbitration and the sanctity of treaties, and that would bring disarmament and real security in its train.”182

Baker directly approached Wilhelm about his leadership of a “League of Peace


and Brotherhood” in February 1909, while visiting Berlin to make arrangements for the church conference. Ernst von Dryander and Eduard de Neufville came with him. Dryander’s account of the meeting resembles the showdowns between kings and prophets in the Old Testament. Baker asked Wilhelm whether arms could ever bring peace to Germany and then proposed a three-state League composed of the United States, Germany, and the British Empire. The Kaiser hesitated a bit, and then admitted: “Our nations ought to have so much more in common than with the Latins or the Slavs, and if we do not do the work of Christ as Protestant nations, who will?” Dryander then records that Baker, “in a Quakerish manner, possibly under the influence of divine inspiration,” seized the Emperor on the arm and chest “while standing before him with tears in his eyes, calling him the Emperor of Peace [Friedenskaiser] and saying [in English]: ‘Thou are the Man.’” Wilhelm appeared “visibly shaken. . .by this man sincere and illuminated with love.” He teared up, but regained himself by joking “‘Why would I want war? . . . What do these nervous English writers think I want? The Wallace Collection in London?’” Baker refused to let the moment pass. He bluntly stated that Germany needed to expand and to colonize “because of its growing population,” and that the window for peace was passing. The Kaiser agreed – “What this man wants, I want too” – and abruptly ended the audience.183

Baker believed he had touched Wilhelm’s soul and started him towards a conversion to internationalism. Others on the British side agreed. John Clifford and J. H. Rushbrooke were impressed by the German government’s show of support during the

183 Dryander, Erinnerungen, 233 – 234. Baker later told his wife that during the meeting he “had no anxiety as to what I was to say. . . . That the Divine Presence was over us, and the Spirit of Christ in our midst, none of us, I think, for a moment doubted. . . .” For an analogous account, see Baker and Noel-Baker, J. Allen Baker, 189.
Second Baptist World Congress, held in Berlin in the fall of 1908. Dickinson was especially impressed by Wilhelm’s presence when one hundred and ten Englishmen traveled to Berlin in the summer of 1909. The delegation included Anglicans, Nonconformists, and Catholics; it counted nine ‘backbenchers’ of Parliament besides Baker and Dickinson. The Emperor chartered a luxury liner (jokingly referred to as a “Noah’s ark for all kinds of men and denominations”) for the voyage and ensured that his ministers such Chancellor von Bülow and Admiral Tirpitz attended the events. He charmed them at a private reception at the palace, referring to the visitors as his “brothers.”\textsuperscript{184} At that meeting Dickinson also looked into Wilhelm’s soul and agreed with Baker that he was a “great Christian monarch.” He noted in his journal on the voyage home that: “We saw [Wilhelm] at Potsdam and I was struck by his frankness and evident sincerity. I believe he’s really a good and honest man and although it is by no means impossible that warlike feelings may be too powerful amongst the peoples I think he will do what he can to stem them.”\textsuperscript{185}

This trust in Wilhelm reveals a central aspect of early Protestant internationalism that set it apart from the socialist peace movement. It demonstrates that Protestants still saw war in moral terms. War resulted from the evil that resided in the unregenerate heart. Greed, envy, the lust for domination, and other sins: these caused war, not socioeconomic

\textsuperscript{184} For details of the trip, see various papers in EZAB 51/E-I-b; J. Estlin Carpenter, "At Bielefeld: A Memory of 1909," The Peacemaker 1, no. 1 (1911), Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, ed., Friendly Relations between Great Britain and Germany. Souvenir Volume of the Visit to Germany of Representatives of the British Christian Churches, June 7 to 20, 1909 (Berlin: H. S. Hermann, 1909). On Wilhelm II’s interest, see EZAB 626/1/12.1: letter from Philip von Eulenburg to Ernst Dryander, 11 May 1909. For Wilhelm’s speech to the delegation, see Siegmund-Schultze, ed., Friendly Relations between Great Britain and Germany, 118 – 122.

\textsuperscript{185} Costley-White, Willoughby Hyett Dickinson, 121.
imbalances or political structures. The human will, not society’s imbalance, needed a cure. Therefore Protestants in Britain and Germany sharply disagreed with the radical wing of the peace movement that, following Hugo, believed that “the first condition of peace is liberation.” Protestant internationalism was essentially conservative because, in its separation of church and state, it limited itself to the churches’ power to change the souls of nations. It tried to infuse existing political structures with the regenerative power of Christ.

At both conferences, peace was therefore conceived as the achievement of spiritual discipline over the warlike passions of Europe. In his 1908 plenary address in London, Adolf von Harnack equated war with the absence of restraint. “The lower nature urges a nation simply to follow the materialistic instinct of self-preservation, to fight to the end in the struggle for existence, the struggle for fodder and a place at the stall.” Peace is therefore “not the fruit of a skillful political policy. . . . Peace is fruit of the Spirit, that is to say, that Spirit which issues not merely from our nature and physical conditions, but which lifts us above Nature.” War comes to a nation that has abandoned God and devolved into arid ritualism. It is part of the “natural law” to be overcome by those who have accepted Christ. Conversely peace is the evolutionary product of centuries of Christian culture. “The higher the spiritual level of a people, the more eagerly will it guard the interests of peace.” Harnack believed that this bond of culture, rooted in the Christian mastery of humanity’s sinful nature, joined Britain and Germany in a “society of the nations” devoted to a common civilisation, “the winning of which represents an endless never-ceasing task.” This bond could only be sustained by the continual struggle for self-mastery by both nations. An “enduring” peace could never know rest. Christ
must always be fought for. Spiritual warfare was a precondition of a pan-Protestant peace. “[The Spirit’s] utterance is not ‘Cease from fighting’; but He calls to us: ‘Fight for the highest possessions; fight with holy weapons; fight in a noble rivalry; strive to bear your comrades aloft; compel to lay hands on better weapons than swords and sabers, namely, the instruments of peaceful handicraft and spiritual toil.”

The Protestant interpretation of peace as the victory of national self-discipline over the warlike passions of the masses reverberated throughout the broader internationalist community. Martti Koskenniemi has recently shown that the before the Great War the field of international law was dominated by a “rhetoric of honor and virtue” that prized restraint and moderation as the products of Christian civilization and manly character. Internationalists saw themselves as the “conscience of the civilized world” able to stimulate the moral progress of the Christian nations. In the same vein C. Roland Marchand has argued that the core attitude of the Hague movement was a conservative belief that international conflict had to be removed from the jurisdiction of elected legislative bodies that were held hostage to public opinion and placed in the hands of transnational judges who possessed “nonpartisanship, detachment, and restraint.”

This sense of noblesse oblige permeated Protestant internationalism as well. Jacques Dumas, not only a leading advocate for a world court but also the future secretary of the French chapter of the World Alliance, argued that the Hague Court was necessary because it was “impartial” and “above nationalism.” When wars threaten to

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break out, “passions are unloosed and. . .human brutality loses itself without restraint in the most deplorable excesses.” At this moment the Hague Court could “impose restraint” on the masses by the enforcement of a “cooling-off period” while the matter was submitted to the world court. In this context Dickinson’s trust in Wilhelm II makes more sense. He had the same hope for the Emperor that Dumas had for the Hague Court: that in a time if crisis, they could act as a restraint on the “warlike feelings” of the masses.

The pioneers of international law also contended that international law would codify the prescriptions of God’s natural law, but that it still would only pertain to civilized nations capable of realizing its demands. “Barbarian” peoples were too “fanatical, untrustworthy, and uneducated” to expect them to follow the rule of law; they were like “children who allowed their passions to rule their behavior.” However the enforcement of international law would civilize the barbarians. Combined, force and law could enhance the moral progress of the world. Protestants did not disagree, but they also saw a complementary role for the missionary movement. International law might hold down the brutality of the nations externally, but only the acceptance of the Gospel could transform them spiritually and admit them into the society of nations. The nations

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without Christ needed to awaken their conscience to move from a feminine, irrational, political backwardness to a masculine, rational self-governed nation.\textsuperscript{191}

The dominant tone of the 1908 and 1909 meetings was a shared sense of mission \textit{[Missionsbewußtsein]} to establish and extend the civilizing influence of the Kingdom of God throughout the entire world. Baker wanted the League of Peace to formalize a joint commitment to international law that would prevent a civil war within Christendom.\textsuperscript{192} Speakers routinely called for a renewal of the spirit of Waterloo. A poem unveiled at the 1908 ceremony extolled Waterloo as the moment when “we stood fast together” while “flames struck brightly our strong friendship.”\textsuperscript{193} Friedrich Lahusen, superintendent of the Protestant Church in Berlin, wanted the ecumenical movement to transform the “Teutonic nations” into an “army of the Spirit” forming “one line of battle to contend with the weapons of the Spirit for the unity of the Spirit.” He despised the opinion that international cooperation would weaken the churches in Germany. Anglo-German accord was in full accord with the Christian desire “to remain a brave people, capable of bearing arms for the defence of our fortress, [and] the manly training of our people.”\textsuperscript{194} Meanwhile J. H. Rushbrooke openly fantasized about the day when “our flags, united”


\textsuperscript{192} Baker, ed., \textit{Der Friede und die Kirchen}, 17.

\textsuperscript{193} EZAB 626/1/12.2: “Germania und Britannia”

\textsuperscript{194} J. H. Rushbrooke, untitled editorial, \textit{The Peacemaker} 1:1 (July 1911), 3.
could “be the masters of the whole world, the rulers of the ocean.”\textsuperscript{195} This rhetoric sometimes devolved into blatant racism, but the leaders of the movement in both countries strove to return the primary spotlight on the mission. Writing in 1911, Richter scolded those speakers who dwelt overmuch on “the racial affinity” and the “enormous common stock” of the Protestant powers. “Perhaps there is one point which deserves more emphasis, and which is still more convincing, that is, the common work, and the community of tasks which both nations have before them in the wider world. We have long outlived the medieval stage when the relations of two peoples were of importance only for their own well-being, their progress or decay.”\textsuperscript{196}

In his 1909 sermon in the Berliner Dom, Ernst von Dryander located the root of Anglo-German union in its faith and in its mission. This address, based on Matthew 5:13-16 (“You are the salt of the earth”), quickly became a defining document of the movement.\textsuperscript{197} It located the “foundational unity” of Britain and Germany not only in “the communion of one faith, one God, and one Savior,” but in the “shared tasks of culture, civilization, and science to which our nations have been called.” Dryander traced the meandering path of civilization in world history to the spread of the Gospel. Civilization has always been a product of the Church, which has brought the Gospel to bear on the nations and transformed individuals into “the salt of the earth and the light of the world.”


\textsuperscript{196} Julius Richter, "Peace and the World Position of Christianity," \textit{The Peacemaker} 1, no. 2 (October 1911).

\textsuperscript{197} The complete text of Matthew 5:13-16: “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven.”
The Church has “championed the mindset [Weltenschauung] that fills its members with the power of salvation” and “the power over the world, without which they would be unable to be salt or light.” Because the Christian “infuses the world with the substance of the divine,” the Church is the midwife of the transnational Kingdom of God wherever it can lodge the Gospel in the culture of a nation. They are the salt and the light that lifts a nation up out of the brutality of despotism and paganism. A Christian’s quest for peace is a subset of this larger mission, as they “are called before God and mankind to be peacemakers in opposition to the prejudices and quarrels of the nations. The more that they are redeemed by the salt of truth and penetrated by the light of the righteous life, they themselves will find it even more possible to be a tower of peace. . . .”

Dryander considered a universal coalition of nations an “impractical utopia.” The Church in his opinion was not yet active enough as the salt and light in all of the nations. It still had work to accomplish in Britain and Germany. Still the nature of the Church necessitated that it work through the two Protestant nations to spread its influence to the entire world. “We stand now for the deeper and brighter light of our fatherland and our national character as much as for the character of our faith, and we must stand even higher for everything that contributes to the extension of the Kingdom of Christ.” Peace between Britain and Germany was essential for their identity as “chosen peoples.”

The complement to an Anglo-German peace was a unified expansion of Christendom into Africa and Asia: both spiritually and militarily. Dryander especially

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198 Dryander, Salz und Licht - Der Weltberuf der Christen, 3 – 4. An abbreviated version of the sermon was published as Ernst von Dryander, "Deutschland und England," Die Eiche 1, no. 2 (April 1913). For the context surrounding this sermon, see Bernd Andresen, Ernst von Dryander: Eine biographische Studie (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 144 – 148.

199 Dryander, Salz und Licht, 5.
regarded the Ottoman Empire with suspicion. He delivered a similar sermon on the Church as salt and light when he accompanied Wilhelm II on a tour of the Middle East. On this trip he became aware of the uniqueness of Christian Europe by experiencing Muslim society for the first time. He worried that “Africa’s future was apparently not tied to Christendom, but with the crescent moon.”

From 1910 to 1914 Dryander justified the aggressive African and naval policies of Germany by reference to the armed opposition of the enemies of Christendom. He compared German action in Numbia and Morocco to the American conquest of the Philippines and the British Raj. He could not understand why so many British politicians felt so uncomfortable about the construction of a strong German navy to enforce international law and free trade. Did not the two nations share one common mission?

This proposed League of Peace, grounded upon a Anglo-German hegemony, was not an absolute valorization of peace per se. Instead it was a united political alliance that might forward the world mission of the Church while testifying to the power of God to transform the redeemed into peacemakers. In *The World and Africa* (1947), W. E. B. DuBois complained that “What the peace movement really meant was peace in Europe and between Europeans . . .” It is hard to disagree. Yet that statement should be qualified in this case. Protestant internationalists in Germany and Britain fought for peace because war between their two nations would severely cripple the churches just as the missionary movement promised to “Christianize the world in this generation.” Yet


they remained more open towards the use of military force against the enemies of civilization.

In Germany church leaders in favor of an Anglo-German entente distanced themselves from secular pacifism. In an early essay in *Die Eiche*, the periodical begun in 1913 to give voice to the movement inside Germany, Siegmund-Schultze clearly separated himself from the so-called utopianism of the German Peace Society.

We are fostering friendly relations between Great Britain and Germany, not because we want to dabble in politics, but because we feel compelled to build the Kingdom of God.

We accentuate our common stock, not because we are obsessed about some anti-national world brotherhood, but because whoever says he loves God and yet hates his brother is a liar.

Thus we despise the bloodshed between our two peoples, not because we would hate to see blood in the twentieth century, but because we always want to have before our eyes the blood that reconciles all of the hatreds of the world.

We do not work for peace because eternal peace is now going to happen, but because the field of our Lord is ripe to the harvest and the Lord needs workers to reap it in.

Hence we love peace, not because we want to live a lazy life that is free from struggles, but because God’s children should be called peacemakers.

Siegmund-Schultze has a deserved reputation as the member of the German Council who was the most serious about a European peace. Yet even he denounced the leadership of the Peace Society as “fanatics” (*Schwärmer*) who are “are in pronounced opposition to the national consciousness of the German people.”

Historians such as Karl Holl and Roger Chickering have blamed the impotency of the German peace movement on its restricted social base and its inability to compete in the popular mind with the concrete achievements of the German military. Militarism,

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Chickering argues, was integral to the national identity of Germany precisely because the newly founded nation had so little else to keep it together. Ecumenical Protestantism might have helped the internationalist movement overcome these two fatal flaws. It certainly did in Britain, where the churches disseminated internationalist ideals to a wide audience clothed in the accepted religious language of the different denominations. German Protestants worried about their own standing within the national community if they were to become tainted as cosmopolitans, socialists or utopians. The insecurities of the ecumenical community prohibited them from reaching out for unorthodox allies and repeatedly pushed back towards their traditional base of support in the Hohenzollern dynasty.

In 1910 Baker and Dickinson rejoiced when the decision was made to create two permanent ‘associated councils’ for fostering Anglo-German Understanding. Dickinson served as secretary of the new organization, while Randall Davidson assumed the more public role of president. Baker had little influence on the British Council. In 1909 he suffered from a “temporary breakdown of health” and followed his doctor’s orders to take a break from work. From 1909 to 1914 Baker spent significant time in North America seeking fresh support for an ecumenical council of the churches. Davidson took Baker’s place as the public face of the movement, while Dickinson continued to direct

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205 See Chickering, Imperial Germany and a World Without War. John A. Moses also identifies a “built-in divergence of the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic political cultures.” However, unlike Chickering, he locates the roots of so-called German militarism in Lutheran theology instead of in the historical-political development of the German Empire. This seems suspicious on two accounts. In the first place there are many examples where Lutheranism did not develop a militarist political culture, including Norway, Sweden, and Minnesota. In the second place Moses draws too sharp a distinction between the British and the German councils that passes too easily over their shared missional and imperialist assumptions. See John A. Moses, “The British and German Churches and the Perception of War, 1908-1914,” Journal of Religious History 5, no. 1 (May 1987).
matters behind the scenes. In Germany Dryander and Siegmund-Schultze assumed control of the day-to-day operations of the organization while the chairmanship fell to another layman, Friedrich Albert Spiecker, an executive with Siemens with a long history of work for the Inner Mission and the YMCA.206

The two groups engaged themselves in cultural contacts between the German and English churches. Spiecker and Harnack spent the early part of 1911 on a high-profile lecture tour of England, which was capped off by a celebrity-rich gala at Queen’s Hall. A second round occurred in March 1912; this time Spiecker accompanied Eduard de Neufville and the New Testament scholar Adolf Deissmann. The Germans also organized tours for a group of British missionaries in 1911, for Dickinson in 1912, and for the writer Norman Angell in 1913. More informal ties were laid when Dickinson arranged for several pastors’ daughters to work as au pairs in London, or when the Council paired seminarians up as penpals. On Wilhelm’s request, the German Council

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On the early composition of the two councils, see EZAB 51/D-IX-b: “Memorandum”; “Our German Fellow-Workers: Herr Dr. Spiecker (President of the German Council)” The Peacemaker 1:4 (May 1912), 67. Friedrich Spiecker’s brother Johannes was a well-regarded in mission circles as director of the Rhine Mission Society. (An early candidate to chair the event was Prince Hohenlohe-Langenburg. Yet Siegmund-Schultze Fairly shelved this idea fairly quickly for some unknown reason. In 1906, the Kaiser appointed the prince as his Colonial Secretary in the midst of the Herero genocide and the Reichstag refusal to ratify the budget for Africa. Quickly the Catholic Center party protested the appointment of such a partisan Protestant. Perhaps Hohenlohe’s inability to appeal to Catholics made him unsuitable to serve as president of the German Council.)
translated several devotional books, including *Conversations with Christ* by Bernard Lucas and a biography of the Quaker activist Elizabeth Fry.\(^{207}\)

Both councils began periodicals in order to reach a wider audience within the churches. James Henry Rushbrooke assumed control of *The Peacemaker*. This rising Baptist star was both the protégé of John Clifford and the student of Adolf von Harnack. He had a personal connection to Berlin, having married the daughter of the painter Anton von Werner. The magazine quickly gained enough subscribers to become financially independent. Eighteen months after its inception, the British Council boasted over 7,000 paying members, mostly clergy; the number swelled to 11,000 by the end of 1913. Subscriptions to *The Peacemaker* topped 67,000.\(^{208}\)

The German Council never achieved that level of popular support. Rather than attract a large audience, it continued to rely on the support of the ecclesiastical and academic elite. Siegmund-Schultze had trouble finding enough paying members to get his periodical, *Die Eiche*, off the ground. It did not see print until January 1913, after Baker convinced the American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie to cover the costs of publication. Because the strongest official support still came from Luise von Baden and Wilhelm II, the overwhelming majority of the four thousand pastors who did join the


\(^{208}\) WCCA 212.020: “The Associated Councils of Churches in the British and German Empires for Fostering Friendly Relations between the Two Peoples”; *The Peacemaker* 1:4 (May 1912), 52; “Second Annual Meeting of the British Council,” *The Peacemaker* 1:7 (June 1913), 120. This figure included some adherents in Canada and Australia.
German Council had some sort of association with the royal family. This dependency gave the movement status, but also weighed it down. While the British Council openly engaged in debate about arbitration and international law, the German Council remained narrowly focused on the cultural bonds with London.209

The British council possessed more influence in local churches than its German counterpart. In 1910 the British Council convinced nine different denominations to demarcate the Sunday before Christmas as a “Peace Sunday.” (This is the week during Advent in the traditional church calendar when Christians reflect on the angelic proclamation of Christ’s birth to the shepherds, which begins: Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men.) The German Council, however, declined to even promote the idea, because they were afraid that it might antagonize the churches. Friedrich Curtius, president of the Alsatian Lutheran Church, was the only member to successfully implement the new holiday in his home church.210

The content of the two papers was quite different. Die Eiche argued that an entente with Britain would not compromise German honor, whereas The Peacemaker allocated most of its attention to explaining the German point of view to its English readership. Yet British writers rarely appeared in Die Eiche. Even the same event was covered differently, as can be seen in the two discordant explanations of why the movement had chosen an oak tree as its symbol. Rushbrooke paid tribute to their common heritage: “The design on the cover of ‘The Peacemaker’ represents the oak, the


national tree both of Britain and Germany. The branches, which shelter the shields of the two nations, spring from a stout common trunk, which is strongly rooted. The Bible, the inspiration and common possession of both peoples, lies open at its foot.”

Siegmund-Schultze struck a more strident tone: “The oak tree [die Eiche] is a German tree. It is no sapling that must adorn itself with foreign leaves. Its spring and its autumn are not dependent on Parisian fashions. It does not need English fabric to clothe itself. Exotic plants are alien to its soul. . . .”

The German Council welcomed ecumenical interaction if it remained stubbornly fixed on spiritual matters. Executive members such as Julius Richter, A. W. Schreiber, and Karl Axenfeld held high positions in the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 and the nascent International Missionary Council. Harnack, Siegmund-Schultze, Dryander, and Adolf Deissmann played central roles in the growing international movement for social Christianity. Yet German enthusiasm for religious ecumenism fell far short of Baker and Dickinson’s desire to align ecumenism behind the Hague Conferences. The Germans refused to support treaties of obligatory arbitration. On the one hand the resistance was theological, an echo of Harnack’s dictum that the churches were “not qualified” to endorse specific policies and should concentrate instead on “rous[ing] the conscience.”

The German Council restricted itself to the production of “mutual understanding” and the “right atmosphere,” and then left policy to the politicians. On the other hand its resistance was to internationalism itself, which they associated with the radical left.

211 The Peacemaker 1:1 (July 1911), 14.
213 Harnack, Essays on the Social Gospel, 16.
The German attitude caused frustration in London. Since its inception a leading item on the agenda of the British Council was an Anglo-German arbitration treaty akin to the one signed by Britain and France in 1903. Dickinson felt that: “It if was not for our going ahead in England I think the Germans would not have started and certainly would not be continuing their organisation at all. It is much more difficult to move the German mind in the direction of pacifism than the English.” His only hope was that “if we can only hold on we will get our friends on to the right lines.” In 1912 he put forth one final effort. The British Council hosted one last Conference for Anglo-German Understanding. Besides the German Council, Dickinson invited members from a new organization with the potential to create a fresh start for Protestant internationalism in Germany.

The Verband für Internationale Verständigung (Society for International Understanding) offered conservative proponents of arbitration an alternative to the German Peace Society. It grew out of a community of jurists and diplomats who wanted Germany to take a more proactive stance at the upcoming Hague Conference. Although it claimed to “stand above partisan politics and remain completely neutral on domestic issues,” in actuality, socialists and radical pacifists were snubbed. The organization adhered to a cautious internationalism that appealed to German nationalism as the basis


215 Costley-White, Willoughby Hyett Dickinson, 129.

216 EZAB 51/I-a-2: “Aufruf” of the Verband für internationale Verständigung. For example, Alfred Fried, founder of the German Peace Society, was specifically told not to come to the Verband conference, even though he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize that year. Roger Chickering, "A Voice of Moderation in Imperial Germany: The 'Verband Für Internationale Verständigung' 1911 - 1914," Journal of Contemporary History 8, no. 1 (January 1973): 157.
for German leadership on the arbitration issue. Its membership consisted primarily of moderate internationalists, including Walther Schücking and Ottfried Nippold, and academics, such as Ernst Troeltsch, Max Weber, Ernst Cassirer, Hermann Cohen, Martin Rade, and Adolf von Harnack. Siegmund-Schultze and Curtius accepted positions on its executive. One of the Verband’s strategies was to enlist the churches as allies on the ground in the battle for German public opinion. The Verband was a natural ally for Baker and Dickinson, who saw in the new organization the chance to push the German Council further towards their own goals.

In 1911 the Verband spread to France and England, where it too attracted support from moderate internationalists, academics, and business interests. A small informal conference on “Anglo-German Understanding” in Berlin took place without much publicity at which Dickinson, Davidson, and Cardinal Bourne were present. Its success prompted plans for a second conference in 1912 in London. This time the Verband’s leaders intended to invite the British and German Peace Societies, arrange for greater publicity, and focus on the real possibility of joint arbitration. Funds arrived from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Spiecker, Harnack, de Neufville and Lahusen all agreed to speak. Spiecker even reassured Dickinson that Wilhelm wanted a treaty of “mutual understanding.” In turn Baker, Dickinson, and their allies on the backbenches of Parliament formed their own Foreign Affairs Committee that pushed the government to remain open to a German treaty.

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217 The German Council was represented by F. A. Spiecker and Eduard de Neufville. EZAB 51/E-I-b: “The Anglo-German Understanding Conference Committee,” 2 August 1911.

218 EZAB 51/E-I-b: letter from Frank Lascelles to Dickinson, 17 August 1912; EZAB 51/E-I-b: letter from Spiecker to Dickinson, 22 April 1912.
A series of diplomatic crises of 1911 almost derailed the conference. The German Council threatened to fall apart. One of its strongest supporters, Adolf von Harnack, was the most openly upset with British foreign policy. After France and Britain swiftly cooperated to limit German influence in Morocco in 1911, Harnack participated in an angry exchange of public letters with Davidson and Prime Minister Asquith. Harnack explained why he “could no longer believe in the friendship of England” when the country was moving closer and closer to Russia. He now believed that Britain was pursuing a policy of “encirclement” (Einkreisung) that would “strangle” Germany in the next war and eliminate Protestantism in central Europe. In an open letter to Siegmund-Schultze in the German press, Harnack compared contemporary Britain to the French policy of Napoleon III: “Just as it appeared to France intolerable that a unified German state should have arisen in the middle of Europe that was stronger than them, so England finds it intolerable that our state has developed enough to rival England’s spiritual and material powers.” The theologian insisted that he had not lost his belief that the “common inheritance” of three Protestant empires of “England, North America and Germany,” but this would only be possible if Britain accepted Germany as an equal.

Baker and Dickinson tried to repair the damage through letters and visits. They rallied their allies in Parliament and began a petition campaign through the churches. Both men met with the British Foreign Minister and arranged for Lord Haldane to take an

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220 Rushbrooke reprinted the epistolary debate without Asquith’s contributions: The Peacemaker 1:3 (February 1912). See Bell, Randall Davidson, 655 – 661.

impromptu trip to Berlin in early February 1912 to forge a détente. Haldane offered a British pledge to remain neutral in exchange for a cap on German naval development. It was not accepted, though Haldane’s eagerness to please his hosts successfully eased tensions.

In August the German delegates came to London for the *Verband* conference. In December Britain and Germany colluded at a peace conference that ended the First Balkan War to their mutual satisfaction. However these achievements were illusory. At that conference Haldane communicated to the German ambassador that England would stand by France if Germany attacked. Whether unable or unwilling to trust the British government any longer, Wilhelm called a council with his ministers and general staff that set his country on a path towards an inevitable war.

Even with all of these developments the German Council shied away from any discussion of a universal church conference, a League of Peace, or the Hague Conferences. In May 1913 the German Council reneged on its association with the *Verband für internationale Verständigung*. Its numbers sagged; the group never totaled more than three hundred. When Dryander worried that ecumenism had become too politicized, Davidson reassured him that “our Association. . .rests upon a religious basis” and will not “concern itself directly with political or diplomatic matters but with creating in our respective countries the true spirit or atmosphere in which International Friendship

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and Brotherhood are certain to flourish and increase.”²²⁴ Even as Siegmund-Schultze was finishing the final plans for the Konstanz Church Conference in July 1914, he insisted that “it would not deal with the amalgamation of the pacifistic mentality into the various churches,” but instead try to “identify which position the broader church should take on the issue of peace and the friendly relations of the nations. . . .”²²⁵

The celebration of Wilhelm’s twenty-fifth year as Emperor marked the last time that the two councils would work in concert. The theme was the monarch’s reputation as the *Friedenskaiser*. One final contingent of British churchmen traveled to Berlin. Baker and Dickinson collected petitions and memorials to present to the monarch. Once again Baker urged him to champion the Hague Conference. On June 15, 1913, Dryander opened the official ceremonies with a service in the Berliner Dom. On Monday Wilhelm received the deputation after a long parade down the *Unter den Linden.*²²⁶

The jubilee was an event that permanently changed the ecumenical movement. Just after the celebrations Baker and Dickinson found the financial resources they needed to host their church congress and establish a permanent international institution. The patronage did not come from the Kaiser, but from Andrew Carnegie. The industrialist was an ardent admirer of Wilhelm and, impressed by the substance of the German Council, promised to endow the new league of churches with $10 million. This was no

²²⁴ EZAB 51/D-II-1: letter from Davidson to Dryander, 11 June 1913.

²²⁵ EZAB 51/I-a-2: round letter from Siegmund-Schultze to the German delegates, 1 July 1914.

²²⁶ Davidson was supposed to lead the delegation, but a sudden illness forced him to surrender his position to Bishop Boyd Carpenter. EZAB 51/D-II-1: letter from Davidson to Spiecker, 11 June 1913; “Second Annual Meeting of the British Council” *The Peacemaker* 1:7 (June 1913), 120; William Boyd Carpenter, *Further Pages of My Life* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1916), 286 – 287; W. H. Dickinson, "Deputation of the British Council to H. M. The German Emperor," *The Peacemaker* 1, no. 9 (September 1913); Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, "Belle Alliance," *Die Eiche* 1, no. 3 (July 1913).
spontaneous benefaction, but the product of Baker’s persistent petition. Since 1909, when his doctor forced him to take a ‘vacation’ for his health, Baker had been gathering support among American Protestant internationalists. We turn now to that story.

2.3 Transatlantic Expansion: The Federal Council of Churches and Carnegie’s Endowment of the Church Peace Union, 1908 – 1913

After Baker and Dickinson conceived of their plan to hold an international church congress during the next Hague Conference, they immediately turned to the churches in Germany. Despite two successful visits in 1908 and 1909, the movement in Germany staggered too much to be truly effective. The German Council hesitated over the idea of obligatory arbitration or an international league of peace. Its members preferred to stress the common spiritual mission of the Protestant powers and insisted that Britain pry herself free from alliances with Russia and France. Furthermore the Council was heavily dependent on Hohenzollern support and possessed no real influence on the churches outside of the ecumenical agencies and universities in Baden, Alsace, and Prussia.

Baker first approached the North American churches with his plan in 1909. The response was a welcome contrast. In 1912 over forty American denominations signaled their desire to participate in the congress. High-ranking churchmen and politicians enthusiastically endorsed the idea, including Presidents William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson. In 1913 Carnegie pledged a ten million dollar endowment specifically for the worldwide promotion of political internationalism within the churches. This generous gift provided Baker and Dickinson with the funds to support Siegmund-Schultze and Die Eiche in Berlin, call a preliminary planning convention in Konstanz in
1914, and stage an even grander church congress in 1915 at The Hague that would rival the spectacular Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910.

Why did the Americans respond so differently? First of all, there was a century-old relationship between the peace movement and evangelicalism. The German Peace Society was formed in 1889 in the midst of fierce cultural wars between Catholics, Protestants, and progressives who were disdainful of all forms of institutional religion. The peace movement failed to draw support from the churches because of its alleged identification with the politics of anti-nationalism and anti-Christianity. This partisan atmosphere did not yet exist in the United States. The American peace movement existed almost entirely within evangelical circles for most of the nineteenth century. Until the rise of international law as a distinct discipline, clerical leadership was the norm. In fact the American Peace Society did not eliminate a doctrinal requirement for membership until 1901.227

The American response can also be explained by looking at organizational factors. Whereas the Protestant churches in Germany remained factionalized and regional, a legacy of the Peace of Augsburg, American Protestantism possessed more national unity, despite having a larger number of different denominations. There were few religious newspapers with national appeal in Germany, and even fewer that adopted internationalism; Martin Rade’s Die Christliche Welt is the sole exception to the rule. By contrast religious periodicals flourished in the United States. Baker’s allies controlled many national newspapers (e.g., The Outlook, The Independent, The Congregationalist, The Biblical World, The Congregationalist, etc.) and had influence at many leading

publishing houses (especially Fleming H. Revell, Macmillan Co., and the Y.M.C.A. press). In the U. S., there also existed a national federation of denominations, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (FCC), which became the central hub through which the World Alliance could reach local churches. Ecumenical federations also played a key role in Britain, where the British Council could claim among its top leadership the head of the London Federation of Free Churches (J. Allen Baker), the British Baptist Union (John Clifford), and the chairman of the Lambeth Conference (Randall Davidson). Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the ecumenical movement depended on national ecumenical bodies that could distribute its literature and ideas at the same time that it funneled local diversity into a representative national voice.

One final point of comparison cannot be overlooked. Pacifism and internationalism were quite fashionable movements in fin-de-siècle America, particularly in New England. Commercial expansion and the current missionary boom lifted many eyes up over the horizon of their own continent. The U. S. engaged in numerous military operations from 1850 to 1913, in fact far more than Prussia/Germany, yet most Americans still considered themselves an essentially peaceful nation, especially when compared to German militarism. American presidents routinely adopted the rhetoric and tenor of internationalism, while congressmen littered the rolls of the peace societies and eagerly attended the annual Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration. In Germany, elected politicians fled from the very sight of pacifism. Even the moderate Verband für Internationale Verständigung attracted only a handful of progressive parliamentarians. The interconnectedness of the pacifist, ecclesiastical, and political worlds astonished Siegmund-Schultze on his first trip to the United States in 1911. He
could not believe that President Taft and several Senators paid close attention to Baker talking about the need for a league of churches. "In America one goes to social conferences without minding whether they are Christian or secular! . . . We Germans are not open to this mixing of religion and mundane life; however this aversion doesn’t exist in New York, not even in London. In view of the situation in America our council must stretch itself. . . ." Unfortunately the German Council remained fixated on Wilhelm II and his ministers.

This contrast in political culture had its effect on the willingness of Protestant internationalists to fight for their view within the ecclesiastical square. Most internationalists belonged to parachurch organizations (e.g., missionary societies, student organizations, social ministry groups, theological academe, etc.) and therefore had tenuous, conditional connections to the institutional churches. In Germany individuals like Julius Richter and Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze refused to promote campaigns for an arbitration treaty or for Peace Sunday because they feared losing support. Yet ecumenical organizations in the United States adopted internationalism in order to bolster their standing with the denominations.

Baker was also able to capitalize on the close relationship between American and British evangelicalism. British writers such as W. T. Stead popularized English movements in the U.S. From 1885 to 1910 Stead’s writing introduced American audiences to such diverse causes as disarmament, the Salvation Army, the settlement movement, the Welsh revival of 1905, and the campaigns to abolish opium and child

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228 EZAB 626/1/12.1: untitled notes/diary of Siegmund-Schultze’s trip to New York and Lake Mohonk, 1911.
prostitution. His journal, the *Review of Reviews*, was published in both New York and London.

Stead was also a committed proponent of arbitration and international law, which occupied more and more of his time after 1895. He covered both Hague Conferences in 1899 and 1907, where he befriended Baker and de Neufville. Afterwards he frequently wrote about the British and German Councils in *The Review of Reviews* and openly sympathized with Baker’s vision of a league of peace. In his most rhapsodic mood he campaigned for Anglo-American union, an increasingly popular opinion among a certain cross-section of political commentator.  

He envisioned an eventual political union of the “English-speaking race” which would begin by the establishment of an institution that would “be to the English-speaking world what the Catholic Church in its prime was to the intelligence of Christendom.” The belief that Britain and America shared a common manifest destiny to pacify the world, a movement that historians now refer to as Anglo-Saxonism, captivated many of Stead’s contemporaries, including Admiral Mahan, Theodore Roosevelt, Arthur Balfour, Joseph Chamberlain, and Josiah Royce. Although Anglo-Saxonism was built upon openly racist concepts, it also blended in easily with the sensibility of self-sacrificial *noblesse oblige* that permeated much of the transatlantic social gospel movement. Like Stead, most Anglo-Saxonists considered Germany as little

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229 See, for example, W. T. Stead, *The Americanization of the World; or, the Trend of the Twentieth Century* (New York: H. Markley, 1902). It is important to note that by 1902 Stead had lost his taste for orthodox Christianity. He now saw the spiritual basis of union in spiritualism and the social gospel. He no longer sought an organized ecumenical union, after become disaffected by the institutional churches, but rather a diffuse ethical spirituality that permeated the entire body politic. It would have been interesting to see if Stead would have been welcome at the Konstanz Church Conference if he had still been alive. The reformer went down with the *Titanic* in 1912 while on his way to speak at a peace conference in Carnegie Hall.

230 Ibid., 330.
more than a junior partner, an attitude that divided the American ecumenical community
in the years leading up to the war.\textsuperscript{231}

In 1893 Stead attended the Chicago World’s Fair and, horrified by the living
conditions of the city’s poor, launched the first explicitly ecumenical campaign in
American history. Stead outlined a vision for a united “Civic Church” that would
combine the various churches of the city into one efficient social power. His book If
Christ Came to Chicago: A Plea for the Union of All Who Love in the Service of All Who
Suffer (1894) mixed detailed descriptions of Chicago’s “organized sin” (complete with a
colored map showing the locations of prominent whorehouses and saloons) with an
fictional meditation on Christ’s arrival at the World’s Fair and personal restoration of the
one true Church.\textsuperscript{232}

W. T. Stead pursued church union because it would recover the fading social
power of Christianity by harnessing it to the practical life of service and sacrifice.”

Stead, who was also an enthusiastic participant in the 1909 Calvin Quadricentennial,
believed he was recovering the “theocratic” mindset of Puritanism, where Christ governs
the nation through the regeneration of its collective soul. “The Mayflower sailed across
the Atlantic, not in order to found a free church in a free state, in the sense of a state in

\textsuperscript{231} Stuart Anderson, Race and Rapprochement: Anglo-Saxonism and Anglo-American Relations, 1895
- 1904 (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University, 1981); Dong-Bai Chai, "Josiah Strong: Apostle of
Anglo-Saxonism and Social Christianity" (University of Texas at Austin, 1972); Edward P. Kohn, This
Kindred People: Canadian-American Relations and the Anglo-Saxon Idea, 1895-1903 (Montreal: McGill-
Queen's University Press, 2004); Paul A. Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule
2002). For an example of a Protestant proposal for Anglo-Saxon union, see Josiah Strong, Expansion
under New World Conditions (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1900).

\textsuperscript{232} Grace Eckley, Maiden Tribute: A Life of W. T. Stead (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2007); Robert Frankel,
Observing America: The Commentary of British Visitors to the United States, 1890 - 1950 (Madison:
University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 57 – 95; Gary Scott Smith, "When Stead Came to Chicago: The
'Social Gospel Novel' and the Chicago Civic Federation," American Presbyterian 1, no. 68 (Fall 1990).
which the church had nothing to say, but rather to found a state in which the church
should be supreme,” he argued at the Chicago Fair. “The community which we call a
State stands more than ever in need of being directed and controlled and dominated by
the moral sense of the community. In other words, the State must have a conscience as
well as a will and a mind.” Stead’s schemes never got off the ground. Yet his belief
that ecumenism was the ticket to a renewed spiritual and social vitality reemerged in
1905 at the creation of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America
(FCCCA).

The FCCCA was not technically a church union, but a church federation. It did
not try to subsume the denominations under a single organization. Instead it tried to
coordinate existing churches into one efficient combination that could “secure influence
for the Churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social conditions of the
people.” Its central ambition consisted of reorganizing the Church so that it could once
again “become the conscience, the interpreter, and the guide of the social order. . . and she
will be no longer weak and helpless. . . .” Participating bodies had to be
“Evangelical,” an intentionally vague word that apparently meant Protestant and
Trinitarian. (The Universalist and Unitarian churches were the only applicants denied
membership.)

233 W. T. Stead, If Christ Came to Chicago!, 329.
234 Elias B. Sanford, ed., Church Federation: Inter-Church Conference on Federation, New York,
November 15 - 21, 1905 (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1906). For earlier proposals for church
federation, see Don Herbert Yoder, “Christian Unity in Nineteenth-Century America,” in A History of the
235 Charles Macfarland, The Progress of Church Federation to 1922 (New York: The Federal Council
of the Churches of Christ in America, 1922), 24.
In 1905 the Federal Council existed only on paper. It had no employees, no offices, no institutional structure, and little agenda, though it claimed to speak for 17 million Protestants. In fact it possessed no ability to speak for the denominations and a meager budget. The project resembled a battleship without a rudder: it had lots of bulk but little direction. In 1908 the assembly tried to rally support for the struggling institution by adopting the Methodist “Social Creed,” a document that endorsed specific social reforms such as the “suppression of the sweating system,” a “living wage,” and “the principles of conciliation and arbitration in industrial dissensions.”

Under Josiah Strong, the Commission on the Church and Social Service provided a public face for the movement. Yet its political progressivism angered many conservative Protestants and failed to win the approval of the denominations. Several leading Protestants threatened to pull their support. In 1911 Elias Sanford, Strong’s close ally, was removed as secretary general. The FCCCA struggled to find a more appealing cause through other commissions on temperance, sabbatarianism and rural evangelism, but it still failed to

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generate the level of support that was needed despite these campaigns.\textsuperscript{237}

In 1910 Frederick Lynch gained stature within the Federal Council by reorienting the struggling organization towards political internationalism. At the time Lynch was a young Congregationalist pastor with impeccable connections within the peace movement. His father-in-law Samuel T. Dutton was an elder statesman of the American Peace Society.\textsuperscript{238} More importantly, Lynch was close to Andrew Carnegie, who maneuvered to have the young pastor appointed to his own church (the Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City) in 1904. Carnegie did not share Lynch’s orthodoxy or his zeal for evangelism, but he admired the young pastor’s strong advocacy of arbitration. In 1906 Lynch, Carnegie, and a handful of other prominent metropolitans founded the New York Peace Society to engage in aggressive public campaigns in the schools and churches of New England. Carnegie offered Lynch a monthly stipend of $1000 to run the Society and bought him a national newspaper, \textit{The Christian Work and Evangelist}, as an outlet for his views. The money freed him from the pulpit. It allowed him to spend more time writing, particularly for the evangelical press, and make connections. In 1907 Lynch attended the Second Hague Conference. He returned to Europe again in 1908 for the London Peace Congress. This financial independence was a major reason for why he could wield such influence within the cashpoor FCCCA; he was able to work for free. From his position as chairman of the Commission on Peace and Arbitration, he was able


to secure control over the entire Federal Council.\textsuperscript{239}

The Commission on Peace and Arbitration was created almost as an afterthought at the first national assembly of the Federal Council in 1908. The Council did pass a resolution supporting “obligatory arbitration” and the creation of a World Court, but the topic took a backseat to domestic and labor issues.\textsuperscript{240} The Commission grew in prestige because of Lynch, who developed its stature among the Washington elite at the annual Conferences on International Arbitration at Lake Mohonk in upstate New York. Lake Mohonk Mountain House is still a stunning lodge, built to resemble a Scottish castle, set back in the Catskill Mountains. Albert Smiley built the lodge in 1869 as a resort for the New York wealthy. Yet, like Baker, he too was a capitalist Quaker who in his later years used his wealth to subsidize his passion for social reform and internationalism. In 1883 President Rutherford B. Hayes appointed Smiley to the Board of Indian Commissioners. That same year Smiley invited his fellow commissioners and private reformers to his hotel during the slow spring season so that they might have the chance to socialize and exchange ideas. His plan worked, and the event became a regular event. In 1895 Smiley copied his own idea and began hosting an annual conference on arbitration. Lake Mohonk created social connections between the leadership of the peace societies,


\textsuperscript{240} Macfarland, \textit{Christian Unity in the Making}, 47.
academic specialists, and the reigning powers of the Republican Party. The lakeside golf courses had a particular reputation as a place to see and be seen within the movement. In 1907, for instance, attendees included eight cabinet secretaries, ten Senators, four Supreme Court justices, nine governors, eighteen university presidents and sixty newspaper editors.241

Lake Mohonk played a crucial role in the origin of the World Alliance. Lynch first went there in 1903. At the 1906 conference, Andrew Carnegie made the decision to subsidize Lynch’s work and underwrite his voyage to London in the summer of 1908, where he likely first met J. Allen Baker. After Baker’s doctor forced him into vacation Lynch convinced him to join him at Lake Mohonk in the spring. At this “Garden of Eden,” Baker described the visit of the German churchmen to London. He also pressed President Taft, there in the audience, to take the initiative for a trilateral pact of peace.

I believe that the peace of the world is practically dependent upon three great peoples – the United States, Germany and Great Britain. . . .I want for the moment that the United States be in the middle. . . .We look to you to lead, and if your President at Washington, His Excellency, the President of the United States would say to His Majesty of Germany and His Majesty of England, ‘Take my hand and let me lead you into that brotherhood and into that condition that you ought to be in as Christian nations,’ I think they would gladly accept that proffered hand and would be delighted to let the United States take the lead and their President be the great leader in this movement.242

In essence this was the same request that Baker had tearfully approached Wilhelm II with earlier that year. This too was part of the ecumenical movement’s search for a strong


statesman who could translate the religious ideal of Christian brotherhood into a secular League of Peace.

At Lake Mohonk Lynch introduced his guest to many individuals who, just five years later, would have a hand in the Konstanz Conference. Baker’s new allies included Hamilton Holt, editor of The Independent; Edwin and Lucia Ames Mead, the original power couple of the American peace movement; and Andrew Carnegie. The latter was apparently quite taken by his fellow industrialist. Baker’s strong defense of the Kaiser likely appealed to Carnegie, who also placed the highest trust in the Emperor’s moral character. Both men were also among the first proponents of a League of Peace. At that time the gilded pacifist bankrolled a substantial portion of the internationalist movement. At that first meeting in 1909 Baker first planted in Carnegie the idea of a multi-million dollar endowment to sustain an international league of churches.

Baker’s health prevented him from returning to Mohonk in 1910. Yet two other

243 Other Protestant internationalists at the 1909 Lake Mohonk Conference included Charles Jefferson, pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle in New York City; Lyman Abbott, editor of The Outlook; Arthur J. Brown, director of Presbyterian missions in China and chairman of the American delegation to the Edinburgh Missionary Conference; William Adams Brown, a future power in the Federal Council of Churches; Cephas Brainerd, secretary-general of the International YMCA; Francis E. Clark, founder of the international Christian Endeavour youth movement; Nehemiah Boynton, pastor of the First Congregational Church in Detroit; George Nasmyth, future European secretary of the World Alliance; and William H. Short, future secretary of the League to Enforce Peace; James Bryce, British ambassador and Dickinson’s future partner in the British League of Nations Society, and V. K. Wellington Koo, the future Chinese ambassador to the League of Nations judge, were also present.

244 Carnegie unveiled his proposal for a League in 1905: Andrew Carnegie, A League of Peace: A Rectorial Address Delivered to the Students in the University of St. Andrews, 17th October, 1905 (Boston: Ginn, 1906).

245 His larger donations included $1.5 million for the Hague Peace Palace in 1903 (current home of the International Court of Justice), $750,000 for the Pan-American Union Building in 1906 (current headquarters of the Organization of American States in Washington, D.C.), and $200,000 for a Central American Court of Justice in 1908 (which closed in 1918). On top of this Carnegie gave at least $50,000 in smaller grants and stipends every year from 1900 to 1910. Marchand, The American Peace Movement and Social Reform, 1898 - 1918, 115. For a broad view of Carnegie’s place in the peace movement, see David S. Patterson, "Andrew Carnegie's Quest for World Peace," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 114, no. 5 (October 1970).
members of the British Council, Rev. William Thomas and W. Moore Ede, came and regaled the Americans with the story of their visit to Berlin. They developed deeper ties with evangelical leaders like William Jennings Bryan and John Mott, both of whom met with Baker, Dickinson, and Davidson that summer on their way to the Edinburgh Missionary Conference. Thomas and Ede also made concrete plans with Lynch to transform the Federal Council of Churches into an American analogue of the British and German Councils.

Lynch’s decision reoriented the FCCCA and brought it badly needed credibility. The struggling organization now had allies in Europe and a political cause that actually attracted political conservatives and evangelical businessmen. After 1910 prominent individuals from Lake Mohonk publicly associated themselves with the FCCCA. President Taft addressed the Council in 1910 on the topic of Christian brotherhood;

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247 William Jennings Bryan’s speech at Lake Mohonk concerned the necessity of Christian belief for the success of international arbitration. William Jennings Bryan, The Forces That Make for Peace: Addresses at the Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1912). (Bryan’s repeated references to his outsider status – “I have been trying for a number of years to arrange to be in this place at one of these Conferences…”; “I am not sufficiently acquainted with your program…” – reinforce the notion that Lake Mohonk was virtually a Republican affair.)

meanwhile the Council endorsed Taft’s Anglo-American arbitration treaty. Large denominations such as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) returned to the fold once the Social Creed retreated into the background. The pitiful financial status of the Council improved. The organization reported debt after its first two years of operation, despite the fact that it had neither an office nor one single salaried employee. However, beginning in 1910, the FCCCA was able to make its payments thanks to increased donations. In 1911 it contracted office space in New York and hired its first employee.

In 1911 Lynch handpicked an old friend from seminary to become that employee. Charles Macfarland had not had any previous experience with ecumenical work. Yet he was adept with European languages and a passionate believer in the application of

249 Taft’s foreign policy is often derided as “Dollar Diplomacy,” a term that obscures his orthodox internationalism. Most internationalists believed that the globalization of capitalism and the intertwining of currencies laid the foundations of peace. Because capital depended on international trade, states with modern economies that went to war would face economic dislocation. Taft’s resume included the successful conclusion of the insurrections in Cuba and the Philippines, trade treaties with China and Japan, and the opening of diplomatic relations with the Vatican. As President he invested a lot of his clout in an arbitration treaty between Britain and the U. S. Although the treaty was ratified by Parliament, it was eventually defeated in the U. S. Senate. David H. Burton, William Howard Taft: Confident Peacemaker (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2004).

Taft’s presidential career was in close cooperation with the Federal Council of Churches, despite the fact that as a Unitarian, Taft was not allowed to be a member of the PHS. For Taft’s defense of his faith to the ecumenical movement, see William Howard Taft, A Stateman’s View of Christian Work Abroad (New York: Laymen’s Missionary Movement, 1908), William Howard Taft, The Religious Convictions of an American Citizen (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1913).


Taft was president of the League to Enforce Peace during World War I and then Supreme Court Justice in the 1920s. This connection was passed on to his sons, Charles Phelps Taft, who became the first lay president of the PHS in 1947. Since the 1980s this relationship has dissolved. Taft’s grandson, Bob Taft, the governor of Ohio from 1998 to 2007, has a strong association with the religious right. Ishbel Ross, An American Family: The Tafts, 1676 to 1964 (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1964).

250 In 1909 – 1910, the Federal Council of Churches took in only $13,000. They had to take out a loan for $5500 to keep operations open. Only two $500 gifts came from wealthy donors (Cleveland H. Dodge and John D. Rockefeller). Macfarland, Christian Unity in the Making, 54 – 58; Sanford, "Report of Progress for 1911," 17 – 19.
Christianity to the social and political realms. Macfarland prided himself on being a self-made man. He grew up in poverty in Boston, the product of a marriage between a Baptist runaway and a Scandinavian sailor. Six of his seven siblings died in infancy. His father, who named him after King Charles XII of Sweden, was a construction worker and a self-taught linguist fluent in Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Arabic, and Sanskrit. He schooled his children at home in these exotic tongues until he suffered a work-related fatality.

Macfarland, only twelve years old at the time, dropped out of school to work: hauling dry goods, hawking newspapers, keeping simple accounting books. He was intelligent but unfocused, and he struggled with an enervating asthmatic condition that kept from working at any one place for too long. During stretches of unemployment he finished high school and hung out at the local YMCA. Macfarland devoted his life to Christ at age nine, but he gained his first intellectual taste of faith through the Y’s informal study sessions. In 1892 Macfarland accepted a position with the Y to start and oversee similar study groups throughout northern New England. Then he became a traveling lay minister for the poorer Congregational churches in Boston. In 1894 Yale University offered him a scholarship; in six years he earned his B.D. and Ph.D. in New Testament studies.251

After seminary, Macfarland cultivated his self-image as a maverick. The young minister seemed preternaturally compelled to adopt grand ideas and then fight for them against his rivals within the Congregational Church. He enjoyed a feisty reputation by arbitrating strikes, demonstrating for prohibition and labor reform in the inner cities, inviting rabbis and priests to give the Sunday morning sermon, and championing biblical

criticism. At Yale Macfarland had soaked in German scholarship under a visiting professor named Adolf Deissmann, who in 1910 was a founding member of the German Council and who would become one the mainstays of the German League of Nations Society. The American novice navigated his way through the networks of European academia with Deissmann’s help. In the seven years after his graduation Macfarland took six trips to the Continent. In 1909 he returned to Yale as a professor, developing the seminary’s first course in “practical theology.”

In the winter of 1910 Macfarland casually questioned Lynch about the viability of the plodding FCCCA. Lynch responded with an invitation to Mohonk.

The 1911 Lake Mohonk Conference represents the first time that the American, British, and German churchmen all met together to discuss a common strategy. Lynch introduced Macfarland to Baker, Siegmund-Schultze, and key members of the executive committee of Federal Council of Churches.

For many of them this was their first exposure to the well-heeled Mohonk set. The primary draw was the third day of the conference, which had been given over to Lynch and Baker to organize around the theme of “The Churches and International Peace.” The audience, which included President Taft and half of his Cabinet, received Baker’s plan for an ecumenical congress during the summer of 1915 with alacrity. In turn, this reception impressed many of the visitors, including Siegmund-Schultze, Macfarland, and the hierarchy of the FCCCA. On the

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252 Macfarland designed the course to bring seminarians into regular contact with unionists, industrial leaders, and social scientists from outside the university. It was later taken as a model by other seminaries. Charles Macfarland, ed., The Christian Ministry and the Social Order (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1909).

253 Baron de Neufville and Friedrich Wilhelm Simoleit, the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Berlin, accompanied Siegmund-Schultze. Invitations were also extended to other Berliners in the German Council (Bodo Voigts, Ernst von Dryander, Friedrich Lahusen, and Hermann von Soden), but they declined for unknown reasons. Meanwhile, on the British side, John Clifford and F. B. Meyer came with Baker.
final day the executive committee appointed Macfarland as its first full-time employee. It also created the Commission of Peace and Arbitration, intended as the functional equivalent of the groups in London and Berlin, and handed control over to two twenty-something pastoral activists from Yale.254

Macfarland and Lynch immediately reoriented the American ecumenical movement away from the social gospel towards political internationalism. Macfarland accepted high positions in the YMCA and the International Missionary Conference in order to put forth a more coordinated effort on behalf of internationalist issues. He also became a regular presenter at the American Peace Society, the American Federation of Labor and the American Academy of Political Science. The FCCCA successfully instituted both an Arbitration Sunday (first Sunday in April) and a Peace Sunday (the Sunday before Christmas) in its member denominations. The relationship between Taft and the Federal Council deepened as both fought for the President’s Anglo-American Treaty in 1911; in one of their White House appearances, a delegation from the British Council presented thousands of supportive petitions from London-based churches. Meanwhile Baker invited Macfarland to meet the major players in London and Berlin.255

Looking back in 1933, Macfarland admitted that the Federal Council’s turn

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towards internationalism was “frankly and consciously opportunistic. It followed very frequently the line of least resistance.”

The reorientation under Lynch and Macfarland saved the struggling institution. Relatively quickly, the Federal Council experienced its first numerical growth, its first official recognition by foreign churches and other ecumenical agencies, the patronage of Taft’s administration, and, of even more importance, its first debt-free year.

By tabling the Social Creed, Lynch and Macfarland kept the denominations from dissolving the FCCCA at the quadrennial assembly in 1912. Every four years the denominations of the FCCCA met to approve budgets, ratify the labors of its leadership, and set an agenda for the future. From beginning to end Lynch and Macfarland steered the assembly around plans for the Third Hague Conference. James MacDonald, editor of the *Toronto Globe*, outlined in his plenary address the recent movement for church union in Canada and the popularity of the British Council north of the forty-eighth parallel. The Protestant churches had to unite themselves in order to assert Christ’s dominion over the world’s governments and bind together the Protestant nations in a unified League of Peace. “The crisis in the world situation requires that the churches of America shall

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256 Charles Macfarland, *Christian Unity in Practice and Prophecy* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), 60. Most historians of the PHS downplay the tenuous existence of the organization and thus overstate its ideological and/or theological foundations. The Council’s primary concern was survival and therefore, like any good business seeking a reliable consumer base, it gravitated towards issues that attracted an audience and donors. The peace historian C. Roland Marchand does the best job of understanding this dynamic: “The Federal Council almost instinctively seized upon those issues that would keep the churches abreast of popular current movements and give the Council something to do without outlining its constituent bodies. A mild form of social action and the peace movement conveniently met these specifications.” Marchand, *The American Peace Movement and Social Reform*, 236.

257 During Macfarland’s first four years with the PHS, the budget increased from $5500 (which it could not meet) to over $100,000. The overwhelming majority of these new funds came from private donors, in particular, John D. Rockefeller and Cyrus McCormick. Frederick Lynch, “A Church Peace League,” in *Report of the Eighteenth Annual Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration, May 15th, 16th and 17th, 1912*, ed. H. C. Phillips (New York: Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration, 1912); Macfarland, *Christian Unity in the Making*, 78, 98.
Christianize not only the nations and peoples, but shall civilize and Christianize international relations. . . . The churches of America, Britain and Germany can create a Triple Alliance of Christian peace against which the powers of darkness cannot prevail.  

If this League was already in existence, MacDonald went on to say, they could have prevented the current Balkan War and “compelled” the Ottoman Empire to submit before the jurisdiction of a “supreme court of nations.”

Now the churches must look ahead and fight to establish a League by the beginning of the Third Hague Conference in three years.

The 1912 assembly represented a permanent “reorientation” of the Federal Council of Churches that transformed it into the strongest public voice for international government in the U. S. for the next thirty years. At its conclusion the delegates elected Macfarland general secretary and increased his salary. The assembly charged both him and Lynch to cooperate fully with the British and German Councils until the next meeting in 1916. The notoriously parsimonious body even approved a second full-time employee to forward their new mission: Sidney Gulick, an ex-missionary from Japan with

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258 Macfarland, ed., Christian Unity at Work, 235 – 236.

259 Ibid., 205 – 206.

260 Macfarland’s predecessor Elias Sanford was not even present, allegedly for health reasons. The presidency also changed hands; they replaced the unpopular Bishop Eugene Hendrix with Shailer Mathews of the University of Chicago. Hendrix believed in non-violence and remained deeply skeptical about any proposals for a League of Peace that would commit the U. S. to foreign military engagements on behalf of an international court. Mathews was a better candidate to lead the Federal Council, not only because he lacked Hendrix’s pacifism, but also because his Chicago locale left the daily affairs of the central offices in New York firmly in the hands of Lynch and Macfarland.

In general, the PHS employed well-known, recognizable personalities to its top posts that lent the movement respect. More often than not, they lived in the Midwest and spent little time or attention on their duties, except for at national assemblies. Actual power resided at the secretarial level. For example, although Junius Remensnyder, an Civil War veteran and senior statesman of American Lutheranism, was the chairman of the Commission of Peace and Arbitration for a decade, Lynch determined its policy, communicated with its members, and wrote its literature. Thus, Macfarland was the central pillar of the Federal Council until his retirement in 1930, but he served under a succession of presidents who lent their name to the organization.
expertise in sociology and interracial relations.  

At the close of 1912, Baker and Dickinson had reason to feel proud about what they had accomplished in the past five years. In the U. S. the FCCCA had created an appetite for political internationalism in the churches. Lynch and Macfarland were already recruiting candidates for an international planning committee that would meet as early as the spring of 1914. In Britain the hierarchies of both the Nonconformist and Anglican churches had roused substantial support among the laity in several petition campaigns. In both countries the movement could claim support from substantive politicians such as Prime Minister Asquith, Conservative party leader Lord Cecil, and President Taft. The movement was also rapidly expanding into Canada after several visits by Allen Baker and John Clifford. 

Yet, at the same time, two issues threatened to annul their plans for the Third Hague Conference. First and foremost, the German Council carried an obstinate frustration with the British Council about their country’s foreign policy of ‘encirclement.’ With the exception of Siegmund-Schultze and de Neufville, the leadership remained focused on a British alliance and only tepidly interested in anything more substantial. Harnack spoke for the majority of his fellow Germans when he declared that the attempt to prevent war in Europe was a “waste of energy”; his goal remained focused on preventing Russia and France from annihilating Continental Protestantism. The German Council felt it had a joint mission with Britain to be the ‘salt and light’ of the world and

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262 WCCA 212.021: “Second Annual Meeting of the British Council,”; W. H. Dickinson, "An Imperial Council Movement," The Peacemaker 1, no. 9 (December 1913); L. E. Horning, "Canada and Conciliation," The Peacemaker 1, no. 9 (December 1913).
to promote ecumenism and international law, but not at the expense of German security.

Originally Baker and Dickinson had hoped to hold a planning session with American, British, and German churchmen, both Catholic and Protestant, in Berlin in 1913. They likely hoped to stimulate interest in the German churches by meeting in their capital. They also wanted to retain the Kaiser’s interest and patronage by holding the meeting during the jubilee celebrations of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Friedenskaiser’s rule. Yet the diplomatic crises of 1911-1912, combined with the frustration of those who, like Harnack, lost their faith in Anglo-German harmony, scuttled their plans. After 1912 Wilhelm himself remained aloof from the ecumenical movement. At one time the Foreign Office had promised to fund an ecumenical meeting, but by 1913 this offer had been withdrawn. As seen in the last section, a delegation of British churchmen did come to Berlin for the jubilee, which went a long way towards softening the opposition. Siegmund-Schultz wrote Dickinson afterwards that the German Council had experienced yet another change of heart. They were now ready to recommit to an international conference, even though the Kaiser and the Foreign Office still refused to host the event. Desperate for funds, Siegmund-Schultz turned to Luise von Baden and, for the first time, Konstanz was floated as a locale. Only afterwards did the German Council signal its willingness to attend an international conference, even though because the Foreign Office remained noncommittal.²⁶³

Still, the second unresolved issue for Baker and Dickinson was the financial question. How would they pay for an ecumenical congress? Luise could help somewhat

with Konstanz, but she did not have the resources to give the movement its independence. Baker still felt that Carnegie was the natural choice to foot the costs. Unfortunately Carnegie had retired from philanthropy. In December he turned over $10 million in steel bonds to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP). Henceforth a board of trustees, culled from Lake Mohonk and the Republican hierarchy, would have the responsibility of sorting through the stream of petitions for grants and stipends. Carnegie referred Baker to the Endowment and even promised to put in a good word for him. If he did, it did not help. The trustees turned Baker down. Lynch failed as well to win a grant from the Endowment.\footnote{SCPC, CDGA (World Alliance papers), 1:5, “Battin report for CPU, 1917.”}

Fortunately, this was not the first time that the Carnegie Endowment had gone against the wishes of its benefactor. According to Larry Fabian, the gilded pacifist regretted handing over his fortune almost immediately. The CEIP board consisted of politicians, businessmen and social scientists with a dim view of unproven organizations. They regarded moralist, religious, or sentimental opposition to war as unscientific. Finally they held a more critical view of Germany and Wilhelm II. Carnegie became upset when the CEIP refused to substantially support Lynch’s work with the FCCCA. He made personal allowances to the German Peace Society after the CEIP dropped it in favor of the Verband für Internationale Verständigung. Yet the final straw came when the trustees’ refused to support William Howard Taft’s Anglo-American treaty. The idealistic tycoon held Taft in as high opinion as he did the Kaiser, proclaiming in 1911 that the President was now “among rulers the leader of the holy crusade against man
Carnegie became enraged when the CEIP remained tepid towards the treaty and then supported Roosevelt’s bid to defeat Taft in upcoming election. When both the treaty and Taft’s presidency died in the fall of 1912, Carnegie cut ties with many of Roosevelt’s supporters.

In the meantime Carnegie observed that the Federal Council of Churches steadfastly supported Taft throughout the arbitration debate. He was impressed by the growing delegations at Lake Mohonk and likely moved by the close relationship between Baker, the German Council, and Carnegie’s beloved Hohenzollerns. Lynch continued to hound his patron for money. He told Baker and Dickinson that he “saw Mr. Carnegie practically every week, and during the last two years, as we have walked and talked together, I have kept him thoroughly in touch with the fine work the churches have been doing during the past two years for the Peace Movement, and I have gradually seen dawning in him the consciousness that after all the churches are the greatest moral force in the world.” Carnegie soon agreed. He told Lynch in 1912 that he had “been feeling more and more that it is to the churches we must look for the bringing of peace.”

When Lynch wrote his first book for the FCCCA, a short work entitled *The Peace Problem: The Task of the Twentieth Century*, Carnegie was so involved that the young

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pastor joked that he should be named as a co-author. The philanthropist paid for the New York Peace Society to send a copy to every clergymen in the state.268

Baker submitted a detailed plan in 1912 for an “international church peace society” with “a separate Council in each country with a Central Committee consisting of representatives from such Councils. . . .”269 Carnegie remained noncommittal, mostly because of his own religious convictions. As a pragmatist he knew the churches could be potentially strong allies of the peace movement, admitting to Lynch in the course of their conversations that: “Of all other organization [the churches] should be the most interested in this cause. Then, too they have the people. They have audiences already made, and that is a great thing. They are there ever Sunday.”270 However he possessed a strong allergy to the biblicism of orthodox evangelicalism. In particular he found the violent histories of the Old Testament to be “inhuman,” “revolting,” and “contrary to the spirit of Christianity.”271 He hated “sectarianism” and could not fathom the differences between the various churches of Germany and the United States. In his memoirs of Carnegie, Lynch recounted that he would never give money to anything that had a “credal” or “denominational” foundation, a category that included the Federal Council of Churches.

Carnegie’s hesitations did not vanish until Wilhelm’s jubilee. In Berlin he met several times with Baker, attended meetings of the German Council, and noticed that Wilhelm seemed to once again hold the movement in some favor. On the spot he agreed

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270 Lynch, Personal Recollections of Andrew Carnegie, 156.

271 Ibid., 170 – 172.
to cover the expenses for *Die Eiche* for five years. A week later at the opening ceremony of the Hague Peace Palace, Baker and Dickinson again pressed their case in person.

When Carnegie returned to New York, he informed Lynch that he was ready to give him a second endowment worth $10 million.²⁷²

Carnegie’s gift came with strings attached. He created a new organization called the Church Peace Union (CPU) to oversee his endowment. First of all, the nonsectarian Carnegie refused to endow the Federal Council of Churches because it was a self-declared evangelical organization. He insisted that the board of trustees be monolithically American and yet be composed of representatives from each major American faith. He also refused to give control of the money to foreigners, a move that prohibited members of the British and German Councils from exercising any direct control over the fund. Finally Carnegie personally selected each trustee in consultation with Lynch and his personal pastor, W. P. Merrill. None possessed any relationship to the CEIP, a fact that Hamilton Holt interpreted as a disinheritance of his former endowment.²⁷³ The final list of trustees closely resembled the Federal Council’s Commission on Peace and Arbitration (e.g., Charles Macfarland, John Mott, Hamilton Holt, Charles Jefferson, Shailer Mathews, Junius Remensnyder, Arthur J. Brown, Francis Edward Clark, etc.), plus several religious leaders who were not Protestant (e.g., Rabbi


Siegmund-Schultze felt grateful for the financial endowment of *Die Eiche*, but kept the source of the funds a secret for fear of the public backlash against foreign-funded peace societies. EZAB 51/D-II-l: letter from Siegmund-Schultze to Dickinson, 21 June 1913.”

Stephen S. Wise, Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch, James Cardinal Gibbons, James Joseph Walsh, Edwin and Lucia Ames Mead, etc.). (A complete list is available in the appendices.)

Carnegie’s conditions created two fatal flaws into the World Alliance that haunted it until its eventual collapse in 1946. They made the foreign councils financial dependents of the American-dominated Church Peace Union. From its inception most of the CPU’s monies remained in the U. S. After 1915, when the CPU spent more on promoting the League of Nations than its European allies combined, its money was spent purely on domestic propaganda. Even in the 1920s, when the European councils desperately needed funds to survive the onslaught of inflation and political unpopularity, the CPU lagged on its overseas commitments. Secondly the interreligious board of the CPU quarreled over the Protestant composition of the World Alliance. On the one hand, Catholic and Jewish trustees objected to the majority’s assumption that the CPU was little more than a funnel for Protestant internationalism from the very first meeting on.274 On the other hand, European ecumenical leaders resented the CPU’s perpetual demands that they accept all faiths into the World Alliance.

At the last minute Carnegie also hedged on the amount of the endowment. He worried that the CPU might become too independent once Carnegie surrendered control, just as the first Carnegie Endowment had. The actual endowment was only one-fifth of the $10 million originally promised. Lynch, Macfarland and Baker pleaded with Carnegie to keep to the full amount, but without results.275


The bonds traded hands in an informal ceremony on 10 February 1914 at the steel magnate’s New York mansion. Baker came from Britain, even though Dickinson remained behind (as usual) in London to attend to his duties in Parliament and on the King’s Privy Council. Carnegie lectured the trustees on the importance of peace for the future of the three Teutonic peoples and read out the new charter of the CPU word by word. Afterwards Lynch found him “as happy as a child,” full of jokes and breezy optimism about the prospect of perpetual peace.

Baker left straightaway. He and Siegmund-Schultze were still finalizing their renewed plans to hold a planning conference in Germany, this time in Baden. Siegmund-Schultze wanted to have it during the first weekend in August. They had only eighteen months to execute their plans.

2.4 Expansion in Europe and the Rush to Konstanz, 1913 – 1914

The first meeting of the Church Peace Union ended in dissension over its relationship to the Federal Council of Churches. Despite Carnegie’s interference, Lynch and Macfarland assumed that once the endowment was complete, they would be able to spend the money as they saw fit. However they did not account for the Catholic, Jewish, and liberal-Protestant elements of the board. At its first few meetings the Catholic trustees filibustered on transferring any funds to London or Berlin until their plans

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included European Catholics. They also insisted on the creation of a separate American Council of the World Alliance that would be organizationally distinct from the FCC Commission on Peace and Arbitration.278

The CPU’s position put additional stress on Baker and Dickinson. Not only did they have to garner support for the Konstanz Conference from the Protestant churches of Europe in just a year and a half with tenuous finances; they had to establish fresh connections with the Roman Catholic Church as well.

Baker and Dickinson visited the Fédération protestante de France in Paris in April 1914. The situation there resembled conditions in the United States. The French denominations formed a national federation in 1905 based on the principles of ‘social Christianity.’ This organization, committed *a priori* to social-political activism, allowed sympathetic French pastors to respond quickly and efficiently to Baker and Dickinson’s proposal. Moreover the French churches had a long history of working with peace societies. As seen last chapter with the *Monument internationale de la Réformation*, French and Genevan pastors interpreted modern political internationalism as a contemporary manifestation of their religious heritage. The *Association de la Paix par le Droit* grew out of evangelical student study circles in 1887 and evolved into one of the largest internationalist organizations in France. Both its president, Théodore Ruysse, and its general-secretary, Jacques Dumas, would become regular figures both in the

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World Alliance and the French League of Nations Society in the decades to come. Since the Bourbon Restoration in 1815, Protestants and secular progressives shared a commitment to liberal republicanism based on their joint resistance to Catholic monarchism. Unlike in Germany, French Protestants worried about associating with the royalist remnants of the French army (especially after the Dreyfus Affair) and had no concerns about public alliances with the political left. Moreover, French socialism was not nearly so tied to Marxist orthodoxy, economic determinism, or anticlericalism.

The French churches responded to Baker and Dickinson’s plans with alacrity. Fifty Protestants formed a French Council of the World Alliance under the jurisdiction of Jacques Dumas, an international jurist and former representative at the Second Hague Conference. Other prominent pastors agreed on the spot to come to Konstanz the next summer, including Henri Babut (pastor of the largest Reformed Church in Paris), Senator Eugène Réveillaud, Elie-Joël Gounelle (editor of the popular evangelical newspaper *Revue du Christianisme Social*), and Jules Jézéquel (socialist pastor and editor of the social gospel journal *Evangile et Liberté*).

The French also helped Baker and Dickinson find potential allies within the Catholic Church. The two British M.P.s immediately met with two possible recruits:

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279 Sandi Cooper, the best Anglophone historian of the Continental peace movement, ascribes the following numbers for *La paix par le droit* in 1902: 1200 dues-paying members, three hundred of which were students; three thousand subscribers to its journal; and ten thousand copies of its *Almanach de la paix* sold annually. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism*, 64. The *Fédération protestante* also had its own peace society, the *Société chrétienne des amis de la paix*, though many peace societies and many politicians with an internationalist mindset were disproportionately Protestant.


281 EZAB 51/D-I-b-2: “Notes of the Visit of Mr. Allen Baker and Mr. Dickinson to Paris April 4 – 8, 1914.”
Cardinal Léon-Adolphe Amette, the Archbishop of Paris, and Charles-Henri-Célestin Gibier, the Bishop of Versailles. Yet both bishops felt that the stakes were too high to merit their involvement. The French laity would reject any cooperative venture with German Protestants. Furthermore, because the Vatican was denied representation at both Hague conferences, many French Catholics identified that movement as a secularist-liberal conspiracy to eliminate the papacy in modern diplomatic affairs.

The French Council then provided Baker and Dickinson with the name of a Belgian engineer with an interest in pacifism. The lead proved providential. In 1911 Alfred-Marie Vanderpol founded the first international federation of Catholic peace societies in Brussels and, like his new friends, was in the process of starting chapters across Europe. Vanderpol introduced Baker and Dickinson to his bishop, Désiré Cardinal Mercier, who pledged his cooperation on one condition. Because the papacy forbade Catholics from attending ecumenical and interreligious congresses, Mercier would not be able to come to Konstanz. Therefore he proposed instead to hold a parallel conference in Liège for Catholic internationalists during the following week. Baker

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immediately told Lynch the good news. The CPU agreed to pay for both conferences and sent Dickinson the money.²⁸³

Baker and Dickinson spent that entire summer soliciting other churches’ participation. For each nationality, they tried to identify two or three key leaders in the position to extend the movement into the local churches. In Switzerland they relied on Louis Emery, a professor of systematic theology at the University of Lausanne, and John Louis Nuelsen, a bishop of the German Methodist Church located in Zurich. The council in Holland began under J. A. Cramer, a Dutch Reformed minister at The Hague and Calvin scholar; J. W. Pont, a Lutheran church historian at the University of Amsterdam; and Herman Rutgers, a Liberal politician active in the Dutch Y.M.C.A.²⁸⁴

It appears as if none of these new recruits tried to find Catholics for the Liège Conference. Yet poor Siegmund-Schultze was expected to produce Catholic representation from Berlin. In 1913 there were no German Catholics in Vanderpol’s organization.²⁸⁵ Siegmund-Schultze failed to recruit any Catholics in large part because he knew very few of them. At one point he was desperate enough to invite a professor of

²⁸³ EZAB 51/D-I-a-1-1: letter from Alfred-Marie Vanderpol to Dickinson, [?]. Cardinal Mercier was a maverick bishop frequently on the cutting edge of theological and intellectual debates with the conservative papacy. By 1914 he was a strong advocate of closer church unity with the Church of England and an admirer of the Slavophile branch of Russian Orthodoxy. For an overview of Mercier, see Roger Aubert, *Le Cardinal Mercier (1851 - 1926): Un prélèt d'avant-garde* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses universitaires de Louvain, 1994); John Gade, *The Life of Cardinal Mercier* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934).


²⁸⁵ Roger Chickering notes that German Catholics were “conspicuously absent” from the organization. Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and a World without War*, 197.
Catholic theology whom he had never even met. He had found the address in the phone book.\(^{286}\)

Siegmund-Schultze had less difficulty with his fellow Protestants, though he still struggled to overcome the social and political divisions that perpetually hamstrung the movement. Siegmund-Schultze invited both the core of the German Council (e.g., Dryander, Deissmann, Rade, Richter, Spiecker, Schreiber, Lahusen, etc.) and pastors associated with German Peace Society (e.g., Otto Umfrid, Friedrich Curtius, Albert Nicole, etc.) Old animosities seemed to have been forgotten at a preliminary rally in the main square of the University of Berlin. Harnack recycled his speeches on the spiritual kingship of England and Germany alongside Walter Schücking, Otfried Nippold, and other leaders of the Verband für Internationale Verständigung. The presence of the Empress and Luise von Baden signified the return of the royal blessing.\(^{287}\) Luise’s support was critical for Siegmund-Schultze. The Grand Duchess arranged the accommodations in Konstanz and lobbied the Badenese churches to fully support the endeavor. During this time she grew extremely close to Allen and Elizabeth Baker, who frequently stayed with her in the Bodensee while traveling around Europe. When Baker and Dickinson could not afford the time to travel to Scandinavia, Luise drafted Queen

\(^{286}\) EZAB 51/D-I-a-1-2; letter from Siegmund-Schultze to Professor Fassbinder, 3 July 1914; EZAB 51/D-I-a-1-2; letter from Siegmund-Schultze to Dickinson, 22 May 1914; EZAB 51/D-I-a-1-2; letter from Vanderpol to Dickinson, 22 May 1914; EZAB 51/D-I-a-1-2; letter from Vanderpol to Siegmund-Schultze, 31 May 1914

\(^{287}\) EZAB 51/I-a-1-2; letter from Siegmund-Schultze to Luise von Baden and Richard von Chelius, 3 July 1914.
Viktoria of Sweden, her daughter, who then arranged for delegations to come from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. 288

Yet opposition to Anglo-American internationalism still ran underneath the apparent accord. Harnack resented the inclusion of French Protestants. Others were disturbed by the renewed relationship with the Verband and the German Peace Society. The British agenda stated that the primary aim of the conference was the foundation of a “congress of churches” [Kirchengemeinschaft] that could exert an influence on the government at the Third Hague Conference. Yet its secondary aims included less appetizing topics such as cooperation with the secular peace movement, interracial reconciliation, the binding authority of the Hague court, and the promotion of “the advancing organization of the world.” 289

Some Germans remained leery about any ecumenical union with churches that they considered unorthodox. Even more agreed with Harnack about the conspiratorial nature of the international peace movement. They did not want to tie the hands of the Kaiser to an international community that wanted to weaken, or even eradicate, the German Empire. Karl Axenfeld, an executive officer of the International Missionary Council, listed all of these reasons in a long rejection letter dated July 13, 1914.

I am a student of Treitschke. I don’t believe that humanity will ever develop to the point that it will be able to do without the cleansing effects of war, and I announce that these conscientious efforts for peace will soon have catastrophic results, especially for Germany. . . . The refinement of our sentiments and the elevated influence of foreign civilizations on our lives that has led the lower classes


along the pathway to international brotherhood, is in truth threatening to eradicate the European nations’ ability to assert themselves. No nation is as endangered by these people and their false visions of peace as we are. . .because of our geographical surroundings and our history, which threatens to hoist us up on a unsheathed, sharp sword. For me there is something increasingly suspicious about England and America’s attempts to satiate us with these peace efforts, as if the stars of peace could just be pulled down to the ground; meanwhile there has been no more peaceable European nation than us.

Not that this meant that Axenfeld wanted to resign from the German Council. He wanted to work for Anglo-German understanding, as long as it remained distinct from the utopianism of the peace movement.

I will be happy to cooperate if there is some particular task for us, a misunderstanding or an anxiety between our nations to clear up. However I will have nothing to do with generic formulas of peace, and I will never be able to believe that the deputies of the churches should be writing pledges to these generic peace proposals. . . .I want to stress instead the obligation of our nation to defend itself from various foreign powers. . . .I hope we will always be, in the narrow sense of the terms, a warring, yea, even a war-loving, nation. I have not once entertained the hope that these discussions in Konstanz will bring me any more clarity about this.290

Siegmund-Schultze reassured the delegates in July 1914 that a church congress would “be above political and party organizations and be completely neutral on issues of domestic policy.” He insisted that the theme of the conference was not “the infusion of pacifistic spirituality into the churches,” but rather “what position the broader church should adopt towards the problem of peace and of friendly relations between the nations.”291

The shape of the conference was coming into view. Despite their suspicions, the German Council was sending thirty individuals. Smaller delegations ranging from two to six persons would arrive from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Holland, and

291 EZAB 51/I-a-1-2: letter from Siegmund-Schultze to the German delegates, March, 1914.
Belgium. Both the British and French Council reserved about twenty-five spots. The American contingent however numbered sixty-two, each of whom had the benefit of having the CPU pay for their traveling expenses, plus a small stipend of $300. The CPU also paid for bound reports by both Macfarland and Lynch, as well as for their free distribution at home and abroad. Carnegie’s insistence on the national homogeneity of his endowment was already paying unintended dividends. When Siegmund-Schultze lamented his lack of ready cash to pay for the hotel rooms, Lynch admitted that he was so desperate to include the diverse elements of American Protestantism that “we had to considerably overdraw our funds.”

On August 1, 1914 those who could navigate the challenges of wartime travel shuffled into Konstanz. Baker and Dickinson’s original vision of an ecumenical congress meeting alongside the Third Hague Conference now seemed ridiculous, though only because it was now apparent that there would no Third Hague Conference. The delegates therefore stuck to their primary goal. They created an ecumenical federation, the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches, and they shifted their sights towards assembling in full after the smoke cleared. Although they did not know it then, that too would take another five years.

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CHAPTER 3:

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

AS CATALYST FOR PROTESTANT

INTERNATIONALISM, 1914 – 1918

“One loves in proportion to the sacrifices which one has approved and for which one has suffered.”

-Ernest Renan

3.1 Introduction: The World Alliance Reconvenes: Berne, August 1915

On 24 August 1915, just about one year after the Konstanz Conference, many of
the same faces converged on the Bernerhof Hotel in the oldest part of the Swiss capital. The Bernerhof (currently the home of the Federal Ministry of Finance) was a grand hotel built in the grand Victorian style. By this point in the war a traveler could still find certain luxuries at this particular hotel, even as the British blockade degraded the menus of other, lesser hotels on the Continent. Visitors from the Axis power in particular avidly sought out fresh coffee, sweetened chocolates and Central American cigars in just such an establishment if they could manage a business trip to Switzerland. I imagine that many of the the men who clambered into the hotel from Berlin that night enjoyed their meals immensely without having to worry about the regimen of any rationing boards at

161
home. There might even have been some slight cases of gluttony or overindulgence in the war since the coffers of the Church Peace Union was picking up the check.

Some delegates from Scandinavia and Great Britain must have been relieved simply to have made it. Travel in Europe was becoming more and more haphazard as the Swiss had just begun to crack down on all of the pacifists, draft-dodgers, and spies that had recently washed over their Alpine state. Public opinion on the war had become sharply divided between the German-speaking majority and the Francophone minority. A few pundits predicted the polyglot federation might break apart. The Swiss government banned all public discourse on the war, especially pacifist commentaries, and closely monitored the émigré communities in Berne, Zurich and Geneva.

Yet no one at this religious peace conference experienced any serious hassle from the authorities. Each bore top-flight credentials from their respective governments. No revolutionaries here. And so, for the first time since the war began, British and German internationalists from both sides of the war met face to face in the company of their peers from Scandinavia, Holland, Switzerland and the United States.

The purpose of this conference was to strengthen the fragile World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches, which had been slowly moving forward since its shaky advent twelve months earlier. Initial expectations of a quick war had passed. The original aim of the organization had been to convene an ecumenical congress alongside the Third Hague Conference during the summer of 1915. That was now impossible as that event had been cancelled. Protestant internationalists realized that they could not wait out the war. They had to discuss some sort of truce within their own ranks if the movement was to survive long enough to see the peace.
In all twenty-five individuals gathered at the Bernerhof. The only American in attendance was Benjamin Battin, a graduate student at the University of Berlin who had been hired by the Church Peace Union to travel back and forth between the various national councils after Konsatnz. He handled the financial arrangements in the absence of any senior Americans, who failed to cross the Atlantic in a time of war because of expense and visa issues. A significant number of Scandinavians, eleven in all, signified the strong interest in the movement that had developed within the Swedish, Norwegian and Danish episcopacy. The Archbishop of Uppsala, Nathan Söderblom, was eager to host an ecumenical conference in his hometown of Uppsala within the next two years.

Italy was represented for the first time, but in name only. William Kemme Landels traveled to Berne from Rome, but in reality he was nothing more than an English Baptist missionary living in the Eternal City.293

Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze once again anchored the Germans. The settlement worker and university chaplain had kept up his connections with several Allied churchmen. He continued to publish Die Eiche, one of the only German journals to print ecumenical literature, even though the council in Berlin had practically gone into hibernation. Although the government banned the public activities of the German Peace Society, whose leaders relocated to Zurich, Siegmund-Schultze operated with the

blessing of his patrons Emperor Wilhelm II and Luise von Baden. The office of the Chancellor and the Foreign Ministry arranged the passports for this trip as they officially encouraged the German Council to maintain their position within the World Alliance. Two individuals associated closely with the World Alliance – Georg Michaelis, an under-secretary in the Ministry of Finance who was also the president of the German Student Christian Movement, and Prince Maximilian von Baden, Luise’s nephew who worked in wartime for both the Red Cross and the YMCA – used their positions in Berlin to ensure that the ecumenical bodies had a voice within the German government. (As we shall see in Chapter 7, both men later served as Chancellor of the government in 1917 and 1918.)

Work-related duties prohibited Georg Michaelis and Max von Baden from personally attending the Berne Conference, though Siegmund-Schultze carried with him their official blessings. Yet several ecumenical leaders refused to come to Berne because of their anger towards the British. As described in the last chapter, the German Council originally began as a movement for an Anglo-German understanding. Now that the two empires had gone to war, many of the council’s leading lights regarded it as an organization that had outlived its purpose. In the first months of the war, ecumenical leaders engaged in vitriolic denunciations of one another that left a permanent scar on the organization. Adolf von Harnack and Ernst von Dryander, for example, refused to associate any longer with the World Alliance, though each kept up private correspondences with ecumenical friends abroad. Siegmund-Schultze did however fill up the four allotted spots. Beside himself, the party consisted of Friedrich Würz (director of the Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft Basel), A. W. Schreiber (director of the Deutsche
Evangelische Missionshilfe) and Adolf Deissmann (New Testament professor at the University of Berlin).

The French Council was conspicuously absent. This was in keeping with the general policy of French internationalist organizations not to meet with any unless they first remonstrated publicly against the invasions of Belgium and France. French feminists, socialists and international jurists all boycotted their respective institutions. In private Huguenot leaders were even more inflexible. When J. Allen Baker and W. H. Dickinson visited Paris in March 1915, church leaders insisted that any acceptable peace settlement had to include “the dismemberment of [the] German Empire and the reduction of Prussia to the position of a second rate power.” As a result the World Alliance’s activity in France lay in suspension until 1918.294

The British delegation contained several veterans of the World Alliance with a long history of working together. W. H. Dickinson, J. H. Rushbrooke and W. Moore Ede had been active leaders from the very beginning.

For a while, plans progressed smoothly. Battin and Siegmund-Schultze made arrangements with the Bernerhof Hotel. The trustees of the Church Peace Union approved all of the expenditures. None of the delegates had problems securing passports. Just three weeks before the conference, in a letter to Luise von Baden, Siegmund-Schultze sounded positively upbeat about the reunion.295 Still the inevitable finger-pointing soon disrupted the conference. Adolf Deissmann reneged on his commitment


because he felt it was inappropriate to gather while “hundreds of thousands of earnest Christians are going happily and willingly to their death.” In view of their “tremendous example of self-sacrifice,” expressions of “Christian solidarity” had to be placed on hold. Deissmann had heavily invested himself in the care of his students at the front, arranging care packages and bible studies, even visiting them on several occasions. Over the course of the war Deissmann’s department lost over two hundred seminarians. In a letter to the delegates the scholar reflected on the “divine paradox” of being a Christian at war, torn between the “natural” desire to “love both his nation and his supranational church.”

The conflicting allegiances to the transnational Church and the divinely ordained nation tortured British ecumenists as well. For instance, William Temple wrote a series of short books about the “perplexity” of the universal Church in a situation where it was at war with itself. “In a world gone pagan, what is a Christian to do? For the world is gone pagan. Members of the body of Christ are tearing one another, and His body is bleeding as it once bled on Calvary, but this time the wounds are dealt by His friends. It is as though Peter were driving home the nails, and John were piercing the side.” Yet Temple still thought about the conflict in terms of just war theology. He could not abandon the issue of whether or not to go to war to those outside of the Church. “And yet, as I at least read the story, this nation was right to declare war, and those who are

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296 EZAB 51/D-II-c: letter from [Deissmann] to the Berne delegates, 15 August 1915. In another explanation of his position in the Evangelischer Wochenbrief, Deissmann emphasized that he had not abandoned his transnational commitment to Christ by refusing to meet with the World Alliance. “There is no command of the Gospel which forbids a Christian to stand up less faithfully for the nation, of which God has made him a unit, during a terrible war than he naturally does in peace. On the contrary, the Christian will in time of great trouble be moved to do more for his country than at other times, and the grand example of self-sacrifice set us.” ZLB 306, Box 619: Evangelischer Wochenbrief, #40, 4 September 1915. Again, writing two weeks later, he maintained that once the war was over, he would return to the fold. Yet for now, “Christian internationalism belongs to those things upon which at this time I can only meditate with the deepest emotion, for my heart aches especially when I think of England.” ZLB 305, Box 619: Evangelischer Wochenbrief, #43, 25 September 1915.
fighting at her call are fighting for a just cause, which there was, at that time, no way of
serving except the soldier’s way.” The root cause of the war, underneath even the
diplomatic particularities of 1914, was the sin of national egotism. Every Christian
nation was ultimately at fault and condemned by God to a purgative suffering that would
call them back to the Cross of Christ. “Sacrifice is the Divine activity; Calvary His
method.”

The British delegates possessed a great deal of sympathy for Deissmann’s first
reason for his cancellation. They had considerably less tolerance for his secondary point.
Deissmann worried that the overt desire of the British delegates to discuss the framework
of a possible peace centered on a league of nations. Immediately after Konstanz, a
stripped-down draft of a league constitution passed through the network of the World
Alliance. In the fall W. H. Dickinson had organized a study group under the guidance of
Lord James Bryce to produce a working proposal that would be acceptable to the British
government. The following spring Dickinson, Baker and other British Council members
tried to use their ecumenical connections to start sister societies throughout the Protestant
West. The Dutch and Swiss councils had already endorsed a proposal for an arbitrated
peace and a new, strengthened international government. In June the leaders of the
Church Peace Union and the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America had
launched the so-called League to Enforce Peace at a public ceremony at Independence
Hall in Philadelphia with much of the same goals. More will be said about these
organizations in the next chapters. For now, though, it is important to realize that
Dickinson and company arrived in Berne with the agenda of establishing a German

297 Temple, Our Need of a Catholic Church, 16.
League of Nations society. Everyone except the Germans (and the absent French) wanted the World Alliance to, in effect, identify the war aims of the ecumenical Churches and to include among these aims the erection of a League of Nations.

Deissmann objected to this approach, insisting that to do so would cheapen the sacrifices of the young men dying on both fronts. He urged the delegates to abandon this idea and instead “focus on new immediate tasks.” What he likely had in mind was Siegmund-Schultze’s plan to convert the World Alliance into an international network of relief for prisoners of war and civilian detainees. Siegmund-Schultze hoped to sidestep arguments about the war itself. Debates that utilized just war theory always ended in stalemate. Each side was too adept at harnessing a certain set of facts to reinforce the righteousness of their particular actions. He hoped to jettison debate about the past and reorient the ecumenical movement towards concrete acts of Christian charity in the present that would bear witness to the transnational Christ even in the midst of fratricide.

On the first day the delegates hashed out plans for an ecumenical congress and exchanged ideas about the League of Nation, often basing their discussions on a mediated peace that did not take into account German insecurities about the ambitions of Russia’s foreign policy on the Eastern Front. Siegmund-Schultze’s topics received little attention. This infuriated the German delegation.

That first night Siegmund-Schultze complained in private to the other delegates. Friedrich Würz simply left for Berlin. The following morning August Wilhelm Schreiber read out an angry speech that he had spontaneously composed over the night. Schreiber first expressed his frustration that the World Alliance had been formed last year without the German Council. He felt anger that the movement had abandoned its original aims of
a pan-Protestant peace for the “utopianism” of political pacifism. He felt betrayal that the British had abandoned the cause of German Protestantism. When push came to shove they had allied with the “uncultured” Russians who threatened to wash over the Protestant churches of Central Europe. War was an ineradicable element in human history, and it would continue to be so until Christ Himself returned to judge the living and the dead. The belief that Christians could abolish war struck Schreiber, as well as “many other German Christians,” as “evolutionary, pacifistic, and therefore unbiblical.” He demanded that the conference constrain itself to practical matters, such as POW relief, or else squander what little goodwill remained in Germany.298

Schreiber’s diatribe had its effect. Delegates abandoned any discussion of an ecumenical congress and the League of Nations. Everyone agreed to ignore the elephantine question in the room: Which side bore ultimate responsibility for the war, and how can we ensure this never happens again? Instead they became preoccupied with practical matters such as Siegmund-Schultze’s concern for POW relief until they left the hotel on Friday afternoon.299

The Berne Conference illustrates four characteristics of the World Alliance during the First World War. First, there was a shared recognition that moral debate about the war was pointless and divisive until after the conflict was over. The first section of this chapter describes how in the first months of the war both sides tried to use just war theory to argue other churches into agreement. This attempt failed miserably. Just war theory

was singularly inadequate when it came to creating a moral consensus within the ecumenical community, which was unable to even establish a common body of facts with which to argue from. Protestant internationalists tabled the issues for the sake of unity and turned their immediate attention from pacifism to philanthropy, the theme of the second section of this chapter. After Berne World Alliance leaders transformed ecumenical organizations such as the YMCA, YWCA, Christian Endeavour Society and the World Student Christian Federation that were prototypes of the modern non-governmental organization. I focus in particular on the relief campaign for POWs and detained civilians, since it was the first successful project of the World Alliance. Ecumenists also created new organizations capable of responding to specific regions in need. This chapter analyzes the example of Near East Relief, a multimillion dollar venture formed in 1915 to rescue Armenians from the genocidal policies of the Ottoman Empire. These practical wartime ministries mobilized unprecedented resources and volunteers that tied the churches closer and closer to the ecumenical movement. After the war, as we shall see in future chapters, these organizations became cooperative partners of the League of Nations, particularly in the Middle East. They eventually formed the skeletal frame on which the League rested until it grew strong enough to move about on its own.

Thirdly, the enthusiasm for a postwar league of nations shown by the majority of those at Berne became a defining trait of the World Alliance. Church networks became conduits for League societies, reaching millions of laymen of the so-called gospel of internationalism. What had been the political fantasy of those few at Konstanz now became the commonplace commitments of congregations around the world, but
particularly in Britain and America. From 1914 to 1918 political support for the League of Nations emerged as a virtual orthodoxy for mainline Protestantism, both in North America and in Europe, but for two exceptions. Neither France nor Germany participated in this development. The French Council abstained from ecumenical relations during this time and never prepared Protestant public opinion for the eventual peace. The German Council also withdrew into itself and failed to secure a mass audience. It isolated itself from the main streams of Christian intellectualism, often exacerbated by what Adolf Deissmann referred to as the “theological blockade.”

Furthermore the German leaders retained their traditional suspicion of ‘utopian’ and ‘pacifist’ schemes of universal peace. In their mind, the point of the World Alliance should not be to ensure there is never another war, but to insure instead that Protestantism won the next war against its Catholic and Orthodox rivals.

The Berne Conference is notable simply because it happened at all. Despite all the tension and argument, Christians at war with one another met and made plans to sustain their transnational organization. Despite its inauspicious start, the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches outlived the war. This simple fact should not be taken for granted. Neither the Interparliamentary Union nor the International Peace Bureau succeeded in pulling off their 1915 conventions. There never was another Universal Peace Congress after 1914. The Verband für Internationale Verständigung dissolved when the guiding elite of the German Peace Society relocated to Zurich in the fall of 1914. Feminist organizations suffered schisms. The Second

300 This phrase comes from a 1918 Deissmann article in the journal Deutschen Politik: ZLB 306 (Deissmann Nachlaß), Box 17.
International broke apart at its 1915 assembly in nearby Zimmerwald, Switzerland.

Socialists had hopes that a 1917 congress in Stockholm would heal the rifts in the labor movement, but instead the Russian Revolution only accentuated their lack of cohesion.

The World Alliance’s survival was in fact a remarkable achievement and a testament to the durable appeal of the transnational Christ. No other international pacifist organization that existed in 1914 survived to see 1918.\(^{301}\)

In fact the First World War acted as a catalyst for the Protestant internationalist movement. As we shall see, ecumenical agencies ballooned during the war into formidable institutions endowed with ample resources, devoted volunteers and enhanced prestige. Even though development remained stunted in France and Germany, it experienced four years of unprecedented growth in Britain, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Holland and the United States.

The final section of this chapter portrays the League of Nations as the fruit of an eschatological imagination that interpreted history as an agonistic process of redemption and suffering as sacrifice. As the war dragged on, Protestants abandoned their reliance on just war theory, which proved singularly unable to cope with the First World War. They then justified the war according to their eschatological expectation that the suffering would bring about the future reunion of Christendom, both in its spiritual and political dimensions. They foresaw the joint establishment of a League of Churches and a League of Nations. This vision also defined their philanthropic endeavors. By voluntarily

sharing the suffering of the soldiers and refugees, Protestant internationalists believed they could perform the sacramental act of transforming the horror of war into a global revival. The leaders of the World Alliance mobilized the churches into a crusade that would fight for a peace that would be worthy of all that had been lost. It is a consistent theme of this dissertation that the League of Nations must be interpreted as a moral phenomenon. Its authority rested on the sacrifices of the Great War and the promise of a covenantal regeneration of the nations.

The League of Nations was born in violence. Its actual development defied the anodyne predictions of nineteenth-century progressives. It was not the end result of a gradual social evolution. Nor was it the manifestation of economic globalization, or of an ascending human consciousness. It did not even come about during an era of cosmopolitan sensibilities. The League gained momentum while millions of nominal Christians shot, stabbed and clawed one another to death – and this momentum grew not in spite of these horrible acts, but because of them.

Even as the first bullets flew, Protestant internationalists interpreted the war through the lens of hope. They expected the spiritual and political renewal of the Christian nations. Lynch recorded that those at Konstanz “felt that the seeds of another Reformation were being sown that day as we sat down fresh from the Upper Chamber and planned together how the church might purge herself of trifles. . . .What could the awakened Church do to extend the rule of Christ over the nations?”  

Not a single vote was cast at Konstanz in favor of dissolution. Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze felt that the timing had been “providential”: “Nearly the entire conference became a prayer meeting

where the delegates of different nations found themselves bound together in the closest of communities despite the war breaking out. . . . The immensity of the Church’s failures fell all the more heavily upon our souls.”

Baker recovered from his initial sense of failure less than twenty-four hours after his return to London. Instead of lamenting that they were “too late,” Baker now felt firmly that the aborted conference happened because of “Divine approval. We were there because we felt that we were called to go. . . . If we go forward shoulder to shoulder God will bless our aims.”

Historians of the League of Nations, as well as historians of the ecumenical movement, must interpret the Great War with irony, because, in a very real sense, it was a period of success. My interpretation of Protestantism’s fate in the First World War runs counter to the dominant historiographical narrative, which portrays the conflict as a purposeless, amoral bloodbath devoid of any redeeming quality. Unlike the Second World War, which has become the archetype of the ‘good war,’ its predecessor has become the standard of the meaningless disaster. Until recently, historians studied Protestantism during this time through this lens. They used it as a case of pastors and theologians who, stricken with war fever, acted as little better than shills for jingoistic militarism. The tone of these studies was often blatantly moralist. The message remained consistent: If mixed, religion and militarism fuel absolutist crusades that become incapable of conclusion without the total defeat of the demonized enemy.

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This historiographical paradigm began in the 1920s, a period when many internationalists became increasingly uneasy about new alliances between the established European churches and the resurrected political right. In Germany the new mood arrived in the form of a novel: Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929). In France we can point to Julien Benda’s *La Trahison des Clercs* (1927), who targeted French clergymen for having “taught the annulment of all patriotism in the City of God” in exchange for a “pillar of national egoism.” Arthur Ponsonby, a secularist ally of Baker and Dickinson on the backbenches of Parliament, famously portrayed the British churches as little better than puppets of the state, blaming the contemporary “loss of spiritual influence by the Churches” on their “betrayal in time of stress of the most elementary precepts of Christianity. . .” In 1933, Ray Abrams laid a blanket of damnation over the American Protestant churches’ perpetual hawkishness, which he claimed was caused by the common core of irrationality and hatred at the center of both religion and nationalism: “The ideology of Nationalism and religion grow out of the same social soil and make their appeal to the same emotions. . . It can readily be seen that their appeals to the citizens to wreak vengeance upon their enemies had only to be couched in holy phraseology to bring forth the desired responses from the church people.”

For decades theologians and religious intellectuals revived the heuristic whenever they feared churches might endorse another armed crusade. In 1953 Herbert Butterfield


wrote about Britain’s “war of righteousness” in order to scold the Cold Warriors in the English churches who wanted to once again apply “absolute moral categories” that left “no room for the negotiation of diplomacy.”

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, German historians probed the tenets of Lutheran ‘theology of war’ (Kriegstheologie) in order to purge those elements from their churches. Writing against the background of the Vietnam War, pacifist Albert Marrin wondered in The Last Crusade: The Church of England and the First World War (1974) why Christians feel a compulsive need to “propagandize” and to “cast [armed conflict] in terms of divinely sanctioned moral imperatives.” In 2002 the neoconservative Richard M. Gamble resurrected the old familiar tropes to slay Protestant liberalism. Because progressive pastors turned away from “immortality in the world beyond toward the immorality of the world under its feet,” Gamble postulates, they “contributed profoundly to this mentality of total war and

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310 "To make his sacrifices bearable, and to mobilize greater energies for the fight, [the Christian] needs an all-embracing, yet easily intelligible, explanation of what is happening and why... It is no paradox that he who cherished human life and cannot sanction the taking of it for any but the weightiest reasons, should be among the first to verbalize the cause, then to assert for it a validly transcending considerations of self-interest and expediency. It only remains for the propagandist to translate these ideas into the catch-words, the slogans, and the visual images appropriate for mass consumption. ... Besides idealizing an issue, his training and general outlook predispose him to 'theologize,' to cast it in terms of absolute, divinely sanctioned moral imperatives; he may even go so far as to conclude that one side is in league with the Antichrist, the other fighting in company with God and the Angelic Host.” Albert Marrin, The Last Crusade: The Church of England in the First World War (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1974), 97 – 98.
played a vital role in turning at least their side of the Great War into a ‘war for righteousness,’ an ultimate spiritual battle to rid the earth of a pagan nation that impeded the progress of God’s righteous kingdom.  

Only recently have historians viewed the cataclysm of 1914 – 1918 through the “war culture” of its participants. Annette Becker’s La Guerre et la foi, de la mort à le mémoire de la Grande Guerre (1994) inquired directly into the religious experiences of the French people. She has inspired historians of religion to reassemble the conceptions and mindsets that infused the war with religious significance for its contemporaries.

By putting the League of Nations in the foreground, I hope to resurrect, however briefly, the moral sensibilities of Protestant internationalism at war. By lopping the League out of their studies of the war, earlier historians have decapitated the ethical eschatology that drove the war effort. For it is unfair to simply dismiss clerical support as mere ‘war fever’ or as evidence of a lack of integrity. Explanations need not be sought in the psyches, class or doctrine of the faithful.

To understand modern internationalism, we must understand it within the context of its roots. Both the modern ecumenical movement and the League of Nations were products of the First World War. Protestant internationalism achieved stature in the midst of apocalypse. New supporters flocked to the banner of the League of Nations out


of a desire for some redemptive justification of their horror. In other words, the League was not predicted upon a naïve utopianism that neglected to take into account humanity’s propensity for evil and violence. On the contrary the League gained ground only after the nations descended into a seemingly endless series of massacres. Instead the League of Nations was based on a eschatological narrative of purgative punishment followed by covenantal restoration, of waywardness followed by resurrection, and of egoism followed by social harmony, a progression that would redeem the sacrifices of the nations.

3.2 Arguments About the Past: A Tug of (Just) War

Vitriolic exchanges between Protestant internationalists in Germany and Britain characterized the first six months of the war. How was it that Christians could exchange such angry public denunciations of one another once the war began? This chapter section tries to answer that seemingly simple question

Traditionally historians have explained this rupture as the product of a clerical nationalism inflamed by war. This perspective is true – to a point. However some additional observations are needed to round out this limited judgment. First of all, this dispute occurred within the context of an ecumenical community that had been working together towards a pan-Protestant alliance. The war split apart friends who had been expecting their counterparts to keep the peace. The tenor of the manifestoes was sharp in large part because the authors felt betrayed. Secondly, the substance of the debate was conducted within the framework of a shared adherence to just war theory. Unable to fathom how the other side could have turned on them, British and German Protestants tried to, in effect, argue their former compatriots back onto their side. Throughout 1914
there was still a naïve faith that just war theory could restore a moral consensus to the ecumenical community. It could not. The tug of (just) war ultimately ended in stalemate.

On August 4, 1914, the British government declared war with Germany. Earlier that morning, when Siegmund-Schultze waved good-bye to the other Konstanz delegates at the train station in Cologne, he had confidence that Britain and Germany would not go to war. Baker and Dickinson had plans with their allies in Parliament to resist British entrance into the war. Before their departure, Baker and his close friend Arnold Rowntree had conferred with Randall Davidson and James Bryce about the necessity for British neutrality. As soon as the Englishmen arrived in London, Rowntree and Philip Baker, the son of J. Allen Baker, met the delegates and informed them that their circle had launched a Neutrality Committee to restrict the conflict to a purely Continental affair. On August 4, the Britons who had been at Konstanz fully intended to continue their efforts for an Anglo-German entente. On the train platform, just before boarding, Baker, Dickinson, Siegmund-Schultze and another Quaker missionary couple from London, Henry and Joy Hodgkin, swore an oath with one another to continue their work within the churches for peace between their two nations.

At home, later that week, Siegmund-Schultze must have been shocked to learn that only the Hodgkins kept their word. Baker and Dickinson not only abandoned their

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commitment to British neutrality. Both men, so known for their strong opposition to the Liberal party’s military budgets, gave introductory speeches in favor of the government’s war appropriations bill in the House of Commons. It must have been quite a coup for Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Minister, but yet one that Grey had been working towards for some time. Since the German visit in 1908, he had been a consistent presence on the platform next to Baker and Dickinson. It was Grey who worked with Taft and the American churches on the failed Anglo-American arbitration treaty in 1911. Even though his cooperation was primarily perfunctory, the leading Liberal diplomat cultivated an open relationship with the ecumenical movement that would pay strong dividends during the First World War.

Although Grey abandoned much of the creedal components of Anglicanism while at university, the Foreign Minister still doggedly held to the moral and social teaching of the Church of England. On a meeting with World Alliance delegates only one night after their return from Germany, Grey presented the British case for war within the strict ligature of the just war tradition. Grey hinged his case on the German invasion of Belgium and the Emperor’s refusal to submit the relevant issues to a congress of the Great Powers. The Foreign Minister handed out free copies of the British *White Book*, even though it had not even been made available to Parliament. He was convincing. Baker and Dickinson called off their plans to stage a protest in Trafalgar Square. Frederick Lynch and Charles Macfarland accepted Grey’s arguments as well, even claiming that that “anyone who will read the ‘White Book’...can see in a moment who

315 For more on Grey’s religion, see Keith Robbins, *Sir Edward Grey: A Biography of Lord Grey of Falloden*. For his political internationalism, also read Ian Packer, *Liberal Government and Politics*, 34-36.
brought on the war.” Both men co-authored an account of the Konstanz Peace Conference that forwarded the view that claimed Germany was “directly responsible for the war.”316 Lynch brought several copies back with him, one of which was sent to the White House and one of which was republished in full in the New York Times. In the first half of the war the Church Peace Union circulated thousands of copies of these books to Protestant clergymen at cost.

Macfarland, Lynch and the other American travelers finagled tickets to the House of Commons when Baker and Dickinson introduced Grey’s war appropriations bill. Baker’s endorsement sounded regretful at times. While he believed that the “German obstacle” to international order had to be removed from power, he also insisted that Britain herself was sometimes “as guilty of militarism and war fever” as they were. He understood the German position – “They feel they are in a desperate position, and if you could realize their position, I think you would see that there is very much to be said for the hasty action they have taken. They felt that the only opportunity they possessed was by striking quickly. I say that they have been forced into this position. I believe they are entering into this war with deep regret, and certainly, on the part of the masses of the people, with great friendship towards us.” – and for this understanding Baker was booed and hooted off of the floor. Dickenson’s tenor was more petulant and assured, though he too wanted to clarify that this conflict was against “that military caste. . .that battens on the lust of always aiming at and preparing for war,” and not the German people.317

316 Lynch, Through Europe on the Eve of War, 100.

From August 1914 until November 1919, every member of the British Council of the World Alliance supported the war effort. This decision spawned two new organizations, each of which redefined the nature of Christian pacifism. Harry and Joy Hodgkin left the British Council and recruited like-minded pacifists to form an alternative association, the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR). The FOR maintained its commitment to non-violence throughout the war years. Its central creed called Christians to “establish a world-order based on Love,” which is “the only power by which evil can be overcome and the only sufficient basis of human society,” even though they live “in a world which does not yet accept it.” Christians are “forbidden to wage war” and by following this radical command they “offer [them]selves to His redemptive purpose to be used by Him in whatever way He may reveal.” Both in the United States and Great Britain, members of the FOR faced stiff jail sentences and social exclusion for refusing to serve in the armed forces. The FOR never endorsed the League of Nations, which was predicated upon the just war tradition, and for many years served as an ecumenical rival to the World Alliance within internationalist circles.318


schism between political internationalists and absolute pacifists during the First World War. Hodgkin and Baker led that fight from opposite sides. Baker wanted Quakers to interpret the war as the re-establishment of international order. He himself converted his factories to produce camp equipment and munitions. Hodgkin, on the other hand, wanted Baker and his allies purged from the denomination for violating its tradition of non-violence. This debate continued without resolution over the next five years. It colored the debate over the League of Nations. Accommodation remained the rule of the day. The Society did not purge Quakers who participated in the war effort, but neither did it endorse the League of Nations or the actions of the government.319

J. Allen Baker’s second oldest son hit upon a solution that helped preserve this fragile compromise. Philip Baker, who went by the name of Philip Noel-Baker after his marriage in 1915, formed a medical unit at the Quaker village of Jordans. (Then Jordans was known as a Quaker center and the burial place of William Penn. Now it is perhaps better known as the home of Ozzy and Sharon Osbourne.) In the fall of 1914 it reported for auxiliary duty in northern France. The Friend’s Ambulance Unit allowed young men to support the military and serve on the front lines without technically violating the traditional Quaker prohibition against committing acts of violence. The entire family invested itself in the project. The profits from Baker’s war contracts paid for the group’s expenses and medical equipment. Although his youngest son Joseph enlisted in the military, his oldest son Allen joined his brother. The ambulance unit also offered women

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the chance to experience the front lines. Dickinson’s daughter Désirée joined as well. In the spring of 1915 Philip Noel-Baker created a second unit with his friend G. M. Trevelyan for the Austro-Italian front. The Italian company had a broader membership; only sixteen of the sixty-six recruits came from the Society of Friends.320

As early as August 1914, the British churches lined up behind the Liberal government’s declaration of war. Dissidents such as Henry and Joy Hodgkin abandoned Protestant internationalist circles. Even traditionally pacifist denominations such as the Society of Friends could not find their way into full opposition. From that point on, there was no debate within the British Council about the justness of the Allied cause.

The most common justification on the British side was the brutal German invasion and occupation of Belgium, which violated the standards of the Hague Conventions. Randall Davidson condemned the military’s frequent resort to random

civilians as reprisals for acts of terrorism. John Clifford later recalled how Germany’s invasion of neutral Belgium and arrest of his ecumenical ally Cardinal Mercier ended his “rigorous abstinence” from violence. “My eyes were opened. My conscience refused to be quieted in the presence of that gross wrong done to the soul and the homes of a small nation. . . .” Like any good Baptist, his conversion prompted him to share the good news with others. Clifford spent much of 1915 and 1916 on the church circuit, urging on his nation to war and spreading the Council’s plan for the League of Nations. One contemporary observer noticed that the preacher resembled “a Cromwellian Ironside, taunting the shirkers and urging that the War should be pursued with our whole force and brought to an end as soon as possible.” W. H. Dickinson always emphasized that the Great War was above all the punishment of a renegade state

321 Because the German military classified the Belgian Resistance as terrorists (franc-tireurs), it suspended the Hague and Geneva Conventions in their case. The Army summarily executed approximately 6400 civilians without a civil trial in just the first three months of the war. Entire towns suffered reprisals for any perceived act of partisanship or sabotage. On 23 August the military commander of the town of Meuse killed 674 civilians, chosen at random, after an unknown assailant fired upon the night watch. As the war progressed, the German government seized entire factories and farms. Hundreds of thousands of Belgians were deported and then forced into slave labor battalions that made munitions or dug trenches on the front line. In an eerie preview of the Cold War, these battalions even constructed an electric fence along the Dutch border to keep Belgians from fleeing to the refugee camps in Holland. Alan Kramer and John Horne explain our collective amnesia regarding these atrocities as a contributing factor as why contemporary historians still attribute the First World War to irrationalism and ‘war fever.’ Alan Kramer and John Horne, German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001). Also see Annette Becker, "Remembering and Forgetting the First World War in Western Europe," in Ideas of Europe since 1914: The Legacy of the First World War, ed. Menno Spiering and Michael Wintle (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002). For more information about the German military’s habitual refusal to apply international law to conquered peoples, both in the colonies and on the Western Front, see Isabel V. Hull, Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany (Ithica, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005).


by a coalition interested only in justice. He justified the British blockade as an
“economic sanction” imposed on violators of international law. Dickinson was also
typical of the British Council as a whole when he openly wished that the Central Powers
would repent of their actions and join a postwar continuation of the Allied powers that
could act swiftly against future transgressors. These desires for reconciliation with
Germany and a return of the Protestant coalition: these desires lay at the base of his
proposals for the future League of Nations.

Naturally German Protestants felt betrayed by their friends in London when they
learned of their newfound belligerency. Dickinson sent Siegmund-Schultze the British
White Book in the vain hope that he might change his mind when confronted with the
documentary proof. In that first year many Protestants on both sides still had hope that
they could reach a consensus based on just war argumentation. Siegmund-Schultze did in
fact print the White Book in Die Eiche, per Dickinson’s request, but alongside his own
counter-arguments that ran line by line. Of all the council members, Siegmund-
Schultze retained the most sympathy for Britain throughout the war. Yet even he
believed that the “only guilt” thus lay with the “Russian Army Party” and a cabal of
“British militarists” who “had for so long worked to slander and isolate so-called German
militarism.” He never understood how Baker and Dickinson believed Grey’s
“tremendous lies” when it was clear that Germany had been the victim of a plot by non-

324 Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, "Das englische Weissbuch: Entdeckte Unstimmigkeiten," Die Eiche
2, no. 4 (1914).

325 FHL, RG 5/069 (William Hull Papers), 2:11: letter from Siegmund-Schultze to Lynch, 24
December 1914. Siegmund-Schultze was responding to a missive from W. H. Dickinson that restated the
British position: EZA 51/D-II-a: W. H. Dickinson, “The European War. 1914.” He expresses the same
view in several letters, such as for example in FHL, RG 5/069 (William Hull Papers), 2:9: letter from
Siegmund-Schultze to Hull, 19 August 1914; Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, untitled editorial, Die Eiche 3:2
(1915).
Christian imperialists to “encircle” and “entrap” the defender of central Europe.\textsuperscript{326}

The German Council also crafted a defense of the war based upon the just war tradition. Their focus primarily remained on the Eastern front and the threats to all three of the Central Powers posed by the aggressive foreign policy of Russia. Germany may have attacked first, but Russia had mobilized its armies first. The Tsarist regime represented the polar opposite of true civilization; it was absolutist, militarist and quasi-feudal. The German Council could not understand why British Protestants failed to understand this clash of cultures in the East, nor how they could align themselves with such a spiritually primitive nation. Spiecker’s initial reaction to the news from London was pure incredulity: ““The British are going to cooperate with the Slavs to fight the Teutonic Race! Is this possible?”\textsuperscript{327} Friedrich Lahusen had the same reaction: “What England is doing must not be England; rather Grey and his friends have betrayed England.”\textsuperscript{328}

The ecumenical movement in Germany saw Russia as a mortal threat. Recent progress in economic modernization promised to utilize Russia’s comparative advantages in size and natural resources. The tsarist government refused to adopt modern standards of religious liberty. Ecumenical and evangelical organizations were illegal and periodically purged from the universities. As the army marched west through Eastern Prussia and the Baltic States in 1914, they torched and looted many Lutheran and Jewish communities. Eastern Europeans became subject to strict programs of Russification. The

\textsuperscript{326} EZA 51/D-I-d: letter from Siegmund-Schultze to Luise von Baden, 3 December 1914; EZA 51/D-II-a: [Siegmund-Schultze], “Der Deutsch-Englische Krieg” [1914?].

\textsuperscript{327} EZAB 51/D-II-g: Friedrich Albert Spiecker, “Der europäische Krieg.”

\textsuperscript{328} EZAB 51/D-II-a: letter from Lahusen to Siegmund-Schultze 13 August 1914.
pogroms were particularly violent. German clergy and German rabbis used these atrocities to delineate what was at stake. The British might be fighting for such vagaries as international law, but the Germans were fighting for their very lives.\textsuperscript{329}

Adolf von Harnack was particularly distressed by the situation on the Eastern Front because his family still lived in Dorpat in the path of the oncoming Russian army. His family home resided in what is modern Estonia today in a small town named Tartu, a former Hanseatic port that had been a Protestant outpost since the Reformation. Like many Baltic Germans born beyond the protection of the Kaiser, von Harnack harbored a particular fear about Russian expansionism.\textsuperscript{330} Since the Algeciras crisis in 1911 he worried that the British would backstab the Germans if they could. (See Chapter 2.) In an open letter to the British Council in September 1914, von Harnack expressed strong feelings of betrayal:

Great Britain sides with Russia against Germany! What does this mean? It means: Great Britain is tearing down the dam that has protected Western Europe and its culture from the desert sands of the Asiatic barbarism (\textit{Unkultur}) of Russia and the Panslavs. Now we Germans must plug the dam with our own bodies. We will restrain them though soaked in rivers of our own blood. We have to do it in order to defend the work of the past millennium and a half on behalf of all of Europe and even on behalf of Great Britain!\textsuperscript{331}

Von Harnack justified the occupation of Belgium on the grounds of necessity. Harnack

\textsuperscript{329} On the Russification policies of the First World War, which affected over one million civilians, see Eric Lohr, \textit{Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens During World War I} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).


explained that because the *Kaiserreich* was “surrounded by enemies and had to fight half
the world,” they could not afford the luxury of “empty formulas” like the Hague
Conventions. Belgium was a necessary evil, which Harnack compared to King David’s
illicit theft of consecrated bread from the Temple in order to feed his army in the Bible: “.
. . [David] was fully in the right; for the letter of law existed no longer at that moment.
You know as well as I do that there is a law of necessity that can break iron – how much
more can it break a treaty.”332

On October 4, 1914, the Berlin newspapers printed Harnack’s infamous essay *An
der Kulturwelt* (To The Cultured World), now considered to be the prototypical example
of militant German nationalism. Ninety-two other academics co-signed the manifesto,
including Martin Rade, Wilhelm Förster and Adolf Deissmann. It is a livid, emotional
defense against the charges of the British government that Germany had acted illegally.
Harnack considered this hypocritical, since the British allied themselves with the
uncivilized “Asian masses” that did not even recognize the province of international
morality. Furthermore the Allies used “heathen” troops from Africa and Asia in their
invasion of German Christendom. The Germans were engaged in a “just defensive war”
and a “sacred task.”

In the East, the ground is drenched in the blood of women and children slain by the
Russian hordes, and in the West the chests of our soldiers are shattered with dumdum

332. The reference here is to an act of sacrilege found in the Old Testament (I Samuel 21) where David
takes bread that can only be eaten by the sexually abstinent. David tells the priest (presumably falsely,
since David is seen lying and faking insanity throughout this chapter to escape King Saul) that his army has
been abstinent. He then adds this: “Whenever I go on a journey, all the young men are consecrated – even
for a secular journey. All the more so today, when they are consecrated at arms!” David’s bizarre self-
justification was likely not the only reason why von Harnack chose this passage to make his point. His
audience would attach this Old Testament passage to Jesus’ absolution of David’s behavior in the New
Testament (Matthew 12) when he defends his own disciples’ harvest of corn on the Sabbath. With this
Biblical allusion, von Harnack accuses his former British colleagues of an inflexible (and hence
unrighteous) diplomatic legalism that fails to see the necessity of action in the face of emergency.
bullets. . . . No one has less right to pretend to be defending European civilization than the allies of Russians and Serbians, who are not ashamed to incite Mongolians and negroes to fight against white men.  

In 1909, when the English church delegation came to Berlin, von Harnack exalted in the common world mission of the Protestant faith that would extend the benefits of Christian culture to the world. He was now witnessing the inversion of this mission. Now ‘heathen’ troops were threatening to wash over a divided and weakened Christendom.

Adolf von Harnack’s public rebuke of his coreligionaries touched off a paper war that almost tore the ecumenical movement apart. Karl Axenfeld wrote a second manifesto that was co-signed by the ecumenical elite, including Adolf von Harnack, Friedrich Lahusen, Ernst von Dryander, Adolf Deissmann, Julius Richter, Carl de Neufville, Johannes Spiecker, and Friedrich von Bodelschwingh. This essay was targeted directly at the English churches for propagating a “systematic network of lies” that is “endeavouring in other lands to cast upon our people and its Government the guilt for the outbreak of this war, and has dared to dispute the inner right of us and our Empire to invoke the assistance of God.” An die evangelischen Christen im Auslande (To Protestant Christians Abroad) pleaded with “those by blood and history and faith are our brothers” and who share “the responsibility for the fulfillment of the Great Commission” to save Germany from “being ravaged by Asiatic barbarism.” It questioned why Britain would create an “incurable rip in Teutonic Protestantism” that will force “Christian

333 Other prominent Protestants who signed the manifesto include Wilhelm Herrmann, Adolf von Schlatter, Friedrich Naumann, Franz von Liszt, Wilhelm Förster and Reinhold Seeburg. Friedrich Sigmund-Schultze refused to sign, because the manifesto was too public. For the full text, see Gerhard Besier, ed., Die protestantischen Kirchen Europas im ersten Weltkrieg: Ein Quellen- und Arbeitsbuch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 78 – 83. For additional background, see Wolfgang von Ungern-Sternberg and Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg, Der Aufruf ‘an die Kulturwelt’: Das Manifest des 93 und die Anfänge der Kriegspropaganda im ersten Weltkrieg (Stuttgart: Fritz Steiner, 1996).
Europe [to] forfeit. . .her position in the world.”  Davidson, Dickinson and others on the British Council engineered a response that recapitulated the arguments of the *White Book* and noted that while they were “keen especially to promote the close fellowship of Germany and England,” still they felt morally obligated to fulfill their “responsibilities and duties in regard to the maintenance of the public law in Europe.”  A leading figure in the French Council, Théophile Babut, renounced his relationship with Ernst von Dryander by letter and then published the subsequent exchange in the Parisian press.

The torrent of paper slowed around December and then mercifully stopped in the spring. Just war theory proved incapable of resolving their differences. It could not achieve any consensus. Chapter 1 presented four qualifications for a just war. British and German churchmen claimed to meet each of them.

• *All wars must be conducted by a legitimate, secular state.* Both the Allied and Central Powers were coalitions of legitimate states. Germany used this plank to justify its harsh martial actions against the Belgian Resistance, which were labeled terrorists, or *franc-tireurs*, for operating without state authority. This dovetailed with the logic of the Hague Conventions, which outlined protections for civilian

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334 WCCA 212.001: “Wartime pamphlets”; “An die evangelische Christen im Ausland.” A longer version of the manifesto appears in *Die Eiche* 3 (Jan 1915), 49 – 53, as well as Besier, ed., *Die Protestantischen Kirchen Europas*, 40 – 45. Siegmund-Schultze did not affix his name to the document because of its public nature. He kept his quarrels with the British to private letters. Inevitably the public essays are more vitriolic and less conciliatory than the private correspondence of the time. Clergymen were hesitant to criticize their own nation in print. Many historians of Protestantism in the First World War overemphasize nationalism because they have paid more attention to published sources at the expense of the more tortured correspondence between the two councils. For more on these manifestoes, see Bailey, "Gott mit Uns"; Bailey, "British Protestant Theologians in the First World War"; Jenkins, *German Pacifism Confronts German Nationalism*, 28 – 57; Gerhard Besier, *Religion - Nation - Kultur. Die Geschichte der christlichen Kirchen in den gesellschaftlichen Umbrüchen des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: 1991), 107 - 130, 134 – 138.


populations if and only if they were not engaged in military engagements, a privilege reserved only for the state. Britain exaggerated German brutality in Belgium. Yet the German army had indeed behaved punitively because they blamed the Allies for sponsoring non-statist guerrilla warfare.

• *Just wars must be a reaction to a specific act of aggression by another state.* Neither Germany nor Britain could agree upon what was meant by “aggression.” The Germans looked to the Eastern arena, while the British focused on the Western Front. The German army crossed a foreign border first. Furthermore, with the exception of the first months of the Eastern Front, the Germans fought the entire war on foreign soil. Austria-Hungary also delivered an impossible ultimatum to Serbia after the assassination of its royal heir Franz Ferdinand. Prima facie the Central Powers were the aggressors. Still, Russia was the first state to mobilize its army. Furthermore every member of the German Council believed that the Allies had planned a ’war of encirclement’ years beforehand. The German invasion was therefore a preemptive strike against the aggressive intentions of their enemy.

• *A decision for war must be made only as a last resort; states must attempt to find a peaceful resolution to conflict.* British churchmen often cited Austria-Hungary’s and Germany’s refusals to accept Sir Edward Grey’s offer of mediation as one of the central justifications for the war. German churchmen had always been less enthusiastic about the concept of arbitration, since the balance of power rather than the disinterested benevolence of law formed the bonds between nations. Most Protestant leaders shared von Harnack’s opinion that the other Great Powers would use the processes of arbitration to hem German power within the Continent. In other words the Germans interpreted Grey’s offer (and President Wilson’s later offers) to mediate as disguised power plays, not as sincere opportunities to forge a common peace.

• *A state must take precautions so that the violence of the war is not disproportionate to the aggressive acts that precipitated the war.* In retrospect neither side met this qualification. German and British clergy shared the professional opinion of the time that the war would be over quickly. Both were wrong. However, both sides did point to the other’s destruction of property and civilian lives. As became the pattern for much of the twentieth century, Protestant churches created iconic images of victims to justify their own militarism. Since the war was primarily fought on Allied soil, British churchmen could choose from an array of horrible stories. Military occupation is inevitably a brutal vocation. German churchmen countered with accounts from the colonies, where Allied armies imprisoned enemy missionaries and confiscated their property, and the effects of the blockade.

In 1914 Protestants in Germany and Britain shared a common recourse to the just war tradition. To paraphrase George Bernard Shaw’s witticism, the British and German
churches were two Christian communities divided by a common theology. Beneath the angry tone of their mutual accusations lies a desperation to achieve moral consensus. The seemingly innumerable exchanges of manifestes, arguments and denunciations do not signify that Protestants threw out their moral principles in the face of war. Instead it shows that Protestants on both sides obsessed about finding a common moral judgment about the war, even as that proved more and more impossible. Ecumenical leaders hoped to argue their counterparts into seeing the justness of their case. Yet neither side was able to win this tug of (just) war by pulling the churches onto its side.

The war was not fought in the absence of Christian commitment, but in the presence of a theological crisis. The just war tradition proved insufficiently capable of reunifying the ecumenical movement. By itself it could not guarantee the unity of Christendom or secure the world mission of the Protestant nations. Ecumenical leaders in Germany and Britain responded differently to this crisis. In Berlin leaders such as von Harnack, Siegmund-Schultze and Axenfeld despaired of the concepts of international law and arbitration. They interpreted internationalism as an Allied power ploy and justified their own military’s conduct by the law of necessity. The survival of the German nation and its mission replaced the just war tradition.

The German Council unraveled after relations with Britain ended. Many members, such as Martin Rade, mailed in resignations. At a meeting on September 15, Ernst von Dryander and Adolf von Harnack stormed out of a meeting of the German Council in anger over their failed efforts for an Anglo-German entente. Neither ever returned. That evening Dryander and Lahusen indicated that they felt their group should dissolve. At a second meeting on November 9, the others agreed to stop their campaign for amity with
Britain, at least for the duration of the war, though Siegmund-Schultze maintained their journal, *Die Eiche*, as a forum to debate the justness and the aims of the conflict.  

British churchmen, by contrast, did not abandon their internationalism when confronted by this crisis. Instead they hoped to reform the diplomatic arena by erecting a League of Nations that would make the just war tradition relevant once again. The primary purpose of the League would be to channel the martial power of the states into a cohesive moral force. The League would publish all diplomatic correspondence (no more partisan White Books), conduct independent investigations and deliver a clear moral judgment about which party was the aggressor. It would enforce a mandatory ‘cooling-off’ period during which peaceful alternatives could be pursued; a Council of Conciliation would even propose a mediated solution. The League could also establish common standards of warfare and enforce them. States that acted against the League’s authority would face the combined military power of the League’s coalition. The resultant war, or economic sanctions, would be lopsided enough to guarantee a swift war that would reduce civilian casualties. The moral consensus and overwhelming force of the community of states joined together in the League would replace the nightmarish stalemate produced by offsetting blocs of allied powers.  

The League of Nations emerged within the Allied and neutral churches out of this crisis of faith in just war theory. Eventually it replaced all of the other issues as the

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central justification for the war. The Great War would be justified by its future results, not by the past actions of its participants. The League promised to modernize the just war tradition by reforming great power diplomacy to fit the mandates of this theological tradition. The League would restore the conditions by which justice and armed conflict could be reconciled. The next chapter, which focuses on Protestant activism on behalf of the League, will return to this point.

Yet the League of Nations was not a viable project until after the Great War had ended. In the meantime World Alliance members explored cooperation on a smaller scale. Friedrich Curtius suggested that their ecumenical agenda shift towards their Catholic countrymen. Adolf Deissmann and Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze became some of the first Protestants in Berlin to cooperate with the Catholic Center Party. Several members (and ex-members) of the German Council endorsed Friedrich Naumann’s proposal to create a federal union of the Central Powers. Naumann’s scheme proposed a reincarnation of the Holy Roman Empire, which had been broken apart by Napoleon’s boot in 1806, and a revival of the *grosdeutsch* fantasies of the German Romantics.338

Ecumenical leaders in Britain and Germany did not entirely abandon their foreign contacts. By 1915 belligerent clergyman aimed their arguments at neutrals instead of at one another. Instead of trying to form a moral consensus, churches engaged in a competition of morality for moral sympathy. The United States was the primary target of this ecclesiastical propaganda. As shown above, Sir Edward Grey and other English

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clerics started swaying American opinion from the very outset of the war. Adolf von Harnack hoped that the Americans might still a pan-Protestant alliance even without Germany. In an open letter to the American churches, he reminded them that God “entrusted to three nations” the fullest expression of Christian culture. “Two still remain, and must stand all the firmly together where this culture is menaced. It is a question of our spiritual existence, and Americans will realize that is also their existence.”

Initially this propaganda had very little effect. The American churches tapped into a rhetoric of American exceptionalism and Old World decadence. Frederick Lynch believed the war was sent to Europe by God as an “object lesson to the churches of the complete failure and break-down of the present political order, [and] of militarism as a means of preserving peace.” Lynch and several other trustees from the Church Peace Union lobbied President Wilson to remain neutral throughout the affair. Funds from the CPU to Europe stopped. The monies went instead to domestic programs, including a series of books by Macfarland, Lynch and Gulick on the responsibilities of American Christians to carry forth the standard of Christian transnationalism by themselves. The CPU paid for the free distribution of these books and programs, while the newborn councils across the Atlantic often floundered for lack of funds.

In 1914 – 1915 American Protestant internationalists only paid attention to those international affairs that had nothing to do with Europe. The Federal Council of Churches tirelessly lobbied for President Wilson to mend relations with revolutionary Mexico. It sponsored a goodwill tour of Japan akin to the Anglo-German visitations of 1908 and 1909. The Church Peace Union organized celebrations of a century of peace.

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between the United States and Canada. Ecumenical organizations also threw their weight behind the President’s pan-American policy. In 1915 the CPU also underwrote substantial portions of the National Peace Congress in San Francisco.\textsuperscript{340}

One of the books subsidized by the Church Peace Union was Charles Macfarland’s \textit{Europe’s War, America’s Warning} (1915), eleven thousand copies of which were distributed through the Federal Council of Churches.\textsuperscript{341} It exemplified the new turn towards domestic affairs. The mutual recriminations filled him “with unspeakable sadness, because they are filled with bitterness and scorn, with reproach and contempt for those who only a few short weeks ago were their brethren beloved.”\textsuperscript{342} Europeans failed to understand that each side “is fighting, in others, the very sins which it has itself committed. Each is fighting now a foe without, because each failed to fight her foe within. . . .All have, in varying degree, either talked or acted an imperialism, and each has constantly increased the suspicions of the other.”\textsuperscript{343} The United States was removed from the bloodshed, but not immune from the war’s message. “We clearly recognize that no peace can come to Europe unless it be the peace that comes from justice,” Macfarland

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\item \textsuperscript{343}Ibid., 5
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wrote, “but yet within our own land thousands upon thousands of our people live in a continuously armed truce and we have here a social and industrial order still awaiting the peace of justice.”

American solipsism almost destroyed the World Alliance, particularly in Germany where funds were needed the most. In the summer of 1914 Siegmund-Schultze handled the arrangements with the Hotel Insel in Konstanz on credit with the understanding that the Church Peace Union would pay it. In July Lynch informed Siegmund-Schultze that the CPU had overdrawn its account for the stipends and expenses of the American delegation. Apparently he expected Carnegie to cover the bill. By August Carnegie was no longer in the mood to continue his association with the ecumenical movement.

Lynch’s role in the publication of the British *White Book* grieved him. After a heated argument about the personal responsibility of Wilhelm II, Carnegie and Lynch parted ways. The philanthropist reneged on his pledge to cover the costs of the German Council. By March 1915 Julius Richter reported that the German Council was broke and that it had stopped receiving anything from the CPU. As American churches swam in free literature (the majority of which was League of Nations propaganda), the German Council could not afford postage stamps.

The immediate effect therefore of Protestantism’s reliance on the just war tradition was the estrangement of the different branches of the ecumenical movement from one another. The tug of (just) war was not a struggle that could be won. Relations between

344 Ibid., 11-12.
former friends in belligerent states froze over after an early flurry of heated exchanges. Both sides lobbied neutral churchmen, who often retreated into domestic and/or regional issues.

By the beginning of 1915 it appeared likely that the World Alliance would dissolve. Yet it did not for two reasons. First of all, the World Alliance reinvigorated itself in the Allied and neutral nation by its decision to center itself around the League of Nations movement. The League provided an eschatological justification of the Great War that would restore the moral promise of the just war tradition. In other words, ecumenical leaders tabled the debate about who was to blame for the First World War in favor of a common anticipation of a new covenantal union forged together by the suffering of God’s peoples.

Secondly, the World Alliance survived 1915 by focusing on the care of the war’s victims, particularly POWs and civilian detainees. Ecumenists focused on practical ministry rather than the righteousness of any one particular side. Arguments over the past gave way to the preparation for the coming peace and the Kingdom of God. This new practical bent restored American interest in transatlantic affairs, as ecumenical leaders from the States accepted the CPU’s vision to launch a sacrificial crusade to Christianize the battlefields of Europe.

3.3 Cooperation in the Present: Mr. Battin Sees It Through, 1914 – 1918

In August 1914 the Church Peace Union hired its first full-time employee, Benjamin Franklin Battin. The young man was a complete novice to ecumenical work. He had come to the inaugural conference of the World Alliance at Konstanz as an
interpreter at the request of his former college advisor, William I. Hull. Battin was in the process of completing his graduate work at the University of Berlin. He had plans afterwards to return to Swathmore to teach German and history alongside Hull. When the conference disbanded, Battin did not go to London with the other Americans. Instead he took the regular train to Berlin, where he learned that his seminars were all canceled. He wrote about his disappointment to Hull, who in turn put his name up for a vital position with the CPU. The trustees needed someone fluent in German for the urgent job of locating their missing luggage. In the chaos of their flight from Konstanz, forty-eight suitcases had not made the connection in Cologne. Every graduate student has two needs: easy money and the goodwill of their mentors. Battin accepted the post. 

It took Battin only six weeks to find the missing bags. Yet he worked for the CPU until the beginning of 1918. In the meantime the former student served as the overseas eyes and ears of the CPU trustees, personal mediator, occasional gopher and mailman. As a courier he carried information about the League of Nations and the ecumenical movement back and forth between Berlin and London without the hassles of the British blockade and the censors of the German government. During the first year of the war Battin’s detailed reports allowed Americans to see the importance of practical philanthropy for the continuation of the World Alliance in Europe. He also traveled to

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347 If I read between the lines of Lynch’s correspondence with Hull correctly, Battin was dismissed for improperly using CPU funds for his personal expenses. This was the end of his ecumenical and academic careers. Battin went into international business and accumulated a small fortune until the 1929 stock market crash. Faced with sudden bankruptcy, Battin committed suicide. FHL: “Battin, Benjamin” file.
the States himself on three occasions, where he lectured at rallies for the League of Nations, attended Lake Mohonk soirees and, with Mott, debriefed President Wilson on the World Alliance’s progress on the Continent. Battin’s wife also became involved in the internationalist cause. She attended the 1915 women’s peace congress at The Hague and served thereafter as one of the founding members of the Women’s International Peace Congress. Her involvement ensured a certain amount of cooperation between the two strongest peace movements of the First World War.

Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze first introduced Battin to the plight of civilian detainees in Berlin in October 1914. Siegmund-Schultze had just become aware of their situation himself. In mid-August J. H. Rushbrooke, the editor of the British Council’s periodical *Goodwill*, was taken into custody by military authorities. Rushbrooke married Dora von Weber, the daughter of a court painter Anton von Weber, during his time as a graduate student under Adolf von Harnack. Like Battin, Rushbrooke headed for Berlin after Konstanz in order to retrieve his wife. Siegmund-Schultze (and perhaps Harnack as well?) leveraged his political connections in order to attain Rushbrooke’s release. He spent six weeks of house arrest (at the home of his in-laws!). 348

Eventually the German government exchanged Rushbrooke for some of their own citizens similarly caught behind British borders. Four thousand other British citizens were not so lucky. Siegmund-Schultze was shocked at the hasty and haphazard nature of

the army’s care of POWs and civilian prisoners. Ruhleben, where they were held on the outskirts of the capital, was still in essence a track for horse racing. The camp was crude, understaffed, and chronically short on supplies. Guards lived in the compound’s three permanent buildings, while their charges bedded down in stables.

Siegmund-Schultze made arrangements with the military commandant for the churches to provide some basic services for the interned. Dr. Elizabeth Rotten, Siegmund-Schultze’s partner at the settlement house, provided free medical care. Schreiber and Richter diverted missionary funds to purchase more rations for the camp. Dryander and Lahusen donated their time to meet the increasing demand for pastoral care. Several members (or former members) of the German Council volunteered as chaplains and conducted interreligious services. Ecumenical agencies recruited pastors to perform similar duties in the growing archipelago of one hundred and fifty detention centers spread across the country. Over sixty YMCA workers helped. The German SCM

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349 Wartime Germany was subdivided into preset military units and placed under martial law. Army commanders assumed complete control of both home and conquered territories. The treatment of subject civilian populations fell under the personal authority of the regional army commander. The army therefore supervised the camps without civil or parliamentary oversight and cooperated with relief organizations at the regional command’s pleasure. Uda Hinz, Gefangen im grossen Krieg: Kriegsgefangenschaft in Deutschland 1914 - 1921 (Essen: Klartext, 2006).

350 On the conditions in Ruhleben, see Christoph Jahr, "Zivilisten als Kriegsgefangene: Die Internierung von 'Feindstaaten-Ausländern' in Deutschland während des ersten Weltkrieges," in In der Hand des Feindes: Kriegsgefangenschaft von der Antike bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg, ed. Rüdiger Overmans (Köln: Böhla, 1999); Joseph Powell, The History of Ruhleben: A Record of British Organisation in a Prison Camp in Germany (London: W. Collins, 1919); Matthew Stibbe, British Civilian Internees in Germany: The Ruhleben Camp, 1914 - 1918, 20 ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008). The Nazi government demolished Ruhleben when the area was chosen as the site for the Olympic Stadium. Today a British graveyard and a small ecumenical chapel is the only part of Ruhleben that remains.
also gathered supplies and young (mostly female) volunteers. Over one million prisoners received spiritual care through their efforts.\textsuperscript{351}

Siegmund-Schultze lacked the resources for this venture. He used his political connections to unleash governmental assistance. Georg Michaelis, the chairman of the German Student Christian Movement, became an invaluable partner. Michaelis was a main supporter of Siegmund-Schultze’s settlement house; he played a key role in securing his friend salaried employment with the Berlin SCM. Even after the war he continued to look after Siegmund-Schultze through the hyperinflation of the 1920s. Michaelis was a career bureaucrat who was used his position in the Prussian Ministry of Finance to coordinate his parachurch work with the German government. Siegmund-Schultze also used his relationship with Wilhelm II, Luise von Baden and, through Luise, the German Red Cross. On several occasions their letters ended police interrogations or dissipated the misgivings of camp supervisors. Finally, he relied on the support of Luise’s nephew, Maximilian von Baden.\textsuperscript{352}

The contrast between German enthusiasm for POW relief and German frustration with internationalism was a dominant theme in Battin’s early reports. By the fall of 1914


\textsuperscript{352} The most intimate portrait of Michaelis’ involvement with the settlement house is Irmgard von der Lühe, \textit{Elisabeth von Thadden: Ein Schicksal unserer Zeit} (Düsseldorf: Diederichs Verlag, 1966), 19 – 22. (Elisabeth von Thadden is best known for being executed by the Nazi government for her role in the Resistance. Her father was very close friends with Michaelis, and both men encouraged Elisabeth as a college student to live with Siegmund-Schultze and Rotten at the settlement house.)
the German Council had practically dissolved, while more and more Protestants rallied to Siegmund-Schultze’s project. Battin noted that their attitude towards the World Alliance had been poisoned by an “extreme bitterness toward England” for having sided with “Russian barbarism” and having “thus been false to all ideals of civilisation, including her own.” He concluded that Siegmund-Schultze was the most open-minded clergyman in Berlin, even though he strongly endorsed the war effort and denounced those who did not. Battin believed that if the World Alliance shifted its focus toward relief, there was an opportunity to form a small circle which “should be organised in a quiet way, without publicity” in order to preserve the ecumenical movement for the peace. Battin even compared the prospect for the German Council favorably to the French, who “find it impossible to look into the future and think of peace.”

353 The CPU was intrigued by the proposal and sent Mott to Berlin for a meeting with the ecumenical community there on November 9.

John Raleigh Mott was the most dynamic Protestant figure of the early twentieth century. In many ways Mott was the successor to D. L. Moody, an evangelist and an organizer, a theological conservative and an ecumenical visionary, all rolled into one, except that, unlike Moody, Mott accomplishments were truly international. In 1914 Mott was at the height of his career: president of both the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) and the American YMCA; the founder of the World’s Student Christian Federation (WSCF); and the dominant personality behind the landmark Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910. Born in Iowa and raised up in the Keswickian movement, Mott first

entered the public arena while a student at Cornell University. There he experienced “entire sanctification,” a conversion that transformed his love of business into a passion for American revivalism. Mott took full-time work with the YMCA while still an undergraduate. Mott was a regular at the Northfield summer camps where Moody, the unelected monarch of American evangelicalism, infected youth with an enthusiasm for missions. Mott first worked with American college students. Traveling from campus to campus he developed study circles that attracted students from American universities and recruited thousands of elite young people for the mission field. After that he expanded his reach overseas. The WSCF would “encourage Christian students in each country to develop national movements of their own, adapted in name, organization, and activities to their particular genius and character, and then to link these together in some simple yet effective federation.” This global league would be capable of “Christianizing the world.” After his first world tour in 1895 – 1896, Mott logged an annual average of thirty to forty thousand miles of travel for the next sixty years. Mott was one of the world’s first global celebrities. On any given day he could be seen meeting with politicos in Asia, visiting remote missions outposts in the Middle East, holding revivals in Geneva, or acting as the spiritual caretaker to the American political elite.

Mott became an adherent of political internationalism around 1905. That spring he attended his first Lake Mohonk Conference to report on the growth of the WSCF.


Mott returned in 1908 to pledge his intent to align the YMCA and WSCF behind the cause of international arbitration. In 1912 Mott timed the second executive committee meeting of the International Missionary Council to coincide with the annual festivities at Mohonk. In 1913 he did the same with the WSCF. Three hundred student leaders from around the world formed one single “world-embracing student Christian movement – international, interracial, ecumenical.” Audiences listened to Mott target certain “danger zones” to world peace (such as Austria-Hungary, the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire) and demand that they “diffuse the atmosphere of Mohonk among these peoples.”

In 1914 Mott was an original trustees of the Church Peace Union, one of those select few handpicked by both Carnegie and Lynch, and afterwards at Konstanz. After returning home with the other American representatives, Mott quickly returned to Europe to ease his worries that the war could tear his student and missionary organizations apart. Mott met with youth leaders and missionaries in Holland, Scandinavia, France and Switzerland, so when he arrived in Berlin in November, he was already well acquainted with the tug of (just) war between Britain and Germany. Still, the palpable anger of those present took him aback. YMCA leaders at the University of Berlin raged against Russian imperialism. Karl Axenfeld fulminated about the expropriation of missionary property by Allied forced in Africa and Asia. Julius Richter arrived armed with a detailed argument about the Russian origins of the conflict. Georg Michaelis rationalized the army’s retributive measures against “civilian terrorists” in Belgium. Mott would not

believe these individuals were representative of the broader church mood until Battin confirmed his apprehensions.\textsuperscript{357}

Mott quickly abandoned any hope of a reconciliation. He remained in Berlin cataloguing German grievances and persistently refusing to take the British side until he convinced them that the American churches were in fact committed to neutrality between the two sides. Mott cast the war within a religious interpretation that blamed the general spiritual decline of Europe. He spent much of his time in worship and prayer with German leaders. At one meeting at the home of Friedrich Lahusen, Mott and Dryander prayed together for the future reconciliation of the British and German churches. Lahusen later claimed that this was “one of the most holy experiences of my life.” He attended services at the Dom and vigils at the University of Berlin. In this context he visited Ruhleben and other neighboring camps with Siegmund-Schultze and the other volunteer chaplains.

Mott was impressed by Siegmund-Schultze’s work. One particular service at a camp at Döberitz for three thousand British prisoners particularly moved him. Afterwards Mott told Siegmund-Schultze that the visit had deeply changed him: “Your time has been well spent in seeking to put me into intimate touch with the important developments in unselfish service on behalf of the prisoners and others and likewise in giving me insight into the point of view and feeling of your countrymen. . . .I desire to do everything in my power to cooperate in the important activities to which you have called

attention.”\textsuperscript{358} When Siegmund-Schultze proposed to refocus the ecumenical agency around this issue, Mott was receptive to the idea. Since the Spanish-American War, the YMCA had been providing services and goods to Western armies. Why not extend this mission to troops who had been captured and were at the mercy of an enemy power? 

Georg Michaelis approached Mott about working with the German government, which was (once again) particularly concerned about the Eastern Front. Russia and Germany had no agreement about the standards of care for POWs. Nightmarish rumors about impromptu gulags and inhumane conditions filtered back to Germany, but no one could know anything for certain since there existed no way to send or receive mail from the prison camps. Michaelis warned Mott that their cooperation depended upon the reciprocity of the Allied nations.

Why would the German government turn to churchmen when it wanted to negotiate a treaty regarding POWs? As shown ahead in Chapter 5, governments also used Protestant internationalists as emissaries for discussions about a postwar League of Nations. Why wouldn’t belligerents use more traditional diplomatic channels? Gerald H. Davis discovered in his study of the diplomatic archives of the belligerent powers that in order to maintain secrecy states frequently used informal channels for discussions about POWs, temporary truces or peace terms. “When the parties wanted to reach agreement with their opponents, they did so indirectly, though modulations of action or inaction or through discreet third parties,” particularly for “work that might be considered

\textsuperscript{358} EZAB 51/A-III-h: letter from Mott to Siegmund-Schultze, 28 August 1915.
American ecumenists were therefore only one example of this apparently common practice during the First World War of using amateur intermediaries for issues such as the care of captured enemy soldiers.

Mott and Battin split up when they left Berlin to take this new vision for POWs to the other councils of the World Alliance. This new direction was an opportunity to renew relations between the churches of Germany and the Entente, while at the same time bringing Christ into the war zone.

Mott first returned to Britain, where the churches responded with alacrity. Davidson and Baker used their positions in Parliament to lodge appeals for the release of captured German missionaries and pastors of émigré churches in London with fairly successful results. Dickinson used his new appointment to the King’s Privy Council to create a National War Refugee Committee. His whole family often spent weekends bringing care packages, organizing little luxuries such as sporting events and libraries, and aiding the International Red Cross’ efforts to identify each prisoner by name so that they might chart abuses and establish a rudimentary mail system. His youngest daughter Joan (though everyone called her Mimi) took a position in the British Red Cross where she might oversee these efforts and personally coordinate the shared work. Sir Henry Lunn made the most original contribution of all of the members of the British Council. Lunn compiled his fortune before 1914 with his chain of Christian hotels in the Switzerland that combined religious retreat with Alpine sports. Now he transformed his

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hotels into de luxe POW accommodations. As unlikely as it may seem, a few French and German soldiers waited out the war together under ‘hotel arrest’ in the Bernese Alps.\textsuperscript{360}

These labors often reconnected Christians in Germany and Britain in intimate ways. For example, after Otto Umfrid’s son was listed as missing on the Western Front, he had no information about his fate until Kate Courtney found him in a camp in northern Scotland. Courtney and Umfrid first met at the London Peace Congress and had developed a friendship through various ecumenical and internationalist events. Now Umfrid was able to send him letters and some personal effects, the only contact he would have with his son before his death in 1918.\textsuperscript{361}

In March 1915 the British Council published a new document that redefined the World Alliance. \textit{The Christian Attitude on the War and International Relationships after the War} replaced the older vision of Anglo-German harmony with two new interconnected aims: on the one hand, practical acts of Christian charity during the war and, on the other, the creation of a League of Nations after the war. Future peace depended on efforts to bring the mercy of Christ to the victims of the battlefield. “By using their power to assuage feelings of animosity an ill-will; to encourage prayer for enemies and care for their well-being; to refute calamities which inflame passion; to allay bitterness by making known generous actions on the part of foes as well as on the part of friends; to aid helpless and innocent aliens when in difficulties; to keep alive the friendly relations which may have existed before the war – by so acting they will do much to


facilitate the task of the nations when they come together to discuss the terms of peace.”

Humanitarian missions, such as the care of POWs, foreshadow the coming Christian world order. They incarnate the commitment to “Christ’s principles” that “should control the actions of States not less than those of individuals.” They point forward to a “worldwide league”, open to “all civilized nations” and grounded upon the “Christian principles of righteousness and tolerance.”

The Christian Attitude on the War and International Relations after the War generated fifteen hundred positive responses from local pastors. Membership in Britain rose over five thousand.

Quite early on in the war effort, the British Council produced a substantial amount of influential material (e.g., sermons, pamphlets, journal articles, academic lectures, etc.) that cast the Great War as a struggle for international comity. Its journal, renamed Goodwill, climbed to fifteen hundred subscriptions under the recently repatriated Rushbrooke. Several newspapers and journals served as outlets to a broader audience. Dickinson regularly contributed to The Contemporary Review. E. Richard Cross negotiated relations with the Nation. William Temple edited his own newspaper, The Challenge, while working in conjunction with J. H. Oldham (John Mott’s right-hand man for the International Missionary Council) to produce a series of Papers in Wartime with Oxford University Press.

Mott understood that a philanthropic crusade had the potential to mobilize millions of Protestants who would otherwise be excluded from the battlefield, including

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362 The Christian Attitude on the War and International Relationships after the War, (London: British Council of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship Through the Churches, 1915), 3. (This document can be found in different archives, including WCCA 212.001, EZAB 51/D-I-b-2 and SCPC, CDG-A: file 17.)

students from neutral states, clergymen and women. By redefining the war as a site for
spiritual labor (or even spiritual warfare), Mott and other ecumenical leaders broadened
the war effort to include all Christians in every land. It gave civilian individuals who
might have otherwise been bystanders a sense of agency and responsibility. In his rallies
Mott returned repeatedly to the theme that the final outcome of the war depended on the
mobilization of believers. “The world will not drift into peace. Peace must be made. . .
Christ did not say,’ Blessed are the pacifists,’ but ‘Blessed are the peace-makers.”
At the American SVM convention in December 1914, Mott presented the Great War as an
“opportunity. . . .Nothing save the expansion of Christianity in its purest form can make it
a safe home for man.” This was a matter of “changing the motive life, the ambitions, the
spirit of men; and only Christianity has shown itself able to do this wonder-work.”
Within the year over five hundred and fifty British and Canadian students enlisted with
Mott instead of the British Army.

Mott had even more success recruiting support in the United States, particularly
through the YMCA and the Federal Council of Churches. Chapter 2 argued that the
Federal Council gained ground with the denominations only after it championed political
internationalism. Its involvement in this ecumenical crusade continued that trend. By
1916 the organization could rightfully claim to be the voice of American Protestantism.
Even before the U.S. entered in 1917, the Great War was the first European conflict in
which the American churches thoroughly invested themselves. Their traditional political

364 Hopkins, John R. Mott, 443 – 444.
365 Ibid., 85 – 86.
366 Nathan D. Showalter, The End of a Crusade: The Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign
Missions and the Great War (Landham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 121.
isolationism became thoroughly acclimated to the League campaign as early as the winter of 1914 – 1915.

At an International Committee meeting in New York in December 1914, Mott described what he had seen in Europe. He stressed that POW relief was an avenue for American participation in the war without violating their neutrality. To the rest he emphasized that these acts of sacrificial love now would prepare Europe for an eventual reconciliation. Literature for bible studies and discussion groups in the YMCA, YWCA and SCM openly adopted internationalist positions and enlisted youth in a crusade for the soul of central Europe. Mott also carried the idea to the Church Peace Union and the Federal Council of Churches. Carnegie’s endowment paid for recruitment tours, traveling libraries in Europe, and the publication of hundreds of new titles. Charles Macfarland presented “New Internationalism” as the logical culmination of the social gospel movement. Sidney Gulick championed a “Fight for Peace” series of study guides, sermon aids, and Sunday School materials.367 Before 1914 the Federal Council of Churches gained political and ecclesiastical allegiances by championing arbitration. Now it forwarded its hold over the American churches through its moralist approach to the Great War. By 1918 it could justly claim to be the mouthpiece of American Protestantism.368


One of the most popular study guides on university campuses in 1915 was D. Willard Lyon’s *The Christian Equivalent of War*. Lyon had been a veteran missionary in China who was now home on leave. He too had attended the Konstanz Church Conference as one of Mott’s lieutenants. In *The Christian Equivalent of War* Lyon counseled Christian students to commit themselves to international peace by bringing mercy and love to the battlefield. State force might win the war, but only “Christ’s sacrificial love” could bring about peace. “The spirit and teaching of Jesus. . .involve a reversal of many of the world’s estimates by emphasizing the infinite value of each human soul, the superiority of personal character to anything that man may own, the greatness of the power to serve as contrasted with the power to rule, the supremacy of the law of love.” Lyon called for a “Christian crusade” by the neutral churches that would prepare both sides of the war for a global Church grounded in a “new Christian nationalism” without any “limitations of race, color, or social rank. . .a new Israel. . .a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession.”

Meanwhile Battin toured neutral Europe. The Scandinavian churches responded with alacrity. The Archbishop of Bergen, Carsten Hansteen, who now chaired a national council of three hundred pastors, offered his support. The Dutch and Danish Councils proved just as receptive. In Sweden, Battin’s mission was embraced by the new Archbishop of Uppsala, Nathan Söderblom, who became an integral leader to the World


371 Ibid., 81. Lyon cribbed these metaphors of the Church as a new nationality cribbed from Galatians 6:16 and 1 Peter 2:9, which also formed Adolf von Harnack’s understanding of the transnational Church. (See Chapter 1).
Alliance from that point forward. In 1930 he received the Nobel Peace Prize for his contributions to the League of Nations and the ecumenical movement.

Nathan Söderblom was uniquely positioned to act as an able mediator in 1914. In college he fell under the spell of D. L. Moody and attended summer conferences of the YMCA in the United States. At Moody’s home in Northfield, Massachusetts, he befriended John Mott. Söderblom pursued graduate work in comparative religion and the Old Testament at the Sorbonne, capped off by teaching career in France, Sweden and Germany. He knew Harnack and Deissmann well through academic collaborations. In 1908 he participated in discussions between the Swedish and Anglican churches about institutional union, a topic that always excited him. Since that time he had been in close contact with Davidson and other British ecumenical leaders. Before 1914 Söderblom possessed no firsthand knowledge of the peace movement. Yet he was still familiar with its tenets through his childhood friend Anna Hammarskjöld. The Hammarskjöld family was a pillar of Swedish internationalism throughout the twentieth century. Her husband Hjalmar represented his country at both Hague Conferences and, later on, at the League of Nations; he was also Sweden’s Prime Minister from 1914 to 1917. His son Åke worked for the League secretariat and the International Court of Justice in the 1920s and 1930s. His other son Dag was the first secretary-general of the United Nations.

Nathan Söderblom knew peace for only three months after his appointment as Archbishop of Uppsala. The Anglo-German tug of (just) war deeply disturbed him. Like Mott, Söderblom wanted to churches to substitute eschatological struggle for a future peace for irresolvable arguments about past guilt. In the winter of 1914 he issued his own appeal, which pleaded for an end to these arguments. “The tangle of underlying and
active causes which have accumulated in the course of time, and the proximate events which have led us to the breaking of peace, are left to history to unravel. God alone sees and judges the intents and thoughts of the heart.” Christians everywhere must realize that “war cannot sunder the bond of internal union that Christ holds in us. . . . Our Faith perceives what the eye cannot always see: the strife of nations must finally serve the dispensation of the Almighty, and all the faithful in Christ are one.” The proper reaction to war was repentance and prayer that “He may destroy hate and enmity, and in mercy ordain peace for us.”

Söderblom’s appeal set the tenor for neutral Protestants in Europe and secured the Swedish academic’s future leadership within the ecumenical movement. Church leaders in Holland, Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, and the United States signed the document. Several councils of the World Alliance printed the document in seven different languages. Söderblom became a fierce advocates in Europe for an ecumenical congress that could truly act as the “soul” of the League of Nations, for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1930.

Nathan Söderblom and Hjalmer Hammarskjöld eagerly received Battin in the spring of 1915. Since the Konstanz Conference, all of the Scandinavian countries (except Finland) had developed self-sufficient national councils of the World Alliance. Each council worked closely with the established churches; most of them began publishing

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their own periodical that printed information about the movement in both Germany and Britain. At the Berne Conference, where delegates met in August, Sweden however took the lead among this group because of the fervent support of Söderblom, the Archbishop, and Hammarskjöld, the Prime Minister. Also, the von Baden family connections once again benefited the World Alliance. Queen Victoria of Sweden was the daughter of Luise von Baden. Her son, Prince Carl, assumed the presidency of the Swedish Red Cross and worked closely with his cousin, Max von Baden, to arrange a Russo-German agreement about standards of POW care.374

Signed in December 1915, the Stockholm Convention stipulated precise standards of hygiene, communication and nutrition for POWs. It also authorized the International Red Cross and the YMCA to inspect camp conditions, report violations and handle the distribution of food, supplies, Christian materials and care packages.375 The success of this conference revived the flagging German Council. German concerns about the fate of their captured brothers on the Eastern Front were quite real. Alon Rachamimov estimates that six million prisoners were captured on the Eastern Front, about seventy-five percent of the total number of POWs for the war. Several of the Russian camps were little better than gulags. Without foreign aid it is likely that few would have survived, especially

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during the increased chaos of the Russian Revolution.\footnote{Rachamimov, \textit{POWs and the Great War}, 3.}

The Stockholm Convention would have been little more than a scrap of paper without the presence of foreigners on site to handle inspections and ensure the proper distribution of supplies. These courageous volunteers kept millions of men alive. The majority of these workers came from ecumenical agencies, particularly the YMCA and YWCA. Söderblom personally recruited the elite Protestant students of Sweden and Norway for his campaign. Herman Neander, one of Söderblom’s young assistants, was among the first to go. The so-called ‘Angel of Siberia,’ Elsa Brändström, spent six years in Russia working with the Red Cross, the YMCA, and eventually the League of Nations. She handled over 700,000 cases in Russia before getting swept along with escaped Czech units trying to fight its way across Siberia after the Communist Revolution in 1917.

In 1915 the American YMCA arrived in Russia and the Eastern Front as well. In the twelve months Mott gathered together one-hundred and fifty youth leaders as an avant-garde for the YMCA and YWCA on the Eastern fronts. The Y copied patriotic symbols in its campaign. For example, they provided families of volunteers with “service flags” to hang from the windows of their homes and churches. Each star sewn onto the flag represented a son or daughter in the field; a gold star indicated that volunteer had died.\footnote{John Mott, \textit{The Tradition of the American Mother: A Message to the Fathers and Mothers Who Live in the Homes with Service Flags} (New York: United War Work Campaign, 1918).} The numbers rose sharply by the fall of 1915. From then until 1919 Mott attracted twenty-six thousand more volunteers, the majority of whom came from the United States.\footnote{Showalter, \textit{The End of a Crusade}, 121.} Conrad Hoffmann was one of these young men and women, so
many of whom later worked for the League of Nations. Mott personally plucked Hoffmann from his post at the University of Kansas for work alongside Siegmund-Schultze in Berlin. It was his first trip outside of the United States. There he administered millions of dollars in relief while arranging with Georg Michaelis and Max von Baden for parcels and funds to be sent to Stockholm. From there another former Bible group leader, Ethan Colton from South Dakota, funneled the packages to Russia under the guarantee of the Swedish royal family.\(^{379}\)

Relief efforts spread to other fronts as well after 1915. Eberhard Phildius, a Swiss student in charge of the SCM at the University of Vienna, organized relief services for Italian POWs. Philip Baker formed a new ambulance unit destined for service in Italy and helped coordinate relief measures on the other side of the southern front.\(^{380}\) Edward Carter, an American evangelical in charge of the YMCA in India, traveled to France with Indian troops and took charge of POW relief and services to the Allied armies on the western front.\(^{381}\)

Two brothers served together on the Western Front organizing activities and materials for the United States army in 1917. The older brother, Harry Emerson Fosdick, discovered a talent for writing YMCA devotionals and inspiring sermons on behalf of the American war effort and the League movement. Meanwhile, Woodrow Wilson

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appointed Raymond Fosdick to incorporate the YMCA into the daily life of the army and
navy so as to “preserve the moral vitality of the men.” Both brothers were exposed to
internationalism through their wartime experiences. Harry later became pastor of the
Park Avenue Baptist Church in New York City (where John D. Rockefeller and John
Foster Dulles supported his ministry), host of the popular *National Vespers Hour* on
NBC, and one of the most stalwart advocates for the League. Raymond performed well
enough for Wilson that in 1919 the President appointed him the American representative
on the three-man committee to set up the League of Nations in Geneva.

In all, the ecumenical ‘crusade’ attracted twenty-six thousand volunteers. For the
Fosdicks, for Brändström and Baker, for Hoffmann and Philidius, as for so many others,
participation was the gateway to a lifelong association with the League of Nations. I find
it very significant that each of the four persons associated the League of Nations who
received the Nobel Peace Prize – Phillip Noel-Baker, Inazo Nitobe, Fridthof Nansen and
Arthur Henderson – worked for the YMCA or the World Alliance before their
employment in Geneva. The fact that the ecumenical agencies were a shared socio-
religious background for a predominant number of League workers has yet to be fully
taken into account.

The financial consequences of these campaigns were just as important. Ecumenical
organizations now had the financial clout to sway other internationalist agencies. Mott
dubbed the response to his campaign “the largest voluntary offering in history.”

382 The Federal Council of Churches received a budget increase of sixty percent in 1917. Swiss
churches contributed $2,500,000. The Student Christian Movement collected almost

$60,000,000 from 1915 to 1918. During that same time period the YWCA dispersed $20,000,000 on relief programs and the provision of frontline “war huts”. The YMCA added another $50,000,000 worldwide for the new campaign. Most of these funds came from the United States. The German churches could not help; their financial resources and young men were too devastated by the war effort and the Allied blockade. However the Imperial government contributed around DM 30,000,000 annually after 1918. By 1919 Mott’s organizations served between five and six million POWs and still enjoyed a surplus of funds, money that would be used after the war to support relief efforts by the League of Nations.383

The First World War was therefore not a catastrophe for Protestant internationalism. On the contrary, it proved to be a boon for organizations such as the YMCA, the YWCA and the World Alliance for International Friendship. The ecumenical movement successfully established a ‘church front’ for the First World War that funneled funds, supplies and volunteers into a campaign to heal the wounds of Christendom and expand Christ’s Kingdom throughout the world.

The Great War promoted Protestant internationalism, a stimulation akin to the war’s effect on other transnational religious movements such as political Zionism, the

pan-Islamic Khilafat Movement and Muslim Brotherhood, the Bahá’í Faith, and a
Buddhist-inspired pan-Asianism. It may be correct to conclude that transnational religion
in general gained momentum during the 1910s, but unfortunately historians currently lack
the studies to make such a large statement. Though some stellar monographs exist, more
work should be done in this area. Yet it is also important to underline that Protestant
internationalism’s wartime growth also separates it from other political internationalist
movements, all of which (with the exception of the women’s movement) entered a fatal
dormancy after 1914. As the League of Nations ideal picked up strength from 1914 to
1919, and then into the 1920s, it relied upon the financial, political and moral resources
of the ecumenical organizations.

3.4 Near East Relief and the Armenian Genocide, 1915 – 1918

Near East Relief is a model example of the relief-oriented humanitarianism that
became predominant within the ecumenical movement during the First World War. The
organization began in 1915 in response to the Ottoman Empire’s genocidal aggression
against Christian Armenians. Its trustees were all Americans drawn from three sources:
from Protestant universities located in the Near East, from the leadership of the Federal
Council of Churches, and from those Protestant businessmen close to President Woodrow
Wilson. In just four years, Near East Relief developed into an institution with annual
expenditures of $20,000,000, its own army of relief workers, and intimate political clout

with the American President (and therefore the Paris Peace Conference). It was also a particularly important organization for the League of Nations throughout the 1920s, as the Allies placed the League in control of the city of Constantinople and continued to wrestle with the politically defiant Young Turks. This chapter section will therefore take the time to briefly present the origins of this institution to further this chapter’s claim about the war’s catalytic effect on Protestant internationalism.

The Armenian genocide resulted from Ottoman suspicions of its Christian populations after the 1915 British invasion of Gallipoli. Most Armenians were Orthodox, but Protestant missionaries had been active among the Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire since 1810, primarily in the fields of education and medicine. Their students often adopted the political and nationalist views of their teachers. As described in Chapter 1, Protestant missionaries believed that nationality was a gift of God and that a healthy nationalism was a primary social product of a people’s conversion to Christ. The spread of such views in the polyglot Balkans and Near East often had predictable results. Protestant-educated Bulgarians, Albanians, and Syrians took the lead as those fringes of the Sublime Porte broke off, often with the support of American, German, and British

statesmen. Meanwhile, within the borders, Armenia bore the brunt for the separatism of its fellow Christians.386

In 1895 – 1896 Turkish nationalists massacred about fifty thousand Armenians, about ten percent of which were Protestant. Western Protestant churches put intense domestic pressure on their governments to stop the killing. In 1915, once the Ottoman Empire was already at war with the Entente, the Ottoman government resumed its genocidal policies after the Sultan declared jihad against the Christian West. The Ottomans charged the Armenians with conspiring with their co-religionists in Britain and Russia.387 After Russia surrendered in 1917, the Ottoman army extended their brutal reach to Armenian communities in contemporary Georgia and Azerbaijan. Tallies of the death count are necessarily inexact. Estimated deaths range from 900,000 to 2,100,000.388

Protestant internationalists tried to intervene but found their options limited in a time of war. In 1914 the Ottoman government banned ecumenical organizations and British missionaries. (Germany’s other ally, Austria-Hungary, did likewise. When Alice Masaryk, daughter of the first president of the soon-to-be-independent Czechoslovakia,

386 Joseph L. Grabill’s analysis of the relations between Protestants and the Ottoman government are in general spot on. At one point he observes that “Missionaries did not understand that they were expecting the Porte to react benignly as they trained an Armenian minority in literacy and the professions – a minority which included people who spoke of independence. The American Protestants did not imagine how they might have behaved if for several decades in their homeland a foreign educational system directed by Muslims had devoted itself to, say, Afro-Americans, with the result that the black Islamic minority became more proficient than the majority of white Americans.” Other helpful surveys include Peter Balakian, The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response (New York: HarperCollins, 2003); Robert L. Daniel, American Philanthropy in the Near East, 1820 - 1960 (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1970); and Manoug J. Somakian, Empires in Conflict: Armenia and the Great Powers, 1895 - 1920 (London: I. B. Tauris, 1995).


388 For various estimates of the number of dead, see Strachen, 114. For the political and historiographical issues that drive this debate, see Guenter Lewy, The Armenian Massacres of Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005).
tried to establish YWCA and WSCF outposts in Prague in 1914, she was arrested and sentenced to twelve years of prison despite protests from the internationalist community.) Thus, when the massacres began in 1915, the only foreigners to witness the killing were a handful of German and American missionaries. Both groups tried independently to stop the slaughter by putting pressure on their respective governments.

The U. S. State Department received firsthand accounts in the spring of 1915. President Wilson and Secretary of State Bryan tried to pressure the Ottomans but failed. Both men then turned to other means of alleviating the suffering. Wilson contacted the Church Peace Union, the Federal Council of Churches, and several Christian businessmen who were on close terms with the President. He urged them to create a private relief fund for Armenian refugees and pledged the government would support their efforts to establish refugee camps in the Near East.\textsuperscript{389}

The thirty-eight trustees of Near East Relief first convened on 20 November 1915. Eleven were involved with the FCCCA or CPU, including the two Catholic members of the board which were carried over. They included the usual suspects: Hamilton Holt, Frederick Lynch, Charles Macfarland, Samuel T. Dutton, James Cardinal Gibbons, David H. Greer, and John Mott. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, who was rapidly becoming an unofficial member of the Federal Council of Churches Committee on Peace and Arbitration, anchored a small Jewish contingent. The International Missionary Council was also heavily represented. Besides Mott, the board contained Robert Speer, James L.\textsuperscript{389}

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\textsuperscript{389} Near East Relief was originally called the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, but for the sake of clarity I refer to the organization by its later moniker. On the foundation of Near East Relief, see James Barton, \textit{Story of Near East Relief (1915-1930): An Interpretation} (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 90 – 96 and Joseph L. Grabill, \textit{Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Diplomacy and American Policy, 1810 - 1927} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 68 – 72.
Barton, William Sloane, and Talcott Williams, a noted sociologist at Columbia University who was the son of missionaries in the Middle East. Wilson’s friends included Cleveland H. Dodge, Arthur Curtiss James, George Plimpton and Charles Crane, all of whom were board members of Protestant colleges in Constantinople, Lebanon and Syria.

To raise money Near East Relief launched what Suzanne Moranian has described as “a surprisingly modern and sophisticated public relations campaign.” Secular and religious appeals reached both types of media. Pastors preached on the tragedy of “the oldest Christian nation” using material from firsthand American and German accounts. President Wilson set aside special Sundays for these sermons, after which congregations could collect subscriptions and solicit volunteers. The board produced its own films, including *Ravished Armenia* (1918) starring Aurora Mardiganian, a fourteen year old survivor now starring in her own story, in a gaudy spectacle of Muslim masculinity terrifying, beating and herding Armenians into harems. The graphic climax of the film depicts the crucifixion of twelve girls who refused to have sex with their so-called husbands while Aurora, playing herself, is compelled to watch.

The fund-raising campaign was successful beyond anyone’s expectations. In 1915 Near East Relief raised $176,000. The total grew to over $4,000,000 in 1916 and 1917. During 1918 and 1919 the campaign collected an additional $26,000,000. By the end of the war Near East Relief employed two hundred and seventy workers servicing roughly

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3,500,000 refugees and 400,000 orphans. The majority of them came from the Laymen’s Missionary Movement, an organization under the umbrella of the Federal Council of Churches. In the field Near East Relief worked particularly closely with Herbert Hoover and the U. S. State Department in the distribution of its resources in the Near East.  

By 1919 Near East Relief was one of the most powerful international agencies in existence. Furthermore it specialized in a region that was one of the most difficult, chaotic political environments in the world. As shown below, this organization played an influential role in the postwar settlement both at the Paris Peace Conference and then through the League of Nations.

Near East Relief was an American organization from top to bottom. As such it had certain unique characteristics for an ecumenical organization. First of all it was truly blind to the dogmatic aspects of religions; the board was composed not only of liberal and orthodox Protestants, but also Catholics and Jews. Secondly it worked closely with the American government. Thirdly it was wildly successful in harnessing resources that were relatively untouched by the war. Fourthly, the leadership of Near East Relief consisted exclusively of Americans. While European ecumenical organizations tended to be multinational, American philanthropists preferred a more unilateral brand of internationalism.

These four characteristics defined an entire series of new humanitarian ventures that lodged themselves within the American religious landscape. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America sponsored separate relief projects for East Prussia,

Poland, Serbia, Belgium, and Persia. In collaboration with Rabbi Wise, the FCCCA raised $300,000 to combat Russian pogroms on the Eastern Front.\(^{393}\) One of the largest projects was the erection of an endowment for the reconstruction of Huguenot churches, overseen by Charles Macfarland and chaired by Theodore Roosevelt. Since many French Protestant communities were located near the German border, the Germans destroyed over six hundred Protestant churches, whose bell towers made ideal lookout and sniping posts. In some cases demolition didn’t serve any practical purpose. For example, when Bavarian soldiers had to withdraw from Noyen, France, they razed the childhood home of John Calvin and torched the local church before their withdrawal. (In 1927 the FCCCA and the Fédération protestante de France reconstructed the house and christened it a museum in honor of the French Reformer.)\(^{394}\) In total Macfarland, Lynch and their allies handled funds in excess of $75,000,000 from 1914 to 1919. This number does not include the $150,000,000 raised and spent by Mott’s organizations. Nor does this number include the $188,000,000 raised by the Red Cross and the FCCCA after 1917 earmarked for the care of American troops on the Western Front. Nor does it include the

\(^{393}\) SPC, CDGA – World Alliance papers, 2:14, “Program Work, undated” Lynch, “Record of the First Meeting of the American Group of the Continuation Committee of the World Alliance of the Churches for Promoting International Friendship.”

$100,000,000 set aside by the United States Congress for war relief in Belgium and Russia distributed under the aegis of Herbert Hoover, often with the cooperation of YMCA and YWCA personnel on the ground.\textsuperscript{395} Clearly the American churches subsumed command of the internationalist movement by the sheer weight of the monetary response to the ecumenical crusade to Christianize the Great War.

The plight of ecumenical agencies in Germany forms a sharp contrast. Even sympathetic church leaders could not summon the manpower or the financial resources available to the Americans. Nor did the government show much concern for religious matters, unless, as was the case for POW relief, it could be directly tied to the promotion of German interests.

Thus, although German church leaders tried to rouse its government to protest the mass murder in Armenia, they could not find a sympathetic ear. Johannes Lepsius, director of the \textit{Deutsche Orient-Mission} and one of the premier European scholars of Islam, struggled in particular to halt the genocide. He traveled to Turkey to collect first-hand accounts and personally plead with Ottoman officials. Then Lepsius returned to Berlin in the spring of 1915 and contacted Deissmann, Siegmund-Schultze, and other members of the German Council, after which he unsuccessfully gathered a petition signed by fifty Protestant leaders for the German government to put pressure on their

ally. Lepsius’ publicity about the atrocities attracted the black ink of the German censors. A petition to the German chancellor was refused. The Kaiser refused to grant them an audience. The government was hesitant to offend their military ally. National exigency overrode any loyalty to a united Christendom. After his publications were censored, Lepsius relocated to Holland without abandoning his intention of swaying the Kaiser’s government.397

Lepsius also gave his reports to his American contacts. He had been a delegate to the ecumenical congress Edinburgh in 1910 and maintained a standing since then with the International Missionary Conference. In late December 1915 Charles Macfarland visited Berlin just as Lepsius was becoming desperate. At a meeting on 5 January 1916 the German Council shared their knowledge with their American visitor, one of the board members of Near East Relief. I have incomplete evidence as to what Macfarland did with this information from there. I know that Macfarland immediately telegraphed Barton and the Church Peace Council. He also smuggled Lepsius’ findings out of Germany and shared the information with the French Council member André Weiss, international law professor at the University of Paris and advisor to Foreign Minister Briand. At some

396 Lepsius’ trip is immortalized in Franz Werfel’s masterpiece The Forty Days of Musa Dagh (1934), where the German missionary is the mouthpiece for Werfel’s own Christian cosmopolitanism: “For weeks now I’ve been seeing more clearly every day that power will have to be taken out of the hands of the children of this world, the politicians, if ever communion in the Lord, the Corpus Christi, is to become a reality in our poor little world. . . .No! No! the peoples are the slaves of their racial differences. And their flatterers, who want to live off them, intensify such things and stimulate their vanity. As though there were any special merit in being born a dog or a cat, a turnip or a potato. Jesus Christ, Who gives us the eternal example of the divine man, only put on human form in order to conquer it. So that on earth only the true sons of God should rule, from the very fact that they have conquered their race, their earthly conditioning. That is my political creed. . . .” Franz Werfel, The Forty Days of Musa Dagh, trans. Geoffrey Dunlop (New York: Viking Press, 1934), 536 – 537.

397 Johannes Lepsius, Bericht über die Lage des armenischen Volkes in der Türkei (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1916). Biographical details about Lepsius are based on Andreas Baumann, Der Orient für Christus: Johannes Lepsius - Biographie und Missiologie, kirchengeschichtliche Monographien (Gießen: Brunnen Verlag, 2007).
point after his move to Holland, Lepsius also gave his findings to John Mott, once again touring Europe to supervise the relief efforts for POWs.

If Lepsius’ reports could not find an audience in Germany, they readily found press in Great Britain as propaganda against the Central Powers. In October 1915, shortly after the Berne Conference, Lord James Bryce produced a six-hundred and eighty-four page documented history of the genocide. Bryce’s documents included anonymous accounts by “German missionaries” that had passed through Lepsius’ hands.398

Lord Bryce was a British diplomat who cultivated ecumenical contacts during his ambassadorship to Canada and the United States from 1907 to 1913. Bryce worked particularly closely with the Federal Council of Churches, Taft, and Gray during the push to ratify the Anglo-American arbitration treaty. In 1914 he renewed these relationships when he and W. H. Dickinson founded a small study group that was the beginning of the transatlantic League of Nations movement. Bryce was disturbed by the German government’s willingness to subordinate its moral standards to military exigency. His moral outrage fueled his determination to embed the standards of the Geneva and Hague Conventions within the framework. Bryce’s early academic training was in history and political theory; his studies of the Holy Roman Empire and the United States are still considered classics in their field. In May 1915 he utilized these skills to reconstruct the violations of international law in the occupied portions of Belgium and France. His

398 In a letter to Deissmann in 1919, Lepsius privately confessed that he was responsible for Bryce securing the German missionary documents about Armenia. Yet he does not specify how he sent the documents. The timing suggests either Macfarland or Mott. ZLB 306, Box 16: letter from Lepsius to Deissmann, 30 December 1919. For the report, see Lord Bryce, The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915 - 16: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1916).
Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages appeared in thirty languages and shocked American audiences. The graphic depiction of the mass murders in Armenia made even more effective propaganda.399

Lord Bryce’s reports were not forged, yet there is no doubt he favored inflammatory sources. As his biographer tactfully put it: “Bryce was concerned to establish the facts; but he was still more interested in the moral to be drawn from them.400 His approach was similar to many British Protestants, who foraged through evidences of their enemies’ abuses in order to fortify the Entente’s claims to be fighting for the principles of political internationalism. The Armenian case was particularly effective ammunition in this style of moral warfare, particularly in the American churches. While Near East Relief trumpeted the pathetic situation of Armenian Christians in order to raise relief funds, British Christians transmuted this sympathy into righteous indignation against the Central Powers.

In my research I have never found an instance where a leading member of the World Alliance did not favor the breakup of the Ottoman Empire after 1915. The

399 Bryce also had a personal interest in the Ottoman massacres. In 1876 he climbed Mount Ararat and spent almost six months living with the Armenian people. He maintained a connection to Ottoman Christians through his friendships with American, Swiss and German missionaries, many of whom provided material in 1915. Bryce spent the spring and summer of 1914 touring Turkey, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, visiting the Protestant universities dotting the Empire from Jerusalem to Istanbul. Biographical details about Bryce have been taken from John Seaman, A Citizen of the World: The Life of James Bryce (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006).

Armenian genocide, the massacre of a Christian people by a Muslim majority, was the primary reason why Christian politicians ranging from Woodrow Wilson to Lord Bryce to Max von Baden to Arthur James Balfour all supported the internationalization of Middle East in 1919. Eventually these sentiments would spawn the League mandate system and the designation of Constantinople (a city pointedly not referred to as Istanbul in the Paris peace treaties) as an international city directly under the governance of the League of Nations.

The Armenian genocide was a turning point for Protestant internationalism because it provided an extreme example of a state abrogating natural and international law for the sake of military exigency and nationalistic fervor. The murders delegitimated the Ottoman regime in the eyes of the ecumenical movement at the precise moment when it was rising in political and financial clout. Bryce, Dickinson and other British internationalists believed that the Armenian genocide revealed the moral vacuity of all of the Central Powers. They placed the Sultan’s programmatic killing of civilians alongside the German occupation of Belgium and Eastern Europe. The Armenian and Belgian occupations threatened once again to rend the World Alliance apart by placing the present moral issues of the war ahead of the future anticipation of the reconciliation of Christendom and the return of a godly world order.

Lepsius was outraged that Bryce used his dossiers as propaganda against Germany. He never reconciled himself to the missionary movement. In 1918 he petitioned the German Foreign Office to allow him to inquire into the truth of the Entente’s charges regarding Armenia. He had confidence the archives would exonerate Germany. In 1919 he published a collection of four hundred and forty-four documents
that, in his mind, accomplished just that. Lepsius’ career in exculpatory history had just begun. In 1924 the ex-missionary published *Die große Politik der europäischen Kabinette 1871 – 1914*, a documentary history meant to counter the charge that Germany had solely responsible for the outbreak of the Great War that was for decades a standard within the historiography.

Other members of the German Council felt similarly torn between their avid patriotism and their transnational fealty to the church in the Middle East. Adolf Deissmann wrestled with these issues in his *Evangelischer Wochenbrief* (Protestant Weekly Letter.) Each week Deissmann mailed these four to five page mixtures of political argument and personal anecdotes to thousands of churchmen overseas. (They strike the contemporary reader as a pre-virtual version of a blog.) The Germans subsidized Deissmann’s labors and helped him secure paper and translators, yet Deissmann wrote freely with almost no immediate oversight from the government censors.

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401 Johannes Lepsius, ed., *Deutschland und Armenien 1914-1918: Sammlung diplomatischer Aktenstücke* (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1919). Wolfgang Gust has compared Lepsius’ collection to documents in the diplomatic archives of the German Foreign Office and had indeed found many discrepancies. It is his belief that the German government doctored the documents they handed over to Lepsius, although it possible that Lepsius himself altered some documents out of a misplaced sense of patriotism. Wolfgang Gust, *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern: Die Tragödie des ältesten Christenvolks der Welt* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1993).

402 Addresses of the newsletters’ recipients and Deissmann’s reports to the Foreign Office can be found in ZLB 306, Boxes 139, 147 – 149, 440. Deissmann’s newsletter’s patron was Matthias Erzberger, the parliamentarian in charge of civil propaganda. As a devout Catholic himself, Erzberger understood the importance of transnational church networks for the formation of world opinion. When the war began, Erzberger funded a Catholic Monthly Letter, produced by Engelbert Krebs in Freiburg. When he learned that Deissmann had begun a Protestant counterpart on his own initiative, Erzberger allotted him the venture the necessary resources and financing. (Erzberger’s and Deissmann’s collaboration continued in 1918 when men became founding officers of the German League of Nations Society [*Deutschen Liga für Völkerbund.*] See Klaus Epstein, *Matthias Erzberger and the Dilemma of German Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959).
Deissmann’s response to the Armenian crisis was akin to Lepsius’. On the one hand he admitted that the Ottomans had acted with “barbaric” brutality. Islamic rulers were sadly unfit to govern over other minority religions, including Christians. The Sultan’s campaign against the Protestant colleges was particularly condemned as a rejection of enlightenment and modernity. On the other hand, Deissmann contended it “could not be denied” that the Armenians had been stirred up and armed by “Russian agitators.” He insisted that the German churches were trying to send aid and influence its government, but their ally would not listen. Finally he reverted to the *tu quoque* defense: why should Germany be singled out for these crimes if the Entente was not to be held accountable for Russia’s pogroms and other atrocities on the Eastern front?\(^{403}\)

In Britain Bryce continued to wrangle with Deissmann and Lepsius in the House of Lords and in the American press. The ever-cantankerous G. K. Chesterton entered the drama in December 1915 when he castigated Deissmann’s newsletter in the London *Standard*. Deissmann responded, not just by countering Chesterton’s vagaries with Lepsius’ detailed research, but also by holding up Near East Relief to the British churches. The American (and Swiss) churches had thrown themselves into relief efforts without saying “anything that might suggest guilt against Germany.” The neutral churches acted as “a model” that proves that “Christian humanitarian labors may successfully be undertaken without poisoning it with an unchristian and pharisaical spirit” that hijacks atrocities for “political purposes.”\(^{404}\)

\(^{403}\) ZLB 306, Box 619: *Evangelische Wochenbrief*, 18 September 1915; *Evangelische Wochenbrief*, 20 November 1915; *Evangelische Wochenbrief*, 18 December 1915.

\(^{404}\) ZLB 306, Box 621: *Evangelische Wochenbrief*, 18 March 1916.
Within the circles of the World Alliance, the Armenian genocide settled into a familiar pattern. While British and German clergymen initially engaged in a tug of (just) war, the neutral churches engaged in philanthropic institution building. The most prominent of these new ventures, Near East Relief, was predominantly American and, although it steered clear of statements regarding German responsibility, it nevertheless became more and more committed to a postwar order in the Middle East that could replace the international outlawry of the Ottoman Empire.

3.5 Faith in the Future: The League of Nations as the Eschatological Justification of the “Great War”

Reinhold Niebuhr once observed that “every nation is caught in the moral paradox of refusing to go to war unless it can be proved that the national interest is imperiled, and of continuing in the war only by proving that something much more than national interest is at stake.”405 This is certainly the case for the First World War. The faithful of all stripes also put forth their own religious categories as the fighting settled in for the long haul. We have just seen that the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire declared the war a jihad. Meanwhile the Sunni allies of the British viewed it as an opportunity to finally topple the pretenders to Mohammad’s legacy in Istanbul. In France, the rising Catholic Right believed they were involved in a final reckoning with the decadent fruits of the Lutheran Reformation. Finally, conservative evangelicals in Britain and the United States contended that Germany’s moral decay was the result of a hardened state religion riddled

with historical criticism and theological liberalism. All of these religious perceptions of the war drove certain demographic groups, but none were as important in shaping the peace as the campaign for a League of Nations.

What would it mean to say that the League of Nations was itself a religious ideal? That it was a banner behind which the major Protestant churches lined up? That the League functioned as “that something much more than national interest” that enabled the churches to remain engaged in a conflict that lasted for four and a half years without a single letdown in the Protestant countries?

Understanding the eschatological dimension of faith may require historians to reconceive religious agency within history. As historians we could do a better job of understanding religion’s relationship to the future. To perceive Christianity as an inert traditionalism is to fundamentally misunderstand it as a historical phenomenon. This approach can only view Christianity as a reactionary obstacle, bypassing its role as an agent of political renewal and creativity. Christian faith is not primarily belief about the past, but an expectation about the future. The missionary movement, the YMCA and YWCA, temperance societies, and Protestant internationalism: all of these groups strove towards the “evangelization of the world in this generation.” They looked ahead much more than they glanced over their backs at the creeds and ecclesiastical structures of the past, although many of these institutions still viewed the New Testament church as the ideal template for a community.

The League of Nations was shaped by a mindset shaped by millenarianism and theodicy, as much as, if not more than, it was grounded in international jurisprudence or political theory. The central source of the League’s authority (or its appeal, we should say) was always already a moral authority rooted in the pain and suffering of the First World War. The League emerged as a viable political option during a cataclysmic collision of modern empires that, from the perspective of those with an ecumenical mindset, was nothing less than a civil war tearing Christendom apart. We must therefore learn to see the League as the product of an apocalypse and as an act of political atonement. The League provided an eschatological justification for the violence unleashed because Christendom had fallen captive to the sins of militarism and jingoism.

From the first shots fired in 1914, Protestant internationalists leaned expectantly forward towards the reestablishment of their covenantal relationship with God and the rededication of the Christian West to the global mission of Christ. At first glance the Konstanz Church Conference seems like a tragicomedy fit for the stage. There is an unavoidable irony in the image of a small group of Protestant pacifists gathering for prayer and communion while Europe hurriedly mobilizes for world war. As a result many current historians have dismissed its legacy.\footnote{For example: Besier, Religion - Nation - Kultur, 151 – 154.} In The Cambridge History of Christianity (2006), John Molony and David M. Thompson (who misdate the Conference in July 1914 before the war!) argue that the “naivety” of its participants illustrate “the
real distance that separated church leaders from influence on the outcome of political events."\(^{408}\)

Yet that is not how those at Konstanz perceived themselves. Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze felt that the timing had been “providential”: “Nearly the entire conference became a prayer meeting where the delegates of different nations found themselves bound together in the closest of communities despite the war breaking out. . . .The immensity of the Church’s failures fell all the more heavily upon our souls.”\(^{409}\) Baker recovered from his initial sense of failure less than twenty-four hours after his return. Instead of lamenting that they were “too late,” Baker now felt firmly that the aborted conference happened because of “Divine approval. We were there because we felt that we were called to go.” The World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches, which was the first pacifist ecumenical organization in history, had in fact come into being, despite the interruptions and complications. “We want to realize that a great work has been committed to our hands, and if we go forward shoulder to shoulder God will bless our aims.”\(^{410}\) Writing in August 1914, Frederick Lynch perceived that state militarism had trumped Christianity, but still believed that Christian brotherhood would outlast this temporary defeat. He argued that this “terrible Armageddon” would


\(^{410}\) Macfarland, The Churches of Christ in America and International Peace, 52.
end in “the complete collapse of the present political order. . . .The present political and international order is utterly inadequate to either secure justice or preserve peace.”

The collective signification of the Konstanz Conference as a Last Supper reveals the narrative typology that grounded the expectations of the World Alliance. The peace movement overlaid their own painful separation onto the biography of Christ. In the Eucharist they relived Christ’s original offer of the broken bread and wine to the Apostles while He also told them of His upcoming death and their eventual reunion in the Kingdom of God. At Konstanz the faithful turned their last day together into a repetition of the “upper room,” a signification that cast the arriving war as a second Crucifixion, while still assuring them of the inevitable approach of the Kingdom of God. That communion service anticipated the ecumenical unity of the eternal Church. It catapulted the World Alliance into the future, a future in which Christ ruled over the nations and a unified church, a future from which the World Alliance reached backwards in time into the Great War to pull the churches forwards into the Kingdom of God.

Therefore the war validated their adhesion to Christian internationalism. Instead the war invalidated a superficial ‘Churchianity’ that failed to submit its politics to Christ. The war invalidated the use of military deterrents and the balance of power. In short, it invalidated the present world order. As J. H. Rushbrooke colorfully put it, “Those who think that the views of Christian advocates of peace have been somehow discredited by this war should ask whether the death of a patient who would never follow his doctor’s

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advice is a reflection on the doctor’s wisdom.” This conviction deepened with time.
Frederick Lynch perceived that state militarism had trumped Christianity, but still
believed that Christian brotherhood would outlast this temporary defeat. He argued that
this “terrible Armageddon” would end in “the complete collapse of the present political
order. . . The present political and international order is utterly inadequate to either
secure justice or preserve peace.” In his magnum opus Mens Creatrix (1917) William
Temple argued that Europe’s strife was God’s “merciful” judgment that revealed its
“materialism, ambition, and self-indulgence.” God let loose the violence of “the Law” on
Europe, Temple reasoned, because “the Kingdom [of God] comes with power only
through that revelation.”
Randall Davidson felt that the war was “our schoolmaster to
bring us to a larger vision of the world as God sees it.” John Mott reasoned the Great
War was a “necessity in order to create, as a reaction, a renaissance movement all over
the world.” Looking back twenty years later, even Adolf Deissmann agreed with this
judgment. After noting that spiritual revival always arrived with the devastation of war,
as in the Thirty Years’ War and the Napoleonic Wars, he averred that the Great War had
been a necessary stage on Christendom’s spiritual progress. It marked an “awakening of
the churches within themselves. . .to a new embodiment (Darstellung) of their
ecumenical unity.”

412 J. H. Rushbrooke, “Must Wars Continue until the End?” in Basil Mathews, ed., Christ and the
World at War: Sermons Preached in War Time (London: James Clarke and Co., 1917), 154. This sermon
was reprinted as J. H. Rushbrooke, “Must Wars Continue until the End? Goodwill 2 (1917),
413 Lynch, Through Europe on the Eve of War, 96.
414 Temple, Mens Creatrix, 343, 361.
416 Adolf Deissmann, Una Sancta: zum Geleit in das ökumenische Jahr 1937 (Gütersloh: C.
Bertelsmann, 1936), 20.
Protestant internationalists interpreted history as an agonistic and cyclical progress of sin, suffering, and covenantal renewal. One of the crucial distinctions of Protestant internationalism, particularly when compared to the modern peace movement, is its interpretation of war. War was not necessarily sinful. Rather, war was the product of sinfulness. It was the natural end result for any nation that disregarded God’s commandments, who pridefully preferred to rely on their military strength rather than trust in God’s Providence, or that sought national glory at the expense of the less fortunate. Picture a child who touches a stove; the pain is the lesson.

Just as the sinful individual is unable to harmonize his own egotism within society, so the outlaw nation is unfit for international society. To continue this ‘domestic analogy,’ as it was called in Chapter 1: the social effects of individual sinfulness had to be dealt with in one of two ways. She could accept the power of Christ to change her heart, curb her lustful ambitions, and thus be able to truly love her neighbor as herself. Or, he could learn to act outwardly moral out of fear of state punishment. Force might not transform the will, but it could at least discipline the body.

Applied on the international level, this meant that depraved nations required fear in order to behave morally. The threat of war was therefore a constant necessity in a fallen world. Henry Scott Holland, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, spoke for the World Alliance when he claimed: “It is not War, as such, with which the Ideal of Christianity collides. On the contrary, there is a War in which the Cross of Christ is the central act. He dies to destroy the works of the devil: to kill the old man: to stamp out all unrighteousness: to break open the prison-houses of sin: to strike off fetters: to nail all sin
to the wood of the Cross, and slay Death. . . .It is not War in itself that is our difficulty – but the kind of War that we mean.”

War and moral progress were related concepts, not because they were identical, but because war offered nations a chance to reflect upon their standing with God. Indeed, given the tendency of individuals and nations to fall away from God during times of comfort, armed conflict could have a revitalizing effect by once again calling the people to God. War was an opportunity for rededication to the unending toil of social sanctification. Therefore Protestant leaders interpreted the Great War as a punishment on the Christian nations for having strayed from God’s design and as a purgative path back towards a godly, global order. Here they invoked a moral economy based upon the logic of sacrifice.

Recently historians have rediscovered that Christian soldiers commonly used Christ’s sacrificial redemption as models for their own suffering in the Great War. Annette Becker and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau have revealed that a fundamental feature of the “war culture” of 1914 – 1918 was this narrative of redemption that justified the anguish of the present by anticipating the redemption to come. Death preceded resurrection; wretchedness before regeneration; strife before reunion. Laurinda Stryker notes that many soldiers on the Western front made sense of their experiences by placing them within the narrative of Christ: “A God who had suffered was a God who was

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conformed to the image that the soldiers had of themselves." This sacrificial narrative became a standard aesthetic for war memorials and civic liturgies, which in the Anglophonic world often took the form of a Pietà: a compassionate Christ or an angel held the dying soldier splayed across his lap, the perfect sacrifice.

The sacrificial victim offered an exemplary atonement for sin. The demands of war shook societies out of their sinful self-satisfaction and forced them to face a more ultimate spiritual reality. Deissmann believed that the war would have an invigorating effect on Christianity because it would “force individuals to set aside their materialism and selfishness for the common good.” Revival often broke out when a nation faced its extinction. “War affects religion negatively and positively. War disrupts it, but it also wakes religion up and transforms the comfortable, tired out religion of everyday life into a heroic faith fit for this historic time.” Deissmann expected the war to create a true “national community” (Volksgemeinschaft) through mutual service and religious revival.

Deissmann’s beliefs were commonplace throughout the World Alliance. Speaking at Westminster Cathedral in 1916, Lord Bryce reiterated his belief that Entente would become “not only victorious, but purified and strengthened, knit more closely together than ever before, and purged by the trial through which we have passed, fixing our eyes on a future in which an assured peace shall come, a peace based upon Right, with its permanent secured by a league of the peace-loving peoples to maintain law and

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justice.” Even Nathan Söderblom, the most obstinate voice for peace, did not dissent from this opinion. “The blessed power which lies in modern nationalism,” he contended, can “move people to sacrifice and to purify their lives. Much which is inessential and harmful is swept away.” The Archbishop of Canterbury believed that despite appearances, Christendom was being united together by a “new fellowship of interest, of sacrifice, of sorrow” that “has quietly abolished obstinate little sundering walls of mutual ignorance or suspicion. . . .” The war was a “schoolmaster to bring us to a larger vision of the world as God sees it.” He, too, equated the League of Nations with the apprehension of God’s lesson. What was “a few years ago the fantastic aspiration, or ‘fad,’” is “now the accepted policy, the defined programme, of nearly all the foremost statesmen of Europe and America. The change of sentiment upon that alone is the most wonderful and the most thankworthy of the unexpected outcomes of the war.”

The League of Nations was not then the product of gradual social evolution. It was not a manifestation of economic globalization. Nor did it emerge during an era of modern, cosmopolitan sensibilities. The League of Nations gained viability during a world war that sliced Christendom in two. The campaign gained momentum on the domestic front while millions of baptized Europeans and their imperial subjects shot, stabbed and tore at one another – and it secured this momentum not in spite of these horrible deaths, but because of them.

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423 Sundkler, Nathan Söderblom, 162.
424 Davidson, The Testing of a Nation, 69.
425 Ibid., 87.
426 Ibid., 192.
The League of Nations was the product of an apocalypse. Furthermore it was the fruit of an apocalypticism that interpreted history as an agonistic process of sacrificial service and expected eschatological renewal. The future League promised to justify the war. It laid its providential cloak over the dead. Its supporters believed that the war would call Christendom back to God, ushering in an ecumenical union among the churches as well as a political reformation of the diplomatic world order. Without this vision there could be no justification for the war, and so the League of Nations became an unquestionable orthodoxy within the bulk of Western Protestantism. To deny the League would be to betray the dead.

In his seminal essay “What is a Nation?” (1882), Ernst Renan argued since nations are primarily spiritual objects, they are rooted in a history of purposeful suffering that makes demands on the present.

The nation, like the individual, is the outcome of a long and strenuous past of sacrifice and devotion. . . . To have common glories in the past and common will in the present; to have done great things together and to will that we do them again: these are the conditions essential to being a people. . . . Suffering in common unites more than does joy. In matters of national memory, mourning has more validity than triumph, since it imposes duties which demand a common effort.427

What I am proposing is that Renan’s insight applies to transnational movements as much it does to nationalism. It certainly describes the heightened sensibility of a diplomatically engaged, worldwide, ecumenical Church that dominated Western Protestantism more and more as the twentieth century unfolded. The traumas of the First World War served as the bases for moral and social imperatives for the future. Through civic and religious

liturgies (e.g., war memorials, the empty tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the two minutes of silence (or silent prayer) on November 11, etc.), a collective memory arose within ecumenical Protestantism that continued to bear testimony for the necessity of the League of Nations. I believe that this helps explain the fundamentally spiritual and/or moral appeal of the League of Nations in the 1920s. Since the second century Christians have quipped that “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.” Why wouldn’t it be also true that the blood of the sacrificial dead in the Great War was the seed of the League of Nations?

And there was a lot of blood. Because the Protestant churches supported the war effort so intensely, they sent their sons to die at a alarming rate. (Theorists assume that secularization is an intellectual or a social process. What would it mean to think of secularization in terms of literal extinction?) Every male under forty in the French Student Christian Movement fought on the front lines for over four years, if they lived that long. The French draft did not exempt pastors. Approximately one-third also served in the army, leaving many churches without clerical guidance. German Protestants were hit particularly hard. Clergy were exempt from military service, but sixty percent of seminarians refused their privileges. Deissmann reported that he alone lost one hundred and twenty of his students at the University of Berlin. An additional twenty-six faculty members died from influenza or malnutrition because of the blockade. In Britain, where there was a volunteer army until 1916, Protestants died at a disproportionate rate.

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428 Gambarotto, Foi et Patrie, 421.
Members of the Student Christian movement enlisted at averages above the general student population, mostly within the first four months of the war. Even one-third of eligible Quakers signed on. About sixty percent of young males in Christian organizations were at the front by Christmas 1914. The same could be said for about half of the Canadian Student Christian Movement.\footnote{Rouse, \textit{The World's Student Christian Federation}, 40; Showalter, \textit{The End of a Crusade}, 19; Alan Wilkinson, \textit{Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches, 1900 - 1945} (London: SCM Press, 1986), 53.}

Individual deaths left their mark on the World Alliance as well. J. Allen Baker collapsed on the floor of Parliament in 1918 and died hours later, the result of an infected wound he received while visiting his son in Italy. Louis Emery, president of the Swiss Council, and Charles Grauss, leader of the French SCM, passed away as well. Many devoted their lives to the League movement directly as a result of someone else’s death. John Mott rededicated himself to the cause when his nephew Ralph McAdam died on a troop transport sailing to France. Ivy Marks, the secretary of both the British Council and the British League of Nations Society, vowed to God to become an activist after her fiancée’s airplane was shot down. Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation in 1920 in part because of how many young men that he had known that never returned to Berlin. Lord Robert Cecil, a rising star in the Conservative Party, experienced a “conversion” after a sermon on the League of Nations in 1917. The youngest member of Lloyd-George’s Cabinet, Cecil was placed in charge of the British
blockade, a task that weighed him down with grief until his decision to abandon politics and devote the rest of his life to the popularization of the League.\textsuperscript{431}

There is, therefore, only an apparent irony that the League of Nations took shape during the Great War. The League arose out of the war like a desperate ultimate answer bubbles up in the mind of the mystic after her dark night of the soul. The Great War shocked Protestantism not just because it was a war, but because it was a war between Protestants, with each belligerent church claiming to be acting according to God’s will, without any hope of adjudicating the difference. Once the dead began to accumulate, Protestants needed the peace to justify their loss. On its own, just war theology was incapable of providing that. The moral stalemate of the tug of (just) war provoked a series of questions. Who could declare a just war? What institution would be capable of evaluating the justness of rival powers? What authority could possess enough force to uphold international law without in turn becoming a threat itself?

The League of Nations promised to restore the logic of just war theory to Christendom. Advocates believed the new organ could redeem the theory for the modern world by codifying international law, identifying clearly outlaw states through independent investigations, and ensuring the public transparency of international diplomacy for the public. Most importantly, the League would enforce the peace through a multilateral pact of states capable of quickly, and proportionately, punishing offending states. Progress towards an international society depended on the joint repression of the “international criminal.” Alongside a revitalized ecumenical church, the League would

reconcile the nations of Christendom in a new covenantal relationship with one another and with their dead.

3.6 Conclusion: The Moral Authority of the League of Nations

In the introduction to this chapter, I criticized the moralistic tone of the historiography on Protestantism in the First World War. Specifically, I claimed that the majority of the scholarship overly concerned with telling a narrative of tragedy. Because faith and nationalism failed to maintain a healthy distance from one another, it is claimed, they created a crusading mentality that would not allow cooler heads to end the conflagration. The results were, on the one hand, a religiously-inflamed jingoism and, on the other, a mass rejection of Christianity. This historiography has only touched a part of the overall picture. It overemphasizes the early public denunciations that passed between the German and British church leaders. Until recently, historians have under-utilized the extensive private correspondences, which were much more tormented and conciliatory. They have also largely ignored the extraordinary success of Protestant internationalist organizations, whose humanitarian ventures permanently transformed the ecumenical movement.

Because a tragic narrative dominates our approach to Protestantism from the years 1914 to 1919, we have failed to perceive that the Great War in fact acted as a stimulant on the Protestant churches and the ecumenical movement. This chapter hopefully offers a small corrective, but more work remains to be done that lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. I must be content with emphasizing the fact that the First World War did not negate or invalidate the Protestant internationalist movement. The war reenergized the
movement as ecumenical leaders mobilized the churches into a crusade to Christianize the battlefields of Europe and, after that, the larger world order.

In 1918 the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship was a vibrant and active international network of Protestants with ample resources, church connections, and an independent media. Other ecumenical organizations, such as the YMCA, YWCA, and WSCF, had blossomed into the world’s first powerful NGOs. The secret to their success was their ability to lay aside arguments about moral responsibility for the war in favor of common acts of mercy and charity. The trauma of the Great War (as opposed to the wars of the late nineteenth century – with the exception of the Boer War) was that it presented Protestantism with something akin to a civil war. There was a desperation in the just war literature of the first year of the war, a desperation that many historians have interpreted as ‘war fever.’ I however would argue that these writings are not morally vacuous. Rather they abound in moralism because church leaders wanted to achieve some sort of international Christian consensus about the war. They wanted to rescue the ecumenical commitment to ‘evangelize the world in this generation’ and be the ‘salt and light’ to Asia and Africa. They wanted certainty about a situation that they found, to use William Temple’s description, “perplexing.” In short, they argued so hotly because they needed to agree.

Consensus however never came. Therefore ecumenical leaders set aside the tug of (just) war within their organizations. Ecumenical leaders hoped that eventually their common service and suffering would obviate the need to return to these vitriolic debates. These concrete acts focused the churches’ attention on the present suffering in front of them that their faith called them to address. It also forced Christians to look into the
future, to do what they could now in order to prepare their nations for a renewed covenantal relationship with Christ the King.

The Christian narrative of sin, suffering, sacrifice, and redemption enabled the World Alliance to survive through a war that strangled other international organizations. By 1917 the movement had gained a detectable swagger in its literature, such as this 1917 statement by the British and American Councils which was a reflection on Christ’s teaching that “There is only one Christian way of overcoming evil, and that is by good. There is only Christian way of conquering hate, and that is by love.”

While some men have rushed from land to land to destroy human life, other men have hastened to save it. Never did men in pre-Christian times travel to distant lands to bind up the wounds of strangers. The church of Christ has breathed into our civilization a tenderness which cannot be crushed even under the wheels of the chariots of war. . . .We must beget men and women by the millions, filled with the spirit of Jesus that conquers selfishness, ill will, and malice, and that through loving self-devotion to the welfare of men, persuade them to love God and to do His will. . .

Christians must prepare the way of the Lord. They must clear away misconceptions and fallacies and falsehoods, and break the power of the mighty who lead the multitudes astray. They must trample upon the wisdom of the wise and prudent, and attempt things which are manifestly impossible. They must be willing to become fools for Christ’s sake. They who would bear witness to the truth must be content to be made of no reputation, and to stand in Pilate’s court alone. It is only through pain and loss and agony of spirit that the purposes of God are unfulfilled. We shall never get rid of the scourge of war until Christians, in larger numbers are willing to labor and suffer, and if need be, die.432

In the short term this strategy worked. Adolf Deissmann is a typical example of the trajectory of many church leaders during this period. In 1914 his anger spewed out in accusations against the British churches in such documents as his self-published *Evangelische Wochenbrief* and the Manifesto of the 93 Intellectuals. Yet his service as a

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surrogate pastor to detained enemy civilians and POWs reawakened his sensibility to the transnationality of Christ’s call. Through contact with visiting Americans such as Benjamin Battin and John Mott, Deissmann was forced to live in a “paradoxical situation” of “competing loyalties” between love of one’s nation and love of one’s church. By 1916 Deissmann had come to see the Great War as a providential call to repentance that presaged the reunion of Christendom. “I can see how across and back of this dividing line untold threads are being spun which unite Europe, still implacably separated by the political conflict, into a great secret companionship of sufferers.”

Protestant internationalism therefore gained new viability after 1914. It developed into a flexible network capable of quickly circulating funds and information across the armed divisions of the war. This chapter covered two specific examples: the campaign for POW relief and the response to the Armenian genocide. These campaigns harnessed new financial independence, achieved new political credibility and attracted tens of thousands of young, idealistic recruits.

Yet this growth was somewhat uneven. The leadership of ecumenical movement remained European and North American. The World Alliance’s strength relied largely on the financial support of the American churches, which were relatively untapped by the exhaustive war economies in place elsewhere. However membership multiplied not only in the United States, but also in Canada, Britain, Scandinavia, Switzerland and Holland. The French Council remained alive, though it entered a period of self-enforced dormancy after 1914. Meanwhile the ecumenical movement in Germany remained stunted because German church leaders felt so betrayed by their co-religionists in Britain. Believing that

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433 ZLB 306, Box 622: Evangelische Wochenbrief, 11 October 1916.
their nation faced extinction from the East, German pastors subordinated international morality to military exigency, just as King David had violated the Mosaic Law in order to care for his troops in the Old Testament. German Council members such as Adolf von Harnack and Adolf Deissmann remained active enough in ecumenical circles to present the German point of view. Others such as Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze and Georg Michaelis (in conjunction with Max von Baden and the German Red Cross) pioneered joint philanthropic ventures. Nevertheless, the German Council never fully embraced the ecumenical interpretation of the war. At a time when the World Alliance gathered together a mass audience in the Allied and neutral states, the German Council did not expand its reach into the churches. They remained content to be the intermediary between other branches of the World Alliance and the German government. In effect, the German Council failed to capitalize on these war years when, first of all, internationalism captivated the other Protestant churches and, secondly, the League of Nations became a virtual orthodoxy for most Western Protestants.

The relative lack of growth of the ecumenical organizations in Germany from 1914 to 1918 is, I argue, one of the primary reasons why the ideals of the League of Nations failed to take root there. The next chapter will provide further evidence for my case by exploring the intimate interrelatedness of the various League of Nations societies and the World Alliance. The League movement piggybacked on top of the preexisting web of ecumenical institutions.

From the churches’ perspective, the League emerged as the concrete realization of their eschatological expectations. The League was an achievement that would justify the suffering of Christendom. It would return the international order to harmony with the
laws of God and the rule of Christ. The League of Nations would be a political
counterpart to a League of Churches, punishing outlaw states who violated international
law while ensuring that Christendom would never again fall into civil war. From the
League’s perspective, ecumenical organizations offered them much-needed resources. In
its first few years, the fragile League leaned upon the churches’ volunteers, finances,
political connections and moral aura. In doing do it inherited many of the World
Alliance’s virtues – and vices.

The Great War accelerated Protestant internationalism towards its sponsorship of
the League of Nations by providing ecumenical agencies with an immediate, practical,
and secular focus on international relief. It dilated the churches’ vision to include the
entire globe and gave them a more complete picture of the transnational Church. (As
one SCM leader put it: “The mere fact that practically the entire student body of the
nation either crossed the Atlantic or was preparing to do so gives a new reality to the
audiences in the neutral states and Great Britain that opened local avenues for League
propaganda. Their surplus funds would cover initial shortfalls in the League’s budget. A
new set of convictions captured the main streams of Protestantism: the melding of
missions and relief work; a new focus on secular service and sacrifice; a refreshed sense
that a united Church under the Lordship of Christ had the premier role to play in the
political pacification of Christendom; the felt need for a religious revival in order for

434 WCCA 213.05.06: David Porter, Reports of Student Movements for St. Beatenberg, 1920, 90. See
also Ruth Rouse, The Federation in the World War, 1914 - 1918 (Geneva:: World’s Student Christian
Federation, 1940), 64.
humanity to overcome the idols of secular nationalism and militarism. The League of Nations was a capstone to all of these new ideals.

Finally, thousands of individuals gained practical experience in crafting relief programs by working for ecumenical agencies during the First World War. Most of them returned home to form an entire generation of church leaders with a global perspective and firsthand experience with the brutality of warfare. However several stayed behind to craft careers for themselves with the League of Nations in Geneva.
CHAPTER 4:

THE RELIGIOUS ORIGINS OF

THE BRITISH LEAGUE OF NATIONS MOVEMENT,

1914 – 1918

“And if the Christian Church had been anything like what it ought to have been, would there not have been – I do not say a common government over nations, but a common sense in nations, taking effect in councils and conferences, and bearing constant witness to a unity wider than the nation? Will the Church to-day have its message for a new moment in history ready when it is needed? Depend upon it we shall have a unique opportunity of proclaiming again the tidings of the Kingdom of God, as a present power in this world, as well as a hope of another world, as soon as the war is drawing to an end and the world is asking ‘What next?’”

-Charles Gore, Bishop of Oxford, upon his visitation in October 1914

4.1 Introduction: The Ecumenical Borders of the League Movement

This chapter is a watershed for this dissertation. The first three chapters dealt with the birth of an international, ecumenical movement interested in the establishment of a League of Peace willing to puts its strength behind the nascent Hague Court. The next four chapters examine the origins of the first secular League societies in different national contexts from 1914 to 1918. Although the ecumenical movement burgeoned during the years of the Great War, Protestant internationalists put their plans for a world conference
of churches on hold for the duration of the conflict. The focus of the World Alliance and its sister organizations shifted to domestic politics. Ecumenists focused on tilling the soils of their own various nations so that once the peace came the churches would be already mobilized to contend for a durable peace based upon the restitution of international law backed by the combined power of the Western powers.

From 1914 to 1917 eight League of Nations societies came into being. In each of these cases ecumenists played a central part in the establishment of these ostensibly secular League societies. Sympathetic Protestants comprised the majority of these societies’ early rosters, even in countries with a Catholic majority such as France and Belgium. The World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches was thus a nucleus around which support for the League of Nations grew and grew during the First World War.

Ecclesiastical connections proved decisive in attracting fresh support. Wherever the League movement took root in the popular imagination the churches paved the way. Protestant pastors, professors and politicians helped the League of Nations societies to generate popular enthusiasm for the cause by transforming their religious networks into conduits of League propaganda. Local congregations functioned as ready-made centers of a grassroots campaign. Where Protestant church support was lacking, the League movement failed to take root. Even the majority of politicians who came to endorse the League of Nations possessed prewar ties to the worldwide ecumenical community. It is hard to find a single instance of a politician who endorsed the League movement before 1917 who did not express that support within a moral-religious framework.
In these next four chapters I will demonstrate that each of the eight League of Nations societies that began operations during the years of the Great War were defined almost entirely by the boundaries of the ecumenical movement. I will also show that the political resources of the infantile movement depended to a large degree on the recruitment of sympathetic Protestant statesmen such as Woodrow Wilson, Lord Robert Cecil and Jan Christiaan Smuts. In this chapter I will focus on the British League of Nations Society. Chapter 5 will handle the American League to Enforce Peace. The next chapter will briefly treat the smaller League associations in France, Canada, China and Japan as well as the only multinational institution on this list, the Central Organisation for a Durable Peace, which operated throughout Scandinavia, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium and North America. The final chapter will deal with the German case. Seven of them remained strictly within national bounds. These appeared in Britain, France, China, Japan, Canada, the United States and Germany. The eighth case study, the so-called Central Organisation for a Durable Peace, was the only multinational institution whose local chapters remained scattered

In each chapter a clear distinction will be drawn between Protestant internationalists on the one hand and socialist and pacifist internationalists on the other. In general the secular political left denounced the League of Nations during the war. The prospect of an institutional form of collective security dependent upon the great powers themselves offended a wide range of pacifists who agreed with Jane Addams’ dismissal of the League as nothing more than “the victorious disciplining the defeated” because “its
very structure and functioning is pervaded by the war spirit. Radical groups such as the Union of Democratic Control in Britain argued that a durable peace could not achieved without the economic realignment of the West and the disestablishment of the regnant political elite. The emphasis of most League advocates on the spiritual renewal of the West and the preservation of the current state system rooted in the Peace of Westphalia struck most radicals as hopelessly naïve. Radical pacifists and socialists espoused a more radical vision of a cosmopolitan world state that could override national sovereignty in the interests of humanity and thus condemned the League as little more than a “resurrection of the Holy Alliance.”

The British League of Nations movement is an excellent case study of the division between pro-League Protestants and anti-League pacifists since this issue broke apart what had been a productive alliance between religious and non-religious internationalists. The League of Nations Society (LNS) – which was rechristened the League of Nations Union in 1918 (LNU) – was the brainchild of J. Allen Baker, W. H. Dickinson and Lord James Bryce. While it initially tried to include socialists and pacifists within its circle, by 1915 the LNS struck off on its own. Henceforth it relied almost strictly on ecclesiastical circles within both the established Church of England and its Nonconformist offshoots. League propaganda flourished in religious circles well before it gained a foothold in the public sphere at large.


As a result, the British movement frequently conflated the religious and political aspects of its campaign. The LNS was an ostensibly secular organization with a secular vision, but at its rallies it placed speeches by legal experts next to sermons by bishops and evangelists. Its local meetings preferred to meet in chapels and cathedrals on Sunday evenings. It enlisted entire congregations as “corporate members.” The LNS presented its proposals not only as a much-needed diplomatic reform, but as a moral imperative and a necessary embodiment of the transnational Kingdom of God as of a diplomatic venture. In the case of the campaign for the League in Britain, the sacred and the secular overlapped in terms of its leadership, its organization and its message.

The compressed religious and legal tenor of the LNS also determined its reach into the British War Cabinet. This chapter will examine three members of Britain’s wartime governments who strongly supported the LNS: Arthur Henderson, Lord Robert Cecil and Jan Christiaan Smuts. Although each of them came out of different political backgrounds – Henderson was a Labour leader, Cecil an heir to the Conservative mantle, while Smuts was a Liberal from South Africa – each of them shared a commitment to a transnational Christianity that led them into the pro-League camp. In addition, the majority of the subscribers to the League of Nations Society did not hail from the left, nor from the literati: they came from the churches. Because scholars have approached the League movement focused on political boundaries – whether that of the Labour Party, the Liberal Party, or the socialism of the Fabian society – the ecclesiastical shape of the movement has been grossly neglected up until now.
4.2 W. H. Dickinson and the Success of the British League of Nations Society

The period from 1912 to 1920 marked W. H. Dickinson’s most productive stint in Parliament. He co-authored the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913, a bill that instituted modern medical definitions and national standards of institutional care for the mentally handicapped. Alongside J. Allen Baker, Dickinson accumulated a circle of allies in the Liberal Party that pushed for arbitration treaties with the U.S. and the other great powers. His efforts on behalf of women’s suffrage finally paid off with the passage of the Reform Act of 1918. In 1914 Dickinson joined the King’s Privy Council and earned a seat at the Round Table, an influential group of Liberal diplomats devoted to strengthening the federal bonds of the British Commonwealth. He assumed control of the National War Refugee Committee and handled thousands of cases on behalf of POWs and displaced persons living in England. He was still president of the World Alliance. In 1918 King George V recognized Sir Willoughby’s accomplishments by elevating him to the knighthood. However Dickinson’s most impressive achievement was the launch of the very successful campaign for the League of Nations.

437 Dickinson was Chairman of the National Association for the Care of the Feeble-Minded and an appointee of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded since 1904. It is likely that Dickinson’s interest stemmed from his mother’s lifelong activism on behalf of women institutionalized for mental disorders. On the context of Dickinson’s work here, see Harvey G. Simmons, "Explaining Social Policy: The English Mental Deficiency Act of 1913," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Spring 1978).

The League movement in Britain went through a series of name changes. From October 1914 to May 1915 it passed under the title of the Bryce Group, a name that reflected its status as a private, informal think tank under the chairmanship of Lord James Bryce. When it went public in 1915 and began to openly solicit new members it adopted the moniker of the League of Nations Society (LNS). In 1918, after consolidating a smaller rival under its umbrella, the organization came to be known as the League of Nations Union (LNU). From 1914 to 1931 Dickinson was the general secretary of all three organizations, meanwhile serving as the international president of the World Alliance over the same period of time. For almost two decades Dickinson was the only consistent presence.

Given Dickinson’s importance, it is unfortunate that historians of the League’s British origins have not focused more on him. There are two reasons for this omission. The first issue relates to the location of Dickinson’s archives. Previous historians have utilized the institutional records of the LNS, which reside at Oxford University alongside the papers of Lord Bryce and other prominent contributors. Yet the majority of

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Dickinson’s papers reside in Germany in the Ökumenisches Archiv, which have never been consulted before now by those interested in the League.\footnote{Sometime in the late 1930s Dickinson gave the majority of his papers to Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze who had begun gathering materials for the Ökumenisches Archiv while he was living in exile from the Nazi regime. Siegmund-Schultze did not open the archive until 1959, which means that Winkler did not even have access to these records, and even then the Archiv was located in the rural town of Soerst along the Rhine River. The Archiv then moved to Berlin in 1974. Dubin and Egerton, who are both historians of the British political left seem rather uninterested in the religious composition of the early League movement.}

Another reason that historians have not concentrated more on Dickinson has to with his personal shortcomings. Dickinson himself avoided the spotlight. He preferred the backbenches and the hard work of composing legislation. As mentioned in earlier chapters, he was a poor orator who sometimes suffered anxiety when speaking in public. He was also humble to a fault. He liked to give others credit for his own ideas, a strategy he employed to enhance others’ sense of ownership in his pet causes. Dickinson always tried to match himself up with charismatic personalities that would allow him to work behind the scenes, as he had done with J. Allen Baker in establishing the World Alliance before the war.

Lamentably Baker was unable to aid Dickinson. Both men decided that Baker needed to travel to the U. S. and Canada in the fall of 1914 to solidify the tenuous achievements of the Konstanz Church Conference. Even after his return Baker spent the majority of the war abroad. Frequent trips to Canada and the U.S. made him an ambassador of sorts of the LNS in North America. In 1917 Baker undertook an extended tour of Italy and Greece where he sponsored new chapters of the World Alliance and the League of Nations movement. Thanks to his efforts the first Eastern Orthodox chapter of the World Alliance came into being, a coup that admitted the first non-Protestants into
the international League movement. In Italy Baker failed to connect with either the Waldensian community or the Vatican. Although he gained an audience with Benedict XV, who was on record as being in support of the concept of arbitration, the Pope remained politely skeptical about the creation of an international executive authority that might further endanger challenge the Vatican’s tenuous political position in Europe. Baker’s travels left Dickinson in charge of rallying support for the League on the home front.

The Bryce Group came about in August 1914 when Dickinson approached James Bryce about forming a group to draft a potential constitution for a “League of Peace.” Bryce was a logical choice. Although recently retired, the seventy-seven year old possessed the energy of a man half his age. His friendships included the dominant voices in the current Liberal government, including Sir Edward Grey, the minister most concerned with the shape of Europe after the war. Bryce was well respected in diplomatic, academic and internationalist circles from a lifetime of service in these fields. He was not a particularly devoted Christian, but he was a devout proponent of the Presbyterian political tradition of his Scottish heritage. Bryce could boast of a history of collaboration with the ecumenical movement, a history that ranged from appearances at YMCA and SVM conferences to his close collaboration with those from the World

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Alliance on behalf of an Anglo-American arbitration treaty in 1911 – 1912 while he served as the British ambassador to the United States.

Dickinson wanted Bryce to preside over the meetings because of the prestige of his name and the breadth of his political contacts. Bryce agreed, but only on three conditions. There must be no discussion of European union or of a world state, propositions he found both impractical and undesirable. Secondly, the group must not endorse pacifism or a premature armistice with Germany. Bryce deemed the elimination of Germany’s present militarist government as an essential precondition of any viable peace. Finally, the discussions must remain closed to the press so that the group could work with sympathetic members of the Cabinet without embarrassing the government. These provisions lined up exactly with Dickinson’s own state of mind.443

Next the question arose as to who else should participate. Both Bryce and Dickinson had been members of the short-lived Neutrality League that had folded in the wake of the German invasion of Belgium. (See Chapter 3.) The League split when Bryce, Dickinson, Baker and their allies supported Grey’s declaration of war in the House of Commons. Meanwhile, pacifist dissidents formed a new organization, the Union of Democratic Control (UDC), whose prescription for peace required not only the democratization of the Continental Empires, but also the subordination of all aspects of British foreign policy to Parliament.444 For the next four years the UDC vilified Grey, Bryce and other diplomats for leading Britain into war through the secret maneuvers of


444 On the UDC, see Sally Harris, Out of Control: British Foreign Policy and the Union of Democratic Control, 1914 - 1918 (Hull: University of Hull Press, 1996) and Marvin Swartz, The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics During the First World War (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
back-room diplomacy. Bryce and Dickinson hoped that by bracketing any debate about the war and focusing on the specific shape of a postwar international government they could reconcile the divide that torn the British internationalist community in two. They were overly optimistic.

Originally the Bryce Group consisted of just ten individuals. Besides Bryce and Dickinson, its membership consisted of parliamentarians (Arthur Ponsonby and Aneurin Williams), academics (Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, Graham Wallas, Charles Ashbee and J. A. Hobson) and members of the media (H. N. Brailsford and E. Richard Cross). All of these men had been involved in the Neutrality League. Only two came from the World Alliance: Dickinson, naturally, and Cross, a Quaker solicitor who owned a substantial portion of the Nation and represented the interests of many Quaker industrialists, including J. Allen Baker and Arnold Rowntree. (Cross’ views were so identical to Baker’s that they may have considered Cross as Baker’s substitute.) With the exception of Bryce, the remaining original participants of the Bryce Group were also members of the UDC.

Because the majority of its first ten participants were involved with the UDC, it has misled some historians such as Henry Winkler into concluding that the Bryce Group


446 Richard Cross followed J. Allen Baker’s opposition to Henry Hopkins’ attempt to get the London Society of Friends to denounce the war and reaffirm its belief in the traditional Quaker commitment to non-violence. He also financially supported many ecumenical relief efforts, most notably the Friends’ Ambulance Unit organized by Baker and his son Phillip Noel-Baker. For more on Cross, see Marion Wilkinson, ed., E. Richard Cross: A Biographical Sketch with Literary Papers and Religious and Political Addresses (London & Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1917).
was a product of the pacifist movement. Nothing could be further from the truth. Such a presumption ignores two key pieces of evidence that up to now have not come to the fore.

First of all, contrary to the current scholarship on the League’s origins, the Bryce Group was not the only venue that vetted Bryce and Dickinson’s ideas about a constitution for the League of Nations. The British Council of the World Alliance also acted as an informal discussion circle about the League’s possible shape and scope. After every meeting of the Bryce Group, Dickinson and his faithful secretary Ivy Marks took the “almost indecipherable notes” back to his house on Parliament Square for their friends and allies from the British Council to work them over. This parallel circle of ecumenists then contributed their own thoughts and amendments, which Dickinson, Bryce and Marks then polished into concise proposals to take back to the Bryce Group.

By the summer of 1915 this process had yielded a potential constitution for the League that was published as the Bryce Proposals, which later became the nucleus of the 1919 League Covenant. More often than not the final results were not arrived at very democratically. It did not reflect the majority viewpoint of the Bryce Group. Instead it encapsulated the high-handed moral values and internationalist concepts of Bryce and Dickinson that they in turn shared with the broader Protestant internationalist movement. The British Council contributed as much (if not more) to the final product of the Bryce Group as the UDC. It therefore deserves a much larger place in the historiography.

Beginning in October 1914 Dickinson began approaching others in the World Alliance about their expectations for an international government. By November a core

group began to emerge that included E. Richard Cross, Ivy Marks, the Baptist luminaries John Clifford and John Henry Rushbrooke and Dickinson’s two closest friends on the Privy Council, Sir Albert Spicer and Lord Parmoor. Parmoor’s son, Stafford Cripps, a Labour politician who in the 1930s and 1940s held various Cabinet positions, frequently accompanied his father when not with his ambulance unit in France. The rest of the group represented other ecumenical institutions. Louise Creighton and Lord Arthur Kinnaird were officers of the YWCA and YMCA, respectively. William Paton represented the World Christian Student Federation (WSCF) and the Student Volunteer Movement. Marion Ellis from the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) was the only consistent pacifist voice; she was the daughter of one of Baker’s idols in the Liberal Party, John Edward Ellis. Henry Carter, a Methodist pastor who presided over the British Blue Cross, rounded things out. In 1915 the circle incorporated a young historian named Arnold Toynbee, who before his celebrated career as a public intellectual was the personal assistant of Lord Bryce. Dickinson also sought the counsel of several Anglican bishops about the League, most particularly Randall Davidson, the current Archbishop of Canterbury and international president of the World Alliance, and William Temple, a future Archbishop of Canterbury who during the First World War edited an influential church paper *The Challenge* while serving as King George V’s chaplain. Together the contributions of these men and women far outstripped those of their counterparts in the UDC: not only because they influenced the final shape of the Bryce Proposals, but also because they readied a broader network of religious organizations in Britain for participation in the League campaign.  

448 WCCA, 212.022: Ivy Marks, “Thank You, Aunt Jess,” 73; EZAB 51/E-II-e-1: W. H. Dickinson,
Another reason that it would be incorrect to closely associate the Bryce Group with the pacifism of the UDC is that of the seven men who belonged to both organizations in the fall of 1914, six of them quickly turned against the League. Bryce and Dickinson had originally hoped that the schism that had torn the British internationalist community apart could be healed through joint planning for the postwar world order. They quickly became disillusioned. Their former allies left one by one when the final product, the Bryce Proposals, did not reflect the majority viewpoint of the group.

The Bryce Proposals called for an international government with extremely limited powers over domestic affairs. The League would be open to any “civilized” state willing to abide by its constitution; this included Germany. Two new bodies – a Council of Inquiry and a Council of Conciliation – were charged with proposing peaceful solutions to disputes and investigating claims made by one state against another. Member states had to pledge themselves to observe a “cooling-off” period for all disputes, to follow international law in case of armed conflict and to recognize the authority of an International Court over all “justiciable” matters (though there was some broad disagreement over what constituted a “justiciable” affair). Failure to live up to these obligations would bring about a coordinated economic and military coercion by the other members of the League.449

Criticisms of the Bryce Proposals focused in general on three different characteristics. The League’s reliance upon military force to restrain outlaw states drew the most critical fire. Such powers dovetailed comfortably with Protestant just war theory, which took for granted the state’s need to use violence to discourage acts of evil at home and abroad. Dickinson’s first public statements on the League argued that: “It is clearly no use to concentrate all efforts, as hitherto, on treaties of arbitration and such like, so long as such treaties cannot be made binding. . . .What is needed is a common entente based on common goodwill and common sacrifice, and enforceable by common action. . . .”\(^{450}\) In the fall of 1914 William Temple insisted that although war could not be prohibited for as long as humanity continued to suffer from the effects of its own depravity, there was nevertheless a need to compel outlaw states to follow international law. The primary function of the League would be to back a “Court of Conciliation” with the “armed forces” of the great powers to insist on this.\(^{451}\)

The military core at the heart of the Bryce Proposals dismayed pacifists such as Arthur Ponsonby, who rejected the League by challenging the Protestant just war tradition. “The theory that you can maintain peace by force is in my opinion fundamentally unsound. The desire to maintain peace and the recognition of the sanctity of international agreements cannot be forced upon a nation by fear, it can only grow by the enlightenment of each nation when they are fully informed of what their international commitments consist and when they become aware that their own interests are bound up


with the interests of other nations and that war even when successful is disastrous to national life and therefore futile."\textsuperscript{452} Ponsonby believed that the world was evolving peaceably towards a single harmonious world state. Like many other secular internationalists Ponsonby assumed that international government would be a natural product of human evolution, if only the “moral sense of nations” could be freed from the “immoral ambitions of governments. . . . Therefore to formulate deliberately a method of continuing and even creating large armaments under the auspices of a Federation for the maintenance of peace – which would really be under the cloak of organised international hypocrisy – will entirely defeat the impulses for peace."\textsuperscript{453} Ponsonby preferred a pacifist League whose influence rested on the fact that it was a repository of moral authority.

Ponsonby’s optimism contrasted sharply with the sacrificial-historical mindset of the British Council that based its programme upon the perpetual necessity of state violence in a world stained by sin. Its pessimism had only been sharpened by the recent actions of the Central Powers in Belgium and the Middle East. It must be stressed that at the same time that Bryce and Dickinson finalized the Proposals, Bryce was also cataloguing German misconduct in Belgium and Ottoman atrocities against the Armenians. The defeat and punishment of the Central Powers was necessary in order to “show to the Germans and to the world that no Government can be allowed to succeed by such means. Failure must be stamped on them, not from revenge, but for the sake of

\textsuperscript{452} Ponsonby is quoted in Raymond A. Jones, Arthur Ponsonby: The Politics of Life (London: Christopher Helm, 1989), 239.

\textsuperscript{453} Ibid., 239 – 240.
mankind."\[^{454}\] League supporters must not give “foolish people” fodder for accusing the Bryce Group of “distracting” Britain from the moral imperative of an Allied victory.\[^{455}\]

The UDC also took issue with the Bryce Group’s unwillingness to consider the need for an international legislature. Officially the League movement stubbornly clung to Bryce and Dickinson’s demand that the League not threaten the absolute sovereignty of its member states over their domestic affairs. Therefore, while the Bryce Proposals authorized the creation of an international executive that could identify and prosecute states with an illegal foreign agenda, it steered clear of any mention of an international parliament endowed with an independent legislative function. The conservatism of this stance was heretical to the UDC, which argued that any viable peace required the construction of a democratically elected world state equipped with full legislative, executive and judicial branches and entrusted with the power to curb the domestic and imperial abuses of the old regimes.

John A. Hobson left the Bryce Group in disgust over the League’s inability to enact and enforce progressive social and economic legislation. Although Hobson was no pacifist, he shared Ponsonby’s apprehension that the coercive powers of the League would be used to retard international progress. In 1902 Hobson had published a short treatise on imperialism that put forth the thesis that wars were the result of economic cliques and protectionism. In trying to monopolize resources and markets for themselves, the great powers positioned themselves for armed conflicts where the winners achieved autarky at the expense of the conquered. These conflicts in turn reinforced the political


\[^{455}\] EZAB 51/E-II-a-4: letter from Bryce to Dickinson, 16 May 1915.
superiority of aristocratic-military classes at home hostile to capitalism and democratic change. Conversely, Hobson argued, free trade was an engine of peace and democratization. Open trade policies not only knitted nations together, they guaranteed that no one nation could monopolize the natural resources of the undeveloped world. In 1916 Hobson published the first of his many attacks on the League of Nations in which he contended that unless an international government contained a democratically elected legislature committed to economic globalization, the old regime would simply use the coercive powers of the League to manipulate the world’s natural resources and shore up their own positions vis-à-vis Asia and Africa. In 1920, when the League held its first assembly, Hobson continued his attack. The League, he claimed, was little more than an updated version of the “Holy Alliance” putting a fresh coat of paint over the tarnished old system of economic sanctions and colonial regimes.

A third charge that Fabians and other English socialists frequently levied against the Bryce Proposals was that the proposed League of Nations was too weak and too limited in its purview. Graham Wallas was the strongest proponent of this viewpoint during the early sessions of the Bryce Group. Wallas wanted a comprehensive world state with full legislative and martial autonomy that could bring the feudalistic and capitalist elements of European society to heel. This so-called “Great Society” would “organise the human will” through the rationality and efficiency of the state, thereby


eradicating the “violent and disorganized bases of human ‘nature.’”\textsuperscript{459} In \textit{The New Machiavelli}, a novel that Wallas and H. G. Wells wrote together after a retreat in the Swiss Alps in 1911, the two men identify the “essence” of their political socialism as the erection of an “ideal world state, an organized state as confident and powerful as modern science, as balanced and beautiful as a body, as beneficent as sunshine, the organized state that should end muddle for ever; it ruled all our ideas and gave form to all our ambitions.”\textsuperscript{460} The League was an inadequate solution to the problems of modern war because its framers still clung to the “doomed legacy” of Hugo Grotius and the just war tradition.\textsuperscript{461}

Bryce identified Wallas’ quest with the “German theory of the State,” which he defined as “the doctrine of the omnipotence of the State, of its right to absorb and override the individual, to prevail against morality, indeed practically to deny the existence of international morality.”\textsuperscript{462} Socialists and German militarists alike were in error, he argued, when they urged the State to co-opt the mission of the church. It is the churches’ role – and only the churches’ role – to “influence the minds and consciences” of its members so that “these citizens, as voters and as holders of any office, should try to use their civic rights and perform their civic duties in accordance with the teachings of the Church.”\textsuperscript{463} When the state usurped the social power of the churches, Bryce


\textsuperscript{461} Graham Wallas, \textit{Our Social Heritage} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), 220.


\textsuperscript{463} Ibid., 4.
continued, the nation could no longer distinguish between *raison d’etat* and an objective morality guaranteed by God. “We acknowledge a moral law; and we acknowledge it as a State no less than individuals. From that position we must never depart.”

And what is this moral law as it pertains to international relations? That “all men [are] brothers because they [are] all the children of one Father in heaven” and that God-fearing peoples “fight against a Government that breaks faith and perpetrates cruelties. . .til its aggressive power for evil has been destroyed.”

The Bryce Group split down religious lines because its Protestant leaders could not accommodate the demands of its secularist members that the League of Nations assume a broader religious mission of rescuing mankind from itself. Ponsonby, Hobson and Wallas believed that a world government could act as an agent of pacification, though for different reasons. Ponsonby foresaw a cosmopolitan state that would reform the nations by its own refusal to participate in violence. Hobson pinpointed economic underdevelopment and commercial rivalries as the root of all wars and thus predicted that a global regime of free trade could usher in an era of universal peace. Wallas fantasized about an efficient, powerful world state run by a scientific elite that would reform human nature itself through social engineering. Despite their differences, all three men wanted the League of Nations to function as a surrogate religious community. Their shared religious background is not as irrelevant here as one might think. Each of them was raised in an intensely evangelical home; each lost his faith at university and became an outspoken critic of Christianity; and each of them expected political and social science to

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464 Ibid., 6.
465 Ibid., 7 – 8.
achieve that which the pastors could not.\textsuperscript{466} Having lost their childhood faith in the transformative power of Christ and the efficacy of internal conversion, they became “neo-evangelicals” with faith in the power of modern secular institutions to temper humanity’s imperfections.\textsuperscript{467}

Protestant supporters of the League had much more humble designs. They simply wanted it to maintain a \textit{pax Christi} while the churches, in partnership with the revitalized missionary movement, could bring the nations into the Christian fold. In their view an international state was only capable of enforcing an outward conformity to the moral law by monopolizing the use of force upon the state’s ‘bodies,’ whereas an ecumenical Church possessed the power to regenerate the ‘souls’ of the nations by placing them in contact with the redemptive power of Christ. The only peace that the League of Nations could ensure was a negative one: that is, a peace defined by the absence of war through the legalization and policing of international conduct. Yet the League of Churches – and only the League of Churches – could bring about true reconciliation and international goodwill. By itself the League of Nations seemed inadequate to manage the peace to its critics because its designers never intended the League to operate alone.

The diplomatic historian J. H. B. Masterman made this argument on behalf of the LNS and the British Council in 1918. Spiritual union, he claimed, has to precede the reconciliation of the nations. “A League of Churches might well prepare the way for a

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\textsuperscript{467} Wiener, \textit{Between Two Worlds}, 16.
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League of Nations. . . .Here the appointed representatives of all the Churches, living in constant intercourse with one another, might draw together the severed parts of the One Body, till the glory and honour of the nations find, even in this earthly Jerusalem, their natural centre and home. Thus, and thus only, can the spiritual foundation for a League of Nations be well and truly laid.” Christians were “impotent to guide the future, because they are entangled in the present.” Using the apocalyptic language of St. John, he called all believers to live towards the future reign of Christ and to create a permanent League in the city of Jerusalem. “The tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations grows only in the City of God. . . .It is in the Holy Catholic Church that the one hope for humanity lies.” The war was unveiling the hideousness of an “inflamed” nationalism, leaving the future development of Christendom in the hands of two mortal rivals, between “an Internationalism founded, like that of the 18th century, founded on non-Christian culture and materialism, and a Christian Internationalism founded on the consecration of all the local loyalties that bind a man to family, city and nation, lifting him through local spheres of service to the service of the whole human race for whom Christ died.”

The Bryce Group became more and more dependent upon the British Council once its non-Protestant constituency kept abandoning the project. Bryce and Dickinson reacted to this development with barely concealed relief. Both felt that the work had a better chance of success if it could cut its ties with pacifists and socialists. Dickinson dismissed one defector in a letter to Berlin as “an erratic poseur. . . .whose judgement is

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largely vitiated by his fierce dislike of the members of the Government while Bryce expressed relief to Dickinson that they had jettisoned the immodest ambitions of those “utopian cranks who talk of a ‘World State’ and the immediate and final abolition of war.”

By the summer of 1915 only one prominent radical remained: Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, a popular writer of travel literature, philosophical proponent of neoplatonism, a professor of classics at the London School of Economics, and a constant presence among the London literati that circled around Leonard and Virginia Woolf. Lowes Dickinson was a devout mystic and an open homosexual, two passions that kept him from embracing the Anglicanism of his childhood. He had professed a complete disinterest in internationalism until the advent of the Great War, after which he buried himself in constant study and speaking engagements on behalf of the League for the next decade. Although historians have often overvalued his contributions, there is no denying that Lowes Dickinson became a popular face for the LNS and crafted the majority of its popular publications.

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469 EZAB 51/D-II-a: letter from Dickinson to Siegmund-Schultze, [1914?].


471 According to his biographer, E. M. Forster, Goldie Dickinson approached Bryce about forming an informal study group that would include both leaders from the UDC. Bryce was skeptical about Goldie’s newfound passion, but thought enough of the idea to share it with Baker and Dickinson, who encouraged Lowes Dickinson’s participation. Dickinson also later claimed that he invented the concept of the League of Nations. This is impossible since, as shown in earlier chapters, the notion of a League of Peace had been well publicized before World War I. E. M. Forster, *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson* (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1934), 163 – 165; Seaman, *A Citizen of the World*, 261 – 262.
Why did Lowes Dickinson remain even when the others left? Despite his lifelong hostility to Christianity\textsuperscript{472} he nevertheless accepted the validity of the just war tradition because of a revelation he gained while traveling through the Far East in 1913 – 1914. He realized that despite his frustration with the institutional churches he himself still believed in what he called a “common religion of the West.” This faith was not defined by institutional structures, nor by dogma, but by two central beliefs: “the ultimate distinction between Good and Evil” and the “reality of time and the process in Time.” In other words, the hallmark of Western religion was participation in a purposeful history that was itself an unfolding the redemption of mankind. “I believe it to be my duty,” Lowes Dickinson summed up, “to increase Good and diminish Evil; I believe that in doing this I am serving the purpose of the world.”\textsuperscript{473} He believed there was a moral imperative to struggle against evil, even if that meant discrete, limited acts of state violence. Apparently Lowes Dickinson felt that Asian societies had never discovered this moral imperative to act in history on behalf of the “Good,” but what really horrified him was the refusal of those in the UDC and the Bloomsbury circle to see the Allied cause as an “armed coalition of the Good” fighting against German and Ottoman aggression.\textsuperscript{474}

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\textsuperscript{473} Dickinson, \textit{Appearances}, 206 – 207.

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1916 and 1917, at the high point of the war, Lowes Dickinson developed a new appreciation for the ecumenical agencies serving in Europe. He even discovered a new interest in the person of Christ, though he could never quite overcome his antipathy for institutional religion.\footnote{In a letter to an Anglican friend with the French YMCA, G. Lowes Dickinson denied the relevance of the modern churches. “The Christian Churches will not I believe ever recover any influence nor do they deserve to. The greatest crisis in history has found them without counsel or policy or guidance, merely re-echoing the passions of the worst crowd. Civilization is perishing, and they look on passive and helpless. Not from such comes the inspiration men are waiting for.” Still he confessed to a reawakening of an interest in Christ, a person of “sheer common sense and sanity, not the paradox I used to think it,” that had lain dormant since childhood. “If there is to be a religion of the future it will grow up outside the churches and persecuted by them – as indeed is now the case at home.” Cited in Forster, \textit{Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson}, 133.} Why did Lowes Dickinson stick with the LNS? Because even though he never became a Christian, he still accepted the conservative martial tenor of the Bryce Proposals. Although he lamented the departure of his friends, he knew that the LNS had a better chance without them. “Our worst enemies are really men like Brailsford and Hobson, who go for a [world] federation,” he explained to Bryce. “They won’t get that: but they may easily help to prevent our getting what we ask for.”\footnote{Lowes Dickinson is quoted in Forster, \textit{Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson}, 137.}

In 1915 Bryce and the Dickinsons may have been content to quietly lobby the government to consider the Proposals, but it quickly became necessary to contend for their vision in the public sphere as well. The UDC published a series of books that ended the Bryce Group’s monopoly on the discussion of a world league. “Either we must break

\footnote{In a letter to an Anglican friend with the French YMCA, G. Lowes Dickinson denied the relevance of the modern churches. “The Christian Churches will not I believe ever recover any influence nor do they deserve to. The greatest crisis in history has found them without counsel or policy or guidance, merely re-echoing the passions of the worst crowd. Civilization is perishing, and they look on passive and helpless. Not from such comes the inspiration men are waiting for.” Still he confessed to a reawakening of an interest in Christ, a person of “sheer common sense and sanity, not the paradox I used to think it,” that had lain dormant since childhood. “If there is to be a religion of the future it will grow up outside the churches and persecuted by them – as indeed is now the case at home.” Cited in Forster, \textit{Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson}, 133.}
down the whole fabric of Imperialism, the world over,” Brailsford thundered in one such work, “with its tariffs, its concessions and its spheres of influence, or else we must arrange for the equitable allotment of these exclusive areas of opportunity. To achieve either of these solutions we must advance boldly to the conception of international government.”\textsuperscript{477} The Fabian Society also produced another proposal that generated a lot of attention in the media. Leonard Woolf’s \textit{Toward International Government}, which appeared in two parts in 1915 and 1916, was many people’s first introduction to the idea of the League of Nations. Woolf publicly took credit arriving at the idea by himself, though it appears as if he borrowed much of his ideas from the Bryce Proposals.\textsuperscript{478}

Competition from Leonard Woolf and the UDC forced Bryce and Dickinson to contend for their conception of international government in the public sphere. Initially this occurred only in ecclesiastical circles. W. H. Dickinson used his position within the British Council to turn it into a flume for the earliest League propaganda. Just about

\textsuperscript{477} Brailsford is quoted in Winkler, \textit{The League of Nations Movement}, 34.

\textsuperscript{478} This has mistakenly led one scholar to call Woolf “the architect of the League of Nations.” Janet M. Manson, ”Leonard Woolf as an Architect of the League of Nations,” \textit{South Carolina Review} (2007): 1. In Woolf’s memoirs, published in 1964, he describes how he accepted the assignment to draft a League constitution from the Fabian Society, even though his closest friends thought the task “boring and a waste of time.” Woolf claims to have mastered the subject in a few months. “In 1915 I worked like a fanatical or dedicated mole on the sources of my subject, international relations, foreign affairs, the history of war and peace. By 1916 I had a profound knowledge of my subject; I was an authority. . . . They thought me arrogant for saying so, or, if not arrogant, not serious. But it is true. The number and volume of relevant facts on any subject are not many or great and the number of good or important books on it are few. If you have a nose for relevant facts and the trails which lead to them – this is essential and half the battle – and if you know how to work with the laborious pertinacity of a mole and beaver, you can acquire in a few months all the knowledge necessary for a thorough understanding of the subject.” Leonard Woolf, \textit{Beginning Again: An Autobiography of the Years 1911 to 1918} (New York: Harbort, Brace & World, 1964), 182 – 184. As for the Bryce Group, Woolf shows no familiarity with its operations, with the exception of his friendship with Goldie who he dismisses for being a “second-class mind.” In 1918-1920 Woolf, like most other members of the Fabian Society and the Union of Democratic Control, condemned the Bryce Proposals and the League Covenant of 1919 and had nothing to do with the League during the 1920s. On Woolf’s involvement (or lack thereof) with the League of Nations Society, see Duncan Wilson, \textit{Leonard Woolf: A Political Biography} (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 60 – 81. (It's interesting to note that the copies of Woolf’s plan in the archives of W. H. Dickinson [located in EZAB 51/E-II-e-1] show no signs of ever having been opened.)
every new issue of Goodwill, the British Council’s journal, carried information about the
League of Nations. In March 1915 the British Council published an influential manifesto
titled The Christian Attitude on the War and International Relationships after the War,
which re-centered the British ecumenical movement around the League ideal months
before the Bryce Proposals appeared in the press. This document ended with a detailed
plan to “erect a system of international life founded on justice and charity as revealed to
the human race by the teaching of Jesus Christ” that was loosely based on the Bryce
Proposals. It included a multilateral agreement to enforce the judgments of an
International Court and a Council of Conciliation. “If four or five of the leading nations
would bind themselves to settle their disputes in this manner, and would undertake to
combine amongst themselves the conditions of the treaty, this would provide a security
against breaches of agreement which would not be attainable if only two powers were
parties to this agreement. It would, moreover, provide a nucleus for a wider
confederation. Other nations could join in the same treaty, and it might grow to be
ultimately a world-wide bond, through which the Christian principles of justice and
tolerance would in the end regulate the relationships of all civilized nations.” Although
this step would “not effect immediate disarmament, or forthwith make war impossible,” it
could nevertheless be a practical step to spare “civilization” from self-destruction.
Fifteen hundred pastors and several bishops mailed back positive responses to this new
direction. Within the year subscriptions to Goodwill spiked at fifteen thousand.⁴⁷⁹

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⁴⁷⁹ The Christian Attitude on the War and International Relationships after the War, (London: British
This document can be found in different archives, including WCCA 212.001, EZAB 51/D-1-b-2 and SCPC,
CDG-A (World Alliance papers), file 17.
Soon other ecumenical leaders who attended Dickinson’s house meetings, such as Lord Kinnaird (YMCA) and William Paton (WSCF), extended the campaign into their institutions. Local student study groups and missionaries began studying League materials less than nine months after the war began.\(^{480}\) Louise Creighton became a particularly formidable advocate for the LNS and vowed to transform the British YWCA into “a great driving force in the formation of the League of Nations.”\(^{481}\)

The League of Nations Society became a public institution in the spring of 1915. W. H. Dickinson continued on as chairman. Bryce decided to resign his presidency so that he could concentrate on his documentation of the Armenian genocide. The three men decided to offer the job to a newcomer: Lord Thomas Shaw, an elderly statesman of the Scottish Liberal Party and a supporter of the British Council. Bryce maintained a spot on the executive board, as did Lowes Dickinson. Since Lowes Dickinson spent much of the next year abroad on lecture tours for the LNS, W. H. Dickinson assumed control over the daily management of the organization.\(^{482}\) The LNS launched a public relations blitz to recruit new blood. A “Basis” for the League was adopted by popular consent of the members that became a type of confession or creed for the organization. It included proposals for an international court, mutual commitment to the martial enforcement of international law, and open membership for any “civilized State.”\(^{483}\) An examination of

\(^{480}\) Ruth Rouse, *The Federation in the World War*, 44.


\(^{483}\) The Bryce Proposals were not published as an independent booklet until mid-1917.
the first rolls of the LNS shows that it succeeded in attracting individuals from all three of the major political parties (Liberal, Conservative and Labour), but that its adherents remained heavily Protestant. Although some came from outside of ecumenical circles – most notably, Gilbert Murray (Professor of Greek at Oxford and Arnold Toynbee’s father-in-law), Henri LaFontaine (an exiled Belgian Senator) and Ernst Rhys (editor of the Everyman’s Library) – most hailed from the British Council, including Randall Davidson, Louise Creighton, John Clifford, J. H. Rushbrooke, Samuel Augustus Barnett, Canon William Leighton Crane, Arnold Rowntree, Lord Parmoor and Sir Stafford Cripps. Lord Shaw was actually a very typical new supporter: he was a Liberal politician with a solid track record of support for international law who had of late authored a series of devotional books about the trial and execution of Jesus.

From 1915 to 1918 the League idea continued to capture the collective imagination of the Anglican episcopacy. In October 1915 Bishop Charles Gore, the leader of the “High Church” faction of the Church of England, opined in The Church Times that “The central idea of the Bible is that the knowledge and worship of God is to express itself in a visible and tangible fellowship, and in the New Testament it is apparent that this fellowship must be Catholic, that is, must be supernational.” Gore pushed for an ecumenical federation of churches that could act as “the handmaid of such an organization of nations as shall subordinate the nation to humanity.” In Mens Creatrix (1917) William Temple also focused on the centrality of transnationalism for the

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Christian faith and the need for some type of political complement. “The nations themselves need some society that may include themselves, whose basis shall be a common purpose, not springing from merely individual interest and a preference for fellowship as against the horrors of war . . . , but arising out of loyalty to an all-inclusive Kingdom and a common Master, and expressing itself in common action in service of that Master and Kingdom.” 486 Upon the war’s conclusion in 1918 the bishops met at Canterbury and passed a resolution that welcomed “in the name of the Prince of Peace the idea of such a League as shall promote the brotherhood of man” with the “power at the last resort to constrain by economic pressure or armed force any nation which should refuse to submit to an international tribunal any dispute with another nation.” Such a League “should not merely be regarded as a more or less remote consequence of peace,” the resolution went on to say. The British government must “put it in the very forefront of the peace terms as their presupposition and guarantee.” 487

In 1916 Randall Davidson reassumed his presidency of the World Alliance and lent his prestige to the LNS. In a sermon he gave on 10 May 1916, the Archbishop of Canterbury remarked that the war “has quietly abolished little sundering walls of mutual ignorance or suspicions” so that now “the test of nationality, the test of circumcision, the distinction of bond or free, of male or female, has for the new Faith, the new Society, no discriminating, differentiating force.” Davidson saw a coming “fellowship of Christ’s society on earth” approaching, one that will forcefully oppose those who “violate God’s

486 Temple, Mens Creatrix, 252.

487 On the effects of this resolution, see Bell, Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury, 891, Schweitzer, The Cross and the Trenches, 252, and Bruce Wollenberg, Christian Social Thought in Great Britain between the Wars (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997).
peace” in order to “redeem the time because the days are evil.” The just war tradition needed reclamation if Christendom was to triumph over barbarism. This was the providential mission of the League.

The ending of [war] for ever and ever must be in accordance with God’s purpose. The nations must set themselves thereto. . . . When the aged seer in Patmos [St. John] . . . saw the new City of God among men with the evil things cast out for ever from its walls – whatsoever defileth and worketh abomination and maketh a lie. But he saw too a joint offering of themselves and their powers by the nations of the earth, who should each of them contribute to its newformed life. ‘They shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations into it.’ A League of Nations may have a grander meaning than we know. And overhanging and pervading it the presence, the ‘Name,’ of the Lord God Almighty.489

In February 1918 Davidson presented a petition to Parliament urging the government to “put [the League] in the very forefront of the peace terms as their presupposition and guarantee.”490 On the eve of the 1918 election the Archbishop demanded in The Times that all Anglicans vote regardless of party for representatives that would bring the League into being. “The Churches in our land have spoken with no uncertain voice. . . . We give no mere lip-adherence to a great ideal. We mean that the thing shall come to pass.”491

By the war’s end the League campaign had become a sacred obligation in Davidson’s mind.

The seeds sown by the League of Nations Society also fell on fertile soil in the Nonconformist churches. John Clifford toured England claiming that the League

488 Randall Davidson, "Redeeming the Time," in The Testing of a Nation (London: Macmillan, 1919), 65, 69. Davidson paraphrases two Biblical passages here: Galatians 5:28 (“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”) and Ephesians 5:16 (“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil”)


490 Davidson quoted on Bell, Randall Davidson, 891.

491 Ibid., 911.
represented the last hope for reconciliation with the “prodigal nation” of Germany. “Paul saw in Christ the King of a united world, the Lord and Master of a universal brotherhood, and expected the reconciliation of man to man, that began at the Cross, to proceed from tribe to tribe, from race to race, from free men to slaves, until the wounds of the world were healed, the ideas of the Sermon on the Mount became the actual practice of men and the far-scattered children of God were gathered together in one.”

According to church historian Keith Robbins, there was a virtual “consensus” among evangelicals that the League of Nations “represented a great leap forward in international relationships” towards the principles of the Kingdom of God.

In 1917 the League of Nations Society held its first large public rally at Central Hall in Westminster, the largest Methodist church in the world. (In 1946 it would house the first General Assembly of the United Nations.) The LNS established a Clergy Auxiliary Committee that targeted pastors and theologians. The three plenary speakers - Jan Christian Smuts, Lord Hugh Cecil and Randall Davidson – praised the League in language that freely mixed religious and political language. In the following weeks the LNS sponsored several smaller rallies targeted at specific denominations led by, among others, William Temple, Bishop Gore and John Clifford. The LNS allowed entire congregations to enlist in the LNS as “corporate members,” an exception to the general


rules that transformed churches into local launchpads for the LNS throughout the English countryside.\textsuperscript{494}

In 1918 the enrollment of the (renamed) League of Nations Union expanded to 3841, a number that includes both individual and corporate members. David S. Birns, the only historian who has examined the branch records of the LNU, has concluded that the overwhelming majority of this new growth happened wherever the LNU could exploit rural denominational networks. In most cases the local founder of an LNU circle was a priest or pastor; in fact, more often than not he was a Nonconformist minister. Chapters commonly met in churches on Sunday afternoons after services and attracted a wide range of Protestants with an interest in Christian internationalism.\textsuperscript{495} The LNU’s utilization of religious networks merely repeated a common characteristic of earlier reform movements in Great Britain. Eugenio F. Biagini finds in his work that ever since the era of Gladstone, the political parties overcame their lack of an internal infrastructure because they “relied on voluntary work and the support offered by social and religious groups on the basis of local allegiances.”\textsuperscript{496} This was particularly true for the Liberal Party of Baker, Bryce and W. H. Dickinson, whose national tendons were most often the ecumenical organizations devoted to social service and the Nonconformist churches, each of which commanded more financial resources and more volunteer power and enjoyed more access to local communities than any political organization at the time.

\textsuperscript{494} Egerton, Great Britain and the Creation of the League of Nations, 50 – 51, Marrin, The Last Crusade, 242 – 244.


\textsuperscript{496} Eugenio F. Biagini, British Democracy and Irish Nationalism 1876 - 1906 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 181.
Because the LNS/LNU drew so heavily from the Protestant churches, its members frequently conflated legal and political concepts of the Bryce Proposals with the moral and religious language of Christian internationalism. Fiery orations by bishops on the Kingdom of God bookended speeches by scholars of international law. Pivotal conferences and national rallies took place in chapels and cathedrals. Advocates often presented the League as both the diplomatic capstone to the war and the embodiment of the transnational Kingdom of God. This discursive confusion attracted millions of Protestant believers to the cause, but it also drove an even deeper wedge between the LNS/LNU and the secular pacifists of the UDC, a pattern that will re-emerge in future analyses of the League movement in other countries. Yet it also was a crucial element in persuading British politicians to endorse the campaign. In fact, as we shall now see, each of the government ministers who took responsibility for turning the Bryce Proposals into British policy did so because they perceived their work on behalf of the League as a religious duty.

4.3 The League of Nations Society and the Liberal Government, 1914 – 1916

Of all the branches of the World Alliance in 1914, the British Council alone enjoyed the advantage of a close working relationship with a political leader in office when the war began in 1914. Sir Edward Grey, whose eleven-year occupancy of the Foreign Office still ranks as the longest, possessed an entrenched familiarity with the efforts of J. Allen Baker and W. H. Dickinson to bind the German, American and British empires together politically through the influence of the Protestant churches. He consistently appeared at British Council events including the visitation of the German
clerical deputation in 1909. In 1911–1912 Grey worked with ecumenists on both sides of the Atlantic to promote an Anglo-American arbitration treaty. Finally, as discussed in the previous chapter, Grey took special pains to convince the Konstanz delegates in 1914 that the British government had tried to halt mobilization on the Continent by hastily convening an international congress but had been foiled by the illegal German invasion of Belgium. Grey’s influence was a salient factor in Baker and Dickinson’s decision for the government’s war bill. In short, when the Bryce Group started in 1914 there was already a well-trod path from Dickinson’s house to the Foreign Office that permitted an informal discussion about the League to comfortably evolve over time.

Unfortunately the extent and depth of the conversations between Grey and the League of Nations Society are not yet known. From 1905 to 1916 Grey maintained a tight-lipped, one-man monopoly over every diplomatic detail of the world’s largest empire. The Foreign Minister was never prone to sharing the full panoply of his thinking on any topic with others, particularly if they were members of the press or of Parliament. Grey never publicly discussed the League while in office. Like his good friend Bryce, Grey worried that a premature exposure of plans for an international alliance might endanger the project or, even worse, the war effort. He also recognized that without American participation even the best-laid plan could never succeed in its mission. Grey therefore moved slowly and, more often than not, secretively. He said nothing in public that might tip his hand or involve him in political debate that might weaken his grip on the plans for peace.

Grey first broached the issue diplomatically after a visit to London by Edward House, Woodrow Wilson’s senior advisor, in 1915. The two men bonded quite readily
over weeks of non-political conversations that ranged from reincarnation to fishing to “our belief in the wisdom and mercy of the Almighty” in the midst of war.\footnote{497} House spent over three months in Europe – from February through May – hoping to end the war: if not through mutual negotiation with both sides, then by tightening the bonds of the Anglo-American relationship. Grey exploited Wilson’s desire to produce a peace grounded on the restitution of international law. On 22 September, months after House’s departure, Grey offered the League as bait to draw the United States into the war.

To me the great object of securing the elimination of militarism and navalism is to get security for the future against aggressive war. How much are the United States prepared to do in this direction? Would the President propose that there should be a League of Nations binding themselves to side against any Power that broke a Treaty, which broke certain rules of warfare on sea or land (such rules would, of course, have to be drawn up after this war); or which refused, in case of dispute, to adopt some other method of settlement than that of war?\footnote{498}

Unfortunately, as we shall see in the next chapter, Grey’s concern for the League did not bear much fruit initially. When House returned to London in the late winter of 1916, he pushed for a general conference of the great powers that would seek a negotiated peace. Wilson wanted to deal with the League only after the war had ended. Wilson’s waffling neutrality frustrated Grey. He questioned House in a letter dated 28 August 1916.


whether “even if with a League of Nations the United States could be depended upon to
uphold treaties and agreements by force. . . .”

Grey was not just being cagy by proposing the League to Wilson and House.
After all, at this point in time, neither man was interested enough in the League to take
him up on this offer. Grey thought at the time that he had failed. “It is difficult,” Grey
complained to House, “for a man who shares responsibility for the daily conduct of the
war when the very existence of his country is at stake, to go as far as I have done in
public about a future League of Nations, but I have not seen that what I said met with any
public notice or response in the United States.” Yet Grey still pushed on with the
League, even more so after his fall from power in December 1916.

That winter the Liberal government of H. H. Asquith fell because of growing
outrage over the inability of the British army to secure a convincing victory in the war.
Sir Edward Grey was a casualty of the change in power. As a private citizen Grey felt
free to publicly endorse with the LNS. In fact his pamphlet, entitled simply The League
of Nations, which was taken from an oration delivered at the Methodist Central Hall, was
the LNS’ most requested piece of literature. In 1918 he replaced Lord Shaw as president
of the (renamed) League of Nations Union and then undertook two lengthy campaigns in
England and in the U.S. Grey resigned the presidency of the LNU in 1920 because of

499 Grey’s letter is quoted on Keith Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, 341. For more on the House-Grey
negotiations that began so fruitfully but then dwindled into insignificance, see C. M. Mason, “Anglo-
American Relations: Mediation and ‘Permanent Peace’,” in British Foreign Policy under Sir Edward Grey,
500 Grey is quoted on Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, 341.
501 Birn, The League of Nations Union, 8 – 11; Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, 348 – 353; G. M.
his diminished health and failing eyesight. Yet he still remained a strong voice on behalf of the LNU both in and out of ecumenical circles. Willem Adolph Visser’t Hooft, who later became the first general secretary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, heard Grey in 1921 urge the Student Christian Movement to undo the moral damage of the Great War by creating a world that was even more Christian in spirit than it had ever been. His speech shook Visser’t Hooft, who at that time was just sixteen years of age, who later recalled in his memoirs that this was the moment he decided to devote his life to “the universality of Christ” by working in postwar Geneva."502

After Grey’s dismissal in December 1916, the final say over British foreign policy passed to the new prime minister, David Lloyd George. While Lloyd George’s political skills temporarily rescued the Liberal Party by forming a coalition government, it terminated the careers of many internationalist-minded Cabinet members such as Sir John Simon and Lord Haldane. Grey’s loss filled Lowes Dickinson and the LNS with “despair for the future” and tossed Dickinson into a quandary about how to recruit support from the other parties.503

Lloyd George had little interest in either the institutional churches or the LNS. He was not only the first Welshman to become Prime Minister; he was also the first Baptist and he knew that his strong commitment to disestablishmentarianism ensured he would never win over the Protestant hierarchies. Consistently throughout his six years in office Lloyd-George indulged League advocates as long as it benefited him politically, but he never adopted the cause as his own. By refusing to champion the League Lloyd-

George unraveled the work that Gladstone had done in making Christian internationalism a core element of the Liberal Party. Whatever the LNS did next, it would have to do without the Prime Minister.

4.4 The League of Nations Society and the Labour Party: Arthur Henderson

Arthur Henderson was one immediate asset in the LNS’s ledger. W. H. Dickinson approached Henderson about becoming a founding member of the LNS in 1915 but he thought it inappropriate to identify with a special interest group while he held a ministerial position. Henderson had just joined Asquith and Grey on the Cabinet, the first Labour leader to accept a position in a coalition government. He stayed on after their dismissal, even though he never reconciled himself to Lloyd George’s indifference to internationalism. Yet although Henderson felt that he could not join the LNS, he still spread the “gospel of the League” in churches up and down England and Wales. For Henderson was not just the leader of the Labour Party, he was also a traveling evangelist and the president of an interdenominational association of working class churches called the Brotherhood. Henderson became an advocate for the League of Nations first of all in his religious life and then, after 1917, translated brought his fervor back into the folds of the Labour Party.


Henderson’s religious background set him apart from many of the other luminaries of the Labour movement. As a teenager he experienced a conversion at an open-air revival meeting held by “Gipsy” Smith, a twenty-one year old captain in the Salvation Army who urged young men and women to surrender their futures to Christ. In the 1880s Henderson became an itinerant lay preacher in the Methodist Church and a noted advocate for temperance reform. He learned key skills in these jobs that he would use later on to form a new political party: how to speak effectively in public, how to relate to the common man from different areas of the Empire and how to recruit individuals into a cohesive national movement. He also developed friendships with other Christian progressives across the countryside, including Baker and Dickinson.

Another aspect of Henderson’s background set him apart from most of the first Labour politicians: he himself had been a manual laborer. When his father died in 1873, Henderson got his first job at age ten and since evangelism, like crime, does not pay, Henderson worked in factories until 1892 when he became a salaried organizer for the Iron Founders Union. He never attended a prep school, much less university. In a letter printed in The Review of Reviews in 1906, Henderson explained that since he spent so much of his spare time in the pulpit, his “time for exceptional reading” had always been “limited.” His library consisted mainly of sermons (mostly John Wesley and Charles

506 Mary Agnes Hamilton, Arthur Henderson: A Biography (London: W. Heinemann, 1938), 4 – 5; Edwin A. Jenkins, From Foundry to Foreign Office: The Romantic Life-Story of the Rt. Hon. Arthur Henderson, M. P. (London: Grayson & Grayson, 1933), 3; and Harold Murray, Sixty Years an Evangelist: An Intimate Study of Gipsy Smith (Exeter: Self-published, 1937), 82. “Gipsy” Smith was a former disciple of D. L. Moody and Ira Sankey. After his conversion Henderson participated in small Bible studies and toured the lecture circuits of other evangelicals who fell within the Moody sphere. Thus, just like so many Protestant internationalists (in a list that includes Nathan Söderblom, John Mott, Wilfred Monod and W. T. Stead) Henderson was also raised within the extended spiritual family of Moody.
Spurgeon) and his Bible, which Henderson claimed had been an “immense help, not only for its great moral influence, but its literary helpfulness.”

Later in life others in the Labour party sometimes ridiculed Henderson for his folksy touch. Ramsay MacDonald in particular used to treat Henderson as his personal bête noire. Although MacDonald himself suffered from a low birth, he nevertheless had risen up through the ranks of the London socialist clubs. MacDonald knew that the party needed Henderson because of his ability to organize Labour networks within the rural trade unions and the Methodist Church, two constituencies that the Socialists were desperate to tear away from the grasp of the Liberals. MacDonald may have been the favorite son of the party’s elite, who elected him chairman in 1911, but “Uncle Arthur,” as he was popularly known, carried more weight among the rank and file of the party.

In 1903 Henderson won a seat for Parliament despite the fact that there was almost no working class representation in his district. Henderson relied instead a potpourri of Liberal teetotalers, local Nonconformist pastors, trade unions and wealthy Quakers such as Sir Jack Pease, Arnold Rowntree and Joseph Allen Baker. Historian F. M. Levanthal marks this moment as a watershed success for the Labour Party as Henderson’s “well-managed electoral machine and evangelical style” established “a pattern for local organization that other districts came to emulate.” In 1905 Uncle Arthur was given the authority to completely refashion the party machinery. One contemporary discerned that Henderson’s “unequalled authority” stemmed from his obsessive pastoral care of others in the party, a style that contrasted with the

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intellectualism of MacDonald and the other socialist leaders: “[Henderson] cared for the
Party as most people can care only for persons. He saw it as a potential instrument of
purposes that had a Divine sanction, worthy of all a man could give to its service. He, on
his own part, gave all that he had.”

Before the war Henderson did not concern himself with diplomatic issues. One of
his friends recalled that he “had few contacts in Europe before 1914, was appallingly
ignorant of geography, and spoke no foreign languages.” Yet Henderson did
participate in Protestant internationalist events from 1907 to 1914, however casually. In
1907 when Baker and Dickinson tried to rally public opinion for the Second Hague
Conference, Henderson was there. In 1908 when Baker and Dickinson hosted German
churchmen, Henderson was there. From 1911 to 1914 when Baker and Dickinson tried to
organize a League of Churches in time for the Third Hague Conference, Henderson was
there. Perhaps his first exposure to political internationalism came from his ecumenical
friends. At any rate Henderson entered 1914 holding to a generic internationalist mindset
characterized by high hopes for the progression of international law, a binding arbitration
treaty of the Protestant powers, the preservation of the just war theory and the fulfillment
of the Christian churches’ unique obligation to reconcile the classes and the nations of the
world one with another. Henderson’s views clashed with those of MacDonald and the
radical wing of his party once the war began.

Just as his peers in the British Council abandoned their neutrality after the
German invasion of Belgium, Henderson also became a strong supporter of the war

effort. He never wavered in that belief, neither politically nor personally. He sent three 
sons to the Western front in the first few months of the war. When MacDonald led an 
effort within the party to denounce the war, Henderson defended the government. 
Eventually MacDonald resigned his chairmanship of the party when it became obvious 
that the Labour majority wanted to distance itself from his pacifism. MacDonald joined 
the UDC and Henderson took the reins of the party to prevent a schism. As chairman he 
backed Grey’s leadership, even bringing Labour into a coalition government in May 1915 
when it looked like the Liberals might fall from power. 

In 1914 – 1915 Henderson also reentered ecumenical work when he accepted the 
presidency of the Brotherhood Movement. At that time the Brotherhood was a strictly 
working class organization primarily concerned with philanthropic self-help programs, 
urban settlement houses and evangelistic outreach. The Brotherhood’s central ideal was 
the reconciliation of the classes through the earthly establishment of the Kingdom of 
God. The “universal brotherhood of men” (and presumably women, though they were 
not allowed to become members) would be a result of the universal recognition of “the 
Fatherhood of God.” Henderson’s unique contribution to the Brotherhood was the 
expansion of this vision onto the international stage. Now, Henderson argued, the 
transnationality of the Kingdom of God demanded the brotherhood of nations.511 

The Brotherhood became one of the more boisterous and demonstrative pillars of 
the League of Nations Society. Henderson himself made the majority of his appeals 
within this organization beginning in December 1916, after the death of his oldest son in 

511 I have not been able to find a scholarly study of the Brotherhood Movement, though one seems 
overdue. For a firsthand glimpse at its principals, see Arthur S. Peake, *Brotherhood in the Old Testament* 
(New York: George H. Doran, 1923).
the Battle of the Somme, and lasting well into the 1920s, even though John Clifford succeeded him in 1918. Henderson’s speeches unveil a vision for the League that was more apocalyptic and radical than the usual LNS fare. For him the war revealed the need for the churches to move beyond the “old evangelical faith” and to develop the “social conscience” of the people. The Kingdom of God might begin with the regeneration of individuals, but it should end with a complete rehabilitation of a nation’s social and economic life. Henderson demanded that the Church (spoken of now in the singular and with a capital C) must preach a “corporate sense of sin” and advance to the “possibility of corporate salvation.” The self-appointed task of the Brotherhood was to interpret “the world-unrest not as a striving towards a mere material betterment of the conditions of life for the masses, but as a movement of the spirit in men” towards “a new divine society in which there would be neither Jew nor Gentile, neither exploiter nor exploited, neither bond nor free.” United the churches would be a foretaste of a global society “rooted in peace, sustained by the organized will of mankind, and bound together by the ties of genuine brotherhood.”

Henderson quit the government in 1917 after it became obvious that David Lloyd George neither wanted nor valued his council. This became painfully clear in August after Henderson traveled to Russia to witness the effects of the revolution firsthand. The trip convinced him that the Allied Eastern front would collapse soon and that a mediated peace should be struck before it did. Yet when he came to present his report to the rest of the Cabinet, Lloyd George kept him waiting in the hall for half an hour while the others

loudly argued Henderson’s lack of education and ability on the other side of the door. Henderson stormed out. When a few weeks later Lloyd George refused him a passport to attend a socialist conference in Stockholm, Henderson resigned.513

Like Grey, Henderson officially joined the LNS once he was out of office. Even more importantly he quickly brought the entire Labour Party in line with the League campaign. This happened despite the opposition of MacDonald and others in the UDC. For Henderson the League became “the keystone of the new social order that Labour desires to build” and at the “forefront of the Labour policy of international reconciliation.” It represented the chance to curb the “arbitrary” foreign policies of the current governments and would lead to the “democratization of nations.”514 Henderson wanted Labour to work hand in hand with the churches in “using its machinery to present to the people a new conception of international relations consistent with the teaching of the Christian faith.” For “to be successful the League of Nations must be the fruit of the affections. . . .”515 At the party’s national convention in August 1917, Henderson drafted the planks dealing with foreign policy. The platform demanded a peace based upon the re-drawing of state borders according to nationality, the illegalization of secret diplomacy, and the creation of a “League of Free Nations.”516


516 Arthur Henderson, The Aims of Labour (New York: W. B. Huebsch, 1919), 46. Henderson was not much of an author, but he did write a series of articles for the LNS. These are briefly discussed in Winkler, The League of Nations Movement in Great Britain, 126 – 127, 148 – 149, 151, 159.
Henderson steered the Labour Party into a partnership with the LNS at a time when other leading figures of the party were too pacifist and/or socialist to do so. His ability to reach Nonconformists and the working class guaranteed his ascendancy over MacDonald and the UDC during the war years. He maintained his position even after being disappointed by the Treaty of Versailles. “The Peace Treaty is not our treaty,” he declared in 1919, “and we shall never accept it. We shall never rest satisfied until it has been fundamentally restructured.” Yet, unlike the UDC that denounced the League altogether as a “Holy Alliance,” Henderson believed that the League was a benevolent Trojan horse inside the Treaty that would eventually break free. The League was a tool that the forces of Christian brotherhood could use to achieve a lasting reconciliation.

Henderson’s convictions strongly influenced British foreign policy throughout the next decade. In 1922 an intra-party settlement returned the leadership of the party to MacDonald. Henderson supported the move for the sake of the party, though he insisted that he himself retain control over relations with the League. In 1924 Labour won its first national election. MacDonald served as both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, but League issues remained within the jurisdiction of Henderson, who brought along with him Lord Parmoor and Phillip Noel-Baker from the British Council. In 1929 MacDonald once again became Prime Minister, though this time Henderson demanded the Foreign Office as the price of his support. During his three years in office Henderson and MacDonald pursued “two separate foreign policies” for the same administration.  

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Henderson’s resigned in 1931 to chair the League Disarmament Conference, which effectively ended his career as a party man. His efforts merited the Nobel Peace Prize in 1934 shortly before his death a few months later.

In the short term, though, Henderson had little effect on government policy, particularly after his showdown with Lloyd George in August 1917. He had more influence outside of office than in. From 1916 to 1935, the year of his death, Henderson embodied Labour’s commitment to the League of Nations at the center of British foreign policy. Yet his party was not in a position to shape policy during the First World War, which forced the LNS to look towards the Conservative Party for sponsorship.

4.5 The League of Nations Society and the Conservatives: Lord Robert Cecil

In order to entice the Conservatives into a coalition, Lloyd George pledged the Foreign Office to the veteran statesman Arthur Balfour. Balfour came to prominence in the 1880s and 1890s as a particularly nasty supporter of the Tory champion Lord Salisbury, Balfour’s uncle, in his unending struggle against the ascendancy of Liberalism. Salisbury ousted Gladstone three times: briefly in 1885 and 1886 and then more permanently in 1895. Balfour took control of the Foreign Office during Salisbury’s final term and then in 1902 he succeeded his uncle as Prime Minister until 1905. Balfour was notoriously difficult to get along with. Although gruff, elitist and cynical, he nevertheless maintained his hold on the Tory party until he replaced Sir Edward Grey in December 1916.

Balfour’s return to government was a bit of a family reunion. Lord Salisbury’s sixth child, Lord Robert Cecil, had joined the Foreign Office nineteen months earlier
when the Liberals reacted to popular demands for more economic and bureaucratic efficiency after a series of military setbacks in Europe and Turkey. Grey recruited Cecil to oversee the economic blockade against the Central Powers. The two men had been university chums and their friendship was quickly rekindled. Grey relished having someone with Cecil’s Continental experience, command of foreign languages and detail-oriented mindset. Within the year Grey arranged for Cecil’s promotion into the Cabinet as the head of the (newly created) Ministry of Blockade. Cecil in turn was fiercely loyal to Grey for the rest of his life and even considered stepping down when his cousin replaced Grey in 1916.  

Cecil reconsidered his resignation after his friends persuaded him to remain for the sake of the League of Nations Society. He had become interested in the LNS in 1915 when Grey assigned Cecil the League portfolio. Like Henderson, Cecil also was wary of Lloyd George and his supporters who publicly “tolerated the League, and even officially supported it” but behind closed doors were never “much interested in it.” He stayed for the sake of a cause he believed in. Others quickly identified Cecil as the point man for all things League-related. It was Cecil in 1917 and 1918 who drafted the government’s proposals for the League and again it was Cecil who in 1919 represented

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519 No individual is more highly spoken of in Cecil’s memoirs than Edward Grey. See Viscount E. A. Robert Cecil of Chelwood, All the Way (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), 129 – 134, 161 – 162. For more on Cecil’s failed attempt to unseat Lloyd George over the League issue, see Michael Bentley, "Liberal Politics and the Grey Conspiracy of 1921," The Historical Journal 20, no. 2 (June, 1977).

520 Cecil, All the Way, 144. Cecil’s negative opinion of Lloyd George plunged even lower after the Paris Peace Conference. “I have watched very closely Mr. Lloyd George’s conduct of Foreign Affairs since I first accepted office in his Government,” Cecil charged in 1922, “and I am profoundly convinced that there has never been a less satisfactory direction of our foreign policy in this country.” Kenneth O. Morgan, Consensus and Disunity: The Lloyd George Coalition Government, 1918 - 1922 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 111.
Britain at the negotiations in Paris that produced the final Covenant. No one in Britain deserves more credit for the British investment the League of Nations than Robert Cecil.

Or, to call him by his complete name: Lord Edgar Algernon Robert Gascoyne-Cecil. The name oozed pomp. Small wonder that he preferred to just be called Bob. His privileged upbringing often made him feel uncomfortable. He had an overdeveloped sense of noblesse oblige that forced him on a very difficult political path than his cousin Balfour. “Though reared in an atmosphere of aristocracy, Lord Robert Cecil is a democrat,” W. H. Dickinson assured his Liberal readers in 1920, whose Christian conscience has caused him to embrace “the ideals of the most advanced Reformers.”

Indeed Cecil cooperated with Baker and Dickinson on many progressive issues. He supported their efforts for disarmament and international arbitration before the war and backed Dickinson’s women’s suffrage bill during the war.

Cecil worked for the British Red Cross for the first year of the war before joining the government. Although this was likely his first personal involvement with an international organization, it fundamentally altered his attitude towards them. His involvement began when, in October 1914, Cecil’s brother-in-law died in the First Battle of Ypres. Cecil and his wife Eleanor went to France to recover the body but they could not identify him until after several weeks of investigation. Horrified by the army’s disorganization, Lord and Lady Cecil accepted employment with the Red Cross exhuming and cataloguing thousands of corpses.

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Cecil became an enthusiast for the League at a time when he was coping with his own losses and struggling with his own role in the war. Cecil surrendered four nephews and an older brother to the conflict. His deft management of the blockade demonstrated just how effective economic sanctions could be in an age of total war. Yet his success – over one million civilian dead by starvation in three years – caused him endless guilt. “Without the hope that this war was to establish a better international system,” Cecil vented angrily to his wife after one particularly “chilly” Cabinet session, “I should be a pacifist.”\footnote{Cecil quoted on Kenneth Rose, \textit{The Later Cecils} (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 153. In his history of his own family, David Cecil believed that his uncle gravitated toward the League movement because his blockade work “made an indelible mark on him” as it was such “a peculiarly distressing job for a Christian.” David Cecil, \textit{The Cecils of Hatfield House: An English Ruling Family} (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973), 295. I have taken the number of civilian deaths attributable to the blockade from Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, 14-18: \textit{Understanding the Great War}, 62. For more information on Cecil’s performance as the Minister of Blockade, see Eric W. Osbourne, \textit{Britain's Economic Blockade of Germany, 1914 - 1919} (London and New York: Frank Cass, 2004).} The sacrificial interpretation of the Great War, so common in Protestant circles from 1914 to 1920, helped Cecil appease his own conscience and assuage his grief.

Cecil’s Anglicanism and his advocacy for the League were always already interwoven. And not only Cecil: his three brothers also carried both of these banners into their distinctive professional arenas. As the Bishop of Exeter, William Cecil loyally supported Randall Davidson’s lead. James Cecil, the current Lord Salisbury, championed the League as the Conservative leader in the House of Lords for the next decade. Meanwhile Hugh Cecil captained a rowdy sect of Tory backbenchers in the House of Commons, the so-called “Hughligans” (it rhymes with ‘hooligans’), that aggressively
challenged the conservative diplomacy of the party’s elderly leadership. Cecil’s brothers reinforced his sense of religious obligation to the LNS. In fact it was while listening to one of William’s sermons on the League from the pulpit in St. Paul’s Cathedral that Cecil understood that God wanted him to abandon his quest to seize the leadership of the Conservative Party and to spend his political capital on the League. In his own words, he had “been ‘called’ to preach the League spirit in public affairs.”

It is likely that Cecil first learned of the LNS after his return to London in the summer of 1915 just as the Bryce Group was expanding into a public association. Randall Davidson, whom Cecil had long regarded as a spiritual mentor, approached him that summer about joining the Society. So did Cosmo Lang, the Archbishop of York, another clerical stalwart of the League movement, who had been one of Cecil’s closest friend since their time together at Oxford.

Like so many others Cecil was led into the fold by his ecclesiastical social connections and friendships, a fact that shaped his understanding of the League from the very outset of his involvement in the LNS. Cecil worried that the Great War signified the potential suicide of Christendom. Yet the reestablishment of moral limitations on the state’s right to go to war required the rehabilitation of the just war tradition within a collective compact of Christian states. The modern era was disastrously captivated by an


524 Rose, The Later Cecils, 159.

“idolatry of force” wherein “every nation did that which was right in its own eyes.” This spiritual dilemma required the mutual recognition that “the State is an individual, a moral individual, and is subject as such to the moral law.” The idea of collective security was the elemental core of the League, for without the combined force of the great powers it would be impossible to punish outlaw states through joint military actions or the implementation of economic sanctions like the current Allied blockade.

Yet Cecil recognized that force alone was an insufficient basis for the renewal of Christendom. The peoples themselves must desire peace. “What is wanted,” Cecil explained in a letter to the diplomat William Wiseman in August 1918, “is a great ideal, and that must be found in the old Hebrew – and let us add Christian – conception of the reign of Peace. I believe that a great formless sentiment of this kind exists. If it does not, we can do nothing. If it does, we must give it an organ for its expression.”

The League therefore also held the duty of cooperating with the churches in their task of Christianizing public opinion and transforming the means by which Christian states acted internationally. “Above all, I was, and am, confident,” Cecil emphasized decades later, “that no healthy international system can be built up except on a religious foundation.”

Although Cecil did not officially become a member of the LNS, because he served in the Cabinet, Cecil became the primary conduit between the LNS and the British government after that summer. In the fall of 1916, just a few months before Grey’s downfall, Cecil introduced the first memorandum concerning the League of Nations to

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527 Cecil, All the Way, 143.
528 Ibid., 73.
the Imperial War Cabinet. His “Proposals for the Diminishing the Occasion of Future Wars” borrowed liberally from the Bryce Proposals. He also took pains to distance his plan from the UDC. Cecil’s proposal called for an obligatory moratorium and a process of obligatory arbitration for belligerent states eager to declare war. Authority would reside in a permanent council of ambassadors, appointed by the states that would periodically revisit the terms of the peace and control the League’s punitive powers.529

The change of government in 1916 could have submarined Cecil’s work. As mentioned before, Lloyd George was too uninterested and Balfour too cynical. Both men warmed up to the idea in 1917 only after it became obvious that the League of Nations interested Woodrow Wilson. Throughout his entire tenure Lloyd George approached the League first and foremost as a means to bring the United States into the war. When the U. S. Senate did not ratify the Covenant, Lloyd George lost interest.

Balfour, on the other hand, softened in his stance over time, partially because he admired his cousin’s faithful sincerity for the scheme. Balfour was never optimistic that the League would succeed in making Europe a peaceful continent. (He certainly thought that the “really wild” schemes of the UDC for a world state would only result in another world war as factions scrambled for control.530) Still he at least thought the League should be given a chance to fail. After all “some form of international sanction” could still “give pause to the hardiest aggressor.”531 States had a moral obligation, he admitted,

529 Cecil’s memorandum is reprinted as an appendix to his first memoir A Great Experiment.
to optimize the diplomatic options of “delay, discussion, publicity, public opinion, commercial boycott and arbitration” as long as they recognize that these methods were no substitute for the necessity of a strong national defense. “The League may give assistance, but the League is not, and cannot be, a complete instrument for bringing order out of chaos. . . .The League of Nations will serve you well if you do not overload it. At least that is my hope, my faith.” Wedded to the great powers the League had a shot. Furthermore Christians had a moral obligation to back “the most promising effort in the direction of the renewal of civilisation which mankind has ever yet made,” even if it was unlikely to succeed.\textsuperscript{532}

Balfour was incapable of giving the LNS a ringing endorsement. Yet it was enough to provide Cecil the freedom of action he needed to move forward. He took a position of benevolent neutrality towards the whole affair. He also appears to have enjoyed tweaking Lloyd George by promoting his cousin’s agenda. He once admitted to Cecil that he resented Lloyd George and his immediate circle because they took such “obvious enjoyment in putting a spoke in [the LNS’s] wheel.”\textsuperscript{533} Balfour gave provision to Cecil to assemble a staff within the Foreign Office to work on an international constitution. (Cecil quickly hired J. Allen Baker’s son, Phillip Noel-Baker, as his personal secretary.) Balfour also left Cecil in charge of the Foreign Office during his frequent games of hooky. Ostensibly because of illness, Balfour was out of the office about half of the time, which allowed Cecil to sit in on Cabinet meetings and shape the British preparations for the Peace Conference. This arrangement even survived Cecil’s

\textsuperscript{532} Balfour, "On the League of Nations" 293 – 294.

resignation from the government in December 1918 out of protest over Lloyd George’s disestablishment of the Church of Wales. Despite his status as a private citizen, Cecil still served as his cousin’s proxy to Cabinet meetings “owing,” as he slyly put it in his memoirs, “to one of Balfour’s colds.”

Cecil’s proposal was revisited in April 1917, just after Wilson’s pronouncement of the Fourteen Points. A sub-committee chaired by Lord Milner tried to table the issue, but Balfour and Cecil convinced the others to at least entertain the idea for the sake of Anglo-American relations. Meanwhile Cecil directed external pressure from the LNS and the churches towards Lloyd George. He also began corresponding with leaders of the League to Enforce Peace in the United States. Yet he still felt as if he were swimming upstream. He grew increasingly frustrated with those whose enthusiasm lagged behind his own, particular if they were Tories “Of all sections of political opinion,” he complained, “they, both by tradition and reason, should be the warmest adherents of peace; for none have more to lose from the violence and national unrest caused by war.”

Looking back in his memoirs, Cecil acknowledged he became a “difficult” colleague to get along with because of his religious conviction that the League “superseded all other political interests.”

Alone, Cecil would likely never have persuaded the Imperial War Cabinet to adopt the League as its own. The LNS and the British Council were not able to persuade Lloyd George and his circle to endorse Cecil’s proposal until reinforcements arrived in the form of Jan Christiaan Smuts.

534 Cecil, All the Way, 146.
536 Cecil, All the Way, 144.
4.6 The League of Nations Society and the British Commonwealth: Jan Christiaan Smuts

Over a period of fifty years Jan Christiaan Smuts constructed a reputation as a military genius and as the ablest Liberal politician in South Africa. Yet his passions always lay elsewhere. He considered himself a mystic and an intellectual at heart. At the end of his life he felt more satisfaction at the fact that he had introduced the word “Holism” to the English language than with any of his martial feats. In 1970 one of his protégés told a story that sums up this aspect of Smuts’ career. In the early 1920s a group of American and English botanists came to South Africa for an expedition into the veldt. Their host, a professor at the University of Stellenbosch, asked Smuts to accompany them. On the trip an American women asked her host to identify certain grasses that were native to southern Africa. The professor, unable to answer her, deflected her questions onto Smuts, who provided her and her friends with an impromptu lecture, rich in detail, on each species of grass and its role in the local ecology. Taken aback at his expertise the stunned woman asked Smuts how a general could know what a botany professor did not. Smuts allegedly replied, “I’m only a General in my spare time.”


Whether or not this story actually happened, it conveys a central truth about Smuts the person. Smuts’ worldly accomplishments and his spiritual desires rarely intersected. His work on the League Covenant, both before and during the Paris Peace Conference, was one of the few exceptions to the rule because it was a project to which Smuts could bring both political savvy and religious conviction.

The Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa stamped Smuts’ childhood, but as he grew older Smuts strayed farther and farther from his Calvinist roots. The drift began in elementary school. Smuts experienced a conversion under the preaching of Andrew Murray, a representative of the evangelical Réveil, and began to substitute personal holiness and social responsibility for the theological rigidity characteristic of his family. As a university student Smuts moved deeper and deeper into the liberal Reformed camp, even though he remained orthodox enough to fall under the mentorship of the conservative theologian J. I. Marais (who was himself a disciple of the Dutch politician Abraham Kuyper). It was Marais who got Smuts into Cambridge for graduate studies in law and it was Marais who loaned him the money to go.

Smuts never quite adapted to England. A foreigner, a bookworm, a Calvinist devout enough not to go carousing with the other students, Smuts made few friends that were not themselves students from abroad. He socialized little. Instead he fostered his hidden literary ambitions at night after his law classes, even though most of the professors in the humanities refused him permission to sit in on their seminars. Upon graduation Smuts finished his first book, a psychologically oriented biography of the

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mystical poet Walt Whitman. He accepted his fate to become a barrister only after he could not find a publisher.\textsuperscript{540}

In 1895 Smuts returned to Africa intent on overcoming the cultural divide that separated the white Protestant peoples of his homeland. Throughout his long life Smuts’ primary political purpose remained the political union of the Dutch, English and Huguenot colonies into a single, united South Africa that would in turn become the springboard for the extension of “Christian civilization” across all of Africa. To the modern ear, this sounds imperialist and, perhaps, racist. And rightly so, though Smuts was not a racist in the sense that he believed in genetic predestination. He never condoned materialistic definitions of race, but he nevertheless believed in the metaphysical reality of race and a hierarchy of cultures, where Christian nationalities

\textsuperscript{540} Smuts’ book was published posthumously: Jan Christiaan Smuts, \textit{Walt Whitman: A Study in the Evolution of Personality} (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973). Whitman played a key role in opening Smuts up to the theological liberalism he experienced at Cambridge. In 1942 he reflected on this in a letter to a close friend: “Whitman did a great service to me in making me appreciate the Natural Man and freeing me from much theological or conventional preconceptions due to my very early pious upbringing. It was a sort of liberation, as St. Paul was liberated from the Law and its damnations by his Damascus vision. Sin ceased to dominate my view of life, and this as a great release as I was inclined to be severely puritanical in all things.” W. K. Hancock, \textit{Smuts: The Sanguine Years, 1870 - 1919} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 48.
covenanted to God and to one another sat on top. Smuts admired political theorists like James Bryce, André Siegfried and Lionel Curtis who conceived of race (in Dutch: *Volk*) in spiritual and cultural terms. He wanted South Africa to emulate other Protestant countries – Britain, Canada, Switzerland and the United States – that had recently forged (meta)nationalisms that transcended the jagged religious and racial diversities of their population.

Smuts held the prejudice, common to almost everyone connected to the early ecumenical movement, that a socially active Protestant ethos was a *sine qua non* of a progressive, modern nation. If he had been able to attend the celebrations for Calvin’s five hundredth birthday in Geneva, he would have felt right at home. Smuts also particularly identified the Reformed faith as the cornerstone of modern political liberty. He too understood international peace as the interconnected processes of, first of all, the evangelism and regeneration of the nations of the world, followed by the joining together of contemporary states.

On the one hand, Smuts feared the demise of Christian civilization if it was submitted to the African vote. On the other hand, Smuts knew that the South African treatment of the ‘Natives’ was fundamentally immoral. He usually avoided the issue in his political labors or pushed the issue off into the future in the hope that the elevating influence of Christianity might some day civilize the African and soften the Afrikaner. Hancock, *Smuts*, 309 – 321, 558 – 559. This ambivalent position on the place of the ‘Natives’ in the young South African nation is illustrated in a letter dated 13 March 1906: “I sympathize profoundly with the native races of South Africa whose land it was long before we came here to force a dispossession on them. And it ought to be the policy of all parties to do justice to the natives and to take all wise and prudent measures for their civilisation and improvement. But I don’t believe in politics for them. Perhaps at bottom I do not believe on politics at all as a means for the attainment of the highest ends; but certainly so far as the natives are concerned politics will to my mind only have an unsettling influence. I would therefore not give them the franchise. . . .When I consider the political future of the natives in S.A. I must say that I look into shadows and darkness; and then I feel inclined to shift the intolerable burden of solving that sphinx problem to the ampler shoulders and stronger brains of the future. Sufficient unto the day, etc. My feeling is that strong forces are at work which will transform the Africander [sic] attitude to the natives. . . .” Document 288, letter from Smuts to John X. Merriman, 13 March 1906: Jean van der Poel and W. K. Hancock, *Selections from the Smuts Papers. Volume II: June 1902 - May 1910* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 242 – 243. On the role of the Dutch Reformed Church in the creation of apartheid during this time, see Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid: The Struggle for National Independence of Afrikaaner Calvinism against British Imperialism* (Lewiston, ID: Edwin Mellen Press, 1981).
of the Christian powers for the purpose of promoting the international ethics of Jesus Christ. This outlook sharpened over time. At a lecture in Edinburgh during the Second World War Smuts still linked the prospects of an international “community of spiritual outlook and moral values” with the spread of the Reformed worldview. “While inclined by our religious traditions to question the freedom of the will as a metaphysical principle, we [the Calvinist nations] make amends by applying freedom with all the more energy as practical rule of life. We decline to submerge the individual in the State or the group, and we base our organisation of the State and society on individual freedom and the free initiative of the citizen.” He admired Scotland, and in turn the larger British Commonwealth, for having “overflowed their narrow national boundaries and reinforced human life and endeavour all over the world, most of all in undeveloped countries like those on the African continent.”

Smuts hoped that a common Protestantism could meld Briton and Boer together into a fresh political union, the spiritual transnationality of their faith a precursor to a shared worldly dominion. His dreams evaporated in 1899 when the British Empire opted for war over arbitration after a series of legal disputes with the Afrikaaner republics. Smuts and his fellow patriots immediately interpreted the British refusal to arbitrate as sign that much more was at stake in this war. The struggle between Briton and Boer was a metaphysical collision between two incompatible spiritual modes of national life. The Afrikaaners were an agricultural nation rooted in covenantal republicanism facing a rapacious, capitalist, world Empire with little regard for the Hague courts or the other

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316
niceties of international law. Smuts blamed the Tory government for abandoning the Protestant diplomatic tradition and he turned to the Liberal Party for aid. He cultivated alliances with much of the English left via mail and handfed the Liberal press inflammatory reports of British atrocities. He forged connections with leading Nonconformists, such as John Clifford and W. T. Stead, who led loud domestic opposition to the British Army’s conduct in South Africa. In return they turned Smuts the South African guerilla leader into Smuts the icon of besieged Liberalism abroad.

Despite his complete lack of military experience, “Colonel” Smuts – and I use that rank loosely – engineered a series of successful guerilla campaigns that, while not tipping the balance to his side, nevertheless kept him alive and on the run for the remainder of the war. The Afrikaaners lost the war decisively, particularly once the invaders employed a scorched earth policy against their agricultural enemy, but Smuts’ romantic reputation was nevertheless well won.


544 Smuts’ propaganda was usually suffused with the mixed pieties of Dutch Calvinism and English liberalism. For a typical example, see Document 169, letter from Smuts to W. T. Stead, 4 January 1902: van der Poel and Hancock, *Selections from the Smuts Papers. Volume I*, 464 – 495.

545 The ‘concentration camp’ was one unfortunate byproduct of the Boer War. Lord Kitchener, the British commander, removed women and children from the farms into ramshackle POW camps to force the guerillas to the peace table. Almost twenty-eight thousand of them died while in internment. Gregory Fremont-Barnes, *The Boer War 1899 - 1902* (London: Osprey Publishing, 2003), 79 – 88. As the wife of a government official, Inge Smuts was spared relocation when British troops occupied Johannesburg. Her house arrest however was still not easy. Smuts’ only child Jacobus died at the age of fourteen months while his father was in the field. This event hardened Smuts’ resolve to turn the tragedies of the Boer War into sacrifices that advanced God’s providential plan for a peaceful reconciliation of the Dutch and British nations. Hancock, *Smuts*, 129 – 131.
Smuts returned to the political arena at war’s end as a popular spokesman of the nationalist cause with a burning desire to rewrite the oppressive terms of peace that he and his fellow Boer generals had signed at their surrender in 1902. The cornerstone of the Treaty of Vereeniging was unconditional British sovereignty over all of South Africa. Yet it also contained several concessions for the defeated such as the promise of eventual self-government for the conquered Dutch, a postponement of discussion about the black franchise, the permission to use the Dutch language in schools and the courts, and a (relatively) generous demand for financial reparations. Smuts clung to these clauses like an acrophobic clutches his car door going over a mountain pass. In a letter to his opposite figure on the British side, Lord Milner, Smuts “cherish[ed] the hope” that each of them would come to “appreciate the contribution of each to the formation of that happier South Africa which is surely coming.”

The retired “Colonel” adopted the cause of “racial conciliation” with the same metaphysical passion he had once embraced war. Smuts became convinced that the military defeat of the Afrikaaner nation was a necessary prelude to a larger providential purpose that would reveal itself in time. Much like Woodrow Wilson, Smuts’ formative political years took place during a national resurrection after a traumatic military occupation. Both men reacted in similar ways, using the sacrificial logic of Protestant eschatology to reinterpret their nation’s losses as signs of a heavenly mandate to reconcile white Protestants at home and abroad.

Smuts thus saw the Boer War within an eschatological framework wherein God was drawing all of the nations into the Kingdom of Christ. When the Boers erected a monument at Bloemfontein for the Boer women and children who died in the British internment camps, Smuts cast this message to the nation at large on 16 December 1913: “God has not willed that one should exterminate the other. After all that misery and that bloodshed of the past, both races are still here. May we not, must we not believe that is His will that we try to walk another road – the road of love and peace? We have suffered much and many among you will be inclined to ask ‘why?’, ‘to what purpose?’ We can only answer: God’s will be done.” Smuts chose that particular date, the Day of the Covenant, the national holiday when Afrikaners remembered the birth of their nation (see Chapter 1), so that he could present their “history of sacrifice and endurance” as the blood of a new covenant for a united South African nation. “These lives were surely not sacrificed in vain; the nation was purged in affliction. . . .I myself do not doubt that South Africa has found her soul in her history of suffering in those dark years, and that soul will save her in the dark years that await us or our children.”

Smuts’ optimism scored well at the polls. He rose through the ranks of the Het Volk party (the Afrikaaner equivalent of a National-Liberal Party) to become the Colonial Secretary in charge of handling South Africa’s relations with the metropole. He rejoiced at the fall of Balfour and the Conservative Party in 1905. Smuts set sail as soon as he heard the news to put pressure on Sir Edward Grey and the Liberals to respect the British promise of eventual South African independence. While in London he gathered

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friendships with such figures as J. Allen Baker and W. H. Dickinson, W. T. Stead and Kate Courtney, Gilbert Murray and James Bryce. He became especially enamored of the Quaker community, with whom he began spending almost all of his free time. All of these relationships resurfaced during Smuts’ sojourn in London during the Great War. These new connections reassured Smuts that the liberal and ecumenical Britain he had so admired during his college years still existed.

In 1906 – 1907 Britain restored home government to the Afrikaners. Negotiations culminated in 1909 when Parliament and King Edward VII ratified South Africa’s new constitution, a document that Smuts himself crafted to balance Anglo and Boer concerns while sidestepping potential dealbreakers such as apartheid. (Sadly Smuts was more than willing to offer up the rights of Africans and Indians in South Africa in exchange for the reconciliation of the two white nations.) Such a quick and decisive breakthrough convinced him of the fundamental goodness of British Liberalism that had quenched his powerful thirst for Protestant reconciliation of South Africa.548 “When the darkness of the night has passed at last and the light of a new national consciousness dawns,” Smuts declared at the National Convention in 1910, “the scales fall from men’s eyes, they perceive that they have been led, that they have been borne forward in the darkness by deeper forces that they ever apprehended to a larger goal than they ever conceived, . . . the birth of the soul of a new nation.”549 His faith that the Boer War had been a


549 Hancock, Smuts, 264 – 265.
providentially ordained sacrifice for the redemption of the Protestant cause in South
Africa had been rewarded.

For the next thirty years Smuts’ internationalism and Smuts’ ecumenism were
knotted together with his fierce loyalty to the British Empire. In fact, as we shall soon 
see, Smuts’ fevered advocacy of the League of Nations was a logical development of his 
experiences in London from 1906 to 1909. His League was an extension of the 
commonwealth system over the whole of Europe with the ultimate aim of, once again, the 
spiritual reconciliation of its Christian nations and their incorporation into a larger 
political matrix. To continue this analogy: Smuts interpreted the Great War as a moment 
in providential history that was analogous to the Boer War. “The Cross remains the 
everlasting symbol of our line of march. . . .Perhaps Christendom is to be once more 
purged and reshaped in the fierce mould of the great Lover.”550 His previous experiences 
interposed a sacrificial narrative onto the horrifying news of August 1914.

In 1914 Smuts’ party, Het Volk, avidly declared war on the Central Powers 
despite the fact that many Afrikaners sided with the Germans. An anti-British sentiment 
that had been tethered by the desire for independence fell over the Boer nation and almost 
sunk Het Volk at the polls. Smuts survived, but barely. He would have to face 
accusations that he had sold out to the British (and the League) for the remainder of his 
career.

Smuts returned to the field, as a general this time, first crushing a half-hearted 
coup by German sympathizers at home before conquering two German colonies in Africa

550 Document 598, letter from Smuts to A. B. Gillett, 27 September 1914: Van der Poel and Hancock, 
in two quick campaigns. In 1917 – 1918 Lloyd George convened an Imperial War Cabinet with representatives from throughout the entire Commonwealth. Smuts represented South Africa on that Cabinet for that entire time. (At Cabinet meetings he literally sat across from Lord Milner, his opposite number at the peace talks that ended the Boer War.) Smuts’ duties varied. Lloyd George had respect for his abilities but disdain for his personality, so Smuts enjoyed a number of ad hoc assignments that typically involved much travel, assignments such as organization of the Royal Air Force, diplomatic missions to Ireland and Egypt, secret negotiations with Austria-Hungary about a separate peace, and conferences about the future shape of the British Commonwealth. Yet the accomplishment Smuts was most proud of was his contribution to the League Covenant.

Smuts arrived in London in January 1917 without having expressed one iota of interest in the League of Nations movement. Yet in just a short time, just a few months really, he was in “full sympathy with their primary aim.” How can we explain this rapid about-face? Smuts’ previous exposure to the Bryce Group had come solely through members of the UDC, who regularly exposed him to a steady stream of literature about the prospect for a pacificist world state and/or global democratic reform. Yet the general could never stomach the UDC brand of internationalism, not only because he himself held to the just war tradition, but because Smuts believed that this particular war with Germany was itself just. “The cause I fought for fifteen years ago is the cause

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553 Hancock, Smuts, 462 – 464.
which I am fighting for today. I fought for freedom and for liberty then, and I am fighting for them today.” \(^554\) Smuts was not ignorant of the League of Nations movement before 1917, but he does seem to have mistakenly identified it with the UDC’s demands for a secular denationalized world state.

It appears that Smuts first encountered the more moderate designs of the League of Nations Society only after his arrival in London. Its respect for international law and national sovereignty were more in harmony with his political liberalism. Plus the religious sensibilities of the LNS’ leaderships matched his own feelings about the war. Smuts left Africa imbued with certain instinctual concepts about Providence and war, natural law and reconciliation, suffering and sacrifice, concepts commonly taught in millions of Protestant churches each week. The LNS appealed to Smuts’ political instincts and offered him a concrete plan to capitalize on the chance for international reconciliation that the war offered. The LNS promised to fulfill the redemptive narrative for the war effort. In this sense Smuts was a typical convert to the LNS.

The ecumenical community surrounded Smuts soon after his arrival. He cluttered his social calendar with repeated appointments with W. H. Dickinson, J. Allen Baker, John Clifford, James Bryce and Kate Courtney. He attended meetings at Nonconformist temples and became a regular lunch guest of the Archbishop at Lambeth Palace. \(^555\) It is telling that although Smuts never attended meetings of the UDC and would not formally

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join the LNS, he nevertheless became a vice-president of the Methodist Brotherhood Movement and a long-distance sponsor of a South African chapter of the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches.\footnote{Smuts was not an official member of the League of Nations Society because, as he explained in a letter to W. H. Dickinson after being offered a vice-presidency in the LNS, he thought it unseemly for a member of the Cabinet to “formally associated” with any organization with a “political complexion.” Document 753, letter from Smuts to W. H. Dickinson, 18 May 1917: van der Poel and Hancock, \textit{Selections from the Smuts Papers. Volume iii: June 1910 - November 1918}, 518.}

Smuts also reignited his torch for the Society of Friends while in London. The conqueror of German Africa typically passed his weekends in an arcadian retreat just outside the city limits where his Quaker friends offered him “a little circle of peace and blessedness inside the raging storm.”\footnote{Hancock, \textit{Smuts}, 555.} Smuts’ correspondence, previously marked by the Calvinist emphasis on reason and providentialism, began to show the influence of Quaker spirituality by the summer of 1917. In his letters to Margaret Gillett he described a series of nighttime visitations by the Holy Spirit when “Personality blends with the Whole, the small whole with the great whole, with a sense of healing and pacifying and blessedness which is too great for words.”\footnote{Document 791, letter from Smuts to Clark, 3 November 1917: Ibid., 568.} These experiences of a “higher Mysticism” reassured Smuts’ “firm faith in the Friendly Universe” in which “the Holy Spirit, the Holistic Spirit, will gradually transform and cleanse and transfigure all individual lives and souls and redeem them from their littleness and exclusiveness inherent in the merely individual.”\footnote{Document 784, letter from Smuts to Clark, 2 October 1917: Ibid., 553 – 554.}

Smuts did much of his work on the League of Nations for the government while on these weekend retreats. In April he authored the first state memorandum on the
League to the British Cabinet there. In May he presented the government’s new direction to Parliament. A week later he stood alongside Lord Bryce, Hugh Cecil and Archbishop Davidson as one of the plenary speakers at the LNS’ first public rally at Central Hall, Westminster. Finally, towards the end of 1917, Smuts wrote a short piece titled *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion* on one of these weekends that became one of the most influential forerunners of the League Covenant.

Smuts’ analysis started with the observation that the collapse of the Central Powers would create an insatiable power vacuum in the heart of Christendom. Originally he believed that Germany and Austria-Hungary might be preserved in a regenerated state. He assured the Austrians during his secret negotiations with them in 1917 that the British did not agree with Wilson’s calls for the deconstruction of Europe, preferring instead to remake Austria into a “really liberal Empire” that would “give the greatest freedom and autonomy to her subject nationalities.” Or, to use Smuts’ own words, Austria would “become a League of Free Nations” that would “become for Central Europe very much what the British Empire had become in the rest of the world.” Yet by the end of the war Smuts’ idealism had hardened into a determination to liquidate the German and Austrian Empires. He believed they had forfeited their moral right to govern since in the course of the war they had strayed from the “bedrock of Christian principles” while, in light of the Armenian genocide, the “tyranny” of the Turks over the “Christian nations must cease for ever.”

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what might happen if something like the League did not arise to take the place of the Central Powers.

Smuts therefore conceived of the League of Nations as a “successor” to the old regime. “My broad contention is that the smaller, embryonic, unsuccessful leagues of nations have been swept away,” Smuts wrote in late 1918, “not to leave an empty house for national individualism or anarchy, but for a larger and better league of nations. Europe is being liquidated, and the league of nations must be the heir to this great estate.” The emerging states of Central and Eastern Europe and the Near East were too financially “destitute” and too “incapable or deficient in power of self-government” to be left to their own devices. Yet they did not deserve to become the prey of the larger powers. As a political institution the League of Nations struck the right balance between the conflicting needs for national self-development and international cooperation. It offered freedom for the subject peoples of Europe while tying that freedom into a responsible community of law and order. Smuts wanted the League to “occupy the great position which has been rendered vacant by the destruction of so many of the old European empires and the passing away of the old European order.”

One of Smuts’ sharpest contributions was his proposal about how to dispose of Germany’s colonies. He proposed a mandate system, whereby the Allied powers acted as “trustees” on behalf of the international community under the supervision of the League Council. The League would become the “reversionary” of these underdeveloped nations,

563 Ibid., 8.
564 Ibid., 4.
a multinational Leviathan “clothed with the right of ultimate disposal in accordance with certain fundamental principles.”

Smuts’ League was in essence an extension of the British Commonwealth, which he regarded as the Christianization of the pagan concept of empire. In a speech to a joint session of Parliament on 15 May 1917, Smuts explained his position. Previous imperiums had all been “founded on the idea of assimilation, of trying to force different human material through one mould so as to form one nation.” Each in its turn had sinned in the quest for “denationalization” and the perverse desire for cultural, religious and linguistic control of other nations. Britain, by contrast, respected the “liberty and freedom and self-development” of its member bodies. The state respected religious freedom, the progress of civilization and the distinctiveness of each people, “even,” Smuts added, “those nations who fought against you, like my own.” The Commonwealth was held together neither by force nor by an enforced homogeneity, but by a common adhesion to a set of universal, moral principles.

Talk about the League of Nations – you are the only league of nations that has ever existed; and if the line that I am sketching here is correct you are going to be an even greater league of nations in the future. . . .In the welter of confusion which is going to follow the war in Europe you will stand as the one system where liberty to work successfully has kept together divers communities. You may become the real nucleus for the world-government for the future.

The Commonwealth was an appropriate model for a regenerated world order.

Yet Smuts was forced to rescind this judgment after the Paris Peace Conference.

Smuts himself sat on several committees as the official delegate of South Africa,

565 Ibid, 9-10.
including the League of Nations Commission, where he witnessed Lloyd George and Balfour use his precious League as little more than bait for Wilson. Smuts wanted the League to “be put into the very forefront of the programme of the peace, and be made the point of departure for the solution of many of the grave problems with which it will be confronted.” Yet the final terms of the treaty so disappointed him that he strongly considered not signing it as an act of passive resistance. He agreed to sign only one week before the deadline simply because he feared the Germans would again take up arms.

Smuts’ only consolation was the Covenant. He hoped the League might be the Trojan Horse lodged within the larger treaty that would undo the vengeful spirit of the Allies in time. “The promise of the new life, the victory of the great human ideals, for which the peoples have shed their blood and their treasure without stint, the fulfillment of their aspirations towards a new international order, and a fairer, better world, are not written in this Treaty,” Smuts declared to the press on 28 June 1919. “The real work of making peace will only begin after this Treaty has been signed. . . .” True peace required the spiritual eradication of the “destructive passions” that had overwhelmed Europe. For just as the reconciliation of the races in South Africa did not depend upon politics but instead on the regeneration of the nation’s soul, so a Christian peace could never be the product of a legal treaty.

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Not in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, but in spirit and in truth,’ as the Great Master said, must the foundations of the new order be laid.\textsuperscript{568} A new heart must be given, not only to our enemies, but also to us; a contrite spirit for the woes which have overwhelmed the world; a spirit of pity, mercy, and forgiveness for the sins and wrongs which have suffered. . .can alone heal the wounds which have been inflicted on the body of Christendom.

The League of Nations was now but a mere “form” that still required a “quickening life.”\textsuperscript{569}

“Yes, you are right, I am an idealist,” Smuts reflected on the trip back to South Africa to one of his closest Quaker friends. “And ever and always I hear those precious words, ‘Ye believe in God, believe also in me’ whom He has sent. Let us not in our devotion to the ideal despise the human. God is great, so is little man whose puny efforts are necessary to the great creative effort of progress. . .All I could hope to achieve was to sow the seed of the ideal into that fat earth of material victory, knowing that sprouting-time would come, knowing that for complete achievement and victory not only my sowing, but somebody else’s watering, and God’s growth most of all would be necessary.”\textsuperscript{570}

\textsuperscript{568} Smuts is referencing John 4: 21 – 24 in this sentence. In this passage Jesus is informing a Samaritan woman that the distinct religious practices and holy sites of the Samaritans and the Jews will not matter in the Kingdom of God. “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship... .But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God Is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” In the Calvinist tradition, this passage was often cited to rebuke hypocritical, formalistic and superstitious modes of religion more concerned with outward appearances than inner regeneration.


4.7 Conclusion

As 1917 drew to a close, the pressure to adopt the League of Nations as one of the central war aims of the British government finally won over David Lloyd George. It had built up all year as the League movement pressed in from all angles. Under Henderson’s guidance the Labour Party placed the League at the center of its foreign policy platform. In the House of Lords Bryce petitioned the government to create a committee of experts from Britain and the United States to engineer a draft constitution of a League while W. H. Dickinson followed suit in the House of Commons. The LNS generated a letter-writing campaign that, once again, relied heavily on the churches. The American entry into the war had transformed Wilson into a true believer and, finally, Cecil and Smuts brought pressure to bear on Lloyd George from within the Cabinet.

On 3 January 1918 the Prime Minister caved in. He appointed a committee to serve under Lord Walter Phillimore, an elderly ecclesiastical jurist associated with the reforms of Randall Davidson, to enquire if it would be feasible to “establish by means of a League of Nations, or other device, some alternative to war as a means of settling international disputes.” The Committee resurrected the Bryce Proposals, though it also took into consideration the recent contributions of Cecil and Smuts. Its final document, the so-called Phillimore Report, became in essence the British proposal that Cecil and Smuts took to Paris in 1919. Almost every single one of its eighteen articles appear in some form in the final Covenant.

Soon afterwards Cecil joyously announced to

Parliament on behalf of the Foreign Office that the British Empire would place its support behind the establishment of a League of Nations after the war.\textsuperscript{573}

The effectiveness of the League movement in Britain was a prototype for success in the other nations. In just a few days after the disrupted World Alliance conference in 1914, Baker and Dickinson gathered together an influential group of internationalists to draft a constitution for a potential League of Peace. After many pacifists and socialists dropped out due to ideological disagreements with the Bryce Plan, the LNS replenished its numbers by drawing on the connections of the British Council and other related Protestant organizations. By the end of 1915 the League was the cornerstone of the churches’ agenda for a durable peace settlement.

The LNS not only secured a mass audience through the churches. It also gained political access by appealing to the moral consciences of government leaders from all three major parties. Lord Robert Cecil, Arthur Henderson and Jan Christiaan Smuts – the aristocratic heir of Toryism, now gone errant; the Methodist evangelist who rose to the top of the Labour hierarchy; the Boer general who felt the most at home in the company of Quakers – these three had little in common: that is, except for their common faith. From their entrenched positions within the Cabinet they led the British Empire towards Geneva.

CHAPTER 5:
PROTESTANT INTERNATIONALISM
AND THE LEAGUE MOVEMENT
IN THE UNITED STATES, 1914 – 1918

“We feel very anxious about the attitude of the churches in this country and in America inasmuch as it seems likely that we shall have to depend for the institution of the League of Nations or anything of that character more upon the influence of the religious bodies than upon the efforts of politicians.”

-letter from Frederick Lynch to W. H. Dickinson, 6 December 1918

5.1 Introduction: The ‘Declaration of Interdependence’: Philadelphia, 1915
In the summer of 1915 one hundred and twenty Americans sat down on their antique handmade chairs in Philadelphia to “devise and to create a working union of sovereign nations to establish peace among themselves and to guarantee it by all known and available sanctions at their command.” The event was saturated from beginning to end in patriotic symbols from the American Revolution. Independence Hall, where the founding fathers signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776 was where, eleven years later, they hammered out the wording of the U. S. Constitution through months of long

debate. The proceedings on this day in 1915 were a little more streamlined, the details already having been arranged by the executive committee of the League to Enforce Peace (LEP). At day’s end the delegates each lined up and signed the so-called “Declaration of Interdependence,” a short document containing a list of specific proposals for an international constitution that would bind the Western powers into one League of Nations.

For much of the day the action moved rapidly along, pausing only for photo ops or for the distribution of printed copies of the day’s speeches. The beautiful summer morning was already becoming quite humid when the meeting opened at 10:30 A.M. Many delegates had to fight sleep as a lavish banquet at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel had run well into the night hours. William Howard Taft chaired the proceedings, a responsibility that primarily consisted of shepherding orators to and from the podium. The majority of those present were Republican politicians, churchmen or university presidents, though the most attention went to celebrities such as former President Taft, the novelist Winston Churchill, Alexander Graham Bell and the sculptor Gutzon Borglum, who had just begun work on his masterpiece in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The program and the resolutions had already been decided in advance, so the event bypassed the exhaustive (and exhausting) detail-oriented debates over policy that had sunk so many other peace assemblies.

The League to Enforce Peace, or LEP for short, was the first secular organization in the U.S. to publicly agitate for an international government. Throughout its brief life span – the LEP disbanded in 1922 – its members claimed their proposals simply aped the achievements of the American founding fathers who had wielded thirteen unruly colonies
into a united league of nations through three key achievements: a multinational covenant that could serve as the establishment of a common, codified law to govern their relations with one another, the establishment of a supranational court to adjudicate conflict between its member states, and the monopolization of the war power at the federal level. A modern League of Nations needed at least these three skeletal structures in order to keep the West at peace. The League would thus be a watered-down extension of the American federal system across the Atlantic Ocean.

The gathering at Independence Hall was just the first sally of a coordinated public relations campaign that was intimately interwoven with the American ecumenical movement. Hamilton Holt, the newspaper editor who was one of the founders of the Church Peace Union (CPU) and the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches, handcrafted most of the public ritual on display that afternoon in Philadelphia. It was Holt who wrote the Declaration of Interdependence and it was Holt and Frederick Lynch, the general secretary of the CPU and the American Council of the World Alliance, who assembled the nucleus of the LEP after their frantic retreat from Konstanz in 1914. The signing of the Declaration of Interdependence thus represented the culmination of ten months of work by Protestant internationalists to create a secular organ that could propel the League movement to the next level.

Holt himself took the podium and presented the League of Nations as the historical “destiny” of the United States. The U. S. Constitution, he further argued, was the perfect model for an international government because it had effectively abolished the “separate armed forces” of the colonies and yet still guaranteed “home rule and local autonomy” in its internal affairs. “The United States itself is the greatest League of Peace
known to history,” Holt concluded, because it had elevated the rule of law between the states through the erection of a central judicial authority, the Supreme Court, and the military monopolization of force by an executive authority. The key to the future harmony of the Western world lay in the erection of a similar federal court and federal armed force once the Great War had taught the European nations the absurdity of the anarchic state system.575

Only one disturbance interrupted Holt’s plans. Victor L. Berger, who in 1910 became the first Socialist elected to Congress, crashed the proceedings and introduced resolutions from the floor that denounced the use of “militarism to fight militarism.” He and other pacifists were outraged by the proposal to unite the world’s “economic and military forces” against outlaw nations. Yet Berger’s resolutions sank quickly and soundly by a vote of the house.576 The convention even rejected a following motion to rename the proposed body the “League to Establish and Maintain Peace.” by a margin of sixty to forty-nine that would have softened the militaristic tenor of the organization a motion. Instead the delegates chose to emphasize it: Holt’s “League of Peace” was renamed the “League to Enforce Peace” to the applause of the crowd.

Much as in Britain, the League movement in the United States separated itself from the peace plans associated with socialism or absolute pacifism. The LEP defined itself by what it was not as much as by what it was for. It assiduously avoided ties to


576 The New York Times, “League to Enforce Peace is Launched,” 18 June 1915, 4. Victor Berger was sentenced in 1918 under the Espionage Act to twenty years in federal prison, a fact that did not prevent his re-winning election to the House of Representatives in his hometown of Milwaukee. Berger was pardoned in 1921 and then took his Congressional seat from 1922 to 1928, where he continued to argue for revision of the Versailles Treaty and the League Covenant without any success. Sally M. Miller, Victor Berger and the Promise of Constructive Socialism, 1910 - 1920 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973).
radical organizations such as the American Union Against Militarism or the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Since the delegates expected that the average American might instinctively lump together internationalism and pacifism, in their statements to the press they tried to separate the two ideas. As one delegate put it, people should not mistake their proposal as “merely an aspiration for peace” since “we mean by this League something more.” In 1915 opponents of the League did not hail from the right, but from the pacifist left. A sustained and organized objection to the League from the rightwing of the Republican Party would not coalesce until after the conclusion of the war.

In fact a prominent Republican, ex-President William Howard Taft, delivered the most celebrated speech of the afternoon. He concentrated his address on the “primary and fundamental principle” of the League of Nations: that is, a pact to bring overwhelming military force to bear on violators of the international order. “...If any member of the League refuses to use [its] machinery, and attacks another member in breach of his League obligation, all members of the League agree to defend the members attacked by force.” The LEP was not for “peace-at-any-price men.” Nor was it for “militarists or jingos.” It was interested in the institutionalization of the just war theory.

577 Thus, for example, the LEP did not include pacifists like Jane Addams, Eugene V. Debs, Lillian Wald, Norman Thomas, David Starr Jordan or Oswald Garrison Villard. From my brief survey of the minutes of the American Union Against Militarism, it appears this feeling of antipathy was mutual. In 1919–1920 the leadership of this organization campaigned against Senate ratification of the Versailles Treaty because of their opposition to the League Covenant. See the documents in SCPC, DG 004 (Records of the American Union Against Militarism), 1:5, 4:3, 4:4.

578 This is according to the testimony of William H. Sweet. SCPC, CDG-A: Records of the League to Enforce Peace, Box 1: League to Enforce Peace, American Branch: Independence Hall Conference Held in the City of Philadelphia, Bunker Hill Day (June 17th), 1915, Together with the Speeches Made at a Public Banquet in the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel on the Preceding Evening, 62.
“We are trying to follow a middle and practical path.” Taft understood that American sponsorship of such a league would mean that the U. S. would “depart from the policy of isolation,” but he insisted that the youthful great power had to learn to “bear [its] share of the responsibilities of the moment.”

In his address Taft also outlined the LEP proposal for an international constitutional federation. The League of Nations would compel its member states to put their disputes through a two-step process before resorting to war. All “justiciable” issues (defined elsewhere by Taft as: “all issues that clearly fall under international law or treaty”) must be submitted to an “impartial court” composed of qualified jurists of different nationalities. The judgments of this court would be binding. A refusal to heed the court’s authority would trigger a declaration of war on behalf of all of the other powers. Secondly, any non-justiciable conflict would be referred to a “Commission of Conciliation,” a smaller body made up of representatives from each of the Great Powers with the authority “to investigate, confer, hear argument and recommend a compromise.” The authority of this commission would not be binding, but Taft hoped

579 Ibid., 15 – 16.
580 Ibid., 19.
581 Ibid., 17. Like Holt, William Howard Taft regarded the U. S. Supreme Court as the model for an international court. He believed that the Court’s role as the finalarbiter of disputes was directly linked to its immunity from the democratic process and its ability to bring impartial rationality to bear on the matters at hand. Taft shared the common belief among internationalists, as discussed in Chapter 1, that peace required the moral, rational elite maintaining the upper hand against the selfish passions of the masses and the business class. Holt agreed: “An international policy by might enrones reason.” For more on Taft’s judicial philosophy as it applied to both domestic and foreign affairs, see David H. Burton, William Howard Taft: Confident Peacemaker (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph’s University Press, 2004).
582 Along with the majority of the leaders of the LEP, Taft dismissed those who would have equal representation for all states, since the Great Powers had to provide the bulk of the military power to enforce peace. The “smaller powers” should just “be glad to come and enjoy the protection that the League will afford against the unjust aggression of the strong against the weak.” SCPC, CDG-A: Records of the League to Enforce Peace, Box 1: League to Enforce Peace, American Branch: Independence Hall, 19.
that the very act of gathering information and proposing possible solutions would in itself
“form a material inducement to peace.” This lengthy process, that might take months, if
not years, to perform properly, “will cool the heat of passion and will give the men of
peace in each nation time to still the jingoes.”

Here too the contours of the League movement roughly conformed to the pre-
existing borders of the ecumenical movement. The proposals of the LEP were eerily
similar to the Bryce Proposals of the British League of Nations Society. This was not a
coincidence. For Protestant internationalists associated with the World Alliance for
International Friendship played central roles in the erection of both organizations. the
bulk of support for the LEP came from the usual suspects such as the Church Peace
Union (CPU), the YMCA and YWCA and the Federal Council of Churches (FCCCA).
The rank and file of the LEP thus mirrored that of its British counterpart as well. As in
Britain the American League movement moved effortlessly in and out of ecclesiastical
circles and often fused together religious and secular concepts in its pursuit of peace on
earth and goodwill towards man.

Ecclesiastical connections were also important in eliciting support from political
figures. The LEP not only revived the tested alliance between the FCCCA and William
Howard Taft, but it mobilized the Lake Mohonk circle and the New York Peace Society
around the League cause for the first time. Yet because Republicans still dominated all
of these old internationalist institutions and because they did not occupy the White
House, the ecumenical movement had to construct new inroads into the Wilson
administration.

583 Ibid., 16 – 17.
Woodrow Wilson, who was President of the United States from 1913 to 1921, has a firm reputation among historians for his belief in the League of Nations and for his strong religious faith. Thus it might seem as if his cooperation with the Federal Council of Churches would be a matter of course. Yet that was far from the case. Wilson remained estranged from the FCCCA and the LEP for much of his first term in office for both partisan and personal reasons. It was not until his second presidential campaign in 1916 that Wilson and the ecumenical movement began to move closer together and, perhaps not coincidentally, that Wilson made his first tenuous endorsements of the idea of an international government. Still, even at the height of cooperation between the League movement and the Wilson administration from 1917 to 1919, relations between the mainline churches and the Southern Presbyterian President remained awkward at best.

One of the goals of this chapter is its ability to move the discussion of the League’s origins beyond the figure of Woodrow Wilson. While I don’t want to minimize his decisive contributions to the League cause, I do want to emphasize that they occurred only after a larger, preexisting movement had already taken hold in the American political landscape. Hamilton Holt published his plan for a League of Nations on 28 September 1914. The FCCCA began publishing its propaganda in October 1914. The League to Enforce Peace went public on 17 June 1915. Woodrow Wilson however did not utter one encouraging word about the League of Nations until 27 May 1916. Woodrow Wilson was a relative latecomer to the idea and, as I argue below, might never have endorsed the League at all if not for the subtle, and often indirect, influence of certain Protestant internationalists on the Wilson administration.
After the United States’ entry into the war in 1917 Woodrow Wilson emerged as an unparalleled champion of the League of Nations. At the Paris Peace Conference no other statesman possessed as much influence on the final shape of the League Covenant. I therefore do not want to downplay Wilson’s contributions. Yet I do want to draw a clear distinction between Wilson and the broader movement because the relationship between the President and the League societies was often tense. Besides, it is important for historians to move beyond a Wilson-centric account of the League’s origins. Such scholarship compresses a complex international movement to conform to the straitjacket of biography. His presidency culminated in a dramatic standoff with his political enemies that seems more fit for Greek tragedy than actual history: the moral idealist crusading against reactionary demagogues, the hubristic commander unwilling to compromise his principles, and then, the coup de grace, the fatal strokes that physically felled the warrior at the height of his campaign. It is a powerfully compelling story, but nonetheless it should not distract historians from the broader narrative of the League movement.\footnote{A new scholarship of the League’s origins, one with an international focus, will also correct the nationalism that is part and parcel of the Wilson-centric viewpoint. This emphasis is particularly important for those American historians who assume that the League of Nations was a completely American project that in effect failed when the U. S. did not ratify the Versailles Treaty. In other words, this line of argument posits Wilson as the Alpha and Omega of the League, its beginning and its end. This brand of historical explanation arose in the 1940s and 1950s when many American historians were trying to warn their nation not to revert back to isolationism after the Second World War. Their aims were perhaps admirable, but in doing so they ignored two key facts: first of all, that the popular and political resources of the League extended well beyond the United States and, secondly, that the League achieved a series of creditable successes for almost twenty years after Wilson’s defeat, even (gasp!) without any American involvement.}

In many ways the American League movement followed its British counterpart. Yet in one crucial way it did not. In Britain (and elsewhere) Protestant internationalism succeeded in capturing the majority of churches. This achievement was more possible in Europe, which possessed a strong tradition of establishment, than in the United States,
where competitive denominations multiplied at an astonishing rate. Because American Protestantism lacked a coherent institutional center and a clear set of intellectual and ecclesiastical leaders, it has always proven more resistant to a hegemonic political cause or sentiment than the churches of Europe. This has been both a blessing and a curse.

The Federal Council of Churches began in 1908 as a loose, experimental federation that would allow the denominations to act in a concerted fashion on the political scene. It eschewed doctrinal orthodoxy for a political orthodoxy that quickly became centered around the adoption of a Christian internationalism. After 1914 the League of Nations itself became the litmus test for an ecumenical Protestant associated with the FCCCA.

Still in 1914 a substantial number of Protestants still lay outside the reach of the Federal Council of Churches, particularly in the Western and Southern regions of the country and particularly in denominations of a pentecostal or dispensationalist nature. In the United States entire regions of the country – the South and the West – and entire groups of Protestants – be they dispensationalists or sectarians, Unitarians or Universalists, Christian Scientists or Mormons, Pentecostals or fundamentalists – existed as pockets of resistance to the Federal Council of Churches and its League campaign. The existence of these pockets parties created a unique environment where organized Protestant opposition to the League of Nations could coalesce.

This then is the key distinctive of the American case. Only in the United States did there arise an organized counter-reaction to the new political orthodoxy of the ecumenical movement. In Europe not every Protestant became a supporter of the League, but such individuals remained a small and ineffective minority within their larger
churches. In the end these churches remained aggressively immune to both the LEP and to Wilsonianism in what would be a preview of the mainline-fundamentalist schisms of the next decade.

5.2 The Federal Council of Churches and the Beginnings of the League to Enforce Peace, 1914 – 1915

The League to Enforce Peace first took shape at a meeting of the trustees of the Church Peace Union on 27 October 1914. This was the first trustee meeting since they had trundled back into New York City still a bit dazed from the events of the Konstanz Church Conference. Not everyone was present that evening, but there was enough of the core present to constitute a quorum, including Hamilton Holt, Charles Macfarland, Frederick Lynch, Edwin and Lucia Ames Mead, W. P. Merrill and John Mott. J. Allen Baker was also there that evening while en route to his native Ontario to represent the interests of the newly formed Bryce Group.

By this time the consensus of the group had already settled on the establishment of a League of Peace, even though this idea had virtually no foothold in any of the other internationalist and pacifist organizations in America. Hamilton Holt had already

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585 The entire board was not present that evening. None of the token Catholic or Jewish trustees that Carnegie had insisted be included were there, but that had become the rule of thumb by 1914. It may have been that they were not even informed since the meeting took place informally after dinner in the parlor room of George Foster Peabody's house. By 1915 the CPU excluded Catholics, perhaps unintentionally, from their campaign, for it never distributed any funds to Catholic organizations, never commissioned Catholic authors for its projects, and frequently made its decisions without consulting Catholic opinion. Besides, as James Cardinal Gibbons – a sympathetic Catholic leader – put it, certain words and phrases in its League literature “prejudice [Catholics] against the entire material.” FHL, RG 5/069 (Hull papers), 3:8: letter from A. W. Klieforth to Hull, 12 November 1915.

586 EZAB 51/E-II-b-3: letter from Dickinson to Lynch, 15 September 1914; EZAB 51/E-II-b-3: letter from Dickinson to Lynch, 7 October 1914.
published a League proposal in *The Independent*, a proposal that was, not coincidentally, very similar to the initial drafts of the Bryce Proposals.\(^{587}\) The program was by and large already set. The conversation that evening thus centered on how the CPU could use Carnegie’s endowment to promote that program now that the long-dreaded war had finally come.\(^{588}\)

The trustees voted to entrust Holt and Lynch with the task of attracting likeminded individuals from the Lake Mohonk circle with the aim of establishing a secular League of Nations society. The two men lost no time. The following night Holt successfully brought forward a motion at a meeting of the New York Peace Society to add its weight to this endeavor. Next they recruited sympathetic scholars and practitioners of international law from around the New England area.\(^{589}\) One of their

\(^{587}\) Holt drafted his proposal during his return from Europe. In it he emphasized that its main purpose would be to harness the states’ military power into one unified and irresistible force dedicated to the “mutual respect and guarantee” of all. Membership would be open to all, but conditional upon respect for international law. Unethical states could either withdraw or “be expelled by the unanimous vote of the others. EZAB 52/F-I-d-2: Hamilton Holt, "The Way to Disarm: A Practical Proposal," *The Independent* LXXIX (28 September 1914).

Its resemblance to the first drafts of the Bryce Proposal cannot have been a coincidence. Although no current genealogies of the Covenant appear to be aware of this fact, a confidential draft for a “League of Peace” circulated through each of the national councils of the World Alliance by early December 1914. This draft is alluded to in several memoirs, but the specifics of its content are not mentioned. Nevertheless I believe I have found two copies of it in the personal archives of William Hull and W. H. Dickinson. Neither document is dated, a fact that keeps me from positively identifying it, but Hull did file his copy in a file labeled “1914.” EZAB 51/E-II-e-1: “League of Peace”; FHL, RG 5/069 (Hull Papers), 3:1: “Confidential: League of Peace.”

\(^{588}\) EZAB 51/E-II-b-3: “Record of the First Meeting of the American Group of the Continuation Committee of the World Alliance of the Churches for Promoting International Friendship.” This document can also be found in: FHL, RG 5/069 (Hull papers), 48:6.

most important contacts in terms of the future of the LEP was Theodore Marburg, a former ambassador under the Roosevelt and Taft administrations.\(^{590}\) Marburg helped Holt and Lynch reach internationalists who had no past with the CPU or the FCCCA. Finally all three men hosted a series of banquets at the Astor Hotel in New York City at which Holt’s proposal was debated in preparation for the Philadelphia launch of the LEP.\(^{591}\)

The League to Enforce Peace was thus a stepchild of the CPU and the FCCCA, which showed in the makeup of its first “executive board.” It included prominent evangelical authors and editors of Protestant newspapers (e.g., Lyman Abbott, Washington Gladden, Winston Churchill, Henry Van Dyke, Hamilton Holt), missions leaders (e.g., Arthur Judson Brown, Robert E. Speer, John Mott, Francis E. Clark), presidents and professors from Christian colleges (e.g., W. H. P. Faunce, Edwin Warfield, Myron T. Herrick, Talcott Williams,) as well as a healthy dose of the Federal Council of Churches’ hierarchy (e.g, Frederick Lynch, Sydney Gulick, Bishop David H. Greer, Luther Wilson, and Charles Macfarland). Even when the LEP board included non-Protestant clergy, it relied on the non-Protestant trustees of the Church Peace Union. Thus James Cardinal Gibbons served as the primary link between the LEP and the

\(^{590}\) Marburg was in many ways the American equivalent of G. Lowes Dickinson, by which I mean he was the exception to the rule. Currently the only study of Marburg is an informal work written in 1951 by the second general secretary of the Church Peace Union: Henry A. Atkinson, *Theodore Marburg: The Man and His Work* (New York: Morton Littman, 1951).

Catholic Church while Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise fulfilled the same task on behalf of the Reformed Jewish community.\(^{592}\)

Holt convinced William Howard Taft to accept the presidency of the LEP. Since the Republican heavyweight’s loss to Wilson in 1912 he had been working for Holt as an editorialist for his newspaper, the \emph{Independent}.\(^ {593}\) Now, in the spring of 1915 Holt lured Taft out of his semi-retirement and renewed a relationship that had been so mutually beneficial for both sides during Taft’s years in the White House. Initially Taft only agreed to chair the proceedings for the Philadelphia assembly as a mere “figurehead.” Yet afterwards Taft became an enthusiastic and active president of the LEP despite his political disagreements with President Wilson.\(^ {594}\)

Finally Holt and Lynch selected the general secretary of the LEP from among their ecumenical associates. William H. Short graduated from Yale Seminary alongside Lynch and Macfarland and, in 1913, felt a divine call to leave his Congregational parish in Nekoosa, Wisconsin, move to New York to rejoin his old chums, and devote his life to the cause of international peace. In 1914 Lynch hired Short to run the offices of the CPU

\(^{592}\) Although Rabbi Stephen S. Wise was not officially a trustee of the CPU, he was a very close friend (and neighbor) of Frederick Lynch and Charles Macfarland, who appear to have recruited him on behalf of the LEP in the late fall of 1914. SCPC, CDG-A: Records of the League to Enforce Peace, Box 1: Charles S. Macfarland and Sidney L. Gulick, eds., \emph{The Church and International Relations: Report of the Commission on Peace and Arbitration, Parts I and II} (New York: Missionary Education Movement, 1917), 121; Charles S. Macfarland, ed., \emph{The Church and International Relations: Report of the Commission on Peace and Arbitration, Parts III and IV} (New York: Missionary Education Movement, 1917), 39; League to Enforce Peace, \emph{League to Enforce Peace, American Branch: Independence Hall}, 1 – 4.

\(^{593}\) Taft wrote primarily on themes related to American foreign policy. These articles were later published as William Howard Taft, \emph{The United States and Peace} (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1914).

\(^{594}\) SCPC, CDG-A: Records of the League to Enforce Peace, Box 1: letter from William Howard Taft to Richard Bartholdt, 11 June 1915; Kuehl, \emph{Hamilton} Holt, 127 – 129. On Taft’s later involvement in the LEP, see Burton, \emph{Confident Peacemaker}, 85 – 111.
while he traveled to Konstanz. Now he turned to Short to take over the daily operations of the LEP.\textsuperscript{595}

Short’s path to the LEP was very typical of much its early membership. Even before the LEP technically came into being at the Philadelphia assembly, the FCCCA systematically converted the denominations of the Federal Council of Churches into avenues of recruitment for the League campaign. Just as in the British case the political gospel of the LEP fell on fertile soil because the ecumenical movement had already been patiently tilling the ground. Already in the fall and winter of 1914, the FCCCA started distributing literature calling for a League of Nations that was financially dependent upon the CPU. With ample funds at its disposal, courtesy of an endowment called the Church Peace Union (CPU), Protestant internationalists in the U.S. engaged in even more activities than the other branches in Europe. Whereas European advocates had to sell subscriptions to their journals or rely on their personal connections to those in power, the Federal Council of Churches and the League to Enforce Peace had the monetary resources to carve out a successful movement within the public sphere without relying on the goodwill of its members.

In just the first twelve months of the war the Church Peace Union paid the publication costs of a wide variety of literature aimed at the American public. The booklist included several titles such as Hamilton Holt’s \textit{The Way To Disarm} and Irving Fisher’s \textit{After the War, What? A Plea for a League of Peace}, that later became

\textsuperscript{595} I have relied on a short, self-published memoir written by his son and held by the Swarthmore Peace Collection for Short’s biographical information. SCPC: Frederick Wallace Short, \textit{The Man Behind the League of Nations} (New York: Manor Books, 1978). For his school ties to Lynch and Macfarland, see Charles S. Macfarland, \textit{Across the Years} (New York: Macmillan, 1936), 38.
foundational texts of the LEP.\textsuperscript{596} Charles Macfarland mailed a regular newsletter to ten thousand of the most fervent pastors, while fifty-five thousand other pastors received a series of books on the League and arbitration treaties without charge. Hundreds of thousands of additional copies of this propaganda were also sold through the mail from his headquarters in New York. By the end of 1916 the CPU had spent all of Carnegie’s original endowment and prepared itself to borrow money in order to expand its operations.\textsuperscript{597}

The CPU worked with three national newspapers that served largely evangelical audiences. The largest of them was the \textit{Outlook}, edited by the social gospel maverick Lyman Abbott. Frederick Lynch’s \textit{The Christian Worker} had less popular appeal but was nevertheless influential among the more progressive churches of New England. However the premier mouthpiece of the League movement was undoubtedly \textit{The Independent,}


owned and operated by the CPU trustee Hamilton Holt. This paper’s growth mirrored the expansion of the LEP, rising from just twenty thousand subscriptions in 1914 to just over five hundred thousand subscriptions in 1917. (Holt used this new income to buy other papers such as The Chautauquan and Harper’s Weekly, journals that were then added to the LEP’s media assets.)

The CPU also funded an initiative by the FCCCA to establish so-called “Peacemakers’ Committees” for any congregation that responded to the bulletins and entreaties mailed by the FCCCA. Sidney Gulick was awarded a full stipend to spearhead this effort. These committees were composed of individuals that covenanted to form small groups that would meet weekly or bimonthly for intensive studies of international issues. The Federal Council of Churches groomed these local groups to be seedbeds of a political revival for the contemporary church. It saw them as an avant-garde that would “awaken the church in all its branches to a sense of the international meaning and responsibility of Christianity” so that there might be an “infusion of the spirit of Christianity into the League of Nations.”

Under Gulick’s direction the Federal Council of Churches became the largest distributor of League propaganda in the world from 1914 to 1918 while relying on the cooperation of local congregations. Reference guides for pastors – containing sermon outlines, facts of reference, quotations and even jokes helped ministers commemorate League of Nations Sundays, Armenian Relief Sundays and Peace Sundays. Elizabeth


599 CPC, CDG-A, World Alliance papers, 1:1, “History & goals.”
Bansall, a professor of education at Swarthmore College, produced Sunday School curricula intended to instill an internationalist heart in Christian children. Her projects included information on how to become pen pals with Christians in Asia, information about wartime relief, and coloring pages on the Sermon on the Mount. Norman Richardson wrote a similar series for adults and university students on just war thought, Christian peacekeeping, and missions as it related to future international government that was popular in the YMCA and YWCA.600 Gulick encouraged each committee to begin an open lending library and to establish scholarship competitions for students that demonstrated the proper devotion to the new political orthodoxy. He also provided them with information on how to effectively agitate for changes in the local school curricula.601

In 1917 Gulick unveiled the Christian flag – a dark cross set onto a field of white – so that children could recite a pledge of allegiance to the Kingdom of God at church events.

I pledge allegiance to my flag,
And to the Savior for whose Kingdom it stands;


One brotherhood, uniting mankind in service and in love.  

In general, audiences met this new campaign with real enthusiasm. The historian John Piper, Jr. is correct when he notes that the “real growth in cooperative Protestantism” came only after the American churches took upon themselves “the joint responsibilities of Christianizing the international order.”

In 1915 the FCCCA sponsored an essay-writing contest that attracted thousands of new submissions from pastors and laymen. Winners in each category won a cash prize and the promise of publication. Most of the entries came from the Midwest and demonstrated a “substantial unanimity. . . in the conviction that ultimately some form of federation of the world, or at least of Europe, similar to our own, must be worked out, and relied upon as the hope of lasting peace for the world.” Furthermore the judges felt that the CPU literature and Peacemakers’ Committees had succeeded in promoting the concrete proposals of the LEP as the essays in general were characterized by “practical knowledge” and a “lack of sentimentality.”

Gaius Glenn Atkins, a Congregational minister from Providence, Rhode Island, won the award for pastors with his thoughtful piece “The Maze of the Nations and the Way Out.” R. W. Nelson of East Enid, Oklahoma submitted the winning lay essay, but what is even more intriguing is the

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602 SCPC, CDG-A, World Alliance Papers, 1:5: Sidney Gulick, “The New Task of the Church”; FCCA, RG 18-44-12: “How You May Help Create A New World-Order.” (As a personal aside: I remember saying a close rendition of this creed to this exact same flag as a child, although it seems as if the Christian flag is currently going out of style in the United States.)

603 John F. Piper Jr., The American Churches in World War I, 4.

second place finish by a young seminarian named Reinhold Niebuhr. As far as I can tell, this was Niebuhr’s first theological reflection on foreign affairs.  

Reinhold Niebuhr was not the only one whose introduction to the League came through his ecclesiastical commitments. By the close of 1916 every aspect of the Federal Council of Churches was intertwined in some way with the message of the League to Enforce Peace. Just as in Britain, the Protestant denominations served as conduits for League propaganda to enter local communities – and the response was just as overwhelmingly positive. In 1916 the American Council of the World Alliance held its first annual conference in the luxurious Garden City Hotel in Garden City, New York. The CPU paid the costs for six hundred delegates for the three-day event. Beforehand the FCCCA collected the signatures of eight hundred denominational leaders urging President Wilson to endorse the LEP. In January 1917 around two hundred women joined the American Council after they hosted a conference dedicated to the mutual orientation of the YWCA, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, and the National Women’s Peace Party towards the vision of the LEP.

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607 Macfarland, Pioneers for Peace through Religion, 59.

608 EZAB 51/E-II-b-1: letter from Gulick to Battin, 5 March 1917; EZAB 51/E-II-b-1: “Conference of Christian Women for International Fellowship Held in New York City.”
The excitement of the campaign convinced many ecumenists that the League represented an opportunity for America to recommit itself to Christian principles at home and abroad. In his plenary speech at the 1915 American Peace Congress in San Francisco, another event partially funded by the CPU, Charles Macfarland contended that the hopes of the peace movement depended upon a “great spiritual transformation” at the grassroots level. “The Church has surrendered to economists and jurists the leadership that belonged to herself, has consented to a utilitarianism, has seemed to confess that the ultimate and the eternal were something political and legal, has let the world go mad with its monstrous materialism, shaping its political and social economy. These world-forces cannot give the constructive, vital power for the healing of the world.”609 Only the churches could bring about the separation of state power from the “pagan” diplomacy of brute force, but only if they were willing to reorganize themselves into a single, solitary force prepared to “demand of their respective governments and rulers world justice through world organization.”610

Lynch identified “the method” of international peace as nothing more or less than “lived Christianity.” Revival on the individual level and reform on the international level went hand in hand, Lynch claimed, for our experience “teaches us that if we are to change the world we must change human nature. It assures us that human nature can be changed. It offers us the supreme forces which make for moral and spiritual transformation.” To do that the Church “avails itself of every educational and

inspirational force, it deals very patiently with the willful and the stupid, it addresses itself directly to the individual, it believes that it is reinforced by the Spirit of God, Himself, so that it hold bravely to the task of making a better world, of making better men and women.”

Macfarland agreed that the “New Internationalism” must come from a place of “profound repentance, by a national atonement, by a new status in international diplomacy, the status of unselfish reconciliation.” It is thus the task of the ecumenical Church to overcome its internal divisions and establish “the familyhood of nations, the limitation of sovereignty, and the right of all nations and races, small and great, to share in the world’s resources and in opportunity for self-directing development and expanding life.”

The membership of the LEP steadily increased from 1915 to 1918, yet it could not keep pace with the ballooning numbers of the FCCCA’s campaign. While European churches struggled to come to terms with the demands of the Great War, American Protestantism waged its own battle to win its public over to the League of Nations. Led by the Federal Council of Churches and assisted by the other ecumenical organizations and mainline denominations, the American branch of the World Alliance sponsored a well-funded, inventive campaign in the churches that captured thousands of zealous converts for the cause that undergirded the success of the League to Enforce Peace. Meanwhile, as we shall now see, sympathy with the League movement became an essential precondition for participation in the ecumenical movement after 1914.

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5.3 The League of Nations as the Political Orthodoxy of the American Ecumenical Movement

By 1916 belief in the League of Nations functioned as a political orthodoxy for the American ecumenical movement, particularly within the Federal Council of Churches. Although the Federal Council sponsored commissions dealing with evangelism, rural life, labor conditions, prohibition and the healthiness of the American family, the flagship of the FCCCA continued to be the Commission on Peace and Arbitration with its self-professed aim of the “Christian consecration of secular movements for international reform.”614 Of all the wings of the Federal Council, the Commission on Peace and Arbitration enjoyed the largest budget, the only salaried employees and the most members. Its catalogue of printed literature was ten times larger than the next runner-up. Under the leadership of Frederick Lynch and Charles Macfarland the FCCCA declared that the most urgent task facing the Protestant churches was the “Christianization of America’s international relations.”615 Thus while the FCCCA might shelter under its umbrella Baptists and Presbyterians, liberals and conservatives, and even public health experts and faith healers, there was remained no place for opponents of the League of Nations.

The intimate cooperation the Federal Council of Churches and the League to Enforce Peace pushed many Protestants who felt uncomfortable with the just war tradition to the fringe of the mainline denominations. Absolute pacifism became an

unpardonable sin in ecumenical circles, especially as the U.S. became more and more enmeshed in the Great War. The FCCCA placed its just war conditions on prominent display, even renaming the Commission on Peace and Arbitration the Commission on International Justice and Goodwill to avoid any confusion. On its part the LEP adopted an even more militant pose in 1916 at its second annual conference. The assembly passed resolutions that backed the Allies, called for American intervention and demanded the unconditional surrender of the Central Powers. One speaker even used the parable of the Good Samaritan to outline the virtues of the just war tradition. “The millions of dollars we have given to relief funds might indicate that the United States has adequately played the role of the Good Samaritan, but I am convinced that were this parable stated to-day, it would not limit the action of the Good Samaritan to dressing the wounds and paying the hotel bill of the victim, but would have him start a practical movement for ridding the Jericho Road of outlaws, instituting adequate police protection, and making the road a safe avenue for travel.” 616 In his plenary address Taft insisted that the League of Nations was “not adapted at all to the purpose of preventing war,” but for the purpose of restraining outlaw states instead. 617 The LEP shunned pacifist organizations such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation or the American Union Against Militarism at all of its events.

In 1916, at its third quadrennial assembly in Columbus, Ohio, the Federal Council of Churches passed a resolution that gave an unqualified endorsement to the LEP over the


617 Taft quoted in Burton, Confident Peacemaker, 87.
objection of a handful of pacifist and Mennonite delegates in attendance. “The day has come,” proclaimed the final report of the Commission on Peace and Arbitration, “when [the Church’s] prayers, its preaching, and the action of its members should recognize the obligation of every nation to prevent and suppress aggressive war, as of every citizen to prevent and suppress riot. An International League to enforce peace, and its member-nations ready to use force to keep the peace, can end war, and in due time bring world peace, if the church of Christ in all lands and most of all in this land requires nations, as in the past it has required individuals, to submit to law and to support the enforcement of law as a Christian duty.” International order required, it concluded, the “sword of some international magistrate.”

Afterwards a handful of ecumenical leaders felt compelled to resign their positions. Among the trustees of the Church Peace Union, David H. Greer, the Episcopal Bishop of New York, provided the most opposition to the LEP’s overt militarism. He infamously interrupted one board meeting to question whether or not the churches should ever embrace the use of American military power. “Now gentlemen,” he quipped, “may I ask what peace message we are going to spread?” Yet in 1916 Greer succumbed to pressure from within the CPU to resign his trusteeship because of denominational protests against his “Quakerism.”

Other trustees faced less official forms of censorship. In 1916 evangelical publishers refused to touch a criticism of Wilson’s proposal to enhance the military

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power of the United States written in 1916 by William I. Hull. Hull was a decorated professor of international law at Swarthmore, an expert on the Hague Conferences, a Quaker and a pacifist. When he felt he was being blacklisted for his views among his internationalist friends, Hull turned to Lynch for help. Lynch promised that his friend and editor Fleming H. Revell would publish it, but he had to tell Hull a few weeks later that no pacifist pieces were being accepted by evangelical publishers.

Lynch himself cut off his association with the American Union Against Militarism and the Fellowship of Reconciliation when the other trustees made it a condition of his future employment by the CPU. Matters came to a head in February 1916 when Lynch and Gulick amended the wording of a FCCCA letter bearing thousands of clerical signatures that strongly criticized the American use of military force in Mexico. Just before sending it on to the White House Lynch added a condemnation of Wilson’s preparedness policy to the document without consulting the other signers. Almost immediately the offices of the CPU fell prey to a barrage of letters wondering if the leadership of the CPU had moved too far to the political left to accurately represent the churches. Lynch quickly issued a recantation, but the damage was already done. The other trustees almost passed a motion to fire Lynch and Gulick and rescind their salaries. From then on Lynch walked the straight and narrow. Although William I. Hull accused Lynch of becoming a mere “pawn” of the LEP, Lynch justified the flexibility of his convictions because, ultimately, it gave the CPU and the FCCCA “increased effectiveness” with the public. The League, he shot back, was “the only idea

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that is rising” in the churches and, furthermore, it was the only possible outcome to the war that could justify the sacrifice.\footnote{FHL, RG/069 (Hull papers), 5:2: letter from Hull to Lynch, 24 January 1917.}

The FCCCA and the CPU quickly began playing hardball with recalcitrant pacifists who refused to go away as peacefully as Bishop Greer had. Louis Lochner, the man-on-the-spot for the CPU in Chicago, was fired in 1915 when he agreed to join Henry Ford’s quixotic mission to stop the war and “bring the boys back home by Christmas.” By 1918 the unrepentant Lochner was refused admittance to any FCCCA or CPU event.\footnote{FHL, RG 5/069 (Hull Papers), 6:6: letter from Lynch to Louis Lochner, 14 February 1918; FHL, RG 5/069 (Hull Papers), 6:6: letter from Lochner to Lynch, 25 February 1918; FHL, RG 5/069 (Hull Papers), 6:7: letter from Lochner to Hull, 6 March 1918; FHL, RG 5/069 (Hull Papers), 6:7: letter from Hull to Lochner, 13 March 1918. On Henry Ford’s sudden and spontaneous pacifism in 1915, see Barbara S. Kraft, \textit{The Peace Ship: Henry Ford’s Pacifist Adventure in the First World War} (New York: Macmillan, 1978).}

The purge of pacifists intensified after the U. S. declared war on the Central Powers in April 1917. In one highly publicized case, officers from the FCCCA berated and shamed Walter Rauschenbusch, perhaps the most recognizable spokesman of the Social Gospel movement at the time, into denouncing his sympathy for Germany and his opposition to the LEP in 1917.\footnote{Christopher H. Evans, \textit{The Kingdom Is Always but Coming: A Life of Walter Rauschenbusch} (Grand Rapids, MI: WWm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 308 – 311.}

Lucia Ames Mead altered her views on the just war tradition and did not resign, but still recognized that her “peace convictions” and her past association with the pacifist left might make her “harmful to the cause.” Still she gave assurance to the other trustees that her own resignation was “kept ready for instant use.”\footnote{FHL, RG 5/069 (Hull Papers), 6:8: letter from Lucia Ames Mead to Hull, 12 April 1918.}
William Jennings Bryan, the political champion of evangelical Progressivism, was another notable casualty of the new political orthodoxy. Early on Bryan was a stalwart force for arbitration within the Wilson’s administration. As Secretary of State from 1912 – 1915, he engineered thirty similar ‘cooling-off’ treaties with countries in South America. (Each agreement was sealed with the gift of a paperweight made from melted-down swords marked with Isaiah 2:4: “They shall beat their swords into plowshares.”) Bryan extolled a “new gospel of nations” that “national ethics cannot differ from individual means.” Yet he remained an absolute pacifist and after the launch of the LEP in 1915 Bryan found himself more and more on the outside of the FCCCA looking in. In the summer of 1915 Bryan resigned his position over his disagreement with Wilson’s military policies. Yet as a civilian he did not take aim at the White House but at the LEP. In 1916 Bryan and Taft engaged in a series of highly publicized debates. Bryan argued that the League would bind American power to the wills of non-Christian states and distract Americans from the only true guarantee of peace, namely, the extension of Christianity around the globe accompanied by the American promotion of democratization overseas. Bryan’s opposition to the League cost him his influence within ecumenical circles. In a private letter Macfarland compared Bryan to a frightened fundamentalist hiding in a foxhole, praying for the shelling to stop but unwilling to get up and forcibly stop the shells from coming. The former Secretary of State had a “great heart,” Macfarland summed up, but “no reason, no toughness, nothing

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besides ideals.” Even when Bryan flipped in 1919 and supported Wilson’s Covenant, he never regained an authoritative voice within the mainline churches of the FCCCA.

By 1917 the FCCCA targeted not only pacifists, but anyone who was opposed to the LEP for dismissal. As George Nasmyth, one of the many young pastors now employed full-time by the LEP, argued in an address at Clark University, “the real contest is not between militarists and pacifists, but between world federalists and anti-federalists.” Writers for the FCCCA routinely accused isolationist Christians of political myopia or of not being able to look beyond their own nationality, race or class. Materials for the Peacemakers’ Committees identified three such sins of “hypernationalism” that the ecumenical Church must repent of if it was to experience revival: an “incomplete realization of the brotherhood of man” across national and racial lines; an “imperfect conception of the Kingdom of God” that has led to an “unorganized church and society”; and, finally, a stubborn “denominationalism that prohibits a redeemed “national self-consciousness.” Churches were failing in their mission, the CPU claimed in 1915, if they did not teach their parishioners the “distinction between the teachings of Jesus and so-called modern civilization.” Pastors must “cease baptizing national pride and selfishness with the name of patriotism. . .and proclaim the missionary message of international Christianity, of altruistic ministries to other peoples, of God as

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627 WCCA 212.003: letter from Macfarland to Wilfred Monod, 23 August 1916.


630 Gulick, The Fight for Peace, 47 – 51.
universal Father instead of a national deity, of the unity of the human race, of religion as 'the power of God unto salvation' and the antithesis of aggression and brute force.  

The Federal Council of Churches did not hesitate to name names or engage in brass knuckle tactics in the press. Many liberal theologians associated with the ecumenical movement used the issue of the League to wage a war against their conservative counterparts who hesitated to clothe the political agenda of the LEP in the pages of the Bible. Shailer Mathews, for example, the liberal dean of the University of Chicago Divinity School and a founding trustee of the LEP, traced the German churches’ acceptance of nationalistic war to their use of a literal hermeneutic for the Old Testament and then accused conservative theologians in the U. S. of falling into the same error. Mathews’ colleague, Conrad Robert Moehlmann, wanted this “apocalyptic mind” to be drummed out of the churches beginning with “the Sunday-school kindergarten,” because since the turn of the century it has consistently “been able to retard Christianity’s rate of progress” and cause “schism in some Christian churches.” Ultimately such naïve Biblicism “cannot survive in a large and significance way in the modern world.” Meanwhile Frederick Lynch snidely claimed “‘those who are truly Christian are anxious to have the United States become the saviour of impoverished, distracted, disrupted, groaning Europe, after the war is over.’”

The liberal preacher Charles Jefferson was another persistent abuser of conservative evangelicals who used the League issue as a weapon in his theological war against a strict Biblicism. In his book *Christianity and International Peace* (1915) he tackled his opponents who would not support the League of Nations because they could not find the concept in the Bible. This approach to politics was “a millstone around the neck of the Christian church. . . .[The Bible] has furnished proof texts for Mormonism, and it bolstered up the cause of the slaveholder, and it has often fed the flames of war.”

True to his evangelical liberalism, Jefferson distinguished between the spiritual “religion of Jesus and the “organizations which act as its custodian.” “The Christian religion is a heavenly treasure, but it is carried in an earthen vessel.” Therefore, “there are no Christian nations” and “there is no Christian civilization,” a fact that explains why “in no part of a nation’s life is the spirit of Christ so little manifested as in the realm of statesmanship. Christian nations can act on Pagan principles and when they do, their alleged Christianity does not save them.” The time has come to demand that the politicians of the West stop prohibiting the Gospel from having an effect on their diplomacy and instead “surrender to the principles of Christ.”

The time had come for the Christian churches to become truly Christian. “A Christian brotherhood extending around the world will baptize the League of Nations into a spirit which will keep it strong and make it permanent. But to foster and guide this Christian brotherhood we must have the spirit of the Living God, and to receive this spirit in all His fulness we and all men everywhere must repent of our sins and of the sins of our rulers and statesmen.”

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depended upon the ecumenical reunion of the churches and the extirpation of those Christians who resisted. “We desire a new world, and to get the new world we must have a League of Nations.”

Unfortunately this type of struggle for the soul of America acted as a divisive force at the exact moment when American Protestantism could least afford it. In a desire to unify the churches behind a common political agenda, the FCCCA came across as a type of ecclesiastical leviathan. The First World War coincided with the development of what Martin Marty calls the “two party system,” wherein each denomination faced a potential schism between those dedicated to a ‘mainline’ ecumenical faith oriented towards social activism and fundamentalist defenders of Biblical inerrancy who emphasized private spirituality, individual salvation, and traditional dogma. Marty’s work has been sharpened by George Marsden, who in his book *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (1980) demonstrates that conservative Calvinists and traditionalist evangelicals felt that their churches were under attack by a consortium of forces that ranged from biblical criticism to theological liberalism to Darwinism. The Great War, Marsden argues, marked the high point of this feeling as liberal Protestants in the mainline churches accused them of otherworldly, antipatriotic and pacifist convictions.

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that made them politically impotent and incapable of Christianizing the social (and international) orders.\textsuperscript{638}

What both scholars have missed, however, is the central role of the League in these ecclesiastical power struggles. For the Federal Council of Churches’ heavy-handedness about this issue drove an unnecessary wedge between itself and many conservative Protestants who had previously participated in FCCCA projects. A recent study by Markku Routsila, \textit{The Origins of Christian Anti-Internationalism: Conservative Evangelicals and the League of Nations} (2008), complements my own research by looking at the fundamentalist side of the coin. Routsila identifies three different types of Protestants who opposed the Federal Council in large part because of its intimacy with the LEP: American Lutherans, conservative Calvinists, and dispensationalists. He concludes that although each of these groups posed different objections to the League based on their individual theological idiosyncrasies, each of them thought that the Federal Council of Churches’ fervency in this area eventually became an ersatz gospel that threatened to distract the churches from their spiritual calling. Preexisting theological quarrels became, in Routsila’s words, “the main proximate conduit . . . to polemics against the League.” \textsuperscript{639}

In other words, this new political orthodoxy of the American ecumenical movement displaced its traditional concern for dogmatic orthodoxy. The League became, in the words of one fundamentalist critic, a “man-made authority” and a “god


manufactured to serve the social needs of man.”640 This concern was not without foundation. In *The Challenge of the Present Crisis*, the YMCA’s bestselling book in 1917, Harry Emerson Fosdick argued that the political power of Christ lay in His ability to free mankind of the “little bigotries, the needless divisions, the petty obscurantisms” of national and denominational existence and lead it onward to “a new experience and a more intelligent expression of fellowship with God.” The League, working in concert with a “National, Federated Church” would be the highest expression yet of this “international mind” overcoming “national sectarianisms,” wherein the individualist focus of the “missionary enterprise” would be replaced by the “the Christian campaign for international good will.”641

Conservative Protestants objected to the new bent of the FCCCA for several reasons. They worried that the FCCCA was substituting faith in the League of Nations for traditionally orthodox beliefs about the need for internal conversion and the divine forgiveness of sins. They also possessed legitimate concerns about investing a secular international government with the power to direct American foreign policy. Many Lutheran and Calvinist critics felt this was all too reminiscent of the despotism of the Middle Ages when the “Catholic” confusion of church and state cast an imperial shadow over the nations of Christendom. Other pastors spoke out against any arrangement in which the military autonomy of the United States would be subordinated to the collective will of “pagan” states, a category that for many conservative evangelicals included most of Europe and beyond. For, as Markku Routsila explains, “Christian anti-internationalists

640 J. Greshen Machen, quoted in *ibid.*, 73.
still regarded the United States as at root a Christian nation, especially blessed and with a divinely given task of witnessing for the true faith, and they therefore believed that accepting the secular internationalists’ proposals as the basis of national policy would lead God to curse and punish their nation.\(^{642}\) Because other nations had not accepted the absolute truth claims of Christianity or experienced the moral awakening of Christ’s influence, they could not be trusted with the responsibility of policing international morality.

Another prominent source of opposition came from dispensational premillennialism, a populist brand of evangelical theology that interpreted current events through the lens of Biblical prophecy. To its adherents any hint of a pan-European government seemed to fulfill the predictions from the Book of Revelations of a one-world government, which would in turn become the organ of the Antichrist to persecute Christians in the final years before the end of the world. Dispensational premillennialists suspected Wilson was a new Nebuchadnezzar who was creating the League as a “graven image. . .to unify the races” and fulfill his “irresistible yearning to prescribe [his subjects’] ideas for them.”\(^{643}\) (Wilson’s autocratic style and frequent abuse of executive privilege during the wars did little to quell these fears.) In his research Markku Routsila found that this camp informed the “most active and passionate opponents” of the League of the Nations from 1915 to 1919, both within and outside of Washington D. C. This type of theological opposition, grounded in the prophetic portions of the Bible, was virtually absent in Protestant Europe.


The intimate relationship between the LEP and the FCCCA thus exacerbated the developing schism between fundamentalists and liberals. By 1920 almost all of the major Protestant denominations had endorsed the League, the only significant holdouts being the Lutheran synods and the Southern Baptist Convention. However, within each denomination there existed a strong bulwark of anti-League stalwarts who would lead their congregations out from under the influence of Protestant internationalists throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Thus, within the United States there evolved the unique situation where an organized religious opposition to the League took hold of evangelical churches that were already theologically inclined to reject the work of the Federal Council of Churches, the YMCA and the other ecumenical organizations. Their rejection of the FCCCA’s political orthodoxy has had echoes throughout American history that we can still hear today. Since the 1910s issues involving the League of Nations, and its daughter organization the United Nations, have been one of the clear dividing lines between the mainline churches and their fundamentalist critics.

5.4 Woodrow Wilson and the Federal Council of Churches: From Détente to Entente, 1912 – 1916

Woodrow Wilson is the only U.S. President to be buried in the National Cathedral. In fact Wilson is the only U.S. President to be buried in a church. This seems fitting. For no other U.S. President has been so identified with his Christian faith as Woodrow Wilson. His contemporaries, ranging from John Meynard Keynes to Georges Clemenceau to Sigmund Freud, discerned that Wilson’s political outlook was at its heart
rooted in the Presbyterianism of his youth. Since his passing historians such as Jan W. S. Nordholt, John M. Mulder and, most recently, Malcolm Magee have centered their studies of Wilson on the religious dimension of his policy at home and abroad. Even Wilson’s premier biographer, Arthur S. Link, has agreed with the consensus that “it is impossible to know and understand [Wilson] apart from his religious faith, because his action and policy was ultimately informed and moulded by his Christian faith.”

For almost ninety years Wilson has been a poster child for the infusion of progressive Protestantism into American political life. At each stage of his career – professor of political history, president of Princeton University, governor of New Jersey, President of the United States – Wilson proudly wore his faith upon his sleeve. He was the first Southerner since the Civil War to occupy the White House and his religion – intensely pietistic, personal and rooted in Biblical phraseology – contrasted sharply with the respectable civil religion displayed by his Republican predecessors. He took a great deal of pride in his Scottish Calvinist heritage, right down to his formidable golf swing.

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644 Georges Clemenceau, a secular journalist who served as the Prime Minister of France from 1917 to 1920, caricatured Wilson as a devout Christian in order to portray the League of Nations as an otherworldly idealism. Clemenceau frequently complained to the press that talking to Wilson was “like talking to Jesus Christ” and even quipped that Wilson needed Fourteen Points when Moses had been content with only giving mankind ten commandments. Keynes and Freud were likewise suspicious of Wilson’s religious nature and identified it as the root of his allegedly idealistic political policy. Freud claimed, for instance, that Wilson was the victim of “an unconscious identification with Jesus Christ” that directly caused him to pursue such a grand scheme as the League of Nations. See William C. Bullitt and Sigmund Freud, *Woodrow Wilson: A Psychological Study* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), 216; or John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (New York: Harper & Row, 1920), 40 – 41.


“The stern Covenanter that is behind me,” he reassured his supporters in 1918, “sends many an echo down through the years.”

Much like his collaborator Jan Christiaan Smuts, Wilson identified the Calvinist tradition as the root of the modern, democratic ethos, which allowed him to regard his own professions, first as an educator and then as a politician, as secular extensions of his religious inheritance.

Wilson understood the statesman’s duty to be the alignment of his nation with the providential will of God. “I do recognize the sanction of religion in these times of perplexity,” Wilson assured the Council of Free Churches in London in 1918 before crossing the Channel for the peace conference. “I think one would go crazy if he did not believe in Providence. It would be a maze without a clue.”

Because of Wilson’s belief in the beneficial secular effects of Christianity, he often aligned himself with the theological pragmatism of the so-called social gospel movement. “We hold our Christianity as a private, individual matter, if we think of it at all,” Wilson contended in one such typical statement. “Our idea is that we will save ourselves, whereas, in my conception, Christianity was just as much intended to save society as to save the individual. And there is a sense in which it is more important that it should save society than that it should save the individual, because society creates the atmospheric conditions under which all moral lives are lived, and the atmosphere is more important than the attitude of the individual.”

Wilson believed strongly in the social benefits of Protestantism, which translated into staunch support of the YMCA. He himself worked with the YMCA throughout his

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academic career because he believed that it molded young college-educated men into agents of civilization at home and abroad. \(^{650}\) The Y embodied for him the robust, pragmatic Christianity that he valued most. The “supreme object” of each individual Y, the President told the Washington D.C. branch during one of his visits in 1915, was to “exhibit the spirit of Christ, and to show what His example will do in a world that needs that example so much.” Wilson believed that this “spirit of Christ” is the only thing that could humble the individual while compelling him to develop the proper character of selfless love for his fellow man. “There has got to be a motive bigger than the man himself to make him a good comrade, even, and a generous friend,” he argued. “The man who serves only himself is going to serve within a very narrow circle, indeed, and will serve grudgingly, only as he sees some material or obvious advantage. The only thing that can move a man to great service of any sort is something bigger than himself. That is the reason that the Christian motive, the motive of the love of Christ, is the supreme motive.” \(^{651}\) Without this motive the nation would rapidly decay into quarrelsome factions, each looking out for its own welfare at the expense of everyone else.

Wilson also admired the YMCA’s central personality, John Mott. Wilson and Mott first became friends in the 1890s while Wilson was still teaching at Wesleyan University. Wesleyan was a common spot for regional YMCA conferences and SVM retreats and Mott had just accepted the responsibility of leading the different local branches of these two organizations up and down the East Coast. Both Mott and Wilson

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shared a belief that the United States’ spiritual destiny was ‘the evangelization of the world in this generation.’ In 1902, just after Wilson became president of Princeton University, he openly praised Mott for having “taken hold of the nation and taking hold of the nation, is taking hold of the nations of the world.” 652 In 1910 Princeton awarded Mott an honorary doctorate and Wilson eulogized his old friend for the occasion as “a new Crusader bent on the Christian conquest of the world.” 653

Wilson credited the religious internationalism of the YMCA and of the American missionary organizations with the spread of democratic civilization worldwide. The missionary movement created small clusters of rational, self-controlled individuals that elevated the general social and political life of the nations around the world. The Y in particular acted like a “nursery in which the things that benefit the community most are planted and nourished.” Its leavening influence on a people was so vital that Wilson believed that he could “almost assess the character of a community by the manner in which it supports or does not support its Young Men’s Christian Association. . . .” 654

Wilson also believed that those who brought the transnational Christ to the world’s nations were planting the seeds of world peace. “If all the world had a common literature, if all the world had drunk at the same sources of inspiration and suggestion, many lines of division would never have been created, and many more would now disappear,” Wilson mused in 1916 at the centennial celebration of the American Bible Society. “And those who spread the Scripture are engaged, as it were, in drawing the world together under the spell of one body of literature, which belongs to no one race, to

652 Hopkins, John R. Mott, 215.
653 Ibid., 379.
no one civilization, to no one time in the history of the world, but whose appeal is universal, which searches and illuminates all hearts alike. In proportion as men yield themselves to the kindly light of the Gospel, they are bound together in the bonds of understanding and mutual peace." Wilson’s fondness for missionaries sometimes affected his foreign policy. Historians such as James Reed and Joseph L. Grabill have ably demonstrated how, in the absence of a professional American intelligence service and the lack of an experienced Democratic diplomatic corps, both Bryan and Wilson relied on their relationships with Protestant missionaries when formulating American foreign policy in Latin America, China and the Middle East.

One might think that Wilson’s sympathetic views of the American missionary movement and identification with the socio-political aims of the YMCA might predisposition him towards a positive view of the Federal Council of Churches, but that was not so. In 1905 Mott convinced Wilson to attend the inaugural assembly of the FCCCA, but thereafter Wilson remained aloof from the ecumenical body because of a mixture of personal and political reasons.

Wilson possessed a prickly personality that, combined with his fierce sense of self-righteousness and partisanship, made it difficult for him to sustain political relationships for long. More of a professor than a politician, the President was more comfortable behind a podium than in a parlor room. He had a tendency to form close

bonds with women who existed apart from his professional duties. On even the best of days he had more fingers than male friends. The President, one White House insider noted, “has no real companions. Nobody talks to him freely and frankly.” Mott was one of the rare exceptions, but the YMCA leader knew better than to challenge Wilson’s political views or to directly confront him about specific policies. The President’s top advisor, Edward House, achieved his position because he understood that what Wilson wanted was a courtier, not a competitor. “The truth is, the President is something of an autocrat by nature,” House noted in his diary. “He does not desire any interference. Even when he knows and feels the necessity of going forward, his nature rebels at any interference.”

Wilson particularly bristled at any interference with his foreign policy, perhaps because he took office in 1913 without any diplomatic experience. The new President had never even traveled abroad except for a cycling vacation in England during the 1908 Olympic Games. “It would be the irony of fate if my administration had to deal chiefly with foreign affairs,” Wilson joked on the eve of his inauguration. Yet for the community of political internationalists that had thrived under his predecessors, Wilson’s pithy resume was no laughing manner.

Wilson interpreted his electoral victory over Roosevelt and Taft as a moral repudiation of the Republican status quo. “The Nation has been deeply stirred, stirred by a solemn passion, stirred by the knowledge of wrong, of ideals lost, of government to

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658 PWW, Vol. 44, 141: House Diary, 3 September 1917.
often debauched and made an instrument of evil,” Wilson declaimed in his first inaugural address. “We know our task to be no mere task of politics,” he concluded, but an opportunity to see “whether we have the pure heart to comprehend and the rectified will to choose our high course of action.” The day when the “Government we loved” was used only for “private and selfish purposes” was over. Wilson stubbornly equated his agenda for reform with the general welfare of the American people. Conversely he dismissed the objections of his political adversaries as the equivocal justifications of the privileged classes.

As the first southern President since the Civil War, Wilson was incapable of cozying up to the party of Lincoln and Grant. Wilson’s presidency was thus marked by a steadily increasing partisanship that eventually terminated in the bitter standoff with the U. S. Senate about the ratification of the Versailles Treaty. From the very beginning of his first term Wilson repudiated the so-called dollar diplomacy of the Republican Party on moral grounds. He purged the State Department and the American embassies of the old guard and replaced them with loyalists from the Democratic Party who, more often than not, possessed no more practical experience than their Commander-in-Chief. Even Wilson’s most sympathetic biographer, Arthur S. Link, has called the President’s new foreign service “an aggregation of friends and party hacks.”

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660 PWW, Vol. 27, 148 – 152: First Inaugural Address, March 5, 1913.

661 Arthur S. Link, Wilson: The Road to the White House (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 106. Link comments in another volume of his biography that Wilson’s penchant for unorthodox diplomacy “stemmed in part from his egotism, secretiveness, and urge for dominance, in part from his deep suspicion of and contempt for the ordinary processes of diplomacy and of the diplomatic profession, and in part from a well-matured conviction that the President alone must make and control foreign policy, governed only by public opinion and his conception of what was the right thing to do. . . .Wilson paid scant attention to expert advice when it challenged his own intuitive conclusions, and he revealed his contempt for the usual diplomatic methods and diplomats themselves by conducting critical negotiations through special envoys whom he thought he could trust.” Link, Wilson: The Road to the White House, 279.
Wilson thus began his time in office by throwing out the internationalists and arbitrationalists with the Republican bathwater. For the first time in their careers, the veterans of the Hague Conferences and the Lake Mohonk crowd found themselves on the sidelines as Wilson navigated through a series of foreign crises in his first few years. Several of them found work as paid lecturers or lobbyists in associations such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Church Peace Union, and the Protestant press. Teddy Roosevelt, for example, hammered out his endless damnations of the Democratic administration in the pages of the newspaper *Outlook* under the editorial pen of the social gospel minister Lyman Abbott, while Taft found an outlet for his views in Hamilton Holt’s newspaper, *The Independent*.

Given this rift between Woodrow Wilson and the old Republican guard, the Federal Council of Churches found itself on the wrong bank of the chasm. Although the denominations that composed the FCCCA stretched across any singular national or political divisions, the core leadership of the Federal Council of Churches all shared the same narrow social background. When Wilson took office all of its salaried employees except for one – Sidney Gulick, the product of a missionary home – hailed from either Massachusetts or New York. Everyone who managed the day-to-day operations of the FCCCA from its headquarters in New York, including Gulick, Frederick Lynch, Charles Macfarland and William E. Short, were all graduates of Yale Divinity School. Each of them were also lifelong members of the Republican Party.

Although Wilson agreed in general with the social aims of the ecumenical movement, he was at variance with many of the specific goals of the Federal Council of Churches. In 1912 four projects defined the FCCCA, none of which had any influence
on the White House during Wilson’s first four years. Two of the oldest committees, the Commission on the Church and Social Service and the Commission on the Church and Country Life, backed much of Wilson’s agenda for progressive domestic reform. Yet both commissions also identified themselves closely with the Progressive and/or Bull Moose parties during the 1912 election. The Commission on the Church and Social Service even held its annual meeting at the same Chicago hotel and at the same time as the Bull Moose Convention. Meanwhile the Commission on the Church and Country Life, together with the FCCCA Council on Home Missions, remained tightly intertwined with Republican-dominated Rural Life movement and under the oversight of Gifford Pinchot, the former head of the newly-created National Forest Service. In both instances the parallel interests of Wilson and the Federal Council of Churches were not enough to overcome the partisanship that accompanied Wilson’s narrow defeat of Roosevelt and Taft in the 1912 election.

Another committee that was important to the FCCCA, the Commission on the Church and Race Relations, directly opposed Wilson’s racist resegregation of the federal government. Most of the Protestant internationalists involved with the FCCCA and the LEP saw racial reconciliation within the United States as a domestic analogue to the construction of a just international order. In 1913 the executive board of the FCCCA awarded Sidney Gulick a permanent salaried position with the understanding that he would lead the churches in a crusade against the legal discrimination of Asian-Americans in California. The FCCCA also targeted the Jim Crow laws of the South and the recent rise of the practice of lynching. Charles Macfarland felt especially strong about civil rights and made sure that African-Americans were included at every assembly, even if
they were often limited to the topic of racial relations. He was especially proud of the fact that the seven largest African-American denominations were full members of the FCCCA. Under his guidance the Federal Council sponsored the work of Booker T. Washington while in 1909 Macfarland, Lynch and Gulick became founding members of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP). None of this impressed Wilson, who was not only an entrenched racist when it came to African-Americans, but also a firm supporter of the states’ rights to enact their own racial legislation. Throughout his presidency Wilson displayed a distinct inability to form friendships with anyone who possessed advanced views on civil rights.

Wilson failed to see eye to eye with the Commission on International Peace and Arbitration, the fourth major bulwark of the FCCCA, for many of the same reasons. As described in Chapter 2, Lynch and Macfarland rescued the FCCCA from bankruptcy in 1911 by forming a high-profile partnership with William Howard Taft for an Anglo-American arbitration treaty. This alliance may have saved the Federal Council from dissolution by attracting the popular support and the political patronage it so sorely needed. It may have put internationalism at the forefront of many churches’ political agendas. Yet it did nothing to warm the heart of Southern Democrats such as Woodrow Wilson.

The Federal Council of Churches officially remained neutral during the 1912 election. Yet this was little more than a façade, as its most visible spokesmen split their votes between Taft and Roosevelt. When Wilson slipped into office by virtue of a divided Republican base, he knew he had won in spite of the fraternal relations between his political enemies and the Protestant hierarchy of the FCCCA. Moreover, the new President was not one to quickly forget or forgive this fact.

The rancor between Wilson and the Federal Council increased in the first few years after the election. Wilson was congenitally unable to take criticism from a Republican-oriented organization; yet the FCCCA felt compelled to publicly rebuke Wilson’s frequent deployments of the military in Mexico and Latin America from 1912 to 1915. Macfarland and Lynch understood that the FCCCA could not compromise its internationalist positions without offending a substantial portion of its popular base as well as its primary benefactors. Besides how could they betray their prophetic calling to bring the rulers of their nation to heel for the sake of peace? In this spirit it not only initiated a campaign against Wilson’s aggressive actions in Latin America, it also condemned Wilson’s failure to enforce Roosevelt’s so-called ‘Gentlemen’s Agreement’ of 1907 with Japan that promised federal support in the effort to rescind certain state laws that discriminated against Japanese immigrants from Asia. Furthermore, many ecumenical leaders deplored Wilson’s response to the First World War once he proposed substantial expansions for the U. S. armed forces.

663 In 1913 the U.S. seized control over the foreign policy of Nicaragua and landed troops in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Wilson also refused to recognize the post-revolutionary Mexican governments upon taking office in the spring of 1913. The following year Wilson imposed an embargo and seized government offices in Vera Cruz. Wilson refused to arbitrate the matter and insisted instead on a long list of humiliating demands, which Mexico fulfilled. U.S. forces eventually withdrew, but in 1916 Wilson again ordered troops into Mexico to capture the renegade revolutionary Pancho Villa.
Wilson responded to each criticism of the FCCCA with brisk, courteous notes, notes likely written by his secretaries, and nothing more. He also tried to ignore the routine denunciations of his foreign policies in the Protestant press by Roosevelt and Taft. Yet he privately fulminated against these “liars...who I once thought had consciences but now know had none.” For Wilson there could be no compromise with those who are fighting to “bring back the days of private influence and selfish advantage. . .We must hit them and hit them straight in the face, and not mind if the blood comes.”

Seen within this context, it is understandable why Wilson viewed the League to Enforce Peace with such persistent suspicion when it began its public campaign in 1915. The LEP reenergized the dormant alliance between the Republican Party and the Federal Council of Churches that had characterized the Taft years. Even worse, it did so just as both political parties were beginning their preparations for the next campaign season.

From 1913 through 1915 William Jennings Bryan was the only sympathetic figure in Wilson’s Cabinet towards the FCCCA’s foreign policy. Wilson chose Bryan as his Secretary of State for two reasons. First, Wilson needed to assuage the three-time Democratic nominee. Wilson had little respect for Bryan’s intellectual heft and populist style. He looked down upon Bryan with that typically Presbyterian disdain reserved for evangelical revivalists. Still he needed to repay Bryan for his support during the campaign in order to close the ranks of his own party. The second reason Wilson

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665 Politically there was bad blood between Wilson and Bryan as well. In the 1908 presidential election Wilson not only refused to vote for Bryan, he would not even allow Bryan to campaign at his university. Wilson only softened towards Bryan after the three-time presidential candidate pushed the 1912 nomination Wilson’s way in the final hours of the Democratic Convention. Link, Wilson: The Road to the White House, 317 – 321.
appointed Bryan specifically to head the State Department was because he held the post in such low esteem. Wilson disdained traditional modes of diplomacy and possessed relatively little interest in foreign affairs. He thus preferred to delegate the responsibilities of the State Department to someone else, meanwhile reserving the right to step in and assert his command whenever it suited his purposes.

On his end Bryan coveted the position because of his religious convictions about international relations. Bryan was a pacifist, a firm advocate of arbitration and a strong advocate of the missionary outreach in Africa and Asia within the Democratic Party. Beginning in 1909 Bryan took the unusual step of crashing the Republican-laden arbitration conferences at Lake Mohonk. The next year Bryan began to give speeches on the topic at ecumenical events such as the Edinburgh Missionary Conference. In 1911 he crossed party lines and endorsed Taft’s Anglo-American arbitration treaty that subsequently died on the floor of the Senate. On international issues Bryan marched in step with the Federal Council of Churches both before and during his tenure as Secretary of State. From 1913 to 1915 he succeeded where Taft had not by negotiating thirty-four mutual arbitration treaties.

Bryan’s success as an arbitrationist might have made him a legend in internationalist circles in a time of peace. However his pacifist convictions made him an increasingly isolated figure once the Great War began. As noted in the previous section, Bryan’s inability to endorse the militarist basis of the League of Nations placed him at odds with the LEP and the ecumenical movement. He soon fell out of favor with Wilson as well. In the summer of 1915 Bryan resigned his office in order to protest against the President’s strong stand against Germany’s use of submarines. Wilson was frankly
relieved. “No stranger man ever lived,” he quipped as Bryan walked out the door, “and his naivete takes my breath away.”

Bryan was never able to forge a connection between Wilson and the ecumenical movement, partly because the President never took him into his confidence or entrusted him with the final say over foreign policy, and partly because his religious pacifism made him the odd man out with both sides. In any case, even if Wilson had valued the counsel of his Secretary of State, Bryan would not have used his influence on behalf of the LEP.

Because the option of using Bryan to promote the League was never much of an option at all, the Federal Council of Churches struggled to find some other avenue into the White House. The most direct route was without a doubt John Mott. Yet I have found no record that Mott ever brought up the issue with the President, that is, until just after the Konstanz Conference. On 16 September 1914 Mott and Wilson talked for thirty-five minutes about Mott’s recent experiences on the Continent. Mott shared with Wilson his vision for transforming the YMCA into an engine for the care of POWs, after which Wilson provided his “trusted friend” with letters of introduction to the American embassies and orders to assist him for the American embassies in Europe. At this meeting Mott also informed Wilson about the establishment of the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches and its vision for the erection of a “League of Peace” upon the war’s conclusion. At a second visit on 6 January 1915, after Mott’s return trip to Europe, he brought up the League once again in passing while debriefing the President about the Y’s recent successes with POW relief. This time the

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philanthropist Charles R. Crane and the World Alliance’s new man in the field, Benjamin Battin, were also present. This time Battin also told Wilson about his experiences in London and Berlin and about Sir Edward Grey’s quiet endorsement of the League concept, which Wilson quietly listened to but did not respond.\footnote{PWW, Vol. 30, 358: letter from Mott to Wilson, 26 November 1914; PWW, Vol. 32, 52 – 53: letter from Charles R. Crane to Wilson, 10 January 1915; WCCA 212.03: letter from Battin to Dickinson, 10 January 1915.}

Mott planted a seed in Wilson’s mind even if he did not press the issue. Still Wilson made no move towards the Federal Council of Churches or the League to Enforce Peace. In 1914 the President did not once address the concept of a postwar league in his speeches, nor did he mention it at all in his private correspondence. In 1915 he remained publicly silent on the issue in public and took no notice of the burgeoning campaigns of the FCCCA and the LEP on behalf of the League. Yet by the end of 1915 Wilson began to explore the concept in private with one person and one person only, his informal advisor on foreign affairs, Colonel Edward House.

House became the President’s right hand because of his skillful supervision of Wilson’s 1912 campaign. The ‘Colonel’, as he liked to be called, was no soldier, but he was a veteran of the fierce gubernatorial battles in his home state of Texas. He never held office himself, not even an appointed office. Small-boned and unable to project his voice in public, House at least possessed enough self-knowledge to recognize his unattractiveness as a candidate. In 1910 House looked about for a leading man who would allow him to translate his abilities onto the national level and, ahead of the pack as usual, he decided that Woodrow Wilson, the rookie governor of New Jersey, would make an excellent gamble.
During Wilson’s first term, the relationship between the President and the Colonel was one of the most productive political partnerships in American history. Together they formed a balanced team. Wilson was a brilliant orator who exuded educational distinction and American idealism on the campaign trail, yet Wilson’s aloofness and political inexperience too often handicapped him within Washington circles. House, on the other hand, was more Machiavellian and possessed the vital political talent of suffering fools gladly. “The things which Colonel House did best, meeting men face to face and listening to them patiently and persuading them gradually, Woodrow Wilson could hardly bear to do at all,” the White House insider Walter Lippmann later explained. “The President was an intellectual, accustomed to acquiring knowledge by reading. . . Wilson spared himself personal contact whenever he could, and said what he had to say in speeches, notes, and writ memoranda. . . . The Colonel kept open the channels of understanding between the solitary man in the White House and representatives of all sorts of influential and indispensable men.”

In other words, if Wilson seemed made to command the podium, House was built for the smoky back room.

Lobbyists quickly learned to target House. His influence was an open secret. The press called him as the “Assistant President” and Wilson referred to the Colonel as his “second personality.” “He is my independent self,” he added. “His thoughts and mine are one.” House did not occupy an official position. He preferred to float over a wide variety of policy decisions as the President saw fit. Wilson allowed House wide leeway in his dealings and only met with the Colonel face-to-face every few months. House did

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not even live near the White House. He set up shop in Manhattan so as to be Wilson’s envoy to the Republican strongholds in New York.

House maintained a distinct position of authority over Wilson’s foreign policy, particularly during the President’s first term, for at first Wilson had neither the experience nor the inclination to devote much attention to foreign affairs. Nor did he completely trust Bryan and the State Department to do much more than handle the legal formalities of international diplomacy. Wilson allowed House to appoint ambassadors without much oversight. He encouraged embassies to communicate directly with House. The Colonel also engaged in direct negotiations with foreign powers on behalf of the President, both in person and in writing, which allowed the White House to bypass the official channels of the State Department when it really mattered.

House considered himself the administration’s special expert on European affairs and, once the war began, the primary authority on the shape of the eventual peace. In 1917 he organized a team of experts to prepare the U.S. for the postwar world. This group, which House christened The Inquiry, was staffed, supervised and financed independently of the official channels of the State Department. It operated out of the national headquarters of the American Geographical Society in New York City and, with the exception of House, its workers rarely met with the President face to face until the conclusion of the war.\textsuperscript{671} By then The Inquiry employed one-hundred and thirty experts, several of whom were pulled from the ranks of the missions societies and the Protestant colleges of the Ottoman Empire, and produced over two thousand reports that were

heavily relied upon by American diplomats at the Paris Peace Conference. House came to regard himself as some sort of “Super-Secretary of State” and he was not alone. Great Britain assigned a diplomat to his Manhattan apartment and regarded it as more important than its permanent embassy in Washington, D.C.

Yet Wilson retained the absolute right to interfere periodically with House’s diplomacy. Despite his assertion that he and the Colonel were of one mind, this was not always the case. House was the consummate courtier who knew better than to openly contradict or defy the President in his efforts to sway him one way or the other. Wilson often provided House with a broad set of objectives and then trusted House to fill in the blanks. House sometimes stretched the limits of his mandate to create new policy in the belief that he could convince Wilson to follow his lead. When Wilson did not, as began to happen more and more frequently beginning in 1917, it led to bitter feelings. “I simply saturate myself, in every way possible, with facts relating to the present status of the war,” House once railed in his journal when Wilson adopted the advice of some other Cabinet members. “I see ten people to their one, and I read, perhaps, ten documents to their one.” At the Paris Peace Conference this arrangement ended in disaster. When Wilson returned to France after a brief trip home in the spring of 1919, he blamed House for bending too much to the will of the Allies in his absence. The President bristled at this perceived lack of loyalty. The two men never spoke again.

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An understanding of the personal dynamic between House and Wilson is essential to an understanding of how the League of Nations became the central pillar of Wilson’s foreign policy. House brought the League into play as a serious possibility in the spring of 1915. Furthermore, House first entered into relations with the Protestant internationalists and the League movement and then engineered a detente between the President and the FCCCA just in time for Wilson’s reelection. House therefore deserves a lot of credit for being the initial link between the Protestant internationalist community and the White House that provided the League movement with indirect access to Woodrow Wilson.

House’s initial interest in the League of Nations movement stemmed from his desire to defuse the political tensions of Europe. House believed that the U.S. had a diplomatic destiny to establish a *pax Americana* upon the rest of the world. He thus viewed the war as a providential opportunity for the United States to rewrite the fundamental assumptions of international diplomacy and usher in new, more moral stage of human development. In other words, even though House was not a particularly devout individual, he nevertheless shared the same eschatological interpretation of the war as the Protestant internationalist movement.

House’s beliefs predated the Great War. In a utopian novel that House wrote in 1911 as a “blueprint” for his political ideals entitled *Philip Dru: Administrator*, House revealed his faith in the fact that the spiritual evolution of mankind was about to take a giant leap forward. The novel itself is an unfortunate mixture of *Mr. Smith Goes To Washington*, *Braveheart* and the New Testament. The central character, Philip Dru, is a sort of secular prophet who wanders through the Texan desert gathering disciples trained
in the social sciences and preparing them for the regeneration of American society.

“Nowhere in the world is wealth more defiant, and monopoly more insistent than in this mighty republic,” Dru declaims in one of his speeches, “and it is here that the next great battle for human emancipation will be fought and won. And from the blood and travail of an enlightened people, there will be born a spirit of love and brotherhood which will transform the world; and the Star of Bethlehem, seen but darkly for two thousand years, will shine again with a steady and effulgent glow.”

When a cabal of New England capitalists seize control of Washington D.C., Dru leads an armed rebellion of Midwestern and Southern citizens that topples the government and then assumes the classical role of the benevolent dictator. Using the peace settlement as a chance to remake the nation’s laws from the ground up, Dru inscribes the social gospel onto the tabula rasa of postrevolutionary America in order to “take the selfish equation out of our social fabric.”

Once Dru restores virtuous government to the United States by force, he turns his attention to the international realm. The novel culminates in the erection of an “international coalition” based upon a covenant between Britain, Germany, Japan and the U.S. that ushers in “the comity of nations, a lasting and beneficent peace, and the acceptance of the principle of the brotherhood of man.”

Together they beat back the


676 *Ibid.*, 169. Dru’s reforms include legislative control over judges, full women’s suffrage, a graduated income tax, the abolition of state privileges, mandatory labor representation on all corporate boards, a federal pension system, the abolition of child labor, the federal reclamation of southern swamp land, the exclusion of any judicial authority who is “known to drink to excess” and “burial reform” that would favor cremation over the current system of “unsanitary” and “unnecessary” funeral practices.

regressive powers of the world, which House identifies as the Orthodox and Catholic powers in Europe and Latin America.

The core idea at the heart of House’s political fantasy is the conventional dream of the Protestant internationalist movement: that is, the erection of a League of Peace between the three great Protestant empires in the service of the pacification of the international order. Still there is an important difference that must be mentioned. House replaced the ecumenical movement’s emphasis on the missionary movement as the agent of the world’s moral regeneration with a redemptive war waged and won by the American heartland. Thus, while most Protestant internationalists conceived of the Christianization of the world in terms of the ground-up conversion of the nations, House thought of the Christianization of the world in terms of a top-down pacification of the nations through the use of American firepower. House had no belief in the power of the churches to effect meaningful change. He preferred to rely instead on the power of the American state to release the latent “spirit of Christ” in humanity that was being held down by the institutional powers of worldwide conservatism.

House shared enough of the assumptions of Protestant internationalism to be able to engage productively with ecumenical organizations such as the Federal Council of Churches and the World Alliance. Yet he never identified with them. He believed too strongly in the power of the American state to fully support the ecumenical agenda. This was J. Allen Baker’s judgment when he visited House in 1917. He found the Colonel to be “an engaging personality, very responsive and apparently glad to listen as well as to speak.” He was even more pleased to report back to Balfour and Dickenson that House was “deeply interested” in Anglo-American unity after the war. Yet he also felt the need
to note that House “was not very interested in spiritual matters” and remained “too much the nationalist” to ever submit American interests to an international body. 678

House’s commitment to the League thus developed out of his efforts to mediate an end to the Great War with the aid of the British government. From 1914 to 1918 House spent almost three months a year in London, with short side excursions to Berlin and Paris, trying to shape the outcome of the war. During these trips House became an enthusiastic supporter of the British League of Nations Society and a fervent admirer of such men as James Bryce and Arthur James Balfour.

Yet the individual who had the largest influence on House in this area was Sir Edward Grey. House valued Grey’s friendship almost as highly as he did Wilson’s. Grey in turn characterized his conversations as “not only friendly but intimate. . . at once a relief, a delight, and an advantage. . . ” 679 As discussed in Chapter 2, Grey was an early proponent of the Bryce Proposals and an active collaborator with the LNS and the World Alliance and it was he who first pressed House about a “League of Peace” during the Colonel’s trip to Europe in the winter/spring of 1915.

House told Grey before his arrival that when it came to any concrete terms of a mediated peace, Wilson had made the “decision to leave the matter to me. . . ” 680 Yet this was not entirely true. While Wilson did not provide much guidance as to terms - “I need not explain anything to you,” Wilson reaffirmed midway through House’s visit.

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678 PWW, Vol. 41, 532 – 534: letter from Baker to Balfour, 22 April 1917; WCCA 212.03: letter from Baker to Dickenson, 22 April 1917.


“You know as well as I do what my motives are, so soon as I form them.”681 – House knew that Wilson would not enter the war in order to simply deliver a victory to the Allied camp. Meanwhile, Grey’s primary goal in these discussions was get the United States to do just that.

House arrived London on 8 February to a full-on blitz by Grey and the LNS. On the following day Grey first informed House about his plan for “some sort of general guaranty for worldwide [peace],” a pitch that likely resembled the Bryce Proposals.682 Other LNS supporters such as Bryce, Dickinson and Archbishop Davidson lobbied the Colonel at social functions. In essence Grey offered House the opportunity to a mutually beneficial arrangement. Wilson could achieve his aims – the end of the British blockade, the illegalization of submarine warfare, the restitution of international law and, most importantly, the termination of the war – if only he would offer the Allies the military might of the United States in exchange for their support of the League of Nations. The Allies would gain victory, but the United States could define the peace.

In private House saw the sense of Grey’s proposal, but he knew Wilson was not ready to commit American forces to the war. House therefore presented only enough of Grey’s proposal to whet Wilson’s appetite. “I am formulating in my own mind,” House wrote from London, “and am unraveling it from time to time to Grey and others in authority, how far it is feasible, a plan for a general convention of all neutral and belligerent nations of the world, at which you will be called upon to preside and which

should be called upon your invitation.” House focused on how this “general convention” might establish a diplomatic end to the war, but he carefully omitted for now any mention of using American armed might to back the decisions of the conference.

House also traveled to Berlin on 20 March 1915 in the middle of a hellacious snowstorm in order to sound out Germany’s willingness to attend such a conference. He only stayed six days, barely long enough to confirm his prejudices against the current Imperial government. The Germans were, on the whole, “trying and disagreeable” and “almost offensive;” he complained to Wilson as soon as he crossed the border. Neither the Chancellor nor the Kaiser met with him personally. House’s highest contact was an undersecretary named Arthur Zimmermann who accurately interpreted the partisanship that lay underneath the American’s peace proposal. At least Zimmermann was savvy enough to feign interest. House reported back to Wilson that he at least was “exceedingly sympathetic,” House reported back to Wilson, about the idea of a “second convention for organizing permanent peace. . . .” Still he correctly determined that until the German General Staff was willing to entertain the prospects of a mediated peace there was no point in entering into extended discussion about a League with the Central Powers. “I

686 Letter from House to Wilson, 20 March 1915, reprinted in Ibid., 400 – 402. The Kaiser’s refusal to see him apparently rankled House, for it kept reappearing in his conversation and letters throughout the war. For instance, in 1917 when J. Allen Baker told House about his emotional afternoon with Wilhelm II four years earlier (see Chapter 2.6), House readily expressed frustration that he always had such difficulty getting a “private conversation with the Kaiser.” PWW, Vol. 41, 532 – 536: letter from Baker to Balfour, 22 April 1917.
find the civil Government here as sensible and fair-minded as their counterparts in England, but they are for the moment impotent.”

By the time that House returned to the United States during the second week of June, he was intrigued by the possibility of using the League concept as the key to unlock a mediated peace in Europe. Yet he had still not revealed the full scope of the proposal to Wilson. He had still not contacted the LEP, which had just held its first assembly in Philadelphia. Nor had he spent much effort on the Central Powers. House’s conception of the League was almost entirely informed by his contacts in the British government, most notably Sir Edward Grey, and in the British League of Nations Society.

House returned to a series of crises in the White House that forced him to put the League upon the backburner for a time. On 7 May 1915 a German submarine torpedoed the British ocean liner *Lusitania* (which House had taken to London three months earlier) off the coast of Ireland and, being laden not only with American passengers but also with American ammunition, it sank in eighteen minutes. Nearly twelve hundred people drowned. News of its destruction was followed almost immediately by the publication of Bryce’s catalogue of German atrocities in Belgium. Sensing that war was imminent for the U. S., William Jennings Bryan resigned his post as Secretary of State. The Republicans pushed Wilson to join the Allied camp, but Wilson was determined to keep the peace. Who knows? Perhaps Wilson was also distracted by a budding romance with his future wife, Edith Bolling Galt. For a host of reasons events conspired against House and his scheme for greater Anglo-American cooperation.

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For several months House did not bring up the League of Nations with Wilson. Grey kept the issue afloat in his correspondence with House. “My own mind revolves more and more about the point that the refusal of a Conference was the fatal step that decided peace or war last year,” Grey mused in August, “and about the moral to be drawn from it: which is that the pearl of great price, if it can be found, would be some League of Nations that could be relied on to insist that disputes between any two nations must be settled by the arbitration, mediation, or conference of others.” Grey hoped that the Americans would draw the same conclusion that he had based upon their recent difficulties with the belligerent powers at sea. “International Law has hitherto had no sanction. The lesson of this war is that the Powers must bind themselves to give it a sanction. If that can be secured, freedom of the seas and many other things will become easy. But it is not a fair proposition that there should be a guarantee of the freedom of the seas while Germany claims to recognize no law but her own on land, and to have the right to make war at will.”689 After Wilson pledged to work towards the abolition of militarism, Grey pressed House for more information. “How much are the United States prepared to do in this direction?” Grey wondered. “Would the President propose that there should be a League of Nations? . . .I am sure that the Government of the United States is the only Government that could make it with effect. . . .”690

House took the bait. On the day after receiving this last plea from Grey, House presented the League concept in detail to the President with the emphasis on the fact that


this represented a chance for the U.S. to facilitate a negotiated conclusion to the war.\textsuperscript{691} According to House’s journal, Wilson approved of the idea of a general conference of the belligerent powers held under the authority of the United States and, in addition to this, that this conference would draft peace terms that would aim at the permanent elimination of militarism and navalism.

Still, Wilson refused to take the first step. What if the U. S. held a peace conference and nobody came? He had just refused an offer delivered by Benjamin Battin on behalf of the Committee on a Durable Peace, representing neutral Europe, to preside over a conference of neutral powers with the intention of forcing an end to the conflict in Europe. Wilson knew that he could not end the war without the help of one side or the other.\textsuperscript{692} Wilson rebelled against the notion that he alone should be the be one to “assemble a conference of neutral powers (which I am expected and invited to ‘dominate’)” and which “shall sit (and I with it, I wonder? I did not inquire about that) continuously till the war ends and all the while, patiently and without sensitiveness to rebuffs, and by persistent suggestion, heckle the belligerent nations about terms and conditions of peace, until they are fairly worried (I suppose) into saying what they are


\textsuperscript{692} WCCA 212.002: letter from Benjamin Battin to Pieter Wilhelm Adriaan Cort van der Linden [Prime Minister of the Netherlands] and Jonkheer John Loudon [Foreign Minister of the Netherlands], 4 October 1915. Portions of this letter have been reprinted in PWW, Vol. 35, 20 – 21.
willing to do. I can’t see it.” The President had been taking shots from both the hawks and the doves for his foreign policy all summer long and he was not in the mood to take any major political risks unless he could be guaranteed in advance of the results.

House explained Wilson’s hesitation to Grey in a letter dated 17 October. Grey responded on 9 November with a telegraph asking House to clarify, at least unofficially, if he should understand the President’s repeated pledge to eliminate militarism and navalism as at least a code for his possible interest in the creation of a League of Peace. House cabled back, perhaps too optimistically, that the British should indeed interpret it “along those lines,” even though Wilson still seems to have held serious doubts about the domestic viability of such a policy while entering an election year.

With all of this background in mind, we are in a better position to understand why, at this exact moment, House engineered a détente between Woodrow Wilson and the Federal Council of Churches. Since his trip to London and the formation of the LEP House had begun cultivating contacts within the internationalist community in New York. House understood that Wilson needed such allies on the home front if he were to take Grey up on his proposal. House also realized that Wilson had a chance of winning away the internationalist vote from the Republican party if the White House would champion the League idea. It cannot be just a coincidence then that on the same day that House unveiled Grey’s scheme to Wilson he also passed along an invitation from the

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693 PWW, Vol. 34, 240 – 244: letter from Wilson to Edith Bolling Galt, 18 August 1915. Wilson refused to even meet with a group of pacifist women who hoped to shame the belligerents into peace. “The perversity and selfishness of human nature are factors which they have left out of the problem,” Robert Lansing vented to Wilson after the President fobbed off a meeting with delegates from the Women’s Peace Party onto his new Secretary of State. “I shall not bore you with an account of the conversation which took place.” Wilson thanked him for sparing him the details. PWW, Vol. 34, 397 – 399: letter from Robert Lansing to Wilson, 1 September 1915; PWW, Vol. 34, 299: letter from Wilson to Lansing, 1 September 1915.
Federal Council of Churches to speak at their national assembly scheduled for the end of that year.

When Woodrow Wilson took the podium of the First Congregational Church of Columbus, Ohio on 10 December 1915, it marked the first time he had met with the FCCCA since its inception in 1905. Technically Wilson was the guest of the Commission on the Church and Country Life, so he restricted his public comments to this theme. Still almost every pastor, theologian and church worker at the conference attended the President’s address. The church was well known in religious circles because of its pastor, Washington Gladden, one of the leading exponents of the social gospel. Wilson’s homily stood in the vein of Gladden’s religious liberalism. He celebrated Christianity as “the most vitalizing thing in the world” as it was “the “only force in the world that I have ever heard of that does actually transform the life.” In the rural areas, Wilson claimed, beyond the reach of the New England elite, churches sustained an American way of life based upon moral principle and selfless disinterest. Together they composed the infrastructure of civilization. “Legislation cannot save society. Legislation cannot even rectify society,” Wilson thundered before pews filled with pastors, presbyters and bishops. “Enact a law that is the moral judgment of a very small minority of the community, and it will not work. . . .Law is a record of achievement. It is not a process of regeneration. Our wills have to be regenerated and our purposes rectified before we are in a position to enact laws that record those moral achievements. . . .And

that,” he concluded,” is the business of, primarily, it seems to me, of the Christian. . . .”

This prioritizing of the regenerate human heart in local communities over the legislative and executive powers of the State (or, to put into theological language, of gospel over law) was a standard Wilsonian theme.

Wilson’s speech flattered his audience to great effect. (After all, isn’t it easier to be the pastor in small rural town in Ohio if the President sees you as an agent of civilization?) In his own judgment the entire day “passed off very successfully.” The FCCCA agreed. Even Charles Macfarland, a lifelong Republican and former critic of the President, proudly wrote Wilson afterwards that he had won over several former enemies by his appearance. “[The Protestant churches’] sense of confidence in you has constantly increased.”

Macfarland included himself on that list of Protestant leaders who were beginning to look at Wilson in a new light, though he was not as convinced by Wilson’s rhetoric as by an informal interview with the President later that evening. At this meeting Macfarland told Wilson that he was about to set sail for a lengthy tour of Europe. For the sake of appearances he would be traveling under the banner of the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches. In fact, however, Macfarland would be undertaking a secret diplomatic mission on behalf of the League to Enforce Peace to see

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if he could convince his contacts in Germany to begin their own branch of the League movement. Perhaps, Macfarland added without knowing the details of House’s plan to convene a conference of the belligerent powers, this might be a crucial step towards the accomplishment of a mediated peace predicated upon the establishment of the League of Nations.

Unfortunately, other than the fact that Wilson provided Macfarland with visas and personal letters of introduction, there is no record in Wilson’s archives of his reaction to this stunning announcement that the general secretary of the Federal Council of Churches was about undertake his own diplomatic tour of Europe on behalf of Taft and the LEP.\(^\text{698}\)

All we have is Macfarland’s account that the President met the news with “hearty approval” and then cautioned him to “confine” himself to “preserving the spiritual life and relationships of the churches” when speaking to the press.\(^\text{699}\) Macfarland also later informed the German Council of the World Alliance, that, although Wilson had never addressed the League in public, he was nevertheless interested in the concept “if and only if it might induce Germany to accept a mediated peace.”\(^\text{700}\)

Macfarland’s claims about Wilson’s unprecedented interest in the League fit well within the context of House’s discussions about the League with Wilson. Just three months earlier House had introduced Wilson to Grey’s scheme, yet the President was hesitant to agree to anything definite for two reasons. First, he remained unsure what

\(^{698}\) PWW, Vol. 35, 354: letter from Macfarland to Wilson, 14 December 1915. Link notes in a footnote to this letter that many of the documents surrounding Macfarland’s trip are missing from Wilson’s archives.


\(^{700}\) ZLB 306 (Deissmann Nachlaß), Box 129: letter from Macfarland to Deissmann, 12 December 1915.
Europe might do with a proposal for a mediated peace based upon the formation of a League of Nations. In particular he must have worried about the reaction of the Central Powers, since House had collected very little information during his brief stay in Berlin. Secondly Wilson did not want to take a diplomatic leap of faith and convene a peace conference unless he could be assured of strong domestic support during the upcoming election year. Macfarland’s revelation addressed both of these concerns. He promised better information from Berlin based upon his ecumenical contacts in the German government. Macfarland also seemed to be offering the support of the FCCCA and its sister ecumenical organizations for Wilson in the upcoming campaign if Wilson would adopt the League of Nations movement as his own.

Wilson thus entered the new year, 1916, ready to negotiate a peace between the belligerent powers based upon the League concept. On 14 December Macfarland set sail from New York, bound for Berlin, despite almost being stranded in a blizzard. On the dock he dashed off a quick note to Wilson with the promise not to “embarrass our national interests” in the pursuit of “the great task with which it is concerned.” On the very next day Wilson summoned House into the Oval Office and ordered him to leave for London “immediately” to see if Grey was serious about his proposal. House did not want to go. He suggested that Lord Bryce come to the States instead. Wilson refused. He needed House to sound out the views of both parties since it appeared likely that the Liberals would soon fall out of power. Was Grey’s offer just a personal whim of the

current Foreign Secretary or did it enjoy more extensive support throughout the British government?702

House landed in England on 5 January 1916 to sound out the viability of Grey’s plan, just six days after Macfarland arrived in Berlin to lobby the German government to accept the League as the basis of a negotiated peace settlement. Once back in London the Colonel quickly slid back into his old social circles. During this time House’s commitment to the Bryce Proposals solidified as he spent a lot of time in the company of Lord Bryce and the LNS crew. “I talk to him more freely than to any one excepting Grey and Balfour,” House confided to Wilson.703

House visited Germany shortly after Macfarland returned stateside. However, unlike Macfarland, the Colonel just met with members of the government and not the broader ecumenical and internationalist community in Berlin. Once again he stayed in town for only a few quick days and met primarily with Arthur Zimmermann, the junior man from the Foreign Office who had shuffled House around in 1915. In the spring of 1916 Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg began making some public statements that Germany might consider some sort of brokered peace settlement. House noted this with approval, but he nevertheless distrusted Bethmann Hollweg and the other Junkers who surrounded the Kaiser. He preferred Zimmermann, the only undersecretary in the Foreign Office with a middle class background, and swallowed his assurances that he personally was open to a peace predicated upon the League. The Chancellor is “an amiable, well-meaning man, with limited ability,” the Colonel concluded in his correspondence with

Wilson. “Zimmermann is much abler and my talk with him was more satisfactory.” If only, he wished out loud, the German government would fall into the hands of such men, then Wilson could move forward with its mediation.

House returned to London convinced that the time had come to execute his plan. The Germans appeared at the end of their rope. He doubted the Kaiser’s men could survive another full year of fighting and he hoped that a middle-class parliamentary government might seize power and enter into negotiations with the American government. Everything seemed to be falling into place. “A great opportunity is yours, my friend,” House wrote Wilson from France, “the greatest perhaps that has ever come to any man. The way out seems clear to me and when I can lay the facts before you, I believe it will be clear to you also.” The time had come, he concluded, for the Americans to put pressure on the belligerent powers and force them to the peace table.

Macfarland reached somewhat different conclusions after his time in Europe. He too had met primarily with Zimmermann while in Berlin, but he had also met with members of the Reichstag, the university community and church leaders, not only in Berlin but also in Baden, Berne, Holland and Paris. He advised patience instead of action. “The present moment is not the time for any definite, concrete, political or semi-political or even non-political overtures for peace.” Patience would allow the League concept, which was just now gaining advocates in Berlin and London, to ripen into a viable postwar option for both sides. “There may soon be opportunity for some kind of moral

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intervention,” Macfarland projected. “While it may need to be unofficial or only semi-official, I believe that the nations of Europe are really looking, or will look, to the United States.” The churches therefore needed to “restrain the impatience of our various movements and organizations for the immediate present” and “prepare to make this work of reconciliation and reconstruction our largest effort for the immediate future, and prepare our minds and activities for it.” For his part Wilson should speak to those in the British and German governments who were open to the Protestant internationalist message. “The Christian leaders are the subjects of the higher motives and influences. How far will they influence the state and convince the people? That is a vital question.”\footnote{WCCA 212.003: Macfarland, “Special Report to the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America: 1916.”}

Unlike House, Macfarland did not foresee some sort of democratic revolution for Germany, but he did predict that the Kaiser would turn to a circle of pro-League politicians connected to the World Alliance centered around Max von Baden.

For now, the initiative on behalf of the League within the Wilson administration remained House’s prerogative – and the Colonel was ready to push ahead. On the afternoon of 10 February 1916, less than twenty-four hours after his arrival from Berlin, House and Grey worked out an agreement that in effect committed the U. S. to the Allied side in exchange for a peace settlement in accordance with American sensibilities. This so-called “House-Grey Memorandum” stipulated that the U. S. would ask both sides to declare their war aims after which Wilson would propose “terms not unfavourable to the Allies.” If the Central Powers refused the settlement, the memo went on say, then “the
United States would probably enter the war against Germany." House also pledged in secret that he would consult Grey – and only Grey – and wait for him to “signify [the Allies’] readiness” before releasing its peace proposal.

Next House and Grey presented the note to the heads of the Conservative and Liberal Parties, Arthur James Balfour and H. H. Asquith. Although House recorded that neither one of them was “as amenable to the plan as Grey,” he was still pleased that both men nevertheless “adopted it tentatively.” On 22 February House and Grey ironed out a final draft of the memo that took their comments into consideration.

House left London convinced that both parties had pledged themselves to the plan. This meant that Wilson remained the final obstacle. In Europe House did not keep Wilson fully apprised of his negotiations with Grey, a state of affairs that, by the way, the British knew all too well since they were monitoring House’s telegrams.

Yet Wilson was not inclined to use the threat of American force to bully the Central Powers into peace talks. Unlike House, Wilson viewed the British with suspicion. He persistently refused to consider the Allied side as being morally superior to their enemies. Wilson wanted, as he later succinctly put it, a “peace without victory,” whereas what House and Grey proposed was a peace predicated upon victory. House argued that the League of Nations would circumscribe the selfish ambitions of the triumphant powers within a moral international community. Wilson wanted Grey to come out publicly in favor of a peace conference as a gesture that he was in fact serious.

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He worried that the British would yank the football away from him at the last moment.
In 1916 Wilson was centering his election campaign around the fact that he had kept
America out of the war. How could he reverse course now without an explicit guarantee
from the Allies that they would bend to the President’s vision of international order?
Meanwhile Grey feared that the tenuous hold of the Liberal Party on the reins of power
would dissipate if the Foreign Minister bucked opinion and considered anything less than
an unconditional victory in public. He needed Wilson not only to take the first step but to
put public pressure on the government to enter into negotiations.

From February through April, Wilson and Grey circled one another without
landing. House shifted back and forth between them. Wilson could not rid himself of the
feeling that House’s diplomacy would only end in the United States securing a victory for
the Allies without anything to show for it.710 House appealed to Wilson’s vain desire to
play the peacemaker – “This is the part I think you are destined to play in this world
tragedy,” he cajoled in one such letter, “and it is the noblest part that has ever come to a
son of man” – but it was no good.711 Still House believed that Wilson would eventually
adopt the Memorandum. “The President’s penchant for inaction makes him hesitant to
take the plunge,” he scribbled in his journal on the second of April. “I believe he will
follow the advice I gave him, . . .but even to me he has not expressed his intentions.

711 Letter from House to Wilson, 10 November 1915, reprinted in Seymour, ed., The Intimate Papers
This, however, is not unusual, as he seldom or never says what he will do. I merely know from past experience. . . .”712

At a private meeting between House and Wilson on 3 May 1916 the Colonel switched tactics and tackled Wilson’s worries that the House-Grey Memorandum might result in an electoral disaster come November. If handled just right the President could move closer to the British and still be immune from attack. House proposed that Wilson endorse the League of Nations concept before the second assembly of the LEP in May. By doing so Wilson would be telling the British that the U. S. would be willing to join a postwar coalition of great powers if it was founded on a just conclusion to the war. Furthermore, at the same time that he would be sending this signal overseas about the type of peace that he wanted, he would also be coopting a traditionally Republican issue in front of a room filled with Republican internationalists just two weeks before their party’s national convention. By beating the Republicans to the punch House predicted that their enemies would be left “without a single issue foreign or domestic.”713

This was a plan that Wilson could get behind, but he had to move quickly. The League to Enforce Peace planned to meet in just twenty-four days. Wilson had already turned down one invitation, but House convinced Taft to issue him a second.714 Then House prepped Wilson with material from the British LNS. This appears to have been the first time that Wilson seriously studied the literature of the League movement.

712 House’s journal, 2 April 1916, reprinted in Ibid., 229.
714 In his original rejection of Taft’s invitation to speak before the LEP, Wilson gave the lame excuse that it was “practically impossible for me to prepare an address nowadays.” PWW, Vol. 36, 481: letter from Wilson to Taft, 14 April 1916.
Because Wilson’s exposure to the League was mediated through House, it reflected the Colonel’s cozy relations with the LNS. Wilson apparently knew little about the specific proposals of the American movement. When Wilson asked House why he had not given him anything from the LEP, the Colonel simply replied that their platform was too “impracticable.”

House also tried to prepare the British government to fulfill their end of the bargain. In his correspondence with Grey, House urged the Foreign Minister to interpret Wilson’s forthcoming speech to the LEP within the framework of the House-Grey Memorandum. On 4 May, just one day after Wilson had given him his consent to move forward with his scheme, House cabled London with the news that the President was going to call for a “general covenant of the powers to guarantee peace along the lines you and I have so often discussed. . . .” The British must be “immediately responsive” to the President’s lead. Now was the “psychological moment” to call a peace conference as a preliminary step towards founding the League. If Britain delayed, he warned, the Allies might gain the upper hand on the battlefield, which “would probably lead to the complete crushing of Germany; and Russia, Italy and France would then be more concerned as to the division of the spoils than they would for any far-reaching agreement that might be brought about looking to the maintenance of peace in the future and the amelioration of the horrors of war.” “If it is not done now,” he urged, “the opportunity may be forever lost.”

715 PWW, Vol. 37, 75: letter from House to Wilson, 9 May 1916.
717 PWW, Vol. 37, 7: telegram from House to Grey, 10 May 1916.
Understandably Grey shuffled his feet. He could not muster the political will in Britain to stop short of a decisive military victory and he could not bear to renege on his treaties with France that depended upon the postwar dismantling of the Central Powers. (Just that week France and Britain had agreed to a division of the lands of the Ottoman Empire.) As London waffled House realized Grey was not going to act alone. The frustrated diplomat advised Wilson to “get down to hard pan” with the English. “The crisis cannot be postponed. . . .” On 23 May, four days before Wilson was slated to speak before the LEP, House’s despair pervaded his correspondence with Grey. “Your seeming lack of desire to cooperate with us will chill the enthusiasm here.” When Grey refused to bend, House and Wilson revised the President’s speech. Wilson would endorse the idea of the League in general without any specific mention of the Bryce Proposals or of the possibility of peace talks.

By the time that Wilson descended into the lion’s den on 27 May 1916, he and House had whittled the speech down to little more than vagaries and goodwill. “When the invitation to be here to-night came to me, I was glad to accept it,” he began, “not because it offered me an opportunity to discuss the program of the League – that you will, I am sure, not expect of me, – but because the desire of the whole world now turns eagerly, more and more eagerly, towards the hope of peace, and there is just reason why we should take our part in counsel on this great theme.” Wilson steered clear of the proposals ratified at the previous assembly in Philadelphia. He had not come not to endorse a “program but “to avow a creed and give expression to the confidence I feel that

719 PWW, Vol. 37, 57 – 58: letter from House to Wilson, 16 May 1916.
720 PWW, Vol. 37, 100: letter from House to Grey, 23 May 1916.
the world is even now upon the eve of a great consummation. . . .” He avoided an endorsement of the LEP and concentrated instead on the beatific vision of the League as the embodiment of a new international morality. “The peace of the world must henceforth depend upon a new and more wholesome diplomacy,” Wilson informed a room filled with dignitaries from the previous two administrations. “It is clear that nations must in the future be governed by the same high code of honor that we demand of individuals. . . .If this war has accomplished nothing else for the benefit of the world, it has least disclosed a great moral necessity and set forward the thinking of the statesmen of the world by a whole age.” This meant that the United States must abandon its scruples and be “willing to become a partner of any feasible association of nations” that would “maintain the inviolate security of the highway of the seas for the common and unhindered use of all the nations of the world, and to prevent any war begun either contrary to treaty covenants or without warning and full submission of the causes to the opinion of the world . . . .”

The British did not respond to Wilson’s speech in the way that House had anticipated. Wilson’s unwillingness to make a moral distinction between the actions of the Allies and the Central Powers left the British skeptical about his true intentions. Grey pressed the White House to demonstrate its commitment to international law by declaring war on Germany instead of quibbling about the Allied blockade’s effect upon American trade. “[Wilson’s] statement of indifference to the causes and objects of the war, his putting the freedom of the seas in the forefront of the objects of the League of Nations

without defining what was meant by it, without explaining that it was an American and not a German phrase as our press considers it to be, and the omission of all reference to observing rules of warfare on land as well as on sea, were great obstacles to a response here,” Grey explained to House. “The continual reports that public opinion in the United States is determined at all costs to keep out of war, makes people ask whether even with a League of Nations the United States could be depended upon to uphold treaties and agreements by force.”  

In his opinion there could be no just peace without the use of rehabilitative force against the German government. It needed to experience “failure” or else “militarism in Germany will remain the dominant force, and will render ineffective and insecure any convention for maintaining future peace.”

Grey also continued to insist that his hands were tied by Britain’s prior commitment to France. “No Englishman would at this moment say to France. . .in face of the Verdun struggle ‘Hasn’t the time come to make peace?’,“ he argued, and then added, in a nod to his party’s domestic vulnerability, “I ought in fairness to add that I think independent English opinion feels just as strongly as France that the time for a durable peace is not yet.”

The Anglo-American conversation about the League of Nations that peaked with the House-Grey Memorandum came to a crashing halt. Grey’s hesitancy drove House to fits of anger at “the stupidity of English opinion.”


723 PWW, Vol. 37, 131 – 132: telegram from Grey to House, 29 May 1916. Lord Bryce too felt compelled to give a similar opinion. Without the international condemnation and punishment of German war crimes in the Great War and a change in the German government, how could anyone be assured that the past would not repeat itself? “There is no wish to break up Germany or humiliate or injure her,” Bryce explained. “But her conduct has made us feel that no promise she might make would be worth the paper it is written on. . . .” PWW, Vol. 37, 239 – 240: letter from Bryce to House, 17 June 1916.


overlook your high and splendid purposes and lay such stress upon minor phrases of your speeches,” House vented to Wilson on 10 June. “I believe it would be wise to leave Europe alone, for the moment, and not refer to them in any way.”726 Wilson withdrew for a short time into his own hemisphere. For the rest of the summer he turned his attention towards the improvement of relations with Mexico and Latin America. Perhaps, House wrote Wilson at the end of June, “the way the Mexican affair is handled will have great influence upon the European situation. Heaven knows, you have done all that a man could to help the people there, and the fact that they are not able to follow your kindly lead, is no fault of yours.”727

Wilson also had to face some fallout from the American internationalist community after his endorsement of the League. Many felt that unless Wilson was willing to discuss the actual substance of the LEP’s platform without falling into abstract moralism his endorsement should not be taken seriously. Taft, for one, saw through House’s transparent attempt to hijack a traditionally conservative concern in an election year. The President was, in his judgment, “a ruthless hypocrite, and an opportunist, who has no convictions he would not barter at once for votes.”728 This type of bombastic condemnation of Wilson’s speech “delighted” House, who counted it as proof that Wilson had left the Republicans “without a single issue either foreign or domestic.”729

Others in the LEP however strongly approved of Wilson’s speech. They interpreted it as a significant departure from the President’s current foreign policy. The

726 PWW, Vol. 37, 201 – 202: letter from House to Wilson, 10 June 1916.
729 PWW, Vol. 37, 121: letter from House to Wilson, 29 May 1916.
majority that applauded Wilson from within the ranks of the LEP were Protestants associated with the World Alliance and the Federal Council of Churches. Hamilton Holt was one of the biggest prizes that Wilson bagged that evening because he owned and edited the nation’s largest evangelical newspaper, the Independent. He experienced something of a political conversion. He gushed the next day that Wilson’s speech “cannot fail to rank in political importance with the Declaration of Independence and the Monroe Doctrine.”

Others hailed Wilson’s announcement as “an inspiring aim of Christian statesmanship.”

“I expected some criticism,” House crowed two days after the President’s speech, “and you have gotten it, but the chorus of approval makes the criticism seem very vain and partisan.”

Wilson’s newfound appreciation of the League concept should in fact be seen as part of a yearlong effort to win Protestant voters over to the Democratic ticket in 1916 by paying more attention to the ecumenical agenda. Wilson may not have been nakedly pandering for votes that evening, as Taft accused, but the President wasn’t exactly fully clothed either. Wilson’s motivations at this point are difficult to discern, but they likely involved a combination of genuine interest in the League, a desire to woo the belligerents to the negotiating table and an awareness of how this improved his appeal among mainline Protestants in New England and the Midwest.

Since his appearance before the Federal Council of Churches in December 1915, and his subsequent patronage of Macfarland’s unofficial diplomacy with Berlin, Wilson

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730 PWW, Vol. 37, 120: letter from House to Wilson, 29 May 1916. House was thrilled that the President had “won over Holt permanently” and with him the Independent. PWW, Vol. 37, 168 – 169: letter from House to Wilson, 7 June 1916.


had begun to adopt a more cooperative and encouraging posture towards the ecumenical movement. He participated in several of their relief campaigns in the spring of 1916. When Lynch and Gulick asked the President to encourage Americans to donate funds to the ecumenical relief efforts as part of his Thanksgiving Proclamation, he obliged them. Wilson also provided free publicity to Near East Relief and its campaign to rescue the Armenian people. For the first time, he began to see several FCCCA leaders on a regular basis, including Charles Macfarland, who developed a real affection for him. The President paid more attention to their reports and sent some of them spontaneous short letters, including a letter of gratitude for Macfarland for some “words of encouragement” during a difficult time and a note of condolence for Benjamin Battin after his wife Sarah passed away. Such personal touches were unusual for Wilson.

Wilson also sometimes acted on the behalf of ecumenical agencies. Once, after Macfarland presented a petition on 2 November on behalf of the Polish Relief Committee to allow American materials to reach Jews on the Eastern Front, Wilson successfully put pressure on the Tsar to abandon his hostility to Protestant activists working in that region.

In addition, Wilson took steps to defuse the situation with Mexico, an issue that had been a particular sore spot for the FCCCA, and he did so in such a way as to flatter the ecumenical community. In August Wilson deputized John Mott as one of the three ambassadors entrusted with the task of reaching a peaceful resolution to this crisis. That


following January this commission successfully finalized a peaceful negotiation to the crisis with Mexico that had plagued Wilson throughout his presidency. Wilson was pleased with Mott’s results enough to do it again. In the spring of 1917 Wilson named Mott as a member of a six-person team charged with assessing the new Russian Republic after the overthrow of the Tsar.

Most importantly, Wilson continued to promise that the United States would be willing to participate in a League of Nations if it came into being after the conclusion of the war. The shadow of the defunct House-Grey Memorandum still colored Wilson’s foreign policy. At a campaign stop in October, less than a month before the election, the President asked the Allies and the Central Powers to “define the elements” of a possible peace settlement. He then hinted that he would be willing to commit American troops to the side that would be willing to reshape its war aims to fit Wilson’s conceptions of a just and durable peace. “Let us once be convinced that we are called into a great combination to fight for the rights of mankind, and America will unite her force and spill her blood for the great things she has always believed in and followed.” Until then he declared, “we are saving ourselves in order that we may unite in that final league of nations in which it shall be understood that there is no neutrality where any nation is doing wrong, in that

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735 Wilson’s biographer, Arthur S. Link, claims this commission alone preserved peace between the United States and Mexico and thus “helped Wilson win the election by neutralizing the Mexican issue during the campaign.” Link, Wilson: Campaigns for Progressivism and Peace, 143. The other two men on the commission were Franklin K. Line, the Secretary of the Interior, and Judge George Gray, a former judge on the Hague Court of Permanent Justice and one of the few Democratic trustees of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. On Mott’s time in this commission, see Hopkins, John R. Mott, 472–474.

736 Wilson’s son-in-law, Francis B. Sayre, accompanied Mott to Russia as a representative of the YMCA. On Mott’s time in Russia, see Ibid., 476–520. Mott’s final report on the conditions in Russia that he produced for the various institutions of the ecumenical movement can be found in both the Swarthmore Peace Library, the archives of the International YMCA in Geneva and the library of the World Council of Churches.
final league of nations which must, in the providence of God, come into the world, where
nation shall be leagued with nation in order to show all mankind that no man may lead
any nation into acts of aggression without having all the other nations of the world
league against it.”

Wilson’s conversion to the League earned him the support of the broad majority of
the Protestant internationalist community in time for the November election. Almost
all of the trustees of the Church Peace Union and the officers of the Federal Council of
Churches supported Wilson during the campaign. Many of them voted Democrat for the
first time in 1916 and several of them, including Charles Macfarland and Frederick
Lynch, never voted that way again for the rest of their lives. Besides Macfarland and
Lynch, Wilson enjoyed the public endorsements of such ecumenical notables as John
Mott, George Foster Peabody, Washington Gladden, William I. Hull, Shailer Mathews
and Bishop Francis J. McConnell. Each of them cited Wilson’s foreign policy as a
primary factor in their decision to back the President. “You have introduced &
maintained high ideals in our international relations,” Macfarland assured Wilson on the
night before the election. “I did not vote for you four years ago, but I shall do so
tomorrow in the hope that the confusion of the hour may not prevent you from carrying
forward our nation towards those ideals.”

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738 PWW, Vol. 37, 517: letter from Wilson to Gladden, 24 October 1916; PWW, Vol. 37, 520: letter
from Wayne Cullen Williams to Wilson, 24 October 1916; PWW, Vol. 37, 620 – 621: letter from George
Foster Peabody to Wilson, 6 November 1916; PWW, Vol. 37, 631: letter from Mott to Wilson, 10
November 1910. Andrew Carnegie, the original benefactor of the CPU, also vowed to “stand or fall with
Wilson” during the campaign. PWW, Vol. 37, 549: letter from Peabody to Wilson, 27 October 1916.
739 PWW, Vol. 37, 619 – 620: letter from Macfarland to Wilson, 6 November 1916.
The shift within the FCCCA towards Wilson in 1916 may have made the difference. The Republicans put Charles Evans Hughes at the top of their ticket, a nominee with an impressive background in international arbitration and jurisprudence. He was once one of the original trustees of the Federal Council of Churches and a fierce voice for ecumenical cooperation within the fractured theological landscape of the Northern Baptist Convention. He was also a card-carrying member of the LEP. Yet he did not speak about the League in the same high, spiritual manner that Wilson did. Macfarland claimed in a letter dated the 23 August that if Wilson had not endorsed the League he would have voted for Hughes; yet since both candidates were “League men” he felt like he should vote Wilson “since he had remained immune to the war seekers” within the Republican fold. Macfarland’s reasoning was typical for his peers. For the first time since the Civil War prominent evangelical leaders in New England and the Midwest flocked to the Democratic banner. In their endorsements these individuals spotlighted Wilson’s foreign policy as a primary factor for their decision. A more comprehensive study of the religious divide would be a worthwhile topic for future study.

Wilson’s first term was thus characterized by an increasing level of cooperation with the Federal Council of Churches and its sister organizations. Wilson won in 1912 despite the close identification of the FCCCA with his opponents, largely because the rift between Roosevelt and Taft that diluted the Republican vote. With the exception of the YMCA Wilson remained obstinately aloof from the ecumenical agencies for several years. His southern social background and strong sense of personal vindictiveness kept

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741 WCCA 212.004: letter from Macfarland to Baker, 23 August 1916.
the Presbyterian President and the Protestant internationalist apart. Meanwhile the FCCCA published severe criticisms of Wilson’s foreign policy in Latin America and Japan.

Yet by the end of his first term Wilson enjoyed a budding political partnership with the Federal Council of Churches that blossomed during the next four years. Protestant internationalists formed a crucial cross-partisan base of support for the President during his bid for re-election. The turning point in the relationship was Wilson’s address before the FCCCA in December 1915 after which he aided Charles Macfarland in his unofficial mission on behalf of the LEP. Five months later Wilson endorsed the League in front of the LEP. From that moment on the FCCCA demonstrated a new level of support for the embattled President. Wilson was now their guy. His narrow victory over Hughes – sparked by wins in traditionally Republican states like New Hampshire, Ohio, California and Washington – was at least a partial payback.  

5.5 The Direction of the League Movement under Wilson, 1917 – 1918

Wilson emerged during his second term as the unrivaled champion of the League movement around the world. In part this was due to a lack of rivals. From December 1916 to November 1917 almost all of the belligerent powers experienced new civil leadership that was in one way or another hostile to the political dreams of the Protestant internationalist movement. In France power passed to the hard-hearted radical Georges

Clemenceau, who quickly purged the Cabinet of anyone who questioned the viability of a complete and unconditional military victory over Germany. In Germany Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg lost his office and was replaced by a succession of nonentities while the Kaiser continued to allow the army to determine the direction of his foreign policy. The cruelest blow however happened in Britain where on 10 December 1916 the Liberal Party realigned itself under David Lloyd George and entered into a coalition government with the Tories. Unlike his predecessor H. H. Asquith, Lloyd George never put much stock in the League except as a lure for Wilson. Arthur James Balfour replaced Grey as Foreign Minister, which, as discussed earlier, allowed Bryce and Robert Cecil to move ahead with plans for the League.

After Grey’s dismissal the eyes of the internationalist movement turned away from London towards Washington D.C. European advocates of the League scrambled to adjust to Wilson’s recent change of heart. When 1916 began Wilson had not even been an advocate of the League. Twelve months later Wilson was not just a proponent of the League: he was the only world leader who was willing to fight on behalf of the cause. In Paris pastors held up Wilson as an example of “Christian statesmanship” in contrast to the pugnacious Clemenceau. The British League of Nations Society promoted Wilson as the champion of the League and distributed copies of his address to the LEP to its members. “The lead you have given is invaluable: & we are most grateful,” Lord Bryce wrote Wilson after his reelection.743 Bryce still had hope that an American-mediated

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peace was the key to getting the League of Nations into the peace settlement. “Without America, there would be small hope of progress: with America, much may be done.”

Protestant internationalists had placed their hopes on a succession of world leaders who had in the end proved to be disappointments. The British Prime Minister Henry Campbell-Bannerman died after only one year in office in 1908; Taft’s Anglo-American arbitration treaty died in the Senate in 1912, after which he surrendered the White House to his opponents; Wilhelm II did not succumb to Baker’s tearful plea in 1913; Gray was always sympathetic in private but too constrained by his political circumstances to take the lead. With Wilson they seemed to have reached the Promised Land. Small wonder, then, that ecumenical leaders cast Wilson as an almost messianic figure, especially after his fatal clash with the Senate in 1919–1920. “There was a man sent of God whose name was Woodrow Wilson,” Charles Macfarland intoned, who met with “crucifixion” at the hands of his enemies.

The British and American branches of the World Alliance hoped that Wilson would revive the spirit of the House-Grey Memorandum after his reelection. W. H. Dickinson tried to impress upon Wilson (through his ecumenical counterparts) that the United States had to take the initiative to demand the League. If a politician in a “belligerent nation” took the lead, it “would certainly be misrepresented by his opponents and give rise to so much apprehension amongst his own countrymen as would render it impossible for him to carry it through.” Yet if the U. S. took command, it would “rally round itself an enormous mass of public sentiment that is eagerly waiting for a call in this

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745 Macfarland, The Progress of Church Federation to 1922, 5.
direction.” For “the mass of the people in all the belligerent countries believe that they are fighting for the purpose of securing a permanent peace throughout the world and they would hail the advent of some proposition which would afford a practical means of obtaining that object and they would not understand the action of any Government which might decline to consider such a proposition.”

Wilson did in fact try once again to intervene in the European morass. This time he took control of the negotiations himself, perhaps because he had been unhappy with House’s eagerness to join the Allied camp. On 26 November 1916 Wilson demanded that both sides provide him with a set of specific war aims that might in turn serve as the basis of a peace settlement. On 18 December Wilson upped the ante. He proposed to place American might at the disposal of those powers that were willing to negotiate. “The American government had been struck by the similarity of the general war aims that belligerent leaders had announced,” Wilson wrote. “The people and government of the United States would eagerly support such objectives, indeed, would join a postwar league of nations to help attain and guarantee them.”

Wilson made it clear for the first time that the acceptance of American mediation and participation in the League was the ticket to securing American intervention.

No one took Wilson up on his proposal. On 22 January Wilson reiterated his offer in an address to the Senate. The United States would join a “League of Peace” if and only if it were part and parcel of a diplomatic conclusion to the war. Wilson did not

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go into the details of what such a postwar coalition might look like, but he did specify the core principles that the League should uphold, principles such as the equality of nations, the freedom of the seas, the limitation of armaments and the end of imperial conquests of the smaller nations. “It will be absolutely necessary that a force be created as a guarantor of the permanency of the settlement so much greater than the force of any nation now engaged or any alliance hitherto formed or projected that no nation, no probable combination of nations could face or withstand it. If the peace presently to be made is to endure, it must be a peace made secure by the organized major force of mankind.”

Wilson felt as if the United States had the upper hand in its dealing with Europe. Both the Allied and the Central Powers desperately needed American resources to win the war and, even more importantly, to maintain the peace settlement. Wilson was willing to help but only if the belligerents agreed to a “peace without victory.”

Wilson’s call for a “peace between equals” touched off a quarrel between American and British internationalists. While the FCCCA and CPU strongly supported Wilson’s diplomacy, the British Council and the LNS resented the President’s unwillingness to make a moral distinction between the two sides. “Wilson puts a rather severe strain upon those of us here who are working for the idea of a ‘Peace League’,” Bryce complained to House. “How can there be a ‘peace without victory’ as a precondition to a Peace League? . . . Of course Wilson doesn’t want to offend Germany.

748 PWW, Vol. 40, 533 – 539: “Address to the Senate,” 22 January 1917. House and Wilson wrote this speech together. House commented in his diary that it was an extension of the President’s earlier speech to the LEP. “While it actually would be a proposal of peace terms, yet apparently it would be a statement of the terms upon which we would be willing to join in a league to enforce peace.” Excerpt from House’s diary, 3 January 1917, reprinted in Seymour, ed., The Intimate Papers of Colonel House. Vol. II, 415.
But can he really think we could make peace now on a *status quo ante* basis?" British internationalists thought of the Allies as a sort of precursor to the League of Nations already engaged in the forcible punishment of a coalition of outlaw states. How could the U. S. expect the Central Powers to uphold international law when they were presently in violation of it? “But we do not see,” Bryce explained in a letter to Wilson, “how these are to be attained with such a Government as Germany has at present, a Government which goes on showing its utter disregard of justice and humanity by its slave-raiding and other cruelties in Belgium, and by its entire contempt for the faith of treaties and other international obligations and duties.”

The Allies never accepted Wilson’s offer. The United States declared war on Germany in April 1917, though it never technically joined the Allied camp, but it did so without any resolution about the League issue or any agreements to conclude a “peace without victory.” Instead Wilson opted for war against Germany because a series of German mistakes convinced him that the current government in Berlin had to be removed from power before it could be a dependable member of the League. In other words Wilson came around to Bryce’s point of view.

The key event that changed Wilson’s mind was the discovery of the so-called Zimmermann Telegraph. On 16 January 1917 the Germans sent a cable to Mexico that offered military aid reclaiming the southwestern United States if they would join the Central Powers. The British intercepted the communication, deciphered it and then handed it over to the Americans on 19 February. The note infuriated Wilson, not just

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because relations with Mexico had been stormy ever since he had taken office, but because it decisively demonstrated that the Germans had been deceiving him about their interest in a peaceful conclusion to the war.

The Zimmermann Telegram also turned the American ecumenical community against Germany. Up until its publication organizations such as the FCCCA and the American YMCA resisted American involvement in the war, partly out of moral conviction and partly out of a concern for their extensive relief efforts in Europe.751 If Wilson had declared war before the publication of this note, these groups would likely not have supported him with such enthusiasm.

It was not just the incendiary substance of the Zimmermann Telegram that angered the ecumenical hierarchy. It was its author. The diplomat who had drafted the proposal, Arthur Zimmermann, was the same man who had spent so many hours with Macfarland, Mott, Battin and the other League advocates who had traveled to Berlin. House too had met with Zimmermann during his missions to negotiate a peace settlement and had come away from these meetings convinced that he was a “good friend” and an eager advocate of the American position within the German government. In reality Zimmermann was the undersecretary of state who was assigned the responsibility of cultivating relationships with any international groups that could potentially disrupt the Allied ability to make war. Besides dealing with the ecumenical movement

751 Later that year Wilson postponed a congressional declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire out of concern for the work of Near East Relief and the American missions on behalf of the Armenians in the region. PWW, Vol. 45, 185 – 186: letter from Cleveland H. Dodge to Wilson, 2 December 1917; PWW, Vol. 45, 207: excerpt from the diary of Josephus Daniels, 5 December 1917; PWW, Vol. 45, 215: letter from Wilson to Dodge, 5 December 1917.
Zimmermann also handled the German government’s connections to nationalists in Ireland, Hindu rebels in India, Russian Communists and, yes, anti-American forces in Mexico. Macfarland and company realized they had been betrayed and blamed their German colleagues for setting them up with Zimmermann in the first place. “Deissmann and Harnack have lied to us,” he vented in one letter, “There is nothing they will not do to win this war.”\textsuperscript{752}

Wilson spotlighted Germany’s “cunningly contrived plans of deception or aggression” when he asked Congress to declare war on Germany on 2 April 1917, a Good Friday on the Christian calendar. He then propounded an altered conception of the League of Nations that would exclude such autocratic states. “A steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations,” he argued. “No autocratic government could be trusted to keep faith within it or observe its covenants. It must be a league of honor, a partnership of opinion. Intrigue would eat its vitals away; the plottings of inner circles who could plan what they would and render account to no one would be a corruption seated at its very heart.”\textsuperscript{753} The same feeling pervaded the FCCCA. “Unless Germany repents and turns its face towards God,” Macfarland counseled in his last letter to Deissmann, “it can not fully come back into the brotherhood of nations.”\textsuperscript{754}

Wilson and the leaders of the FCCCA therefore went to war in lockstep with one another. Ecumenists shared the President’s view that the ultimate goal of the American war effort was the establishment of a just peace backed by the force of an international

\textsuperscript{752} WCCA, 212.004: letter from Macfarland to Lynch, 1 April 1917.

\textsuperscript{753} PWW, Vol. 41, 519 – 527: “An Address to a Joint Session of Congress,” 2 April 1917.

\textsuperscript{754} WCCA, 212.004: letter from Macfarland to Deissmann, 1 April 1917.
coalition and, what is more, that the militarists in command of the German government had to be removed from power for that coalition to come into existence. The League of Nations was the eschatological justification for the war.

The Federal Council of Churches believed it had a special mission to educate the nation about the higher aims of Wilsonian policy. Macfarland vowed that the Protestant churches would infuse the work of the American armed forces with a “spiritual light” that would lift “our nation out of its economic and industrial confusion to a higher idealism which shall make us a moral power in the world.”\footnote{Charles S. Macfarland, "Is Ours a Moratorium of Christian Faith?," \textit{The Survey} 36, no. July 15 (1916): 410.} Wilson himself asked the churches to “constantly interpret the spirit of our actions and to see to it that there is no touch of those things which have brought this war to so intolerably low a level in the methods employed, in the passions excited, in the things engendered which I feel it will take more than one generation to eradicate and destroy.”\footnote{PWW, Vol. 42, 535 – 538: “An Address and A Reply,” 19 June 1917.} The FCCCA felt a special obligation to reach ministers who remained “perplexed” by Wilson’s declaration of war.\footnote{NCCCA, RG 18-70-19: “Report of the First Meeting of the Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook at the Century Club, New York City, April 2nd, 1918.”}

Once the U. S. entered the war, Wilson created a special propaganda branch of the executive government euphemistically called the Committee of Public Information to coordinate and censor the press. Almost immediately the Federal Council of Churches and the Church Peace Union agreed to fall in line. In doing so they agreed to promote the League ideal, both in and out of their ecclesiastical circles, shorn of any partisan debate about its actual structure, function or responsibilities. The letterhead on the Federal Council’s stationary now ensured the reader that the FCCCA was “loyal to the
Government, and does not attempt to decide political issues in regard to the present war.”758

Cooperation had its benefits. Wilson worried that the country might be overcome by ugly passions in the course of a war and he rewarded the ecumenical movement accordingly. Wilson entrusted the YMCA with the moral and spiritual welfare of the American army. With Wilson’s help Mott raised over $235 million for this work in 1917–1918 and employed over twenty-five thousand people in Europe, many of them women who ran the thousands of “huts” (or foyers) that dotted the Western front. (See Chapter 3) Meanwhile Wilson handed control of the Protestant military chaplaincy over to the Federal Council of Churches. He also permitted the FCCCA to develop religious and civic programs for workers in munitions plants. It also secured the right to use the President’s words and images in their publications. Financial donations put the ecumenical agency in the black for the first time in its existence. Macfarland and Lynch responded to the unexpected windfall by hiring hundreds of energetic seminarians and youth leaders to work on its various commissions and solidify its standing with the mainline denominations.

In November 1917 ecumenical leaders created a new umbrella institution, the National Committee on the Churches and the Moral Aims of the War (NCCMAW), to formalize the collaboration between the Federal Council of Churches, the League to Enforce Peace and the Wilson administration. The government expected the NCCMAW to “be its agent in working through the Churches, reaching the clergy of the country and

the various religious organizations.\textsuperscript{759} Although the Committee on Public Information granted the new agency liberty in what it published, the expectations were that it would voluntarily restrict itself to the topics of the League and the need for a spiritual reawakening of the nation.\textsuperscript{760}

The self-appointed mission of the National Committee on the Churches and the Moral Aims was “to present, in every city in the United States of any considerable size which may be a center for bringing in clergymen from neighboring towns, the idea of a League of Nations and a World Court, and other features of a constructive peace program that might be considered at the peace conference of the nations.”\textsuperscript{761} To accomplish this it divided the country into eight regions and assigned an appropriate strategy and personnel for each sector. It sponsored revivals in tents and local churches, up and down the Atlantic Coast. Meanwhile, in the Deep South and Rocky Mountains, it commissioned wandering pairs of nomadic apostles, “one an eminent clergyman who understands the constructive peace program, the other a layman or a clergyman who knows the technical side of the proposals for a League of Nations,” to “present the Christian and ethical implications of international good will and the Christian principles that must underlie and be infused through all international machinery.” The League movement thus reached rural areas it might not otherwise have reached by the national media, solely because of

\textsuperscript{759} FHL, 5/069 (William Hull Papers), 6:2: letter from Lynch to Hull, 12 November 1917.
\textsuperscript{760} NCCCA 19-70-19: “Report of the First Meeting of the Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook at the Century Club, New York City, April 2nd, 1918”; and various untitled documents in NCCCA 19-70-11.
\textsuperscript{761} Macfarland, Pioneers for Peace through Religion, 68 – 69.
the ecclesial networks available to the FCCCA. In two years’ time this effort brought 33,000 ministers and 711,000 laymen into contact with the LEP.\textsuperscript{762}

By 1918 the League of Nations was the centerpiece of Wilson’s foreign policy. As Wilson’s enthusiasm for the project grew, so did his stature within the ecumenical movement. The once-critical Federal Council of Churches lined up behind their President for the duration of the war. For better or for worse the League movement was wedded to Woodrow Wilson by the time of the Paris Peace Conference. Yet although he became the political champion of the ecumenical movement, Wilson was never a comfortable fit. His aversion to interference, his vengeful partisanship, his racist convictions, his shallow roots in the internationalist community: all of these things returned to the surface in 1919 when the time came to create the League and establish a just and durable peace.

5.6 Conclusion

In many respects the American League movement mirrored its British counterpart. The League to Enforce Peace began operations because of the initiative of ecumenists involved in the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches. It utilized ecclesiastical networks to draw in supporters and funds for its work.

Advocates of the League also relied on its common spiritual concerns with the President Wilson to translate its ideal into diplomatic reality. Just as in Britain, the League was not the cause of the political left or of the pacifist community. It was a religious cause that cut across partisan lines.

Yet the League movement never quite gained the same momentum in the United States as it had in Britain. The fissiparous denominational system made it impossible for the Federal Council of Churches to herd all of the Protestant churches under the wings of the LEP. Several conservative and/or dispensational churches rejected the FCCCA and its new political orthodoxy, a division that foreshadowed the fundamentalist-mainline schism of the late 1920s. Thus, whereas all of the major ecclesiastical churches in Britain endorsed the League of Nations by 1919, many of the American denominations remained distinctly outside the fold and more committed than ever to the creed of American isolationism.

The primary difference between the American and the British case still remained Woodrow Wilson. The American President was a relatively late convert to the League campaign, in part because of his suspicion that the FCCCA and the LEP were primarily Republican organizations at the beginning. Yet, shepherded by Colonel House and lured by ecumenists such as John Mott and Charles Macfarland, Wilson became as devoted a believer in the League as there was. His willingness to champion the League transformed political internationalism forever. In return the FCCCA helped secure a second term in office for him.
6.1 Introduction

In the past two chapters I have contended that the boundaries of the League of Nations movement expanded during the First World War to roughly match the borders of a preexisting network of Protestant internationalists involved in the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches. In both the United States and the British Empire individuals associated with this organization utilized their denominational and ecumenical connections to jumpstart a League of Nations movement in their respective countries.

This hypothesis holds elsewhere. In Continental Europe and Canada the League of Nations movement was an outgrowth of the World Alliance and its sister ecumenical organizations. In states with a strong Protestant base the League movement drew its membership primarily from the ranks of the churches. Conversely states that lacked a Protestant constituency also lacked a League of Nations society. To take some negative examples, there were no wartime League societies in places such as Italy, Spain, Austria-
Hungary or the countries of South America. Some small League associations did pop up in Eastern Europe and Asia in the course of the war. Yet even in these cases, as this chapter will demonstrate, these organizations were products of ecumenical relief organizations or missionary activism. In these cases the League of Nations was essentially an imported cause.

This chapter will handle all of the League associations that were not headquartered in the United States, Britain or Germany. It begins with an examination of the Central Organization for a Durable Peace (CODP), the first organization to operate across the European Continent. It took shape at an international assembly of pacifists, internationalists and clerics held at The Hague in the spring of 1915. Although the CODP kept in contact with internationalists from the belligerent powers, its membership was composed predominantly of individuals from neutral Europe. As a result it had little influence on the League Covenant, which took shape under the covetous watch of the victorious powers in 1919. The CODP also suffered from an internal defect, a defect that is explored in the first section of this chapter. The CODP made an admirable effort to incorporate a wider variety of individuals in their organizations than its British and American counterparts. Whereas the LNS and the LEP excluded pacifists and socialists who dreamed of a world state or an international parliament vested with expansive legislative powers, the CODP welcomed such folks. Its so-called Minimum Program offered a watered-down political agenda for diplomatic reform that succeeded in offending few but also failed to inspire many. As time passed the CODP began to tilt towards the socialist position. By 1917 its connection to the Protestant churches was an affiliation in name only. As a result the CODP failed to capture a popular base. By 1919
it was little more than the preserve of a handful of intellectuals whose thoughtful studies on the problems of international government went largely unread. Because of its failure to maintain its ties to the ecumenical movement he CODP failed to develop into a social movement. It failed to develop an audience for its ideas and, consequently, it failed to have any serious influence on the Paris Peace Conference.

After dealing with the CODP, this chapter will move on to France, where there was no official League of Nations society until the government sponsored one in 1918 in preparation for the peace talks. Still advocacy for the League began much earlier within ecumenical circles. The French Council of the World Alliance began their campaign after a conference in 1915 with J. Allen Baker and W. H. Dickinson. Initially French Protestants refused to participate in any movement that faintly smelled like a pacifist endeavor. They did not want reconciliation with the Germans; they wanted repentence from their enemies. Slowly, however, others within the World Alliance persuaded French Protestants to quietly promote the concept of the League. After Wilson endorsed the concept and then led America into the war, French Protestants became more openly enthusiastic about the campaign until their crusade for the League became as religiously endowed with meaning as in Britain and the United States. Consequently the League movement penetrated practically every corner of the Protestant world in France with little opposition. Up through 1917 few individuals outside of that faith embraced the League. As a result the League movement did not make much headway within the government, beyond the conversion of a few minor government officials, and it exercised very little influence on the foreign policy of its Radical Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau.
Internationalist materials circulated solely within Huguenot circles remained religious in its tone.

The final section of this chapter attempts to demonstrate the validity of my central hypothesis for the rest of the world. Very few League societies existed in states without an entrenched Protestant presence. This section will detail very briefly the World Alliance’s successful efforts to expand into Canada, Greece and Eastern Europe as well as its unsuccessful attempts to enlist the Christian hierarchies of Finland and Austria. It will also detail how other Protestant internationalist organizations besides the World Alliance carried the League ideal to Russia, Japan, China, Italy and India. The strongest evidence here however is the evidence of silence. From 1914 to 1918 there is not a single instance of a League of Nations society coming into existence without the initiative of some ecumenical agency. If we go beyond the boundaries of the ecumenical movement, there is simply no wartime League activism at all.

6.2 The League Movement in Neutral Europe: The Central Organization for a Durable Peace

Despite the fact that the historiography on Protestantism in the First World War has focused overwhelmingly on how the churches acclimated themselves to wartime service, a substantial number of Protestant churches remained strictly neutral during this period. Most of the states that possessed a Protestant majority never entered the conflict, including Norway, Sweden, Holland, Switzerland and, at least for the first half of the war, the United States. The experience of neutrality from 1914 to 1918 has been a
relatively underexplored topic for historians, whether in its cultural, religious or legal contexts that deserves more attention in the future.

Unfortunately this dissertation cannot address that particular need. For although neutral Europe contributed a lot to the future of the ecumenical movement, and even though those same states still confer much legitimacy and manpower today to the United Nations, the fact remains that it had little influence on the eventual constitution of the League of Nations. At the end of the day the Covenant was a product of the Paris Peace Conference without the help of the neutral powers. Consequently, I have chosen to discuss this particular branch of the League movement in brief.

In general the story of the origins of the Central Organization for a Durable Peace conforms to the pattern established in the previous two chapters. Here too the original advocates of the League were also involved in the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches. Here too Protestant internationalists used their ecclesial connections to solicit popular support for their cause before forming a secular society in conjunction with other individuals interested in a swift conclusion to the war, the elimination of militaristic nationalism or the future viability of international law. And, finally, here too Protestants fought for their particular conception of the League as a covenanted body of nations determined to prosecute outlaw states against the socialist vision of a world state and the pacifist demand that the League not be reliant on the armed forces of the Great Powers.

The first advocacy on behalf of the League in neutral Europe appeared in the international press in late August 1914. The *Memorial Concerning the Principles of a Durable Treaty* was a short précis that quickly put forth the idea of a “universal European
Federation” and then called for peace-minded individuals to gather together to debate this concept with or without the participation of the governments. A third Hague Conference was supposed to meet in the spring of 1915. These plans were now ten years old, but the war had thrown them into limbo. The *Memorial* proposed that internationalists from around the world should gather at The Hague as scheduled as private citizens to launch a new chapter in the crusade for an international judiciary.\footnote{WCCA: Schweizerisches Komitee zum Studium der Grundlagen eines dauerhaften Friedensvertrages, *Memorial Concerning the Principles of a Durable Treaty of Peace* (Olten: W. Trösch, 1915). A copy of this text is also available in the United States in Jane Addams Memorial Library at Swarthmore College.}

The principal figure behind the *Memorial* was Dr. Louis Emery, a professor of the New Testament at the University of Lausanne. Emery attended the Konstanz Church Conference, just across the German-Swiss border, and it appears as if his enthusiasm for the League was a product of that time. At any rate he does not seem to have endorsed such a concept beforehand, even if he had a long record of support for the Hague Conferences and the establishment of a world court. At Konstanz, Emery agreed to chair the Swiss Council of the World Alliance. Baker and Dickinson hoped that his appointment would bridge the gap between the German- and French-speaking Swiss delegates who, when it came to international politics, could not seem to get along with one another. Emery was a product of the Vaud, a Francophonic canton, but he had studied in Germany and had written his dissertation on the father of German liberal theology, Friedrich Schleiermacher. Furthermore his most recent publication, a theological encyclopedia entitled *Introduction a l’Étude de la Théologie Protestante*, was one of the first attempts to combine the French, German and English theological
traditions into a singular transnational narrative. Emery was an energetic and capable captain of the Swiss Council whose premature death in 1915 from an illness of the lungs set back the development of a truly national Swiss Council, across ethnic lines, until after the First World War.

Emery assembled a small group of internationalists that met in Lausanne throughout the fall of 1914. This assembly, which adopted the name of the Swiss Union for a Durable Peace, included both secular and religious internationalists, the bulk of whom came from the theological departments and law schools of the universities of Lausanne and Geneva. The Memorial was the result of their reflections upon the possibilities available to the international peace movement after the outbreak of a world war. At first Emery just mailed copies of their proposal to like-minded individuals and sympathetic newspapers scattered throughout France and Switzerland. The Memorial only reached a larger audience once it was taken up by the World Alliance.

In October Benjamin Battin arrived in Lausanne as part of his new duties as the traveling secretary of the World Alliance. As described in Chapter 2, the trustees of the Church Peace Union hired Battin to coordinate the efforts of the fragile national councils of the new ecumenical organization. In September Battin traveled with John Mott through the belligerent countries; now with Mott returning home to arrange for the

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provision of POWs through the networks of the YMCA, Battin visited the pockets of World Alliance supporters in Holland, Baden and Switzerland.

Battin was impressed by the Swiss Union for a Durable Peace. Battin had just come from Zurich where he had witnessed the disastrous final assembly of the Bureau international de la paix, the premier internationalist organizations in the years leading up to the war, as the quarreling delegates slowly realized that they had little choice but to indefinitely suspend its operations. In contrast to this notable failure, Emery’s group was moving forward with a plan to salvage what they could out of the plans for the Third Hague Conference. Battin agreed to act as the group’s emissary. For the rest of the year he raised awareness of the Memorial in each of the ecumenical councils that he visited.

Battin found that the responses from his Dutch contacts, both inside and outside of the churches, were the most encouraging. Holland coveted a quick end to the war, sandwiched as it was between the two sides and forced to watch in the meantime the brutal occupation of Belgium next door. In 1914 the Dutch Council was well entrenched in both the Lutheran and Reformed churches. Battin’s reports consistently praised this particular branch of the World Alliance as the healthiest in all of Europe. It published its own organ, International Christendom, in four languages. Within months of its first appearance in August 1914, the journal had earned enough subscribers to claim financial independence. Both theologians and pastors contributed to the Council’s propaganda. Herman Bavinck, one of the standard bearers of Calvinist orthodoxy in Holland, became one of the earliest, and most eloquent, proponents of the League in that country. Even

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the imperious Abraham Kuyper, Prime Minister of the Netherlands from 1901 to 1905 and a revered figure for conservative Protestants worldwide, lent his name to the cause in the end, despite his support for the Central Powers.\textsuperscript{767}

In 1915 a new organization, the Nederlandsche Anti-Oorlog Raad (Dutch Anti-War Council), began making arrangements to host an ersatz conference at The Hague on 7 – 10 April 1915. The main responsibility for this event fell on the shoulders of Benjamin de Jong van Beek en Donk, a legal advisor for the Dutch government who had been a prominent jurist at the earlier Hague Conferences in 1899 and 1907. De Jong van Beek en Donk invited prominent jurists and diplomats. Thanks to his solid connections to the previous Hague Conferences, the event attracted notable contingents from the neutral powers. Yet, knowing he had to secure a broader swath of popular support, he also made sure to include representatives from the World Alliance. Three individuals in particular ensured that the ecumenical movement acted in concert with the Dutch Anti-War Council during this time: Jan Anthony Cramer (professor of New Testament and pastor of the Reformed church in The Hague), Johannes Wilhelm Pont (a Lutheran professor of church history at the University of Amsterdam) and H. J. E. Westerman Holstijn (a Reformed pastor from Apeldoorn).

As the date approached the Dutch Anti-War Council relied more and more on its ecumenical contacts to convince delegates from the belligerent powers to come to The Hague. Often using Battin as their emissary, it kept in close contact with J. Allen Baker and W. H. Dickinson in London. In the end Baker himself attended the conference, along

\textsuperscript{767} LNA: Benjamin de Jong van Beek en Donk, \textit{History of the Peace Movement in the Netherlands} (The Hague: Dutch Anti-War Council, 1915). Also see Herman Bavinck, \textit{Christendom, Oorlog, Volkenbond} (Utrecht: Ruys, 1920) and Harmjan Dam, \textit{Der Weltbund für Freundschaftsarbeit}, 84 – 86.
with G. Lowes Dickinson, as an unofficial emissary of the Bryce Group. They in turn urged Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze to round up a delegation with ties to Berlin. The German pastor feared that his involvement with an international peace conference might jeopardize his work in the POW camps. Thus Siegmund-Schultze did not come in person, though he agreed to serve as an honorary officer of the event, and he solicited other German internationalists to take his place. Baker and Dickinson experienced less success with the French. Although the Huguenot politician André Mercier agreed to a titular association with the conference, no one from France actually attended the event.768

Ecumenical connections played an even more important role in attracting support for the Hague assembly in North America, especially after de Jong van Beek en Donk failed to secure any delegates on his own. In Canada the evangelical journalist James MacDonald put together a small group at the last minute. Meanwhile, becoming ever more desperate for an American presence, the Dutch Anti-War Council asked Frederick Lynch in March to assemble a delegation from the Federal Council of Churches and send them on short notice. Lynch, knowing that there was not enough time to fulfill his request, cabled Battin to ask him to go. He also contacted an old friend by the name of Fannie Fern Andrews. Andrews was, like Lynch, a progressive evangelical from New York with ties to the FCCCA and the YWCA. Even more importantly she already happened to be in Europe for an international conference on education. Andrews proved


After last minute negotiations to penetrate the British blockade circling the ports of northern Europe, the assembly opened on 7 April 1915 with a determined spirit to lay the foundations of a just and durable peace. Unfortunately, the early expressions of goodwill quickly degenerated into arguments about just what such a peace might entail. In general the delegates agreed that the postwar world would only be stable if the Great Powers created some sort of international body endowed with the power to enforce international law. Beyond that vague sentiment, however, there was no consensus. Progressives and socialists wanted a strong federal union of Europe under the dual authority of an elected legislative congress and a enhanced Hague Court. Conservatives and World Alliance members preferred a multilateral alliance with limited powers of arbitration and investigation that would not interfere with, or even truly threaten, the principle of national sovereignty. In other words they wanted the CODP to endorse something akin to the Bryce Proposals.

Quarrels over the preferred constitution of an international government almost terminated the conference prematurely. At one point during the height of the debate J. Allen Baker read aloud a letter from Lord Bryce that unequivocally condemned any “schemes involving a Federation of the European Powers with an Executive authority to maintain peace by armed force” as it would provide too much temptation to tyranny in
both its spiritual and political forms. He threatened to pull the LNS out of the conference. His threat worked. The assembly tabled indefinitely all discussion about a “Swiss style confederation of Europe” and the “parliamentary control of foreign policy.”

The final product of the assembly listed a nine-point peace proposal that favored the views of Baker and Bryce. The centerpiece of this so-called “Minimum Program” was a multilateral covenant by the major European states (with or without the participation of Canada and the United States) to enforce the provisions of the Hague Conferences through the application of armed force and economic sanctions. From beginning to end, the working assumption of every aspect of the CODP was the validation of the previous Hague Conventions and the further solidification of the Hague International Court. “The work of the Hague will become the foundation of the principal of international solidarity and the interdependence of the nations.” This premise, though present in the Bryce Proposals and the resolutions of the LEP, was more important to the CODP than to the other League organizations.

The Minimum Program was a compromise between the progressive/socialist and conservative/Protestant wings of the assembly, and, while openly endorsing the conservative agenda, it still left open a lot of maneuvering for those who wanted the League of Nations to be a singular world state with legislative powers. The CODP emphasized that the Minimum Program was simply a document of the lowest common denominator. Members of the CODP were thus free to demand more authority for the


771 SCPC, CDG-B, 1:6: Organisation Centrale pour une Paix Durable, Une Paix Durable: Commentaire officiel du Programme-Minimum (The Hague: Organisation Centrale pour une Paix Durable, 1915), 22. (This document is also located in the libraries of the LNA and the WCCA.)
League in their publications. The Minimum Program also included several clauses that appeased the left, such as proposals to ban secret diplomacy, the use of plebiscites to resolve border disputes, the protection of national minorities and a “universal Open Door” for Africa and Asia. It also advanced the idea that the League should have authority over the administration of colonies and the distribution of their natural resources. Because “one of the greatest missions of our era is the education of backward or underdeveloped peoples (des peuples rétrogrades ou peu développés),” the Minimum Program argued, a peace settlement must include “the means by which all the nations will take their part and their moral responsibility for this education.”

The officer corps of the CODP also reflected the political compromises of the assembly. Although the board contained its share of World Alliance figures - Baker, Battin, Siegmund-Schultze, Lynch, Kate Courtney, Hamilton Holt, William I. Hull, James MacDonald, André Mercier and Niels Petersen – it also included several prominent pacifist and socialist leaders well known for their extreme internationalist views. At first this had little effect on the day-to-day activities of the CODP. Since the executive committee of the CODP lived in different countries on two continents, and because it proved impossible to ever again assemble them in one place for the duration of the war, operations remained in the moderate hands of Benjamin de Jong van Beek en Donk who worked hard to appease both sides.

In 1916 the Committee for a Durable Peace experienced several setbacks that in the end moved the organization away from the conservative tenor of the LNS and the LEP. It quickly became apparent that the neutral powers could not force Germany, 

772 Ibid., 17.
Britain and France to the negotiating table, because under no circumstances would
Woodrow Wilson associate himself with the movement. Fannie Fern Andrews built up a
notable following for the CODP among pacifist groups and women’s organizations, but
because so many of these types of people were so critical of the President’s military
policy in 1915 – 1916, Wilson refused to take them seriously. So once again De Jong
van Beek en Donk relied on his ecumenical connections to reach the White House.
Benjamin Battin delivered proposals from the CODP, backed by the Dutch government,
for a neutral intervention in the war.\textsuperscript{773} As we saw last chapter, Wilson remained
unconvinced. Why should he be the one, he wondered, to “assemble a conference of
neutral powers (which I am expected and invited to ‘dominate’)” and which “shall sit
(and I with it, I wonder? I did not inquire about that) continuously till the war ends and
all the while, patiently and without sensitiveness to rebuffs, and by persistent suggestion,
heckle the belligerent nations about terms and conditions of peace, until they are fairly
worried (I suppose) into saying what they are willing to do. I can’t see it.”\textsuperscript{774} At the
same time the CODP alienated itself from the British League of Nations Society, which
insisted that the establishment of any durable settlement had to begin with the
unconditional defeat of the Central Powers. By the time that the U. S. declared war on

\textsuperscript{773} WCCA 212.002: letter from Benjamin Battin to Pieter Wilhelm Adriaan Cort van der Linden
[Prime Minister of the Netherlands] and Jonkheer John Loudon [Foreign Minister of the Netherlands], 4
October 1915. Portions of this letter have been reprinted in PWW, Vol. 35, 20 – 21.

\textsuperscript{774} PWW, Vol. 34, 240 – 244: letter from Wilson to Edith Bolling Galt, 18 August 1915. Wilson
refused to even meet with a group of pacifist women who hoped to shame the belligerents into peace. “The
perversity and selfishness of human nature are factors which they have left out of the problem,” Robert
Lansing vented to Wilson after the President fobbed off a meeting with delegates from the Women’s Peace
Party onto his new Secretary of State. “I shall not bore you with an account of the conversation which took
place.” Wilson thanked him for sparing him the details. PWW, Vol. 34, 397 – 399: letter from Robert
Lansing to Wilson, 1 September 1915; PWW, Vol. 34, 299: letter from Wilson to Lansing, 1 September
1915.
Germany in April 1917, it was obvious that, even working together, the neutral states could not hasten the end of the war.

In 1916 the CODP shifted its focus accordingly. It no longer tried to push the Great Powers into mediation. Instead it became a clearinghouse for constructive internationalist thought in preparation for the inevitable return to diplomatic normalcy once the militaristic fervor of the belligerents had exhausted itself. In two years de Jong van Beek en Donk oversaw the publication, translation and distribution of thirty reports in eight different languages. The result was an impressive canon of reference books about the theory and practice of political internationalism. In 1917 the CODP commissioned a second series of investigations into the modern causes of war with a focus on how an international government could prevent a second catastrophe.

These publications took the CODP well beyond the compromises of the Minimum Program. The committees that produced this literature were made up of academics, social scientists and political progressives. Almost no Protestant internationalists were consulted. Thus, the books dealt exclusively with socioeconomic questions of political economy, social organization and democratic reform and shunned the religious and moral appeals that characterized the League movement elsewhere. Furthermore the books were written for other intellectuals. Their ponderous, statistic-heavy style had no mass appeal. Their conclusions also favored the socialist agenda. The new consensus of these studies was that a durable peace would be dependent upon the erection of a world federation with
an international judiciary branch with jurisdiction over each of its members’ socioeconomic activities.\textsuperscript{775}

The political impotence and socialist direction of the CODP after 1916 gradually alienated the World Alliance and the Protestant churches. But there were also several personal factors that contributed to the split. Louis Emery passed away in December 1915, after which the Swiss Council had less and less to do with the CODP.\textsuperscript{776} J. Allen Baker had no time for the CODP due to his numerous travels to Canada and the Mediterranean in 1916 – 1918 on behalf of the World Alliance. In the United States Fannie Fern Andrews’ pacifist convictions and opposition to the war cost the CODP the support of the Federal Council of Churches in 1917. Afterwards Protestant leaders blacklisted anyone associated with the CODP.\textsuperscript{777}

In 1918 the CODP began to fall apart. Under serious social and economic pressure the American branch of the CODP folded in February. In Scandinavia the churches went their own way as well. By summer even the Dutch Council publicly


\textsuperscript{776} NCC RG 18-9-11: letter from Eugène Choisy to Charles Macfarland, 6 December 1915. Eugène Choisy, a French pastor and theologian living in Geneva, took over the Swiss Council but refused to cooperate with the CODP as long as it recognized German pacifist organizations.

\textsuperscript{777} FHL, RG 5/069 (Hull papers), 6:6: letter from Lynch to Louis Lochner, 14 February 1918. In a letter of self-defense to Lynch, Louis Lochner, one of the few supporters of Andrews’ pacifist stance, protested against the usurpation of the CODP in the United States by ecumenists with an aversion to pacifism. “I flatter myself into thinking that I come much closer to representing the ideals of the Central Organization than do the American members who object to my presence. None of the European members have, as far as I know, tried to use their respective groups as vehicles for adopting ‘loyalty’ resolutions, or resolutions favoring annexationalist schemes, such as were proposed in recent meetings of our American Branch. None of them have questioned the inner-political views of their associates. Whatever their personal feelings, they have in their activities inside the Central Organization adhered strictly to the promulgation, discussion and study of the ‘Minimum Program.’” FHL, RG 5/069 (Hull papers), 6:6: letter from Lochner to Lynch, 25 February 1918.
rebuked the CODP for ignoring the vital importance of religion in forging a lasting reconciliatory peace.\textsuperscript{778}

As the war spiraled towards a hasty conclusion that autumn Benjamin de Jong van Beek en Donk tried to popularize the studies of the CODP. It was already too late. Without the churches to act as agents of propagation for the organization, the CODP could not attract a mass following. Beyond providing a small library on the minutiae and machinations of international cooperation that few people read, the CODP had no influence on the League Covenant. The Allied powers refused to grant visas to CODP officials to even travel to Paris in 1919 and the U. S. State Department refused to even acknowledge any communication from its representatives. Although the CODP continued to insist that the neutral states should be “mediators and peacemakers” at the Paris Conference in 1919, the Allies dictated otherwise.\textsuperscript{779}

The fatal flaw of the CODP was its entrenched inability to cater its actions to the tastes of Protestant internationalists after 1915. It offered economic and legal solutions but ignored issues of morality and religion. Its reports were technically impressive, but they abandoned the cautious tenor of the Minimum. It opted to court social scientists, not pastors. The CODP provided no role for the churches to play – and therefore it lost them. Both the LNS and the CODP discovered political allies through ecclesiastical connections in 1914 – 1915. Yet in the end the CODP failed to capitalize on this advantage. In 1920 the organization disbanded.

6.3 The League Movement in France: \textit{La Fédération protestante de France, La}

\textsuperscript{778} Dam, \textit{Der Weltbund für Freundschaftsarbeit}, 100 – 101.
\textsuperscript{779} SCPC, CDG-B, 1:6: \textit{Une paix durable}, 48.
Paix par le Droit, and L’Association pour la Société des Nations

The French Council of the World Alliance did not at first take up the cause of international government. In the fall of 1914 it ignored inquiries from the United States about the possibility of creating a French version of the League to Enforce Peace. Its leaders refused to involve themselves in the CODP or to respond to the first publications of the Bryce Group in London.

In fact the French Council as such went into deep hibernation after the Konstanz Conference. Since the late nineteenth century the Protestant churches in France had co-existed in an ecumenical organization, the Fédération protestante de France (FPF), that allowed the different denominations and synods to speak with one national voice about political and social issues. In 1912–1913, when Baker and Dickinson first approached the French with their plans for a worldwide Peace League of Churches, they dealt exclusively with the FPF. The FPF had an abiding interest in arbitrationism and international law. It was also closely associated with one of the leading internationalist agencies in France, La Paix par le Droit, under the leadership of the jurist Jacques Dumas. The French Council of the World Alliance, which was also under Dumas’ watch, was therefore little more than a small part of the FPF.

The Great War was a difficult time for the FPF. France experienced a resurgence of Catholic nationalism during the world war that went hand in hand with a vehement anti-Germanism. In such a volatile environment Protestants were wary about expressing too much hope for reconciliation with the homeland of Martin Luther. In the first few months of the war French pastors made public denunciations of their German counterparts and worked hard to demonstrate their patriotism. They declined to
participate in any ecumenical event where Germans would be present, even if the purpose of the event was merely to coordinate relief for French POWs. For this reason the FPF boycotted the second international conference of the World Alliance in Berne in 1915.

For the first nine months of the war the Fédération did not address the League of Nations idea, either in public or in private, because it could not afford to appear soft in its patriotic fervor. This position remained fixed in place until a visit from Baker and Dickinson in March 1915.

The primary purpose of Baker and Dickinson’s trip Paris was to persuade the churches to send delegates to the Berne Conference. This never happened. The FPF had made a joint pledge with other French internationalist associations to suspend relations with all German groups until the cession of the war. The leaders of the FPF explained to Baker and Dickinson that they felt it could not renege on its agreement. Even beyond this formal reasoning, Baker and Dickinson quickly sensed that there was no sentiment among the French pastors there that evening for any reconciliation with the German churches. Several confided to their British visitors that they were sure that the German Council had just been pretending to take an interest in internationalism in order to get them to drop their guard. They argued that the war had revealed the Germans’ true, unregenerate nature.

Baker and Dickinson had heard from several others, including John Mott and Benjamin Battin, that the French were by now the most recalcitrant branch of the World Alliance and the most uninterested in a negotiated peace settlement. Yet they had somehow not realized how strong such feelings were until they witnessed it for themselves. Dickinson reported that the French refused to consider anything less than
“the dismemberment of the German Empire and the reduction of Prussia to the position of a second rate power.” Faced with such hostility Baker and Dickinson abandoned their hopes for the Berne Conference and tried to open up a dialogue about what needed to occur before a reconciliation between the French and German Councils could take place. Their hosts insisted that the German churches would have to confess their guilt as a nation for having started the conflict and to repent of their desires for international domination. “Before reconciliation, there must come atonement. Before this, there must be an internal apprehension of their guilt and a confession of this guilt before God and before the Church,” one pastor informed Dickinson after a particularly intense night of debate.780

Within this context Baker and Dickinson persuaded the hierarchy of the Fédération that the League of Nations would be a viable political embodiment of a spiritual reconciliation of Germany and the Allied powers after the war. They too believed that Germany was caught up in a sort of “war fever” that deserved punishment. They too insisted on an unconditional defeat of the Central Powers. Yet Baker and Dickinson also wanted the French to show more concern for the future. They did not want Germany to remain at the mercy of the Allies, but to enter into a full partnership with the victorious powers once it had renounced its militarist past. They assured the French that the German Council would eventually come to its senses once it had tasted defeat. According to Dickinson, when the Protestant community began to see the League

780 The delegation consisted of Marian Reinhardt (an organizer of the YMCA and YWCA ‘huts’ for the French army), Wilfred Monod (pastor of l’Oratoire de Louvre, the largest Huguenot church in Paris), Élie Gounelle (influential editor of La Revue du Christianisme Social); Eugène Reveillaud (a Senator who was one of the principal authors of the separation of church and state), Charles Gide (a leading French economist and social scientist) and Jacques Dumas (international jurist for the Foreign Office and secretary of one of France’s largest peace organizations, La paix par le droit).
within these lights, and not as part and parcel of a mediated peace settlement, they
“received the idea favourably.” After several days in Paris, the FPF agreed to work with
Dickinson and the LNS to promote the League concept within their circles.\textsuperscript{781}

Recent scholarship confirms the success of Baker and Dickinson’s trip. In his
magnificent study of French Protestantism in the First World War, Laurent Gambarotto
finds that in the summer of 1915 the League of Nations became a consistent theme in the
literature of the Protestant churches. He goes on to add that by the spring of 1917, there
were virtually no dissenting voices on this issue within the FPF. In other words, the
League became a political orthodoxy for French Protestants within the first half of the
Great War.\textsuperscript{782}

As was the case elsewhere, the Huguenot conception of the League of Nations
rested upon the tenets of the just war tradition. Pacifism ceased to be an option for
Protestants after the German invasion of their patrie. Jacques Dumas himself is an
excellent example of someone whose pacifist commitments fundamentally changed after
1914. In 1906 Dumas authored a textbook that put forth the case that the Hague Court
should be armed with the power to invoke non-military punishments. Not only did he
believe that economic sanctions were a sufficient deterrent, he argued that no state would
risk “moral alienation” from the civilized world. The threat of “national humiliation” and
“international excommunication” obviated any need for “wars of reprisal.”\textsuperscript{783} Dumas
continued to argue his case at the London Peace Congress in 1908. (See Chapter 2.)

\textsuperscript{781} EZAB 51/E-II-a-3: “Report of Visit of Mr. Baker and Mr. Dickinson to Paris, March 1915”;
\textit{Handbook of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches}, 17.
\textsuperscript{782} Gambarotto, \textit{Foi et Patrie}, 186 – 187.
“We can not admit the principle of eye for eye and tooth for tooth in international law any more than in private morals. Therefore retaliation can not be defended.”784 The Great War instantly changed his opinion. In 1916 Dumas wrote that Germany’s disregard for its own reputation within international community necessitated the creation of a permanent body equipped with full military powers.785

The French churches tied the establishment of the League to the annihilation of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires and the political regeneration of Germany. In his notes Dickinson claims that the French preferred to call the proposed institution a ‘Société’ instead of a ‘Ligue,’ since the latter term evoked images of competition, rivalry, and permanent hostility.786 That may have been true, but if so, it would have contrasted drastically with the general expectation that the Société des Nations, as they preferred to call it, still required an Allied victory.

Protestants usually coupled their advocacy for a League of Nations with the call for the complete subordination of the Central Powers to Allied demands. The League might act as a sort of international supervisor of the conquered territories. For example, Wilfred Monod, Paris’ best known Protestant cleric, insisted that Christians “must shatter the Prussian sword in order to save the ecumenical ideal of ‘one flock under one shepherd’: Christ.”787 The Allied churches must bring wayward Lutherans and Protestants back into a godly world order through discipline and punishment. Only

complete victory could ensure the continuance of Calvinist politics, defined by Monod as the communal respect of covenantal freedoms for individuals and for nations. The violence must continue. Meanwhile his “sole and high-minded consolation is in the indestructible certainty that our final victory involves the [shared] fates of world peace and the advent of the Society of Nations.”

From 1915 through 1917 the Protestant churches remained the only communities in France where the League was taken seriously. The only internationalist society to promote the idea was *La Paix par le Droit.* Therefore, the League movement remained a distinct minority with little political or social pull. The churches had absolutely no influence on Premier Clemenceau, an entrenched freethinker who regarded the League movement itself as some sort of religious aberration, or on Foreign Minister Stéphen Pichon.

The French state did not spend any thought on the League concept until the summer of 1918, when it became apparent that Woodrow Wilson was in fact resolute about making the League the centerpiece of his foreign policy at the peace conference. At this point Clemenceau ordered the Foreign Ministry to organize an *Association pour la Société des Nations* in order to determine a distinctively French position on the issue.

Disagreements within the internationalist community in Paris delayed the launch of the *Association* until just one day before the Armistice. While the Protestant representatives (including Théodore Ruyssen, André Weiss and Jacques Dumas) agreed

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788 Wilfred Monod quoted in Gambarotto, *Foi et Patrice*, 175.

with the Anglo-American vision of a covenanted body of states with the power to impose
economic and military sanctions on outlaw states, they were quite alone. Socialists
worried about the League’s lack of legislative powers and its retention of state
sovereignty over socio-economic matters. Nationalists thought the League would
rehabilitate Germany without properly accounting for French security. Finally, most
non-Protestant internationalists thought that the League movement bypassed the need for
the creation of an international court. At the end of the day this group won control of the
Association. Their champion, Léon Bourgeois, a salty veteran of the two Hague
Conferences with zero interest in reconciliation with the Central Powers, not only
presided over the organization’s proceedings; he represented France on the League of
Nations Committee of the Paris Peace Conference. Legend has it that he wept when
Wilson presented the Covenant to the public for the first time.

After its inception the Association had little to do with the FPF or the World
Alliance. Throughout the 1920s it remained dependent on the state and attracted little
popular interest. The Association promoted the League as the means to maintain Allied
control over Germany’s aspirations, whereas the Fédération hoped that the League might
someday be the engine of Franco-German reconciliation. The FPF interpreted the
League in religious and moral terms; they viewed as a political entity that existed beyond
the mundane pursuits of great power diplomacy. If the Association remained fixated on
the organs and mechanics of international law, the Fédération had faith that the League

790 The examples of Louis Le Fur and Antoine Pillet are covered in Koskenniemi, The Gentle
Civilizer of Nations, 288 – 298.

791 Jean-Michel Guieu, Le rameau et la glaive: Les militants française pour la Société des Nations
was the physical embodiment of the Kingdom of God on earth and the political
counterpart of a renewed and reinvigorated universal Church of Christ.\textsuperscript{792}

These competitive notions of the League characterized the French approach to the
“spirit of Geneva” throughout the 1920s. On the one hand, the French state regarded the
League as little more than a buttress of French sovereignty while working behind the
scenes to establish a world court at The Hague. On the other hand, the French Protestant
churches invested real moral significance in the League’s quest for a pan-European
reconciliation. For French intellectuals such as the political sociologist André Siegfried,
true belief in the League of Nations was simply one of the many peculiar characteristics
of the Huguenot subculture: “It is only the French Protestant pastors who preach the
League of Nations at us in the way [the English] do,” he wrote in 1930, “and their
biblical moralizing nearly drives us mad.”\textsuperscript{793}

6.4 Conclusion: J. Allen Baker’s 1917 - 1918 Trip and Everywhere Else

By 1916 there were thriving League movements in Britain and the United States
with lesser efforts in Germay and neutral Europe, each of them attached to the
ecumenical movement in some form or another. From 1916 to 1919 the World Alliance
tried to transplant League societies to other spots around the globe with limited success.
In each attempt Protestant internationalists relied on their contacts in the YMCA or the
missionary movement to export their grand idea. Thus, even as the League of Nations

\textsuperscript{792} For various expressions of this faith within the FPF and the French Council of the World Alliance
after 1918, see Gambarotto, \textit{Foi et Patie}, 271 – 297.

\textsuperscript{793} André Siegfried, \textit{France: A Study in Nationality} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 54 –
55.
concept planted its flag outside of the Protestant West, it remained closely associated with the ecumenical community.

J. Allen Baker was responsible for many of these new organizations. Immediately after the Konstanz Conference, Baker decided that he should travel to North America while Dickinson kickstarted the Bryce Group at home. Baker spent much of the early fall in New York where he witnessed the earliest beginnings of the League to Enforce Peace before attending that year’s Lake Mohonk Conference. Afterward he traveled to his native Canada where he successfully planted the first new pocket of the World Alliance since the war had begun.  

The League movement became as much of a political orthodoxy for the mainline Protestant churches in Canada as it had in the United States and Britain. Although no official League of Nations association coalesced until 1921, the churches served as the mouthpieces of the League movement while the war was still in progress. Historian Richard Allen notes in his landmark book The Social Passion (1971) that every major denomination in Canada released some type of formal endorsement of the League of Nations with the Presbyterians leading the way and the Baptists bringing up the rear. Another historian, Robert Anthony Wright, is a bit more cynical about the omnipresence of belief in the League in the churches in 1920, given that by the end of the decade many

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794 EZAB 51/E-II-b-3: letter from Dickinson to Lynch, 15 September 1914; EZAB 51/E-II-b-3: “Record of the First Meeting of the American Group of the Continuation Committee of the World Alliance of the Churches for Promoting International Friendship”; EZAB 51/E-II-b-1: Letter from Dick to Merrill, 29 November [1914].


Protestants had cooled in their fervor, but even he concedes that “in Protestant circles... advocacy of the League of Nations was a ritual which few dared to reject.”  

Politically the League movement found itself in the same situation as in London. The nation’s prime minister, Robert Borden, never adopted the cause of the League, but he did allow some members of his Cabinet who were more enthusiastic about the idea to form an influential pocket within the government. The primary advocate for the League was Baker’s ally, Newton Rowell, a prominent Liberal senator who, much like Lord Cecil in Britain, served under a P. M. from the other party. Rowell was also an outspoken proponent of church union in Canada and an influential advocate of the YMCA. He was joined there by other ecumenically-minded Conservatives such as Sir George Foster and Herbert Ames who were willing to stand up to Borden’s hostility to internationalism. As in Britain and the United States, the division between advocates and skeptics was not based upon party but upon religion.

From 1917 to 1919 the League dominated ecumenical circles in Canada, particularly for young adults eager to find meaning for the sacrifices of the war. Newton Rowell spearheaded a League campaign within the YMCA while his wife Nellie did likewise in the Canadian YWCA. (Over the next decade Nellie worked at the international headquarters of the YWCA in Geneva while her husband represented

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Canada at the League of Nations Assembly just down the hill.) In her biography of Mary McGeachy, the first Canadian woman diplomat, Mary Kinnear notes that her subject first became interested in international affairs as a student at the University of Toronto through the Student Christian Movement. McGeachy began speaking and writing on behalf of the League in these circles in the early 1920s. In the 1930s she moved to Geneva to work for the League Secretariat and in 1944 was made a Director of the newly-constituted United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. McGeachy’s career path was perhaps unique, but her exposure to the League through university church groups was becoming the norm for Protestant youths in Canada by 1920.  

Baker returned to Canada in 1916 and found the campaign for the League to be “well rooted in the churches” and “well on its way to success.” Accordingly he decided to turn his attention to the European Continent. In 1917 he embarked on a long journey through Greece and Italy to recruit some non-Protestant churches. Although little is known about what the particulars of this trip, a Greek Council of the World Alliance did form in 1919 under the leadership of Archbishop Germanos Strenoupolos with the blessing of the Ecumenical Patriarch. It represented the first Eastern Orthodox

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801 WCCA, 212.010: letter from Baker to Dickinson, 13 October 1917.
participation in the World Alliance. In Italy Baker failed to recruit the Vatican for his campaign. The Pope was “gracious,” he reported back to Dickinson, but he remained “uninterested in lifting the ban on participation in ecumenical life.” In fact there would never be any Catholic participation in the World Alliance until its dissolution in 1946.

In Scandinavia the World Alliance and the League of Nations movement moved forward hand in hand under the care of Archbishop Nathan Söderblom. The Danish, Swedish and Norwegian branches continued to gain converts, especially after an intense campaign in the fall of 1918 for a “righteous peace” that caricatured the League in apocalyptic terms. “The League of Nations must become religion,” Söderblom wrote in 1919. “The peoples long for a supranational order of society, and its realization must become a religious concept.” In Norway the League campaign fell into the hands of a young professor named Eivind Berggrav, who eventually became the premier Bishop of the Norwegian Lutheran Church and a vital figure in the Resistance during the Second World War. In Finland the YMCA recruited Fridtjof Nansen to work with the deteriorating situation in Russia. Nansen was a vocal supporter of the League concept and at the Paris Peace Conference he was recruited by Phillip Noel-Baker to become the

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802 In 1920 the a salaried representative from the Church Peace Union and the World Alliance visited the Orthodox churches in Yugoslavia, Rumania and Bulgaria and succeeded in starting smaller, less effective national councils in each of those countries. These efforts were considered subsidiary units of the Greek Council. EZAB 51/D-XIII-a: Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, “Die Rolle des Weltbundes bei den ökumenischen Kontakten der orthodoxen Kirchen verdient eine genauere Untersuchung”; EZAB 51/E-II-b-2: letter from George Nasmyth to Dickinson, 22 June 1920; EZAB 51/E-II-b-2: letter from George Nasmyth to Dickinson; EZAB 51/E-II-b-2: letter from George Nasmyth to Dickinson, 1 August 1920; EZAB 51/E-II-b-2: letter from George Nasmyth to Dickinson, 14 August 1920; EZAB 51/E-II-b-2: George Nasmyth, “Report of Mission to the Churches of Eastern Europe and Results of Organization Work in 1920.”

803 WCCA 212.010: letter from Baker to Dickinson, [1918??].

804 Sundkler, Nathan Söderblom, 219.

first High Commissioner for Refugees. In the 1920s he became a powerful speaker within ecclesiastical circles for the practical benefits of close cooperation between ecumenical relief programs and the League of Nations.806

Even as the League movement spread to Asia, it hitchhiked on ecumenical routes. A short-lived League of Nations Society operated in Russia in 1919 before being snuffed out by the Bolsheviks that consisted mainly of YMCA volunteers; an initial contact for the World Alliance appears to have a British diplomat in Archangel who was a close friend of J. Allen Baker.807 League advocacy in Constantinople consisted almost entirely of Protestant missionaries and converts working with the surviving Armenian community.808 The historian D. N. Verma records that early support in India existed only within the ranks of the Church of England and a handful of Hindu nationalists. Most Indians “contemptuously rejected” the League as a peculiar pet project of the British Empire.809 In China there appears to have been little interest in the League outside of Protestant missionary camps until the Paris Peace Conference.810 At that point the League became the property of many individuals who were unconnected to the ecumenical movement and who learned about the League through the secular presses.811

807 EZAB 51/E-II-b-2: letter from Dickinson to Nasmyth, 15 July 1919.
Japan remained the only Asian country with a substantial League society during the Great War. Here too religious connections played a role in the original composition of the organization, even though it attracted many individuals outside of the Protestant churches. The Japanese League of Nations Association fell under the direction of Privy Councilor Kaneko Kentaro, who hosted a goodwill mission from the Federal Council of Churches in 1915, and the chancellor of Meiji Gakuin University, Tagawa Daikichiro, the oldest Christian school in Japan. When other American internationalists wanted to start a more prestigious League society in 1916, they relied on Sidney Gulick, a former missionary who had represented the Federal Council of Churches at Konstanz in 1914, and Walter Boardman Bullen, another ex-missionary. They recommended contacting Okuma Shigenobu in the Foreign Office, but neither Okuma nor anyone else in the government displayed any interest in the League until after the end of the war. A second informal salon, the Wilson Club, also began meeting in 1917 under a former student of the Quaker leader Inazo Nitobé. However it was not until the state sponsored an official society in 1920 that a broad League movement (Nihon Kokusai Renmei Kyokai) developed independently of the Protestant churches. This society relied on funds from the Foreign Office and reached its peak membership of twelve thousand in 1932 before fading away.812

Whether in neutral Europe, in France, in Canada or in Asia, the boundaries of the ecumenical movement defined the borders of the wartime League campaign. In the case

of the Committee for a Durable Peace, its inability to work with the Protestant churches undermined its effectiveness in the long run. Wherever the League movement gained any foothold it relied on the Protestant churches as its anchor, even in a predominantly Catholic country as France. The Catholic Church never did cooperate with the World Alliance, nor did it ever warm up to the concept of the League of Nations. This remained Baker and Dickinson’s sharpest disappointment. Yet Baker did succeed in enlisting the Orthodox churches of Greece and the Balkans in their campaign, an achievement that expanded the World Alliance beyond the Protestant world for the first time.
CHAPTER 7:

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS MOVEMENT IN GERMANY AND ITS
AMBIVALENT ECUMENICAL BASE,

1914 – 1918

At the heart of all the current ideas about a League of Nations, the organization of the world, and the limitation of egotism and forces of destruction, there is an indestructible moral core, which we cannot in its essence reject, even if we are painfully aware, at the moment, of the difficulties which it presents and the abuse to which it is liable.

-Ernst Troeltsch, “The Ideas of Natural Law and Humanity in World Politics” (1922)

7.1 Introduction

Throughout this dissertation I have argued that the borders of the League movement during the First World War more or less catered to the preexistent boundaries of the World Alliance and its sister organizations. In earlier chapters I demonstrated that League societies piggybacked on ecumenical connections and relied on ecclesiastical resources to win over new converts to the cause. By 1918 the League became so popular in many Protestant circles – and consequently weighted down with religious and moral significance – that it became a virtual political orthodoxy among mainline Protestants in the United States and the Allied nations.
That did not happen in Germany. The League of Nations was not a popular concept there until the final few hours of the Second Empire. Most Protestants in Germany remained uninterested in the League before the conclusion of the war. Nor did the churches embroider the League with any specifically religious significance. Perhaps this explains why at the end of the day the League movement in Germany was a failure. Advocates of internationalism were too hesitant to work outside of the purview of the government and too slow in creating a meaningful institutional apparatus. In truth the League movement could have profited from the political respectability and receptive audience that the cooperation of the churches might have given it.

Throughout the past few chapters the argument has been made that the boundaries of the League movement conformed to the preexisting borders of the ecumenical movement. That thesis holds in this case as well, even if Germany is the exception that proves the rule. As described in earlier chapters, the ecumenical movement never infiltrated the various state churches in Germany. Unlike the French, British and American cases, Germany did not possess a federal ecclesiastical system on a national level. The state churches remained under the jealous control of the local states that composed the Empire. By and large these churches remained hostile to the ecumenical movement and therefore disconnected from the very networks that might have exposed them to the League concept much earlier than 1918. The ecumenical base in Germany was simply not strong enough to bear the weight of a successful popular campaign on behalf of the League.

In 1914 participation in ecumenical organizations remained the preserve of missionary associations, reform organizations and university professors under the
patronage of the Imperial family. As described in the first few chapters, the German ecumenical movement enjoyed the particular patronage of Wilhelm II and his aunt Luise, the Grand Duchess of Baden. Therefore the influence of the German Council often flowed upward toward the Kaiser and it had little effect on the local congregations of the lower and middle classes. This had a devastating effect on the League of Nations movement in 1918 when the royal family lost its standing as a precondition of surrender to the Allied and Associated Powers.

As a result interest in the League of Nations remained confined to a small circle of individuals in Berlin associated with the German Council of the World Alliance. This group enjoyed a certain amount of access to the powers that be in Berlin. Yet it could not achieve anything like the popular campaigns for the League that characterized the Protestant churches in other countries.

This chapter will tackle the German case in three sections that correspond to the three distinct stages of the League movement in that country during the First World War. The first will focus on Adolf Deissmann, a professor of New Testament studies at the University of Berlin who became one of the central pillars of the League of Nations movement in Berlin. Initially Deissmann was so offended at the endorsements of war by the British Council that he refused to continue his association with the World Alliance. Yet in time he came to realize that the League of Nations was the ticket to the eventual reconciliation of the Protestant West as well as a powerful bargaining chip in Germany’s continued peace with the United States. Working hand in hand with the German Foreign Office, Deissmann engaged in high-level negotiations with Charles Macfarland and the League to Enforce Peace that aimed at preventing America from falling into the arms of
the Allies. His mashed-together identification of transnational faith, the possibility of a future League of Nations, and the necessity of continued American neutrality was quite typical of the German Council’s position as a whole up until Woodrow Wilson’s declaration of war on April 2, 1917.

The second section of this chapter will set its sights on Georg Michaelis, a mid-level bureaucrat tied to the German Council through his involvement in the YMCA who in the summer of 1917 found himself catapulted into the Chancellor’s chair. Initially internationalists around the world thought that Michaelis’ appointment as the new German Chancellor might be the break they were hoping for. However, Michaelis preferred Hindenburg’s commitment to “total war” over the ecumenical hopes for a mediated peace. Although most of the members of the German Council worked with their allies to pass a resolution in the Reichstag for an immediate peace without annexations or indemnities in the fall of 1917, Michaelis submarined the effort. His loyalty to the military cost him his position after just three months. Unlike Deissmann Michaelis never reconciled himself to the League prospect, which he viewed as another vain attempt to subordinate German power to the will of Allied powers. If Deissmann represents the potential of the League movement within the folds of the German Council, Michaelis represents its limitations.

Finally, this chapter will detail the all-too-brief Chancellorship of Prince Max von Baden whose time at the helm lasted just thirty-eight days before concluding with the German surrender. Max von Baden was not officially a member of the German Council but he had for a long time been closely associated with its members. His aunt had been the movement’s primary financial benefactor before the war. After the war began von
Baden worked closely with the German YMCA on its campaign for POW relief. He was himself a believer in the League’s promise and remained one for the rest of his life. When he took office in October 1918 he approached Deissmann and several others about forming the *Deutsche Lige für Völkerbund* to galvanize popular support for the League both inside and outside of the German churches. He also tried to use his ecumenical contacts to construct a peace based upon the antebellum harmony of the Protestant world. These schemes however were not even close to the demands of the United States and the Allies, which demanded not only an unconditional surrender of the Axis nations but the abdication (and likely criminal trial) of the Kaiser. Von Baden was crushed when he learned of Wilson’s intransigence. After pushing Wilhelm into fleeing to Holland, he himself resigned his office and handed power over to the two largest parties in the *Reichstag*, the Social Democrats and the Catholic Center. These two parties, neither one of which wanted much to do with Protestant internationalism, would control German policy for the next decade.

If the first surge of enthusiasm for the League of Nations ended in 1917 with an American declaration of war, the second surge ended in 1918 with the American demand for the Kaiser’s unconditional abdication. Without the support of the Imperial family, the German ecumenical movement lost whatever traction it had enjoyed in the government. In 1919 the YMCA in Germany practically ceased to operate. Most of the mission societies folded up their operations. Even prominent ecumenists such as Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze had to depend upon foreign charity to survive. The war sapped the German ecumenical movement of its strength and, consequently, of its ability to influence the German people.
Earlier chapters have described a dependable pattern of development for the League societies in the neutral and Allied powers. A handful of ecumenical notables associated with the World Alliance began a secular League of Nations society while simultaneously launching a campaign within the relevant Protestant denominations of their respective country. Then, sometime within the next year, these individuals recruited a strategic handful of politicians to implement their vision of a postwar international order, often through a direct appeal to their religious sensibilities. Finally, in the buildup up to the Paris peace talks these ecumenists expanded their public relations campaign, both within and without the churches, while positioning themselves to influence the final shape of the settlement.

This pattern does not hold up in the German case for several reasons. First of all many Germans associated with the World Alliance abandoned the movement because of a sense of betrayal after the British declaration of war and alliance with Russia. Secondly the ecumenical movement in Germany did not have the same standing in the churches that their counterparts enjoyed elsewhere. Even when ecumenists in Berlin and Baden came around to the League concept, they could not influence the local Landskirchen. There was thus no grassroots movement in Germany. Thirdly, although the ecumenical movement was strong in the Imperial Court, the Kaiser turned foreign affairs over to the military for the course of war and then, when the military handed power over to the civilian authorities in 1918, he abdicated his position leaving the ecumenical movement in Germany without a patron in a time of panic. These factors all combined to make Germany the exception to the rule. The limits of the League movement in Germany remained circumscribed because the World Alliance’s influence remained limited.
The third chapter of this dissertation described the stormy atmosphere of the German Council in the first few months of the First World War. Emotions ran high as ecumenists in Berlin dealt with the collapse of their hopes for an Anglo-German alliance and the perceived betrayal of Baker and Dickinson. Russian troops performed what we today would call acts of ethnic cleansing in Adolf von Harnack’s hometown. Otto Umfrid lost contact with his son serving on the French front and withdrew from society altogether. The Berlin missionary societies, one of the most consistent sponsors of the Protestant internationalist viewpoint in Germany, faced the detention of its agents in Asia and Africa as well as the seizure of its land and assets in the field. The YMCA and SCM suffered a devastating loss of workers and participants as all young males reported for their military duty. (The Berlin chapter of the YMCA relied on volunteers from Switzerland in order to keep its doors open.) Finally, Protestant professors at the University of Berlin, one of the most consistent sources of support for the German Council throughout the First World War, had to suspend their classes after their students left for the front. The war dramatically altered their personal and professional lives for


814 On the deserted state of the seminary at the University of Berlin during the war, see ZLB 306, Box 271: Adolf Deissmann, “Wir treten zum Beten . . . Religiöse Bilder aus der Kriegszeit (Self-published, 1918). All told the University of Berlin lost 997 graduate students in the war, 120 of which were seminarians. Twenty-six junior faculty also died in battle. ZLB: Adolf Deissmann, *Feier bei der Enthüllung des Denkmals für die im weltkriege gefallenen studierenden Dozenten und Beamten der Universität am 10. Juli 1926.*
the worse, and in 1914 it was difficult to find a member of the German Council who did not blame British and French church leaders for their situation.

While the First World War revivified the ecumenical movement elsewhere, the conflict almost killed it in Germany. Most of the members from Baden, including Umfrid and Baron de Neufville, dropped out, never to return. Meanwhile many of its adherents in Berlin agreed with Ernst von Dryander and Adolf von Harnack’s position that it would be inappropriate to advocate for Anglo-German understanding while the two countries were at war with one another. The first American visitors to Berlin reported that of all the original members of the movement only Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze was capable of discussing the war without descending into a tirade against British perfidy.\textsuperscript{815}

The German Council agreed to associate itself with the World Alliance only after a personal intervention in the spring of 1915 by Benjamin Battin and John Mott. Battin remained in Europe as a paid permanent employee of the Church Peace Union with the assignment of keeping the fragile coalition of national councils together. Mott traveled on behalf of the YMCA and its growing campaign of POW relief, the issue that eventually brought the Germans back to the table. By focusing on the practical needs of the soldiers and the dispossessed, church leaders found a cause that allowed them to express their transnational convictions about their faith without compromising their patriotic loyalty to their respective nations. At a meeting in Berlin in March between Battin, Mott and the German ecumenical hierarchy, the Americans convinced the

\textsuperscript{815} EZAB 51/E-II-a-2:” Visit of Dr. B. F. Battin in Connection with the Constance Church Peace Conference”; “EZAB 51/E-II-a-2: “Second Visit of Dr. Battin to Holland, Germany and Denmark”; EZAB 51/D-II-a: “Protokoll der Sitzung des Kirchlichen Komitees zur Pflege freundschaftlicher Beziehungen zwischen Grossbritannien und Deutschland am 9. November 1914.”
Germans to trust them to keep the World Alliance from becoming a tool of the Allied powers.

On 5 April 1915 the German Council agreed to associate itself with the World Alliance. Over the next five years the core of this group was almost the same as it had before 1914, that is, it was comprised mainly of theology professors with an outside interest in ecclesiastical politics (Adolf Deissmann, Adolf von Harnack and Martin Rade, Paul Althaus\textsuperscript{816}), directors of missionary societies (Julius Richter, A. W. Schreiber and Johannes Lepsius), leaders of ecumenical organizations (Friedrich von Bodelschwingh and George Michaelis, the president of the German YMCA), higher-ups in the Prussian church (Ernst von Dryander, Friedrich Lahusen, Gottlieb Lüttgert). The heart and soul of the group remained Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, who kept its organ, \textit{Die Eiche}, afloat while organizing the first relief efforts for detainees on German soil. By 1916 Siegmund-Schultze was the undisputed champion of the ecumenical movement in Germany and the most devoted representative of the German position within the larger milieu of the World Alliance.

American advocates of the League of Nations correctly identified the conversion of Siegmund-Schultze and this core group of German ecumenists to the cause as their first priority. In the early spring of 1915 Charles Macfarland contacted his friends within the German Council to see if they would take the initiative in forming a German analogue to the League to Enforce Peace. As a group they would not. At its first meeting in April the German Council resolved to avoid trying to influence the churches about political

\textsuperscript{816} Paul Althaus was the dean of theological studies at the university of Leipzig. He should not be confused with his better-known son of the same name who taught theology at Union Theological Seminary after his forced expulsion from the country by the Nazi government in 1933.
matters, especially those related to the peace, until after the war was over.\textsuperscript{817} Siegmund-Schultze in particular was wary about any action that might undermine the German war effort. Despite pressure from the British and Americans he refused to publish an account of the Konstanz Church Conference or use the pages of \textit{Die Eiche}, the organ of the German Council under his editorship, to print League propaganda. He even declined to participate in a British initiative to set aside a Sunday for joint prayer and mutual repentance in the two nations.\textsuperscript{818}

In a memorandum that redefined the central aims of the German Council in 1915 Siegmund-Schultze identified three central tasks for the organization in wartime. First the Council should collect materials and manpower for the relief of POWs in German territory in cooperation with other ecumenical agencies abroad. Secondly, it should produce publications aimed at strengthening the faith of German soldiers at the front.\textsuperscript{819} Thirdly, and most critically for our purposes, it should produce materials that would counteract British publications that were influencing ecumenical circles in neutral countries towards the Allied side.\textsuperscript{820} At no point in the document did the German Council affirm its allegiance to the internationalist cause or agree to associate with the League movement.


\textsuperscript{819} See, for example, Adolf Deissmann, \textit{Deutscher Schwertsegen: Kräfte der Heimat fürs reisige Heer} (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1915); or M. Braun and Friedrich Lahusen, \textit{Weihnachtsbuch für Feld und Heimat} (Berlin: Verlag der Vaterländischen Verlags- und Kunstanstalt, 1915).

In regards to the League, the Germans followed a course of action that was the polar opposite of the other national councils of the World Alliance. Where the others spent the majority of their resources and time on domestic propaganda for League campaign, the German Council devoted its resources to propaganda for foreign audiences. If the League figured at all in the German Council’s work, it was only as an issue that threatened to alienate the German Council from the rest of the World Alliance.

The German government encouraged the German Council’s relationship with Protestant agencies in neutral countries. One of the things that the Germans did much better than any of the other belligerents was the cultivation of unofficial diplomatic relationships with religious and social movements. The Foreign Office developed ties to a variety of non-state actors in the First World War ranging from Russian Communists to Hindu nationalists and the Vatican. The Foreign Office directly assisted the German Council in various ways. It arranged travel visas for delegates to ecumenical conferences in Switzerland and Sweden and paid for their transportation to and from these events. It also awarded Siegmund-Schultze a small stipend in November 1914 to cover the costs of his foreign publications. The Grand Duchess of Baden maintained her financial support of Die Eiche, while Kaiser Wilhelm, her nephew, continued to pay Siegmund-Schultze’s salary.821

State patronage, the desire to woo foreign churchmen to the German point of view, the struggle to maintain an ecumenical perspective in the midst of war: all of these factors combined to turn Adolf Deissmann into the most important Protestant

internationalist in Berlin during the First World War. His personal story is a necessary background to understanding the shape of the German League of Nations movement in its earliest years.

Adolf Deissmann became involved in the ecumenical movement through his stellar academic career as an renowned scholar of the New Testament. He entered the professoriate in 1891 at the University of Marburg and then moved to Heidelberg in 1897. In 1908 he transferred to the University of Berlin where he remained until he passed away in 1937.\textsuperscript{822} His greatest achievement lay in being the first theologian to thoroughly utilize the fields of archeology, ancient history and linguistics to recreate the Hellenistic context in which the New Testament was written. The high point of his career actually occurred after the war, when he headlined the excavation of Ephesus from 1926 to 1928. Yet even before that Deissmann undertook two extensive field studies in the Ottoman Empire in 1906 and 1909 after which he wrote his first monograph for a popular audience, \textit{Licht von Osten}. The book sold well in four languages. Visiting professorships in Scotland, Sweden and the United States followed and Deissmann became an international celebrity of sorts in theological circles.

Deissmann’s works from this point on in his career were as known for their piety as for their cutting edge scholarship, an unusual combination that endeared him to many pastors and laymen who labored outside of academia. He often sidelined scholastic

questions about doctrinal minutiae or ecclesiastical power struggles and approached the first century church first and foremost as a living community forged on a common hope in a resurrected Christ. “The Gospel,” Deissmann liked to say, has “too often been treated as an academic concept or a historical problem” instead of as the “presence of the living God, a call to judgment and to repentance, a message of good news and the power of regeneration.”

In many ways he should be considered a forerunner of the neoorthodox approach to theology that dominated European Protestantism after the First World War.

Deissmann’s theological interests spilled over into his political life while teaching at the University of Heidelberg. His belief that the organic community took precedence over the individual determined his progressive commitments to the development of a unified German nation built upon the virtues of self-sacrifice and Christian service. Deissmann’s interest in the ecumenical movement likewise stemmed from his belief that the universal Christian Church, a spiritual reality that was the common property of all believers, had little to do with institutional boundaries of the established churches. Thus his politics and his ecclesiology formed a complementary pair: in the sphere of politics Deissmann promoted the concept of a true national community grounded in the spiritual union of the German people, just as in the sphere of religion he promoted the idea of a true spiritual community grounded in the mutual love of the common believer.

At Heidelberg, Deissmann was an active member of the National Liberal Party in Baden and he became active in the Evangelische-Soziale Kongress, a Protestant reform

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movement associated with Friedrich Naumann and Adolf von Harnack. He founded a study circle with the theological liberal Ernst Troeltsch devoted to the study of “lived religion,” a group that added a young sociologist named Max Weber to its ranks in 1907. At the same time that Deissmann was writing *Licht von Osten* about the religious culture of the the first century church, Weber was composing his masterpiece, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. The two scholars remained close friends and political allies even after both moved to Berlin in the years just the First World War. Both men eventually became founding members of the German League of Nations Society in 1918.824

Deissmann’s political commitments determined his response to 1914. Deissmann’s stance was akin to that of the National Liberal Party as a whole, which interpreted the war as a justifiable fight to preserve the preeminence of a progressive, Protestant, German *Kultur*. Deissmann believed that the war would be an opportunity for the German people to overcome their religious and social divisions through an all-encompassing struggle for national survival. James J. Sheehan has noted that the political imaginations of liberals were inflamed by the First World War because “it satisfied their longings for a source of cohesion which transcended the ordinary social and political world. . . .”825 They hoped that the guns of 1914 could advance German unity and the fortunes of their political party in much the same way that the Franco-Prussian War and the *Kulturkampf* had defined the national politics of the previous generation.


Like his collaborators Max Weber and Friedrich Naumann, Deissmann hoped that this new moral sensibility would result in progressive reform, in both the political and the ecclesiological realms, that would bring the nation together under one national, constitutional Reichstag and one national, ecumenical Reichskirche. In 1916 he defined the primary objective of the war effort not in “material” terms such as expanded borders or forced reparations, but in “spiritual” (geistlich) terms. The German nation had become a true “national comradery” (Volksgenossen) forged together through the reconciliatory suffering of countless sacrifices. “Ethnicities (Stände), classes (Schichten), parties and confessions have been drawn closer together. City and countryside have come to better understand one another; meanwhile the ruler and the nation have realized their mutual dependence upon one another (Aufeinanderangewiesensein) more than ever before.”


827 Volksgenossen is a word that, for us, has been irredeemably tainted by Nazism. The Nazi party used the term in a strictly racial sense, as, for example, in the fourth plank of the 1920 party platform: “Only a member of the nation (Volksgenosse) can be a citizen. A member of the nation (Volksgenosse) can only be one who is of German blood, without consideration of creed. Consequently no Jew can be a member of the nation (Volksgenosse).” Yet although Deissmann favored this term in his wartime writing, he did not mean it in a strictly racial sense. He was not attracted to anti-Semitism or to the German political right, even though he made his official peace with the Nazi regime in his capacity as rector of the University of Berlin. Instead Deissmann shared the usual prejudices towards nationality that were common to the ecumenical movement as a whole: that nationality was created by God as an ideal mode of human sociality with its own set of moral obligations, that God dealt with nationalities as a whole in His providential oversight of human history, and that nations rose and fell (not according to their racial purity) but according to their interior spiritual health and their ability to apprehend the divine justice and mercy of God. (See Chapter 1.3)

Deissmann often took the lead in the German Council’s verbal quarrels with the British during the so-called “paper war” of 1914. He signed the Aufruf an die Kulturwelt and co-authored the ecumenical manifesto An die evangelischen Christen im Auslande, both of which, as described in Chapter 3.2, supported the German war effort without qualification. In his private correspondence with his friends in England, including an extended exchange of letters with the Archbishop of Canterbury in the fall of 1914, he never failed to press the German viewpoint on current affairs while challenging what he saw as the “smugly self-righteous” demeanor of the British churches.829 Yet Deissmann was also anxious about a permanent German exclusion from the worldwide ecumenical community. He increased his epistolary contact with his friends in neutral countries. He even insisted on basing his daily devotionals on passages taken from the King James Bible in order to remind himself of his spiritual kinship with his “brothers” in the Anglican Church.830 For now, he wrote in a general letter to the World Alliance, expressions of “Christian solidarity” would be “inappropriate” while “hundreds of thousands of earnest Christians are going happily and willingly to their death.” Yet no Christian should ignore both sides of the “divine paradox” of being a follower of Christ at war with his spiritual brethren, torn as they are between the “natural” desire to “love both one’s nation and one’s supranational church.”831 For now “Christian internationalism

829 WCCA 212.013: letter from Deissmann to Dickinson, 28 August 1914.
831 EZAB 51/D-II-c: letter from [Deissmann] to the Berne delegates, 15 August 1915. On the context of this letter, see Chapter 3.1.
belongs to those things upon which at this time I can only meditate with the deepest emotion, for my heart aches especially when I think of England.”

Deissmann’s primary contribution to the ecumenical world during this time was the Evangelische Wochenbriefe, a weekly newsletter, roughly four to five typed pages long, that at its peak reached an audience of about ten thousand prominent Protestant churchmen in eleven different countries. The New Testament scholar wrote, edited and distributed the paper from his university office with the help of some foreign student volunteers. The weekly missive provided candid snapshots of a church at war. “The chief theme of these letters remains the same: the war and religion,” he explained in 1917. “For countless individuals this problem has become an intolerable burden, because they only experience it as a tragic paradox. Yet in fact this theme, whose gravity is certainly capable of bringing us to our knees, can also bring about a wealth of inspirational moments whenever someone in the midst of war still heeds the reality of ‘practical Christianity’ and undertakes works of love in imitation of Jesus Christ.”

He often relied on his former students to provide reports from the front lines that demonstrated “the awesome mobilization of the German spirit” (die grossartige Mobilisation der deutschen Seele) to counter the Allied assumption that “God was only active on half of the front.”

In the Wochenbriefe Deissmann relentlessly defended the German point of view on the causes and the conduct of the war. In the last half of 1915, for example,

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832 ZLB 305, Box 619: Evangelischer Wochenbrief, #43, 25 September 1915.
833 ZLB 305, Box 713: Evangelischer Wochenbrief, Vol. 1, No. 10, 9 April 1917.
834 ZLB 305, Box 652: “Evangelische Wochenbriefe: Bericht Prof Deißmanns über ‘Protestant Weekly Letter’ nach Nordamerika 1914/16.”
Deissmann cited recovered documents in Belgium that pointed to its “close collaboration” with Great Britain and blamed the Allies for the first wave of Ottoman atrocities. (“It cannot be denied that through Russian agitation some Turkish Armenians were betrayed into highly treasonable acts. . . .”835) He attacked the hypocrisy of the British Navy’s attempt to illegalize submarine warfare while breaking existing international law in order to strengthen their blockade. (“To crush a man, in my opinion, is just as humane or inhumane as to poison him and to steal a vessel loaded with cotton is just as good or bad as to sink it. . . .I hold it, therefore, unfair and unjustifiable to call the technical advance in the art of war a falling back into barbarism.”836) Several times he defended his government’s practice of mass conscription from critics who alleged that it had militarized German society. (“England is the most bellicose nation in the world in no small measure because of the form of its military organization still in force. When by far the greater percentage of a nation remains practically untouched by war, being compelled at the most, to help bear the financial burden, - when the army of such a country consists of mercenaries from among the countrymen, or of colonial and colored troops, who shed blood for them – the feeling of responsibility with the leading statesmen in case of war can impossibly be so strong as in a country where war means the self-sacrifice of every man and woman. . . .”)837

Deissmann tried to be evenhanded when he could. He was critical in certain cases of the actions of the German army, such as when it torched the city of Louvain resulting in the destruction of one of Europe’s oldest and most prestigious libraries. He admitted

835 ZLB 305, Box 634: Evangelischer Wochenbrief #42, 18 September 1915.
836 ZLB 305, Box 634: Evangelischer Wochenbrief #44, 2 October 1915.
837 ZLB 305, Box 633: Evangelischer Wochenbrief #39, 18 August 1915.
that some German soldiers had committed atrocities, but he was also quick to point out that such abuses were not characteristic of the German army as a whole and that Allied forces were guilty as well of similar offenses. (Like others in the German Council Deissmann paid particular attention to the systematic pogroms of the Russian army on the Eastern Front in regards to the Jewish population as well as the Tsar’s policies of ethnic cleansing in the Baltic regions.) Eventually he even came to the conclusion that “the German invasion of Belgium was politically, militarily, and morally a disgrace (Schade),” although he continued to insist that the British intervention in Greece in 1916 was its moral equivalent. “Both nations invaded small neutral states to stop their enemy from gaining an advantage there. In doing so,” he reasoned, “both broke international law.”

In defending his nation Deissmann hoped to promote “international understanding and the strengthening of Christian solidarity.” He believed that the prospect for the political and spiritual reconciliation of Protestantism depended upon the other nations’ coming to an understanding of the German situation, a task that demanded that someone be capable of providing a clear and cogent explanation of the Central Powers’ diplomatic aims and wartime conduct. Deissmann contended that the ecumenical movement would in effect cease to function if it became an echo chamber of the Allied propaganda offices.

The Evangelische Wochenbriefe exerted a strong influence on Protestant circles in the neutral countries. The newsletter traveled through the mail to a select list of

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838 ZLB 305, Box 349: “Protokoll der Kommission zur Prüfung der moralischen Verantwortung im Kriege am 21. Dezember 1918 nachmittags 4½ Uhr um Hospiz am Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse.”

839 ZLB 305, Box 713: Evangelischer Wochenbrief, Vol. 1, No. 1, 21 February 1917.
subscribers in twelve different countries. Deissmann was always selective about his readership. He worried that “a propaganda aimed indiscriminately at the unknown masses can only do more harm than good,” and thus with very few exceptions he sent it only to individuals that he had known personally from before the war. His list of subscribers was composed primarily of three categories: 1) his academic friends, with an emphasis on his former students; 2) members of the World Alliance with positions of leaderships in other ecumenical organizations such as the YMCA, the YWCA or the International Missionary Council; and, 3) editors of religious periodicals. The latter was a very important focus for Deissmann, as he understood the importance of getting the German point of view into the religious press of the neutral nations. Besides these subscriptions sometimes multiplied his audience. Portions of the newsletter appeared regularly in such geographically diverse magazines as *The Constructive Quarterly* (Boston), Bilvhnis [sp.?] (Rome), *The Biblical World* (Chicago) and the *Sonntagsblatt für die evangelischen Gemeinden* (Brazil).

Deissmann noted that the most receptive audiences of the *Wochenbriefe* hailed from Sweden and the Netherlands, where former Prime Minister Kuyper was reportedly a big fan. Because of its wide circulation and irenic tone, the reputation of Deissmann’s publication surpassed that of *Die Eiche* outside of Germany. “The *Wochenbriefe* have been written in such an ecumenical and truly conciliatory spirit,” a Swiss reader noted in

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840 After April 1915 no one in Britain or France received the newsletter, a fact that Deissmann blamed on the military censors. Later that year, when Italy entered the war, military censors banned the *Wochenbriefe* there as well.

841 Some issues also appeared in the British newspaper *The Daily Standard*, but the editors always printed them alongside editorials by G. K. Chesterton that execrated Deissmann’s arguments. On the *Wochenbriefe*’s distribution, see ZLB 305, Box 707: “‘Adressen- und Namenlisten für die Verteilung des Evangelischen Wochenbriefe.”
1918, “that they have actually become a crystallization point of aspirations for peace and understanding. . . .”

Most of the Wochenbriefe’s subscribers lived in the United States. By the spring of 1916 just over five hundred copies of the Wochenbriefe entered the U. S. every week. Yet that number does not tell the whole story. Deissmann’s friend Silas McBee republished entire issues in the Constructive Quarterly, an Episcopal journal well-known for its irenic approach to ecumenical issues that boasted one of the largest subscription numbers of any religious periodical at the time. The Wochenbriefe made its way into the hands of everyone within the upper ranks of the Federal Council of Churches. Deissmann was always very aware of his foreign readership and sometimes crafted a slightly different version of the newsletter for his transatlantic subscribers. “That I must have hit upon the correct tone for the American psyche has been demonstrated to me time and again,” he wrote in 1916, “yet out of my endeavors to find this tone, the letters demonstrate a few particularities that I would not intend for my German readers.”

From 1914 to 1917 Deissmann hired Rev. J. Quirling, an American theological student from the University of Chicago, to aid him in the composition and translation of the newsletter so that it might be more easily digested by its American consumers.

The appeal of the newsletter quickly caught the attention of the German Foreign Office as it struggled with how to convey its point of view in the face of the British
blockade. From November 1914 through October 1918 Deissmann received a
government stipend to produce the *Wochenbriefe*. This resource allowed him not only to
pay the substantial postal costs; it also handled the expenses of translating the newsletter
into eight languages and covered the salary of Deissmann’s American secretary. This
financial arrangement was the work of Matthias Erzberger, a parliamentarian leader of
the Catholic Center Party (*Zentrumpartei*) who in October 1914 undertook the
administrative coordination of all foreign propaganda under one central office.\(^{845}\)
Erzberger was unique in his immediate apprehension of the value of transnational
religious networks in the struggle with the Allies for the hearts of neutral Europe. No
doubt his own Catholic piety helped him reach this understanding. Erzberger’s first
propaganda efforts in the late summer of 1914 involved the creation of a *Katholische
Wochenbriefe*; Deissmann later admitted that he stole the idea for his own Protestant
newsletter from his Catholic friend. By November both publications fell under the
generous patronage of Erzberger’s *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst*\(^ {846}\).

Deissmann was an avid servant of the state, but he was not willing to become its
slavish mouthpiece. Deissmann’s reports to the Foreign Office about the success of the
*Wochenbriefe* emphasized his service to the nation. He was most proud of their effect
upon the American Protestant hierarchy, which, at least until 1917, remained one of the

\(^{845}\) David Welch, *Germany, Propaganda and Total War, 1914 - 1918: The Sins of Omission* (New

\(^{846}\) ZLB 305, Box 652: Bericht des Professors Geh. Konsistorialrats D. theol. Adolf Deissman über
University Press, 1959), 98 – 105. Erzberger also tried to influence American public opinion by
capitalizing on their connections to American Jewry, initially focused on the Russian pogroms on the
Eastern front. Egmont Zechlin, *Die Deutsche Politik Und Die Juden Im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen:
strongest lobbies against American intervention in the war. “Although most [Protestant journals] are not very well known in Europe, their effect on the American soul is quite substantial; they reach people, particularly in the world of women which is so much more influential over there than those loud political newspapers. Reason enough that we take such pains over the ecclesiastical presses and not just make a halfhearted attempt to gradually win their trust.”847 Yet Deissmann insisted on writing his own material independently of the Foreign Office or the military censors. (Given the clumsy ineffectiveness of the official German propaganda described in David Welch’s Germany, Propaganda and Total War, 1914:1918 (2000), the success of the Wochenbriefe might have been a side benefit of its relative independence from the Foreign Office.) The newsletter gained a reputation as a voice of the so-called ‘other Germany,’ the peaceful Germany of the common man and the pious Germany of the Reformation, that longed to find a lasting solution to the war.

Deissmann’s relationship with the German government appears to have been common knowledge throughout the World Alliance. Yet this did not lessen his status. Quite the opposite. It enhanced it. For Deissmann acquired a reputation as someone with a certain insider’s knowledge of the German government. In the U. S. church leaders viewed him as an indirect spokesman for a faction of the civil government that remained at the very least interested in a negotiated settlement to the war and the establishment of a more just and durable peace. With all of this in mind it makes sense that when the League to Enforce Peace wanted to reach out to the Germans in 1915 it chose to do so

847 ZLB 305, Box 652: “: “Bericht Prof Deißmanns über ‘Protestant Weekly Letter’ nach Nordamerika 1914/16.”
through its connections to the German Council of the World Alliance and its new spokesman Adolf Deissmann.

Charles Macfarland was one of Deissmann’s strongest American supporters. In his memoirs Macfarland remembered his “intimate friend” with what was for him an unusual amount of emotion. “I know of no man in Europe who was more prophetic than Deissmann,” he wrote. For his part Deissmann always considered Macfarland as “a paragon of Christian statesmanship” and admired his ability to keep so many ecumenical projects alive through the sheer energy of his will. “If I were to draw an *ex libris* for him,” Deissmann quipped years later, “it would be a bony fist holding twenty pairs of reins, or...a switchboard with forty-eight lines!”

From 1914 to 1917 Macfarland used his position as the general secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (FCCCA) to promote Deissmann’s *Evangelische Wochenbriefe*. Under his direction the FCCCA copied and distributed the newsletter to hundreds of Protestant internationalists in the United States. Macfarland was particularly enamored of Deissmann’s optimistic interpretation of the war, which he believed contained the key idea that would enable the ecumenical movement to push past the arguments over responsibility for the war and embrace the divine purpose behind the conflict. This spiritual perspective, more than any narrowly German nationalist point of view, led Macfarland to consider Deissmann the most “prophetic” voice in Europe.

As discussed above, Macfarland was also one of the foundational figures of the American League to Enforce Peace (LEP). When the LEP decided in the spring of 1915

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849 Macfarland, *Across the Years*, 145.
to launch organizations in other nations, Macfarland approached Deissmann about the possibility of beginning one in Berlin.

On his end Deissmann gained a newfound commitment for the POW campaign of the YMCA, the relief work of Near East Relief in Armenia, and the other wartime charities associated with the World Alliance. Under Deissmann’s influence the German Council accepted Söderblom’s invitation to attend an international church conference that unfortunately failed to come about when the British government refused to lift the blockade.

Meanwhile, Macfarland adopted Deissmann’s redemptive narrative about the war and pushed that view onto his fellow workers in the FCCCA and the LEP. Deissmann had developed an eschatological interpretation of the war that saw the conflict as a necessary, though temporary, step towards the Christianization of the world. The Great War must be seen as part of an ironic and cyclical pattern of history, he argued, of schism and renewal that has always characterized the history of Protestantism. Pietism was a product of the Thirty Years War and it saved the Protestant churches from a spiritual deadness imposed by the narrow confessionalism and institutionalism of the Reformers. The evangelical revivals of the nineteenth century (a phenomenon known in Germany as the Erweckungsbewegung) followed the Napoleonic Wars. The French Revolution had not destroyed the churches; it had reinvigorated them by pushing them to focus more on the social implications of the Gospel. In the end the Napoleonic Wars forced the churches to open themselves to the missionary movement and to the need for social reform. Now, in the twentieth century, the Great War would inspire an “ecumenical awakening” (ökumenische Erweckung) through the demonstration of the absurdity of the
Christian nations at war with one another. The Great War was part of an agonistic cycle of sinfulness, punishment and restoration that would transform Protestant internationalism from “a mere intellectual necessity” into a “cause buttressed by an untiring brotherly love and a confident submission to God’s will.”\footnote{Deissmann looked forward to the “unification of the different separated churches of Jesus Christ” and the subsequent establishment of the “spiritual and pastoral leadership of the Church” over “public life.”} Now Macfarland too began to contend that the war should be interpreted as much more than a divine judgment against the European state system; it was also an opportunity to purify the nations of Christendom and to prepare them for a internationalist world order.\footnote{Both Macfarland and Deissmann were strong advocates for American neutrality, though for different reasons. Macfarland and the FCCCA endorsed Wilson’s belief that the United States could play a more decisive role at the peace table as an independent power than as one of the belligerents. Meanwhile the Germans desperately wanted to prevent America from joining the Allies. In 1915 these separate interests aligned enough to keep both sides on the same page and Deissmann’s success in this area warranted the patronage of the German Foreign Office. Both men also insisted that, in keeping with their spiritual interpretation of the war, noncombatants had a determinative role in the war through sacrificial service. American neutrality was the \textit{sine qua non} of its moral intervention in the war. Under Macfarland’s watch the Federal Council of Churches endorsed Wilson’s belief that the United States could play a more decisive role at the peace table as an independent power than as one of the belligerents.} 

\footnote{ZLB 306, Boxes 436 and 624: \textit{Evangelischer Wochenbrief}, #99, 11 October 1916.} \footnote{Adolf Deissmann, \textit{Una Sancta: Zum Geleit in das ökumenische Jahr 1937}, 7.} \footnote{See, for example, Charles Macfarland, “Spiritual Unity through Sacrificial Suffering,” \textit{Survey} 39, no. 29 (December 1917).}
accepted that view without reservation and therefore it worked alongside Deissmann – and, by extension, the German Foreign Office – to publish literature aimed at preventing the United States from declaring war on the Central Powers.

Deissmann’s connections inside the Foreign Office gave American internationalists like Macfarland the impression that they too had an inside track to the decision makers in Berlin. Benjamin Battin reported regular meetings with such diverse politicos as the communist Karl Liebknecht, Foreign Minister Gottlieb von Jagow and the industrialist Walter Rathenau. John Mott and Charles Macfarland enjoyed the same access during their stays in the German capital. Deissmann’s arrangement with the Foreign Office meant that the diplomats would do what they could to promote the ecumenist’s good relations with the churches from neutral countries.

In the summer of 1915 the Swedes made a strong push for a peace settlement spearheaded by Archbishop Nathan Söderblom and Prime Minister Hämmerskjold. Whenever their lieutenants met with German diplomats they availed themselves of the German Council’s political connections. Von Jagow and the Foreign Office responded encouragingly at first to these missives, even providing Siegmund-Schultze, Deissmann and several other prominent Protestant internationalists passports and passage to Sweden to further sound out Swedish opinion on the subject, but when push came to shove the Germans backed down. Finally Hämmerskjold himself traveled to Berlin incognito, staying at the home of Max von Baden, but the matter was closed. The Foreign Office claimed that its hands were tied without the approval of the military and the Kaiser.853

On at least one occasion the World Alliance used its German connections on behalf of another internationalist organization. The Women’s International League of Peace and Freedom took shape at an international women’s congress held at The Hague in April 1915. Afterwards a small delegation of pacifists, headlined by the organization’s president, Jane Addams, took a so-called “peace tour” around the belligerent capital cities in order to present the organization’s demand for an immediate armistice. Several women from the World Alliance attended the opening congress, including Kathleen Courtney, Fannie Fern Andrews and Lucia Ames Mead. Yet the most important delegate for our purposes was Sarah Ellen Battin, the wife of Benjamin Battin, who accompanied Addams throughout much of her trip to Europe. After the German government ignored Addams’ request for an audience with the Emperor, Benjamin Battin asked Deissmann to intervene. Upon her arrival she met with the Chancellor, the Foreign Minister and a small contingent from the German Council.

At each step of the way, the German Council voluntarily remained within the boundaries demarcated by its partnership with the German Foreign Office. This obviously tied the hands of the German Council in certain ways, but it also lent the German Council a certain amount of influence and prestige. In 1915, for example, the civil government created a new bureaucracy to shelter the YMCA’s POW program. Two politicians associated with the German Council – Georg Michaelis and Max von Baden – became liaisons between the ecumenical organizations and the Central Powers. When these two men traveled abroad to establish bilateral treaties with the Allied powers, they did so with the authority to forge new standards for prison camps.
Deissmann’s primary handler within the Foreign Office was most likely Arthur Zimmermann, the ambitious undersecretary with a talent for convincing foreigners of his nation’s peaceful intentions. Zimmermann handled not only visitors from the World Alliance but also Colonel House during their stays in Berlin. House for one considered Zimmermann his best asset in the Foreign Office and communicated to the Germans only through him by 1915. He was truly a “good friend,” House assured Wilson, and in his politics he is “exceedingly sympathetic [about] a second convention for organizing permanent peace. . . .”854 Zimmermann was adept at fobbing off responsibility for the war onto the generals that surrounded the Emperor. This tactic allowed him to act sympathetic to any foreign appeals for an armistice without requiring the Foreign Office to change its policy.

Zimmermann was thus a known quantity in internationalist circles. Other ecumenists considered him an open ear for League enthusiasts and a diplomat who was happy to meet with “unofficial” diplomats from the United States. Yet this façade was merely part of his job. The German diplomat had no real interest in either the League movement or the ecumenical cause. His specific responsibility within the Foreign Office was the cultivation, and subsequent exploitation, of transnational movements in order to disrupt the Allies’ war capabilities. He might have given aid to Protestant internationalists, but he also funded, trained and encouraged Catholic patriots in Ireland,

pan-Islamists in the Middle East, Hindu rebels in India and Communists in Russia. Arthur Zimmermann was not an internationalist. He was just a man with his hands in as many pies as possible.

All of these subterranean schemes were not yet public knowledge when Charles Macfarland landed in Berlin on New Year’s Eve, 1915. The purpose of this visit was twofold: first of all, to prod the German Council into forming a League of Nations association or, at the very least, to begin the production of pro-League materials for consumption by the churches; and, secondly, to sound out in person the German government’s willingness to join the League after the war had wound down. Macfarland arrived armed with credentials from the Federal Council of Churches, the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches and the League to Enforce Peace. As such he was another example of the type of unofficial diplomacy that had become fairly common in ecumenical circles in the past year. However Macfarland had also picked up endorsements from Woodrow Wilson and the U. S. State Department just before his departure that lent a certain weight to these negotiations.

When Charles Macfarland descended the train at Berlin’s Hauptbahnhof on New Year’s Eve, 1915, Adolf Deissmann was there, impatiently and worriedly waiting. The American was late – the train didn’t arrive until after 10:00 P.M – but then again his entire trip had not lived up to its itinerary. Initially his trip had been delayed for months while the FCCCA decided whether or not to make this a formal ecclesiastical visitation. (Following Mott’s cautionary advice, the FCCCA kept matters informal.) Then, on the

night before his departure, three sudden feet of snow forced Macfarland to surrender himself to his college-aged nephew’s reckless driving to escape his snowbound home in Mountain Lakes, New Jersey. Luckily his steamship, the *New Amsterdam*, was two days late in leaving New York, or else he would not have made departure. Once at sea the ocean liner zigged and zagged across the Atlantic, a path that effectively evaded the insatiate German submarines, but did nothing to make up time. Off the coast of Britain Macfarland encountered another four days of idle waiting as a suspicious customs inspector attached to Scotland Yard prevented him from sailing on to Germany. The wait might have been much longer if not for the intervention of W. H. Dickinson and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Still Macfarland’s odyssey was not yet at an end. His next boat ran aground on an exposed beachhead off the Dutch coast, costing him another half day. Even after all this, Macfarland suffered predictable delays at the German border while guards slowly inspected each and every passenger on the train.856

When Macfarland finally reached Berlin, he was not just several hours late – the train had been supposed to arrive before dinner – he was a week behind schedule. Deissmann was anxious to see his American friend for the first time since the war had begun. For over a year now the two men had been carrying “an animated exchange of ideas” over the possibility of an American-mediated peace settlement predicated upon the political reconciliation of Britain and Germany and the spiritual rehabilitation of the

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ecumenical movement. Now, finally face-to-face, they exchanged viewpoints and news items in an “uncommonly exhaustive” debate that lasted for the whole week.\footnote{Adolf Deissmann, \textit{Evangelischer Wochenbrief}, 11 October 1916.}

That first night a private conversation had to wait. Deissmann had promised the other members of the German Council that he would bring Macfarland to the midnight service at the Berliner Dom in honor of New Year’s Eve. After a quick bite to eat they scurried to the cathedral and waded through the congregants wrestling for seats inside the crowded nave. For almost a decade the Dom had become in effect the central node of the Protestant internationalist movement in Germany. Wilhelm II ordered its construction on top of an older, smaller Calvinist church that housed the tombs of the royal family. Finished in 1905 the new cathedral was a lavish display of Hohenzollern piety that decorated Wilhelm’s claim to be the protector of world Protestantism. The Dom remained under the Emperor’s direction. First he stuffed the church with art that encapsulated the global dominion of the Protestant powers and then staffed the church with pastors interested in the ecumenical unity of the Protestant churches. Of all the churches in Berlin the Dom remained the freest from the oversight of the Prussian state church, both because of its relative youth and its close connection to the Imperial family. When Baker and Dickinson organized the ecclesiastical visit of the British clergy in 1909 to promote an Anglo-German alliance, the Dom housed the main events. When the German Council formed in 1910 the unanimous choice for its president was Ernst von Dryander, the Dom’s main pastor.

Now, even after the war had put to bed the possibility of a pan-Protestant world hegemony, the Dom was still the primary venue for the remaining members of the
German Council of the World Alliance. Its preachers gained a reputation for successfully combining their faithful support of the war effort with a kinder, gentler message of mercy towards the enemy. Visiting missionaries urged their listeners not to abandon the need for an eventual reconciliation with the British churches on the mission field after the war. Deissmann himself sometimes spoke at the Dom on the religious obligation to prosecute this war without falling into a blind, nationalistic hatred of the enemy.

Dryander delivered the sermon on that particular holiday. He spoke about the universal Fatherhood of God and its logical consequence, the brotherhood of humanity. These were facts, he emphasized, that could not be annulled by the careless policies of the world’s governments. He emphasized the fact that although the Germans must fight now in order to preserve Protestantism from the Russian hordes, they must also look forward to the future reconciliation of Christendom once the war had ended. In Christ, Dryander reasoned, the truly Christian nations of the world would one day achieve a spiritual reconciliation that presaged a political restoration of Christendom.

Both the tone and the substance of the service deeply impressed Macfarland. Dryander was, he later reported, “full of courage” and “without any bitterness.”858 Afterwards the American visitor was even more encouraged by Deissmann’s frank desire for peace as long as it would not interfere with the long-term security of his country against Russia and as long as the settlement was backed by American diplomacy. The two men paced up and down the Unter den Linden until it was 1916, stopping only when thirsty, passing repeatedly under the window of Deissmann’s office and then down to the Brandenburg Gate, engaged in an intense discussion about the meaning of the world war.

858 Macfarland, ed., The Churches of Christ in Council, 199.
for the future of the World Alliance. They did not stop until the evening threatened to turn into morning. Over the next few days Macfarland and Deissmann continued their debate. Macfarland had always felt a strong attraction to Deissmann and he was thrilled to learn that the Germans shared his desire to a quick end to the war and a revitalization of the political internationalist spirit.

Over the next week Macfarland met with individuals associated with the World Alliance. Christian Herder, a secretary of the YMCA in Berlin, and Deissmann shepherded him from event to event. James Gerard, the American ambassador, Bruno Döhring, a chaplain attached to the Hohenzollern court, and Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze joined this core group for a day when Macfarland inspected the POW camps and army hospitals that increasingly encircled the capital. Yet another afternoon was spent with a desperate Johnnaes Lepsius about the Armenian crisis; he gave the American visitor firsthand testimonies of the genocide by German missionaries to smuggle back to the United States. He also had lunch with two YMCA leaders, each of whom soon became Chancellor, Georg Michaelis and Max von Baden, about the recent Stockholm Agreement on POW relief.

On the last day of his visit Macfarland warned the German Council not to forsake their ecumenical commitments. “Our churches and Christian leaders have their duties, distinct from all other institutions. God has not changed in His relations to men of all

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nations, and they are all still brothers in his mind,” Macfarland argued. “Might we not, even in the midst of war, rise into a higher atmosphere, and might we not thus find for the nations their lost war? Should we not even now look forward to the task of spiritual reconstruction and do it in a spirit of reconciliation?”

To his surprise the others shared his fears. In a long conversation marked by desire for “Christian love and brotherhood” and a “deep spirit of prayer,” German missionaries and pastors outlined how the war had affected them and their grievances against the British churches. Still the group made no collective decision to join in the League movement.

Macfarland had not come to Berlin simply to discuss spiritual matters. He wanted to know if the German Council would sponsor its own chapter of the League movement. He travelled armed with an offer of assistance from the League to Enforce Peace and the unofficial sympathy of the British League of Nations Society. He also came equipped with letters of reference from Woodrow Wilson and the State Department. (Macfarland secured the President’s tacit approval of his mission after a secret meeting with Wilson at the annual convocation of the Federal Council of Churches earlier that year. This event is discussed in Chapter 5.4.) Macfarland related to his hosts how by this point every other national council in the World Alliance had successfully sponsored advocacy groups in their own countries and how in each case they had used their ecclesiastical connections to influence public opinion. He hoped that the German churches could supply the financial resources and the moral authority that would be needed to launch a similar movement on German soil.

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Deissmann was intrigued, though he cautioned his guest that he could not speak out in public about the terms of a mediated peace without the consent of the German government. During Macfarland’s stay in Berlin he arranged for his guest to meet with Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg and several diplomats at the Foreign Office. Deissmann possessed excellent connections with the civil and parliamentary authorities in the capital, but unfortunately he could not say the same for the military leadership that had practically seized control of the government since 1914. In the end Macfarland was impressed by the reception he got from the civil authorities. He concluded that in time they would consent to a negotiated peace settlement centered around the construction of the League of Nations. His faith in the German Council to carry out the World Alliance’s secular mission was renewed. However, he had no illusions that the military would ever allow such talks to take place as long as the Kaiser continued to allow them to dominate the domestic scene.

Macfarland met with the Foreign Minister, Gottlieb von Jagow, and Arthur Zimmermann on 3 January 1916. In his memoirs Macfarland remembered that the two senior diplomats avidly peppered him with questions about a variety of issues relating to German-American relations. At one point, he later claimed, von Jagow showed him a draft of a memo related to the dispute over the legality of submarine warfare, the most serious sticking point between the two nations at that time. Macfarland admonished the Foreign Minister for not taking a more conciliatory stance. Meanwhile, Zimmermann kept lamenting that the United States could not do more to end this “criminal bloodbath” (verbrecherisch Blutbad). At this point the conversation became even more intense as

862 Macfarland, Across the Years, 104.
they contemplated the shape of a viable peace settlement. “Throughout these conversation,” Macfarland later recalled, “one could detect a sense of uneasiness on the part of all three participants, due to the frankness with which we spoke. Zimmermann was eloquent in his plea for peace. Von Jagow used up several sheets of paper with what appeared to be hieroglyphics. When we parted I had the feeling that both were inwardly wishing I had been a bearer of better tidings.”

The Germans treated Macfarland not only as someone who held a vital position of influence over the American churches, but as someone who had Wilson’s ear. In his reports on the *Evangelische Wochenbriefe* Deissmann certainly presented Macfarland as someone with whom Wilson consulted before making foreign policy decisions about the situation in Europe. Furthermore, by this point in his presidency, Wilson’s penchant for informal diplomacy and his fervent religious faith were well-established facts in German circles. The prominent newspaper *Die Hilfe* argued that the “attitude of the devout and religious classes” surrounding Wilson were the key to understanding his foreign policy. “A man like Wilson will always be incomprehensible until he is understood in this environment.”

On 5 January, two days after his appointment at the Foreign Office, Macfarland spent an afternoon with about fifteen members of the German Council. He met with mixed results. On the one hand, the time was characterized by a “deep spirit of prayer” and a “full sympathy” with the obligation to promote “Christian love and brotherhood”

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among the nations. On the other hand, there was no consensus about that spiritual aspiration meant when it was translated into concrete, political plans for the peace. Macfarland noted that while the German Council listened to his proposal from the League to Enforce Peace they nevertheless refused to discuss it any further as a group.

In his final report for the Federal Council of Churches, Charles Macfarland concluded that there was a “marked change” within German Protestantism “from the manifest spirit of bitterness at the beginning of the war to their present attitude of Christian reconciliation. . . .They are frankly ready for peace, though not yet on terms, especially as to the matter of indemnities, which would be acceptable to their foes.” In fact Macfarland judged that the German attitude towards the ecumenical reunion of Christian Europe now matched the British and even surpassed the French. Yet the Germans were not yet willing to trust the Allies enough to place their fate in the hands of an international government. “The present moment is not the time for any definite, concrete, political or semi-political or even non-political overtures for peace.” Macfarland therefore counseled patience and predicted that, given another year of suffering, the outlook for the League movement in Germany would dramatically improve. He was confident that, in the end, the German Protestant churches would join their cause and work with the sympathetic elements within the civil government to negotiate a durable peace. He had no doubt that Germany would attend a peace conference if only the constraints were removed from the Foreign Office. He still wondered however whether or not the generals who controlled the Emperor would ever

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866 Macfarland, *Across the Years*, 103. For Deissmann’s similar point of view, see ZLB 305, Box 638: *Evangliescher Wochenbrief* #59, 15 January 1916.
allow that to happen. “The Christian leaders are the subjects of the higher motives and influences. How far will they influence the state and convince the people? That is a vital question.”

Macfarland’s predictions proved partly prophetic. A series of catastrophic stalemates on the Western front that year made the possibility of peace more palatable for a lot of people. The German army launched a major offensive at Verdun that was intended to force the Allies to, as the commanding general put it, “bleed themselves white” (sich debei verblutet). Yet the battle was indecisive despite the cost of 362,000 German soldiers. Elsewhere the news was just as bad. The British blockade had effectively reduced the diet of most Germans to a subsistence level. Just north of Verdun Germany endured another half a million casualties in just four and a half months defending the Somme from an Allied assault that ended in another draw. The only army on the move in 1916 was the Russians, who reduced Austria-Hungary to a German dependency in a number of hard-fought victories on its southern flank. By the end of the year some public figures in Berlin were calling for an immediate end to the war.

As a whole the German Council never reached unanimity about the desirability of a mediated peace. Therefore, the organization remained silent on this particular issue. Individuals in favor of negotiations worked outside of any ecclesial structures. Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze and Martin Rade flirted for a brief time with the Bund Neues Vaterland, an reformist organization formed out of the wreckage of the defunct German

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Peace Society with a vaguely internationalist agenda. Siegmund-Schultze tried to interest others in the *Bund* in 1915. However its close ties to such secularist and/or post-Christian associations such as the German Monist Society, the League for Ethical Culture and the *Bund der Konfessionslosen* made it unacceptable to most Protestants. The *Bund’s* program, which demanded a centralized pan-European authority at The Hague with authority over armaments and colonial policy, was also much too radical for the German Council. In any case the government proscribed the group in February 1916 when it banned all public speech concerned with the German aims of the war. When the organization resurfaced in 1919, this time equipped with even more radical demands for a global parliament, a world court, and the supranational reorganization of the economy, the German Council maintained its distance.\(^869\)

In June 1916 several members of the German Council helped create a new special interest group with the goal of coordinating “like-minded individuals in building a common platform as the basis of a German peace.” The *Deutsche Nationalausschuß* (German National Committee) was a nonpartisan, single-issue organization that worked with the Chancellor’s office to create a public opinion that would support peace negotiations. The group’s founders included Adolf von Harnack, Matthias Erzberger, Martin Rade and Adolf Deissmann. On 1 August 1916 the *Nationalausschuß* held large public demonstrations in over fifty cities at which, thanks to a special dispensation from the government, speakers put forth a patriotic rationale for a mediated settlement. Von

Harnack gave the main address at the rally in Berlin. He argued that the events of the world war had irrefutably demonstrated that the old “illusion...of world domination” was an impossibility. In 1914 he had supported the war because Germany needed protection from the Russian hordes. Now, in 1916, he supported an end to the war because it was the best means to keep Eastern Europe out of the Tsar’s hands. He proposed a settlement predicated on the status quo on the Western front, the return of Germany’s colonies and a collective pact to control Russia on the Eastern Front. In order to maintain itself as a world power and to fulfill its “historical mission” of maintaining “Western culture” in the face of Russia, he contended, Germany needed to return to the “family of Christian, European nations.”

Harnack was ready to discuss peace. He was ready with some specific details of a viable peace. Yet at no point was he ready to endorse the idea of a League of Nations. He distrusted Russia too much to consider any alliance with the Tsar and the conception of a worldwide League with non-European members appears to have not even occurred to him. In many ways his position resembled the vision of the League that predominated in ecumenical circles before the war: that is, of a pan-Protestant alliance between Britain, America and Germany that would enforce international law and ensure the global hegemony of Protestant culture.

Harnack’s attitude was in essence the prevailing viewpoint within the German Council. Although its members differed over what specific propositions constituted an acceptable settlement, there was still a general agreement that the Emperor should

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negotiate an end to the conflict in order to preserve Germany from the threat of catastrophe. Certain individuals quarreled over such issues as the future of Belgium, the extension of German influence into the traditional haunts of Habsburg power in south-central Europe and the desirability of an independent Polish state. Still these differences should not obscure the fact that the sentiment of the German Council shifted away from the martial enthusiasm of 1914 towards the humbled acceptance of the need for a negotiated peace – as Macfarland and company predicted it would.

Yet still the German Council also followed Harnack’s example in omitting any discussion of the League from their public pronouncements on a desirable peace in 1916. Exactly why they were so silent is difficult to explain. Except for Adolf Deissmann, the German ecumenical community appears to have ignored the pressure put upon it by the other national units of the World Alliance to join the League movement. “Many of us are indeed open to international solutions to the war as long as they, much like [Friedrich] Naumann’s Mitteleuropa plan will preserve our Western civilization,” Deissmann wrote Macfarland in October 1916. “We, a people that has been vilified and unjustly alienated from the European family of nations, cannot subordinate our national sovereignty to the uncivilized elements of the Allied powers. . . .The Allies now depend upon the use of African soldiers, of Indians and of the Russian masses. They have elevated these nations so that Germany will never rival them as a world power.”871 He then added that any

871 Deissmann, von Harnack and many other German Protestants were deeply disturbed by the Allied deposition of African soldiers on the Western Front. Writing in the Evangelische Wochenbriefe earlier that year, Deissmann responded to a recent sermon given by a Huguenot pastor in which he referred to the Germans as “cannibals” by saying: “It cannot be denied that on the European continent France has thrown against us troops recruited from the culture of the cannibals of dark Africa, altogether disregarding the fact that our armies represent the flower of our people both intellectually and morally. For this reason, I think, in France one should be more cautious to apply the word ‘cannibal.’” ZLB 305, Box 644: Evangelischer Wochenbrief #79, 24 May 1916.
acceptable multilateral pact with Britain and France must “be negotiated by Wilson and then guaranteed by the United States. Are the American people now willing to do this?” Deissmann thought not. His preference was for the United States to use its “moral standing” to end the war without handicapping Germany’s ability to defend itself from another Russian attack in the future.⁸⁷²

Macfarland refused to take no for an answer. He again petitioned Deissmann and his circle of like-minded political allies to come out publicly in favor of the League in late October. This time he dangled the bait of Wilson’s recent conversion to the cause as bait for a German endorsement. He mailed materials from both the LEP and the British League of Nations Society to the German Council, including Lord Bryce’s recent address before the Congregational Union of England and Wales, to show the depth of support for the League within Britain and the United States.

Deissmann wrote back that although he felt pessimistic about the project because it failed to address Germany’s vulnerabilities, he nevertheless remained open to the possibility. “Although history teaches us that the road leading to this goal is not easy,” he wrote in the 25 October 1916 edition of the Evangelische Wochenbriefe, “yet I venture to say that in our country the idea of arbitration is gaining ground constantly. We do not speak of it in superlatives or in terms of apocalyptic enthusiasm; for we are wedged in between most powerful states whose imperialistic tendencies have led to all-absorbing and all-controlling militarism and navalism. We face the problem with that reserve and soberness which faith in God and in his universal government and unerring guidance of

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⁸⁷² NCCCA, RG 19-70-11: letter from Deissmann to Macfarland, 12 October 1916.
human affairs imposes upon us.” This opinion was not only his, he later claimed in a private letter; it was also the “sentiment of many others” in Berlin.

In November Macfarland sent a telegram to the German Chancellor through the German Foreign Office that inquired if the Central Powers were interested in an American-brokered peace conference. He also urged the German government to issue an endorsement of the League of Nations concept before the peace conference. Macfarland wrote on behalf of the League to Enforce Peace and its president, William Howard Taft. I am uncertain if Macfarland consulted Woodrow Wilson this time about his informal diplomacy, but this seems likely. Macfarland had kept regular contact with Wilson that month in reference to the national election. Furthermore, Wilson himself had plans to reopen discussions about a peace settlement with the belligerent powers once he was safely returned to office. Perhaps Wilson saw an opportunity here to get a sense of where the Germans stood without having to expose his hand.

There was no reply to Macfarland’s query for several weeks, but this was apparently not because of a lack of interest in the question. As October rolled over into November the German Chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, was not yet prepared to go public with his so-called “peace offensive.” Behind the scenes Bethmann-Hollweg was still in the process of persuading the Emperor to pursue peace while quarreling with the military high command about what Germany should regard as acceptable terms. This debate was never fully resolved and in the end Bethmann-Hollweg

was forced to propose peace talks without any details about what that peace might be. His speech unveiling the new German position, given before the central committee of the Reichstag on 9 December 1916, contained more platitudes than content, but it was still remarkable in one important aspect.

The Chancellor’s address was the first occasion when the German government hinted that it would be open to the construction of the League of Nations. “The first condition for the development of international relations by means of an arbitration court and the peaceful liquidations of conflicting antagonisms would be that henceforth no aggressive coalitions should be formed. German is ready at all times to join the union of peoples (Völkerbund), and even to place herself at the head of such a union, which will restrain the disturber of peace.” Yet he warned that any international coalition could not just be an extension of the Allied powers and their policies of encirclement, blockade and colonial expansion – all summed up by Bethmann-Hollweg under the term “politics of force” (Gewaltpolitik) – that had caused the war. “If the Entente wishes seriously to take up this position [of an international peace union], then it should also act consistently upon

\footnote{One of the most serious obstacles to an agreement between the civil and the military authorities was the future of Belgium. Bethmann-Hollweg wanted to propose a return to the territorial status quo on the Western front, meaning Belgium would once again become a neutral state, but the high command demanded that Germany retain key strategic points along the Belgian border for reasons of national security. In general Bethmann-Hollweg – and the members of the Deutsche Nationalausschüß – wanted a peace without annexations that would hurry along the armistice negotiations, whereas the military wanted to extend the German border in preparation for the next war. For more on Bethmann-Hollweg’s struggle, see Hans Wilhelm Gatzke, Germany’s Drive to the West (Drang Nach Westen) (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1950), 71 – 79.}
it; otherwise the most exalted words about peace, union and harmonious living together in an international family are mere words (schall und rauch).”

Bethmann-Hollweg’s speech was not the only signal that the Germans were becoming more open to the prospect of the League. On 12 December Berlin officially notified President Wilson that the German government were interested in an American-mediated peace. Peace advocates also took heart because of a shakeup of personnel in the German Foreign Office. On 22 November Foreign Minister von Jagow resigned, presumably because of his poor health, and the Emperor awarded his post to Arthur Zimmermann. American internationalists interpreted the move as a sign that the German government was preparing itself for an abrupt shift in its foreign policy. Colonel House was thrilled that “our good friend” was now in control of the Foreign Office. The New York Times also interpreted von Jagow’s departure as “an important milestone” towards political progress in Germany. The paper hailed the middle-class Zimmermann, by contrast, as a “man of the people” who was “free from the old traditions and red tape of diplomacy” and, of course, “at all times accessible to the American correspondents.”

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876 Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, "Speech of the Imperial German Chancellor before the Main Committee of the Reichstag on November 9, 1916," in Official Documents Looking toward Peace: Series 1, ed. Frederick Paul Keppel (New York: The American Association for International Conciliation, 1917), 9 – 10. (The translator and publisher of this document, the American Association for International Conciliation, was an internationalist organization founded in 1909 with the sole purpose of publishing primary documents related to world peace. The board contained many Protestant internationalists, including Charles Macfarland, Frederick Lynch, Hamilton Holt and Sidney Gulick. In this particular case the association was eager to get Bethmann-Hollweg’s address into the hands of the American public quickly in order to keep public opinion oriented towards neutrality.) For Deissmann’s copy of the speech, see ZLB 305, Box 349: Rede des Reichskanzlers von Bethmann Hollweg am 9. Dezember 1916 (Berlin: Georg Stilke, 1915).

877 “Von Jagow Retired as Political Move; Rumania A Factor, Too; Kaiser Believed to have Harkened to Public Opinion in Making Cabinet Change. Zimmermann, who may be Foreign Minister, is Hailed as a Man of the People” New York Times, 24 November 1916, 2.
Ecumenical circles also concluded that Bethmann-Hollweg’s peace offensive and Zimmermann’s promotion were portents of a decisive change in German policy.

The German Council showed some signs of coming around as well. Here Adolf Deissmann took the lead by printing a qualified endorsement of the Bryce Plan in the 29 November edition of the Evangelische Wochenbriefe.\textsuperscript{878} Shortly after Bethmann-Hollweg’s speech, which Deissmann regarded as a “landmark in world history,” the German theologian informed Macfarland in a private communication that the Foreign Office wanted the Americans to know that Bethmann-Hollweg mentioned the League in his Reichstag address as a response to his telegram. It seems difficult for me to believe that the German government took Macfarland’s telegram so seriously, but I have found no direct evidence that reveals the thought process of the key political players in Berlin on this matter.\textsuperscript{879} Perhaps the Foreign Office wanted the American to feel responsible for an action that the Chancellor had intended to take anyway. Perhaps the Germans felt that Macfarland really was a viable avenue of influence over the President or over American opinion. All I can say for sure is that the Foreign Office did take the trouble to include Macfarland in their peace offensive and that, on their end, Deissmann and Macfarland really believed they were orchestrating a possible end to the war.

Finally, Deissmann wrote an open letter to Charles Macfarland and the Federal Council of Churches on 23 December that urged the Americans to regard Bethmann-Hollweg’s peace offensive as a serious offer to join in the crusade to erect an international government. He assured his readers that the German government was

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\textsuperscript{878} ZLB 305, Box 648: Evangelischer Wochenbrief #106, 29 November 1916.

\textsuperscript{879} In response to an email I sent to the Politische Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts in Berlin, an archivist informed me that the relevant diplomatic documents were likely destroyed in the Second World War.
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seriously considering the prospect, but he coupled this encouraging news with a cautionary note that public opinion was still working against them in both Germany and the Allied powers. “Our geographical position compels us to consider the question soberly and not to surrender to sentimental dreams, for now as always self-defense is a sacred duty.” The success of any international alliance depended on a transformation of the “moral and spiritual atmosphere” of the great powers, a transformation that could only be achieved through the political mobilization of the ecumenical movement on both sides of the trenches. “The gangrenous ulcer of hate which poisons international relations must be burnt out and the intellectual heads of nations, above all, the Christian leaders, must, under full recognition of the bonus fides of their opponents, be ready to forgive one another’s thoughts as well as words and deeds, whereby they have hurt and wounded each other. Then they would be able to succeed in fully entering into the problem of reconstruction.”

On 18 December Woodrow Wilson responded to Bethmann-Hollweg’s communication by insisting that both sides clearly state their war aims before the United States agreed to act as a mediator. This was a step that neither side wanted to take. The British government desired nothing less than an unconditional victory, but it knew that they risked alienating the Americans if it did not make at the very least some sort of perfunctory reply. Balfour and other British diplomats consulted with Colonel House behind the President’s back to compose a list of demand that would satisfy Wilson’s ambition to play peacemaker while still leaving the Germans dissatisfied enough to stay

away from the peace table. No one attached to Wilson however was willing to do the same for the Germans. No one, that is, except for Charles Macfarland.

Just prior to Wilson’s demand that the German government specify its war aims, Macfarland received a letter from the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. It was sent to him at the instigation of Bethmann-Hollweg. The author of this letter, Count Johann von Bernstorff, wanted to make sure that Macfarland understood the Chancellor’s recent interest in the League of Nations as a response to his inquiry on behalf of the League to Enforce Peace. The ambassador also briefly added that he too shared the Chancellor’s desire for a settlement.  

Macfarland made arrangements to meet with von Bernstorff in Washington. While there he learned of Wilson’s reply and thus his first appointment was taken up by a discussion of how Berlin should respond. The German ambassador assured the American that his government was serious about striking an “honorable” settlement. Macfarland believed him and afterwards went straightaway to one of his contacts at the State Department where he gained permission to advise the German government in its composition of its reply. He then consulted briefly with as many senior members of the League to Enforce Peace as he could on such short notice. Later he also talked about his dealings at the German Embassy with Wilson during a conversation at Wilson’s home in

881 Charles Macfarland, *The Progress of Church Federation*, 150 – 152. I have not been able to locate an original of this letter, so I have been forced to rely upon a reprint provided in Macfarland, *Across the Years*, 114 – 115. In this book Macfarland claims that the letter was dated 23 November 1916, but this cannot be correct as it quotes Bethmann-Hollweg’s Reichstag speech from 9 December. I believe the letter was written sometime between 9 December, the date of that particular address, and 18 December, the date when Wilson replied to the German peace note.
Shadow Lawn, New Jersey. According to Macfarland’s memoirs, Wilson commended him for his actions, but warned him that he should “not trust von Bernstorff too much.”

The next day Macfarland returned for lunch to the German Embassy. There he drafted a long list of advice for the German government in consultation with von Bernstorff, who then telegraphed the memo to Berlin on a diplomatic line. Von Bernstorff also wired a short message to Adolf Deissmann and Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze on Macfarland’s behalf that urged the German Council to “consult immediately, if appropriate, with church leaders in Germany, also with Zimmermann and von Bethmann-Hollweg.” He also promised to use his station within the ecumenical movement and the League to Enforce Peace to support this endeavor. “If something of this kind can be done immediately I believe we can arouse the enthusiasm of the American people through the churches so that peace may be brought about.”

Macfarland’s advised the Germans to eliminate all references to the war guilt question in their response to Wilson’s peace note. He also counseled them to set aside any and all territorial questions until the peace conference. Yet above all he wanted the Germans to demand that one of the concrete goals of the peace conference would be “providing for general disarmament, a League of Nations, a world court or other provisions which will insure eternal peace between nations.” He concluded by once again offering to put the weight of public opinion behind such an offer. “If Germany can issue a statement like this, free from all references which would tend to aggravate the

882 In his memoirs Macfarland also claims that he sent Wilson a complete report of his subsequent interactions with the German government on 31 January 1917. Macfarland, Across the Years. 119 – 120.

883 WCCA 212.008: copy of a telegram from Macfarland to Deissmann and Siegmund-Schultze c/o Count Johann von Bernstorff, 18 December 1916.
situation, I am sure all our moral and religious agencies and forces would immediately urge upon the peoples of all the nations an immediate cessation of the war.”

Then, just as optimism peaked within ecumenical circles in the United States and Germany, nothing happened. The mirage of a peace conference faded away. The larger story here is that none of the belligerent powers were truly willing to accept a peace based upon compromises. The Italians and the French were in no mood to negotiate and the British used their partners’ attitude as a pretense to sidestep Wilson’s quest for peace. On 10 January 1917 they handed Wilson a list of war aims that included the return of Alsace and Lorraine to France, the restoration of Belgium, the demolition of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire along nationalistic lines, the elimination of Turkish territory in Europe and extensive reparation payments for the German Empire. Wilson made another appeal for a “peace without victory” sealed with the League of Nations before the U. S. Senate on 22 January, but the Allies ignored this second plea as well. Bryce explained in a letter to House that, although the British appreciated Wilson’s support for the League, “we do not see how these are to be attained with such a Government as Germany has at present, a Government which goes on showing its utter disregard of justice and humanity by its slave-raiding and other cruelties in Belgium, and by its entire contempt for the faith of treaties and other international obligations and duties.” The Americans would come to share Bryce’s view soon enough.

The Allied proposal tilted the balance of power within the German government back towards the militarists who wanted to continue the war. On 31 January 1917 Count

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von Bernstorff delivered an aggressive list of war aims to Colonel House. The ambassador also informed House that Germany would renew its “submarine blockade” in order to “terminate the war very quickly.” There was no mention of the League in the letter.\footnote{PWW, Vol. 41, 80 – 82: letter from von Bernstorff to House, 31 January 1917.} The German turnabout stunned Wilson. “The President said he felt as if the world had suddenly reversed itself. . .and that he could not get his balance,” House recorded in his diary the next day.\footnote{PWW, Vol. 41, 86 – 89: House diary, 1 February 1917.} Both Charles Macfarland and John Mott sent letters of consolation to the President that pushed him to maintain American neutrality despite the rising pressure to declare war on the Central Powers. Wilson wrote back to Macfarland that his letter “has given me a great deal of cheer. Just now it looks as if the cause of peace were all but desperate, but words of encouragement such as you are generous enough to send help immensely in these dark hours.”\footnote{PWW, Vol. 41, 93: letter from Wilson to Macfarland, 2 February 1917.}

American internationalists thus remained hopeful that a League-oriented peace could still be forged despite the setbacks of January 1917. No one associated with the Church Peace Union or the upper echelons of the Federal Council of Churches wanted the United States to enter the war. The German announcement that it would once again pursue a strategy of unrestricted submarine warfare had not altered a fundamental determination among Protestant internationalists in America to remain above the European conflict and preserve their “moral capital.” That attitude, however, changed abruptly on 1 March 1917 with the Zimmermann Telegram.

The publication of the Zimmermann Telegraph pushed the American ecumenical community into war. The telegraph itself contained an offer from the German Foreign
Office to the revolutionary government in Mexico City – Wilson’s *bête noire* during his first four years in office – to provide military aid for a Mexican reclamation of the southwestern United States. Unfortunately for its author, Arthur Zimmermann, this secret communication was not so secret. For some time the British had been monitoring transatlantic telegrams sent by Germany to the New World via American-operated cable networks. They intercepted this message along with the rest, deciphered it, and handed it over to the U. S. State Department on 19 February.

For Charles Macfarland, the Zimmermann Telegram was a rough revelation that he had been duped by someone whom he had personally regarded as an ally. It had been Arthur Zimmermann who had been so encouraging to Colonel House and other American diplomats interested in a peace settlement. It was his promotion to the head of the Foreign Office the previous November that the internationalist community had been so enthusiastic about. It had been Zimmermann who had always met with Macfarland and other ecumenical figures when they came to Berlin and Zimmermann again who had been the primary liaison between the Foreign Office and the German Council. Now Zimmermann was revealed as someone who had been trying to engineer a war between Mexico and the United States even while he had been feeding his American contacts information to keep the U. S. out of the war.

Macfarland became disillusioned as well with the German Council. Although some of its members had softened in their stance toward the League in their correspondence, only Adolf Deissmann had endorsed the concept in print. At each step along the war the members of the German Council had been more preoccupied with influencing their American counterparts than with swaying the German churches. Its
musings on the League had always been aimed at a foreign, and not a domestic, audience. This became clear to Macfarland only after he received no response from the telegram he had cabled on 18 December pleading with the German Council to strike while the iron was hot. Once Zimmermann’s deceptions became public knowledge, Macfarland assumed that the entire crew in Berlin had been in on the game. “Deissmann and Harnack have lied to us,” he vented in one angry letter, “There is nothing they will not do to win this war.”

After the war was over Macfarland discovered more about just how he had been deceived. He learned that one of Zimmermann’s primary jobs had been the enlistment of all types of transnational and nationalist movements against the Allies and that the ecumenical movement had been just one of many of his projects. The real purpose behind Zimmermann’s promotion to Foreign Secretary also came to light. Gottlieb von Jagow had not retired for health reasons. Instead he had resigned because his strong objections to the aggressive schemes of the German High Command had made him persona non grata with the Emperor. Zimmermann, on the other hand, far from being a so-called “man of the people,” was all too comfortable with the dominance of the German generals over the civil government.

Once contact between the German Council and the rest of the World Alliance was reestablished in 1919, Deissmann disclosed why they had not responded to Macfarland’s final telegram. They had never gotten it. Macfarland had wired his message from the German Embassy in Washington to Deissmann and Siegmund-Schultze via Zimmermann and the Foreign Office. At some point along the way the communication had been lost.

889 WCCA, 212.004: letter from Macfarland to Wilfred Monod, 3 April 1917.
Or had it been misplaced? Could Zimmermann have scuttled the telegram intentionally because he had no intention of allowing the ecumenical movement to mobilize on behalf of Bethmann-Hollweg’s peace offensive? The answer will never be known, but many individuals within the World Alliance had their suspicions.  

At any rate the time for negotiation had passed. Deissmann’s fear that the League issue would become a wedge between the German Council and the rest of the ecumenical world had come to pass. Individuals who expressed some interest in the League such as Adolf Deissmann, Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze and Adolf von Harnack put their thoughts on the subject on the backburner now that the United States had entered the war. The baton had passed to hardliners such as Georg Michaelis, the focus of the next section of this chapter.

7.3 German Ecumenism at War: The Chancellorship of Georg Michaelis, 1917

From February 1917 through October 1918 the German government pursued nothing less than an unconditional military victory. As a consequence it never seriously entertained any discussion of the League of Nations. Before 1917 the League was only considered within the purview of a peace settlement. Once the possibility of a negotiated peace faded from view after the publication of the Zimmermann Telegraph, the prospects of the League followed suit.

890 See Deissmann’s reports on his conversations with Macfarland to the rest of the German Council in ZLB 305, Box 131/1: “Protokoll der Sitzung des Ausschusses für Freundschaftsarbeit der Kirchen am 10. Dezember 1919 im Hospiz am Bahnhof Friedrichstr.”; ZLB 305, Box 131/1: “Protokoll der Sitzung des Ausschusses für Freundschaftsarbeit der Kirchen am 7. November 1919 im Hospiz am Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse, Albrechtstr. 8.”
After the United States declared war on Germany, political power passed into the hands of the German High Command for the remainder of the war. Berlin descended into what was effectively a military dictatorship. Under the German Constitution power flowed downward from the Emperor through every aspect of the federal government. He alone possessed the authority over all ministerial and martial appointments, regardless of any opposition in the elected Reichstag. Unfortunately, Wilhelm responded to the war by falling into a depressive inmobility; he often went days without speaking to anyone, paralyzed by the thought that he might be the last monarch of the Second Reich. In his desperation he turned to the army and allowed the generals to act as his proxy.

Two officers in particular dominated political life in Berlin: General Paul von Hindenburg, the victorious hero of the Eastern Front promoted to the top position in the army in August 1916; and, finally, General Erich Ludendorff, Hindenburg’s Chief of Staff, who assumed complete control of the civilian economy during the second half of the war. Both men believed that the military retain its full autonomy from the Reichstag and even take precedence over the civil government during times of national crisis. Both men were suspicious of democratic reform. Both had favored the resumption of unhampered submarine warfare over the prospect of a compromise with the Allies. Finally, and most importantly for this dissertation, neither of them ever expressed any interest in the League of Nations during the war.  

Hindenburg and Ludendorff also gradually assumed strict control over the
Foreign Office. First Arthur Zimmermann kept the ministry in line until he was forced to
resign on 6 August 1917 for his clumsy handling of Mexico. Then Zimmermann’s
successor, Richard von Kühlmann wanted a negotiated peace, but felt that he could not
defy the High Command without ending his career. He was right. In the summer of
1918 von Kühlmann finally pushed forward his opinion that Germany could not win a
military victory and that it needed to seek a diplomatic solution to the war. Hindenburg
had him removed from office.

In April 1917 Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg offered no more resistance to the
military’s aggressive pursuit of annexations. He signed the so-called Kreuznach
memorandum that committed Germany to the reduction of Belgium to the status of a
German satellite, substantial territorial expansions into the Baltic region and, on the
Western front, the annexation of Liège, Luxembourg, the Flanders coastline and the iron-rich French provinces along the old border. Privately Bethmann-Hollweg thought that
the generals’ demands were little better than fantasies. Yet he felt unable to resist the
tide. The army was at the height of its power after forcing the Russian Soviet Republic to
sign a humiliating settlement, on 3 March 1918. The so-called Brest-Litovsk Treaty
ceded control of the Baltic states, Poland, Belarus and the majority of the Ukraine to the
Central Powers. With the Eastern Front subdued, the German High Command turned its
attention to delivering a similarly one-sided decision in the West.

Bethmann-Hollweg’s inability to stand up to Hindenburg angered an increasingly
restless Reichstag that was beginning to agitate for more reasonable war aims. By July
the German High Command realized that Bethmann-Hollweg no longer possessed the
cache to deal with the dissent in Berlin and so they cast about for a docile replacement who would be willing to take on a growing fiasco. In desperation the Emperor accepted Hindenburg’s nomination for the job without having even met the candidate face to face. The new Chancellor was a minor government bureaucrat who was also a member of the German Council of the World Alliance: Georg Michaelis.

Michaelis might have been unknown to the Emperor, but he was a familiar face within ecumenical circles. For he had been a very prominent leader of several missionary societies and the German YMCA for almost two decades. He was also an associate (though not a member) of the German Council of the World Alliance and one of the key national coordinators of Siegmund-Schultze’s POW relief campaign. Thus the YMCA journals welcomed the appointment of “our Dr. Michaelis” with joy, while Adolf Deissmann congratulated Michaelis on the opportunity he now had to promote the POW programs that he had been so dedicated to over the past three years.

Georg Michaelis grew up in Frankfurt an der Oder, a small town in central Prussia, in a pious family littered with barristers, judges and legal academics. At university he saw no reason to pursue a different course of life. He received an Arbitur in the science of law (Rechtswissenschaft) in 1876 followed by a doctorate in the same field from the University of Göttingen in 1884. Thinking he might want to pursue an academic career, Michaelis accepted an offer to teach law at a German school in Japan. He lived in Tokyo for five years from 1885 to 1889.


In Japan Michaelis encountered a type of Protestantism quite different from the conservative Lutheranism of his childhood. The confessional peculiarities of the various state churches in Germany, most of which were products of the Reformation wars, made little sense when transplanted to Asia. The Japanese Protestants of the Meiji era were characteristically educated, prosperous and nationalistic. Many of the first converts, such as Inazo Nitobe, had accepted Christianity while they were students of American and European professors. An entire generation of ex-samurai had taken on the mandate of absorbing Western ideas, and then translating them into Japanese society, in order to strengthen their country. Japanese Protestants were therefore active agents of the transculturation of the Christian religion. Much like Inazo Nitobe, who rooted modern Christianity virtues in the ancient Japanese values of bushido, Japanese pastors and theologians shaped their own nationalized Christianity, often without consideration for the denominational divisions of Western Protestantism, and then related that faith directly to the social and economic questions facing their nation.\(^{894}\)

Influenced by his Japanese co-religionists, Michaelis also began to rethink about the relationship among Protestantism, capitalism and modern society. As a student he had been attracted to various small-scale experiments in Christian communal living that strived to replicate the ascetic conventicles of the early Pietist movement. He had also flirted briefly with the Christian socialism of Adolf Stoecker, although he never joined the party, because of its attempt to bring a religious nationalism to bear on the nation’s social ills. Now in Japan, while teaching the juridical sciences by day and leading a Bible

\(^{894}\) Nitobé and his search for an ecumenical, and yet nationalized, Protestantism is discussed in Chapter 1.1.
study session by night, Michaelis dove head first into the problems of what he called ‘practical Christianity.’

Michaelis came to the conclusion that modernization was the fruit of Protestantism. In his view a purified, reformed Christianity impressed upon its followers the proper balance of virtues – the sanctity of individual life, the religious brotherhood of Christian nationalism, the obligation to improve the world through labor and technological innovation, the liberation of humanity from the repressive institutionalization of the established churches – that resulted in economic progress. Such progress, however, brought with it social disruption and class inequalities that threatened to erode the spiritual foundation of Christian culture. Only a renewed commitment to Christianize the nation could prevent the devolution of Christendom into a state of complete anarchy or a materialistic communism. Both the state and the churches had to work together to lift the lower classes out of poverty through a coordinated combination of personal evangelism, self-sacrificial patriotism, and social legislation.895

Originally Michaelis applied these thoughts to an Asian context, but this shaped his positions on Germany’s role in the world as well. Not surprisingly Michaelis became a lifelong supporter of many ecumenical mission societies that laid an emphasis on the social and economic development of the so-called ‘younger nations.’ His brother Walter spent five years in modern-day Namibia as a missionary from 1901 to 1906 and lived through the German army’s annihilation of the Herero tribe, but I have found little

evidence that this effected Michaelis’ perspective. His focus remained on Eastern Asia, with a concentration on German missions in China and then an advocate for German colonization in the region. In the decades leading up to the war he demonstrated consistent support for the expansion of the German Navy and, like every other eventual member of the German Council, foresaw the Protestant powers working together to achieve the Christianization of the world in his generation.

When Michaelis returned to Germany in 1889, he began applying his new social and religious views within the context of various ecumenical organizations. He joined the White Cross and participated in several of its campaigns against alcoholism, prostitution and venereal disease. Over the next decade he invested himself in the labors of the Innere Mission, an ecumenical coalition of Protestant clergymen and social workers founded in 1848 and endowed with the mission of elevating the living standards of the industrial poor and economically disenfranchised throughout Germany. Its leader, Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, who became Michaelis’ mentor during this time, believed that the spiritual rebirth of German Christendom could be achieved through the evangelization of the lower classes and a transecclesiastical emphasis on practical acts of brotherly love. The Innere Mission sponsored technical schools, workers’ factories and industrial unions, but refused to condone the class rivalry and violent tactics of the more extremist wings of the socialist movement. These programs strongly appealed to Michaelis. In Japan he had adopted the belief that the modern world would either end in socialism or in Christianity. Now, back home in Germany, he believed he had discovered a Christian organization that had a real, positive influence on the future.896

In 1902 Michaelis attended his first YMCA meeting. The Y in Germany at that time was a loosely affiliated cluster of small groups (*Kreis*) engaged in intensive Bible study, mutual discipleship and urban outreach. For Michalis these cell groups were reminiscent of the Pietist conventicles of the nineteenth-century awakenings and he expected the YMCA to achieve similar results in the present day. The YMCA was a “movement, not an organization, but a movement of intentional communities,” each one of which represented a “seedbed for the Christianization of a national church (*Volkskirche*)”. He saw in the Y the cradle of a revivified spiritual culture. As opposed to the professional cleric of the state churches, the Y leader was someone who “through his outspoken Christianity [and] his magnificent, fresh and selfless love” has inserted into the life of Germany an earnestness of purpose that attracted disciples across regional and class distinctions. 

Michaelis worked with the YMCA and its missionary counterpart, the World Student Christian Federation, for the rest of his life, just as his wife Margarete did for the YWCA.

Professionally Michaelis secured a series of steady promotions in the financial bureaucracies of one state after another in the years leading up to the First World War. From 1890 to 1909 he worked up and down the industrial backbone of the German Empire along the Rhineland. He became an active member of the Conservative Party and emulated the social progressivism of his hero, Otto von Bismarck. He had little patience for the agrarian conservatism of the landed classes and their addiction to high tariffs. Nor did he have much to do with the confessional churches after his return. He was thus an odd fit within the Conservative fold, a gadfly working from within to help the party

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overcome what Michaelis liked to call the guilt, or burden, of the past (Schuld der Alten Zeit). He was that rare political conservative with progressive views on economic, social and religious policy.

In 1909 Michaelis transferred to Berlin for a job with the Prussian Ministry of Finance. There he deepened his relationship with the YMCA by working with students at a small outpost established just off of the Unter den Linden. In 1911 he accepted a position of national leadership and took responsibility for the organization’s presence within the national university system. The national committee matched Michaelis with an accomplice for this endeavor: Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze. By 1914 the YMCA expanded to twenty-eight “circles” across the country with an approximate membership of 70,000 students under their leadership. Through the Y and through Siegmund-Schultze, Michaelis became acquainted with most of the leading representatives of the Protestant internationalist movement. He admired the “practical Christianity” on conspicuous display at the Berliner Dom and quickly reestablished ties with its head pastor, Ernst von Dryander, whom he had known as a boy. Michaelis considered him an exemplary preacher whose “sermons were always freed from dogmatics and centered on the personality of Christ.”

Through these new contacts, Michaelis became a proponent of an Anglo-German understanding and an early associate of the nascent World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches. Michaelis also demonstrated a strong respect for the American evangelist John Mott in the years leading up to the war. He closely followed

Mott’s missionary crusades in eastern Asia in 1912 – 1913 and, through a steady correspondence with Mott and other student missionaries in China and Japan, developed a belief that the YMCA could fulfill a similar purpose there as it was now doing in Europe. After the Great War Michaelis embarked on an extensive tour of China and Japan on behalf of the YMCA and delivered an address on this line of thought at the international conference of the World Student Christian Federation in Beijing in 1922.

The war provided Michaelis with opportunities to advance his political career. At a time when the belligerent powers attuned their domestic policies to the demands of so-called “total war,” inventive bureaucrats and economists had a celebrated role in enhancing the state’s power in order to prolong the war. In November 1914 Michaelis became the head of the supervisory committee of the Prussian War Grain Corporation (Kriegsgetreidegesellschaft). The following spring he became an imperial commissioner charged with rationalizing the dwindling national food supply. Three months later the Kaiser awarded Michaelis oversight of a new commission, the Imperial Grain Corporation (Reichsgetreidestelle), endowed with the absolute authority to control the agrarian market through of rationing all food supplies for the home front. Thus, while Lord Cecil strengthened the blockade that cut off almost all food imports into Germany, Georg Michaelis oversaw his nation’s adaptation to these new conditions.900

In his memoirs, Michaelis noted that he came in time to detest his job because he constantly dealt with angry criticism from all sides. Private corporations and farmers resented the intrusion of state restrictions on the agrarian market. Civilians often

900 For more about the powers of these government agencies and Michaelis’ role within them, see Gerald D. Feldman, Army, Industry and Labor in Germany, 1914 - 1918 (Providence, RI: Berg Publishers, Inc., 1992), 98 – 114.
protested against poor rations and long bread lines, and with each passing year, the situation grew worse and worse.\footnote{Michaelis, \textit{Für Staat und Volk}, 269 – 274, 288} This deprivation culminated in the so-called “turnip winter” of 1918, when the average German civilian consumed just 700 – 900 calories per day, less than half of the recommended minimum, and subsisted on a diet practically devoid of any meat products.\footnote{Belinda Davis, \textit{Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 180.}

The war also altered his role within the YMCA. Like several other Conservatives within the German Council, Michaelis came to the conclusion that the British group had played them for fools. When the German Council reconvened in the spring of 1915, Michaelis did not become an official member even though he did maintain contact with the group, primarily through Siegmund-Schultze. This did not mean that Michaelis abandoned his commitment to ecumenical missions. Just the opposite: when Mott visited Berlin in the late summer of 1914 with his scheme to convert the YMCA into an international relief programme for POWS, Michaelis volunteered to use his political contacts within the Prussian bureaucracy to ensure his government’s cooperation with the project.

His trust in the Americans however ended when the United States entered the war. He became particularly disillusioned with John Mott. In the summer of 1917 the YMCA icon traveled to Russia at Woodrow Wilson’s direction to get a sense of how their new ally was doing on the Eastern Front in the light of the Tsar’s recent downfall. While there Mott made a great effort to reach out to the Russian Orthodox Church on behalf of the YMCA and the ecumenical movement. (Mott’s trip coincided with Baker’s
successful visit with the Greeks in Athens, both part of a coordinated effort to enroll the Orthodox churches in the various organizations of the ecumenical movement.) The press widely reported one particular speech he gave to an Orthodox synod wherein Mott praised the Russian war effort for “fighting for the freedom of the world” and criticized the condition of the POW camps in Germany.903 Ecumenical officials in Germany, including Michaelis, reacted in horror to Mott’s newfound partisanship. This speech effectively ended Germany’s participation in the YMCA’s POW program that Michaelis had invested so much in.

Despite these difficulties Michaelis performed well enough to catch the eye of General Ludendorff in 1917. By this point in the war the German High Command overshadowed the civil bureaucracies and had begun to assert control over many areas that had up until then been the domain of the various ministries. Ludendorff himself took the responsibility for creating a nationalized system of production under the direct supervision of the federal government for the purpose of maximizing the German war effort. Michaelis’ pioneering work on the rations system was in many ways a model for what the High Command wanted to achieve for every aspect of the domestic economy. In the spring of 1917 Ludendorff engineered the creation of a new office under Michaelis entrusted with the executive power to control the agrarian market in order to ensure that food supplies were distributed in such a way as to optimize the production of war materials.

In July Hindenburg and Ludendorff pushed Michaelis upwards yet again – this time into the office of the Chancellery. A parliamentary rebellion against the diplomatic inflexibility of the High Command forced Bethmann-Hollweg, who had held the office since the inception of the war, to resign. On 6 July Matthias Erzberger delivered a speech on the floor of the Reichstag that demanded a renunciation of the Imperial government’s territorial ambitions and the immediate introduction of peace negotiations with the Allies. Up until then Erzberger had been a notable supporter of the High Command, but in researching the reports of the Navy in the late spring of 1917 he had discovered that the military had been doctoring its statistics to cover over the relative ineffectiveness of the submarine campaign and the subsequent severity of the German situation. Disenchanted, the cagy parliamentarian covertly constructed a coalition of like-minded men from the National Liberal camp, the conservative wing of the Socialists Democrats, and his own party, the Catholic Center, before delivering his public damnation of the current course of German policy. This coalition apparently included Adolf Deissmann, who he had worked with to produce the Evangelische Wochenbriefe, as discussed above. As a result the Reichstag followed his exposé by resolving to draft its own independent position on the pressing necessity for a “peace of understanding” (Verständigungsfrieden) based upon the status quo ante bellum to be concluded before the end of the year.904

Bethmann-Hollweg’s chancellorship was an immediate political casualty of the ensuing crossfire between the Reichstag and the German High Command. His inability to quell the dissent cost him the support of the army, while his unwillingness to confront

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904 On Erzberger’s change of heart, see Epstein, Matthias Erzberger and the Dilemma of German Democracy, 113 – 114, 164 – 181.
the generals left him with little parliamentary support. Bethmann-Hollweg handed in his letter of resignation on 13 July while Erzberger and his allies drafted the so-called Reichstag Peace Resolution. Initial probes from the palace discovered that no politicians of note wanted to risk their careers by moving into the line of fire. Finally Wilhelm settled on Michaelis, a name put forward by the High Command.

In his memoirs Michaelis recounts that he received the news of his appointment with puzzlement. He had no parliamentary experience and no record of leadership outside of his work for the YMCA. He also openly admitted that he had no more knowledge of the diplomatic issues facing the Central Powers other than what he had gleaned from the evening papers. Michaelis’ first response was to decline the Emperor’s offer, but on the afternoon just before his appointment with the Kaiser he experienced a divine message during what he later called “the most difficult hour of [my] life.”

No man was with me but God. The text for the day in the manual of the Protestant brotherhood (Brüdergemeinde) to which I belonged, which gave me and thousands like me daily advice for the pilgrimage of life, was verse nine from the first chapter of Joshua: ‘Have I not commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid nor dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with you wherever you go.’”905 Michaelis interpreted this as a sign from God. He accepted the position as his cross to bear for the sake of his people.

Michaelis’ first task as Chancellor was to quash the Reichstag’s peace resolution. On 19 July the Reichstag passed the peace resolution by a vote of 212 to 126 with 17 abstentions, despite the well-known opposition of the Emperor and the German military. The Peace Resolution consisted of just three short paragraphs, and yet within these few words it reopened the possibility of Germany’s participation in a future League of

905 Michaelis, Für Staat und Volk, 321.
Nations. The opening sentence reminded the Emperor of his promise on the first day of the war that Germany was “not impelled by the lust of conquest.” The document then defended the conflict as a just action of self-defense before moving on to the main point. “The Reichstag aspires to a peace based on mutual agreement and a permanent reconciliation of all nations.” It rejected all “forcible territorial acquisitions and acts of political, economic or financial violence” as well as the “imposition of economic barriers.” In a nod to Wilson it endorsed the freedom of the seas and then, finally, announced that “the Reichstag will promote actively the creation of international organizations of justice.”

Michaelis could not accept the resolution, but neither could he avoid it. So he tried to finesse the issue. In a speech to the Reichstag after the vote he commended the spirit of the resolution but then warned the assembly that Germany could not trust the Allies to honestly enter into the type of negotiations that might bring about such an armistice. He then promised to enact the resolution only “as I interpret it” (wie ich sie auffasse). Soon thereafter he made it known to the party leaders in private that he intended to handle the resolution as if it were a piece of naïve advice.

Michaelis never took any steps toward a negotiated peace, even though many of his ecumenical peers encouraged him to treat the Reichstag peace resolution more seriously. Deissmann urged Michaelis to consider the League as a cornerstone of an eventual peace settlement. He even informed him of the discussions he had had with Macfarland in 1915 – 1916. However Michaelis told Deissmann that he could not take

906 Becker, Georg Michaelis: Eine Biographie, 376. The speech is reprinted in full in Michaelis, Für Staat und Volk, 326 – 328.
any American offer seriously after the personal “betrayal” of Mott and the rest of the ecumenical community. “We cannot trust these so-called men of God,” Michaelis concluded, “when they are so clearly trapped by British propaganda.”

The personal betrayal of Mott and the others in the YMCA had taught Michaelis that he could not risk the future security of his country on the goodwill of the other Protestant great powers.

Throughout the summer of 1917 Michaelis stuck to his guns, even though the general sentiment within the German Council was starting to tilt in favor of a quick end to the war before the collapse of the Central Powers. The circle of Protestant intellectuals associated with the Evangelical-Social Congress began attending weekly strategy sessions every Wednesday evening at the suburban home of the historian Hans Delbrück. Through the course of these sessions individuals such as Adolf von Harnack, Ernst Troeltsch and Friedrich Naumann reconciled themselves to the necessity for an immediate armistice and some type of pan-European pact for the postwar world.

Friedrich Naumann’s plan for a pan-European federation based upon the immediate union of Germany and Austria, a so-called Mitteleuropa, as the precursor to a multilateral peace pact received some serious attention in 1917, but Michaelis discounted such schemes as “pure lunacy.”

Deissmann and Siegmund-Schultze also began to interest a small circle of individuals within the German Council in the prospect of a peace based upon Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the creation of the League of Nations. By the end of 1917 these

907 ZLB 305, Box 271: letter from Michaelis to Deissmann, 22 July 1917.
908 Nottmeier, 492 – 495.
individuals included Julius Richter, A. W. Schreiber, Johannes Lepsius and Adolf von Harnack. Realizing that Michaelis stood in the way of their political aims, they decided to throw in their lot with the opposition, led by Matthais Erzberger and Max von Baden. The reliance on Erzberger and von Baden meant political impotence in the short term. Yet within the year, when it had become apparent to everyone, even Hindenburg, that Germany must secure a peace, this political alliance would pay dividends.

7.4 German Ecumenism and the Armistice: The Chancellorship of Max von Baden, 1918

On 31 October 1917 Michaelis was removed from office after it became apparent to the High Command that his continued presence in the Chancellery only enraged the Reichstag all the more. Having done his duty to God and nation, Michaelis moved out of Berlin to take up a new post in eastern Prussia. His successor, Count Georg von Hertling, lasted until 3 September 1918, by which time it had become obvious that Germany had to reach an agreement with the Allies if it was to avoid a complete collapse.

In his hour of need the Kaiser turned to his nephew, Prince Max von Baden, to fill the vacant Chancellorship. It would be the Kaiser’s last appointment. Von Baden’s term in office lasted only eight weeks, from 3 September to 30 November, but by the time it was over the Central Powers had surrendered and the Emperor had fled to Holland, one step ahead of an Allied tribunal for war crimes. In order to secure strong parliamentary support for the new direction of the government, he stocked his Cabinet with the leaders of the two main parties in the Reichstag: the Social Democratic Party and the Catholic Center Party. When it became apparent to him that Wilson would never accept Germany’s surrender without the unconditional abdication of the Kaiser, Prince Max
forced his uncle from office, turned in his own resignation as an act of protest, and handed power over to the Reichstag parties. “All leading factors characterized me,” he later wrote, “as the only person who was suitable for carrying out the great liquidation with some dignity.”

Prince Max’s time in office may have been brief but it still marks a crucial period in German history when the nation shifted from a monarchy at war to a parliamentary democracy seeking a peace settlement. More importantly, for the purposes of this dissertation, this is the time when the German Foreign Office began to treat the League of Nations as a serious issue for the first time.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Max von Baden had a long working relationship with the German Council of the World Alliance, even though he was not himself a member. It is likely that he was familiar with the earliest stirrings of the World Alliance from his Aunt Luise, the Grand Duchess of Baden, the movement’s earliest patron. In his memoirs he details his great admiration for Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze and his ecumenical take on the war. “‘Even in war to love your enemy is the mark of loyalty to the Lord.’ I took up this phrase of Sigmund Schulze’s in 1917, and added the warning clause, ‘And also the mark of loyalty to Germany.’” In 1914 Max had to retire from the military because of his poor health. He spent the remainder of the war working with the YMCA on their POW campaign from within the civil government.

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In 1917 Prince Max was an outspoken supporter of an immediate negotiated peace settlement based roughly on Wilson’s Fourteen Points. In his memoirs he credits the Mittwoch discussion group that met weekly at Hans Delbrück’s house with setting him on this political path. Max had hoped that Michaelis’ “deep and genuine piety would make it easier for him to reject war aims which violated the rights and the honour of other nations.” The two men had worked particularly closely together on the YMCA campaign. “Nothing was so significant of the prevailing state of mind as the universal ‘quest of the successor,’ which began immediately after Michaelis’ speech.” However Michaelis’ rejection of the peace resolution soon doomed him in his friend’s eyes. Throughout the Chancellor’s struggle with the Reichstag, von Baden continued to meet with an oppositional core of Berlin intellectuals that included Siegmund-Schultze, Adolf von Harnach, Ernst Troeltsch, Johannes Lepsius and, most importantly for our story, Adolf Deissmann.

Deissmann became particularly infatuated with von Baden in 1917 and was one of the first to position the Prince as the political candidate of the peace group. In December 1917 he published one of von Baden’s speeches that urged the Allies and the Central Powers to abandon their immoral quests for power in favor of reconciliation. “The healing forces are everywhere listening for each other; everywhere men are growing weary of the moratorium on the Sermon on the Mount.” Citing the Christian spirit of the YMCA and the Red Cross as an example, von Baden insisted that Germany heed its spiritual core values before it was too late. “Power alone cannot assure us the place in the world which in our opinion belongs to us. The sword cannot strike down the moral

912 Maximilian von Baden, Memoirs: Volume 1, 125 – 126. 
obstacles which have risen against us. If the world is to be reconciled to the greatness of our power it must feel that there is a world conscience behind our strength.”  

Deissmann considered von Baden’s speech to be the standard of the pro-League, pro-armistice circle emerging in Berlin.

On 22 August Max von Baden delivered a second address to the Badenese parliament that demanded a postwar League in words that mimicked Deissmann’s own spiritual interpretation of the war. “The settlement of Germany’s internal, political and religious differences has been a spiritual preparation on a small scale for the work of cooperation between the nations. . . . The unity of the German Empire only became possible because men’s faith in this ideal never perished even in the darkest days of German history. And so those who honestly care for the far-off ideal of international cooperation must not lose faith in their high hope, however suspicious the present temper of our enemies may make the phrase ‘League of Nations’ appear to us.”

Prince Max concluded his address with a condemnation of the hawkish mentality of the current French and British governments and the hope that the more Christian elements of those countries might take power and support Wilson’s Fourteen Points.

Three months later when Max became Chancellor, Deissmann and the other core members of the German Council rejoiced that the time was now ripe for a reconciliation of the Protestant great powers. Deissmann’s original enthusiasm for the war had dissipated along with the feelings of ‘national revival’ that accompanied the outbreak of


914 Maximilian von Baden, Memoirs: Volume 2, 330 – 331. A full copy of this speech with Deissmann’s notes can be found in ZLB 309, Box 271.
the war. He felt embarrassed about his participation in the *Aufruf* of 1914, his quarrelsome letters with his British and American friends and his unqualified defense of the German army’s actions in the name of national necessity.

For me, the longer I ruminate about the injustices of this war the more formidable and fatal they appear to me. Neither the fact that our military leaders acted because of a great emergency, nor the fact that our enemies acted with essentially the same injustices against other neutral powers. . . .is enough to dispel the nagging realization that with the invasion of Belgium we have assumed a heavy load of guilt upon us. . . .I feel only relief for my conscience that we have agreed through the government of Prince Max to make reparations.\footnote{ZLB 305, Box 658: *Evangelischer Wochenbrief*, 16 November 1918.}

Deissmann hoped that Germany might regain its moral leadership of the world by becoming the loudest voice on behalf of the League at the peace table in contrast to the Allied powers.

Under Max von Baden the Foreign Office in Berlin reoriented itself around the promotion of the League of Nations. The new Foreign Minister, Wilhelm Solf, believed that by subscribing to the League concept Germany might gain some protection from the United States against the more vengeful schemes of the Allied powers. By seizing upon the League of Nations and Wilson’s Fourteen Points as the centerpoints of a new foreign policy, the German government hoped to take the initiative in the peace talks even as their military power was rapidly evaporating in the face of the arriving American troops. By the end of 1918 there appeared to be more excitement about the League than in Paris, London or even Washington D. C.\footnote{On the reorientation of the Foreign Office under Max von Baden, see Christoph M. Kimmich, *Germany and the League of Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 5 – 16 and Klaus Schwabe, *Woodrow Wilson, Revolutionary Germany, and Peacemaking, 1918 – 1919* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 118 – 137.}
In the fall of 1918 the Foreign Office created a new branch of its bureaucracy that adopted the official title of the Deutsche Liga für Völkerbund. Prince Max tasked the organization with drafting a German proposal for a League of Nations in preparation for the eventual peace conference.

To lead the Deutsche Liga für Völkerbund (DLV), von Baden selected Walter Simons. Simons was a legal expert lodged within the Foreign Office since 1911 who also possessed a firm connection to the missionary movement in Berlin and the Evangelical Social Congress. From this point onward through the next decade Walter Simons championed the cause of his nation’s participation in the League of Nations within the German government while maintaining a reliable presence at every major ecumenical event.917

Adolf Deissmann also played a central role in the DLV in its earliest days. Simons and the DLV hoped that Deissmann could use his position in the World Alliance to aid the Deutsche Liga für Völkerbund as it had in other countries. These hopes proved vain.918 The German Council lacked the financial wherewithal to help, especially after the Kaiser’s abdication on 9 November 1918. Once Max von Baden began negotiations with the American government about an armistice, Wilson demanded that the Kaiser’s abdication occur before any cessation of hostilities. Grieved at the loss of the monarchy, von Baden ushered the Emperor out of office and then resigned his office. The Kaiser fled to Holland accompanied by his favorite pastor, Ernst von Dryander. Wilhelm’s fall


918 Adolf Deissmann’s hand-written notes on the first meetings of the Deutsche Liga für Völkerbund can be found in ZLB 306, Box 905/1.
left the German Council in dire straits. For decades the ecumenical organizations had relied upon the patronage of the royal family. Without the monarchy, many missions societies ceased operation while several members of the German Council, such as Siegmund-Schultze, stopped receiving their regular stipends. Given these conditions, the funds for launching a popular campaign on behalf of the Deutsche Lifa für Völkerbund was out of the question.919

Deissmann thought incorrectly that his ecumenical contacts in Britain and America could help the DLV. On 21 November, just ten days after the German surrender, Deissmann sent a telegram to his old friend, Randall Davidson, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to let him know that Germany was not ready for reconciliation. “Standing from the beginning of the war in the work for international Christian understanding,” he wrote, “I now find it my duty at the end of the war to make an appeal to the Christian leaders whom I know in the belligerent countries to use all their influence so that the approaching peace may not contain the seed of new universal catastrophes but instead release all available conciliatory and rebuilding powers between the nations.” He wanted the British and American Councils to bring their political influence to bear on the peace settlement. Our people, he wrote, fear that the armistice as it then stood “would not mean reconciliation but an aggravation of their misery” and “would prevent for generations the fulfillment of all ideals about Christian and huan solidarity.” Germany had changed, he

assured Davidson, and his nation was now infused with a “new spirit...closely akin to the Gospel.”

Needless to say, Davidson was shocked at Deissmann’s effrontery. In his reply, which he wrote in consultation with Robert Cecil, Davidson wrote that he could not accept Deissmann’s “presentation of the situation” because he “ignores altogether the outrage which has been perpetrated on Christendom and civilisation by the continued action of Germany from her horrors in Belgium down to the last week and the treatment of the Prisoners.” He refused to pressure the British government on matters “political rather than ecclesiastical.” Perhaps things would be different in the future, but now was not the time to confabulate with Germany on mere terms of Christian amity.” Davidson apparently felt that the German change of heart was too opportunistic to be taken seriously, especially without a confession of the Axis’ sins.

Deissmann found that the German Council lacked the political will to act decisively on behalf of the League without any clear support from abroad. At a meeting of the German Council on 13 December 1918, Deissmann shared Davidson’s disappointing response to his feeler. Siegmund-Schultze reported that his contact with John Mott had ended in a similar fashion. The reaction in the room proved that even in the German Council there still remained a vibrant bitterness towards the American and Allied churches. Karl Axenfeld was still angry about the seizure of German missions in Africa and defiantly insisted that “with such people one cannot even sit at the same table.” Johannes Lepsius remained furious over how the British had blamed the German

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920 EZAB 51/E-II-d-1: Telegram from Deissmann to Davidson (via Söderblom), 21 November 1918.
921 EZAB 51/E-II-d-1: Letter from Davidson to Dickinson, 23 November 1918.
government for the Armenian genocide. Another member brought up the fact that Mott “broke his word” to them after the U. S. had entered the war. In the end they decided to table the issue of the League in favor of working on a joint declaration on the “moral responsibility” for the war. As they had in 1914, the German Council focused its attention on materials intended for a foreign, rather than a domestic, audience.

If the ecumenical community in Berlin could not stand behind the League, then what chance did the concept have in the churches throughout Germany? None. In January 1919 Siegmund-Schultze took an informal poll on the churches’ openness to the League of Nations and found it overwhelmingly negative. If the German Council aligned itself too closely with the Deutsche Liga für Völkerbund, the result would be disastrous for the future of the ecumenical community. The time was not yet ripe.

7.5 Conclusion

The League movement in Germany never succeeded in launching a substantial popular campaign in large part because it could not depend on the Protestant churches. The League appealed to the core of the German Council, but the German Council itself had far less access to local congregations than its counterparts in other countries. Its influence was confined to the narrow band of ecumenical organizations operative in Germany before the war. Socially this meant that its appeal – and the appeal of the

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922 ZLB 305, Box 349: “Protokoll der Sitzung der christlichen Vereine Deutschlands, die Mitglieder internationaler Verbände sind, vom 13. Dezember 1918 nachmittags Uhr im Christlichen Hospiz, Berlin, Albrechtsstrasse 8.”

League concept – remained restricted to academic, philanthropic and missionary circles in Berlin.

From 1914 to 1916 American ecumenists managed to interest several Protestants attached to the World Alliance in the League movement, including, most importantly, Adolf Deissmann. Yet after the Americans entered the war, the prospect of a negotiated peace hid underground for two years. When the Reichstag tried to reform German war aims from the outside of the military establishment, Georg Michaelis, a disaffected nationalist associated with the YMCA, squashed any parliamentary dissent.

It was not until the German army accepted the necessity of an armistice that the Emperor allowed an advocate of the League to take command. Max von Baden turned Germany towards Wilson’s Fourteen Points and stimulated the organization of the Deutsche Lifa für Völkerbund within the German Foreign Office. The DLV tried to enlist the aid of the World Alliance through Deissmann’s direct mediation, but the German lacked the breadth, the funds and the political will to promote the League of Nations within the churches.

In every country the boundaries of the League movement remained, with few exceptions, the borders of the antebellum ecumenical movement. The resources at the disposal of the World Alliance became the strengths of the League societies. In this case that is not saying much. The German Council remained plagued by bitterness over the war, an overreliance on a shaky monarchy, an inability to exert its influence on the local congregations of the various Landkirchen, and a tendency to waste its energies on convincing foreign Protestants of the German point of view. The DLV suffered because of these weaknesses. In 1918 – 1919 the League movement in Berlin failed to overcome
its association with the German surrender, depended upon governmental funds to operate, failed to attract a popular audience, and spent most of its resources on trying to influence the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference. Like father, like son.
CHAPTER 8:
CONCLUSION

This dissertation has traced the religious roots of an international movement to establish the League of Nations from its inception at the Second Hague Conference through World War I. League of Nation societies developed around an influential core of ecumenists that formed a new organization, the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches, in Germany in August 1914. At this ill-fated assembly, Protestant internationalists from Europe and North America hatched a plan to cultivate political allies within their countries. Within the first few months these individuals created organizations such as the League to Enforce Peace in the United States, the League of Nations Union in Great Britain, Droit par la Paix in France and the Central Organization for a Durable Peace that operated throughout neutral Europe. In time the World Alliance and its sister ecumenical agencies such as the Near East Relief and the International Missionary Council helped launch League societies in China, Japan, Russia, Canada and the Near East. Ecumenical relationships also helped keep thought about the League alive in Germany despite the relative estrangement of German Protestants from their co-religionaries during the war, resulting in the pro-League direction of the civil government under Max von Baden during the surrender in 1918.
Thus the boundaries of the League movement in 1919 corresponded for the most part with the pre-existing borders of the ecumenical movement throughout the world.

With the exception of the German contingent, Protestants associated with the World Alliance transformed their own churches into conduits for internationalist propaganda and popular pro-League support. In Britain the cause penetrated almost every denomination and attracted ecumenically-minded politicians from all three political parties. In the United States the Federal Council of Churches enjoyed a newfound social relevancy built upon the so-called ‘gospel of internationalism’ while older, more established parachurch organizations such as the YMCA, the YWCA and the Evangelical Alliance rallied beneath the banner of the League. Only fundamentalist churches that remained outside of the fold of the Federal Council of Churches for theological reasons remained immune to the new campaign. In France the League movement became known in the public mind as a peculiarly Huguenot fascination while in Scandinavia, Holland and Switzerland the Protestant churches provided the only popular bases of support for the League campaign from 1914 to 1917. Germany remained the exception to the rule. Prior to 1914 the ecumenical community relied on royal patronage instead of popular support and thus its reach never extended much beyond the court in Baden and Berlin. As a result it was ill equipped to influence the local state churches on any matter. The League therefore remained the preserve of a small, though connected, community in Germany throughout the war years.

Advocacy for the League of Nations allowed the churches to conceive the war as an apocalyptic event. Ecumenists on all sides made eschatological sense within a narrative of redemptive suffering whereby the end result of the war – religious renewal, a
united Christendom, world peace – justified present-day suffering. In 1914 the ecumenical community unraveled a bit after both sides of the conflict blamed the other using just war arguments. A permanent schism failed to come about only because church leaders refocused their attention on the prospect of a reunified pan-Protestant world order recommitted to the supranational ideals of the Kingdom of God. The war then became a necessary prelude to a spiritual revival through a shared sacrificial offering of its participants. The League of Nations thus became a political and moral imperative in order to ensure that the mass destruction of the Great War would not have been in vain.

The religious energy of the League movement brought it political influence. This dissertation has shown how the World Alliance converted several high-level politicians to the campaign. In Britain the concept captured the imagination of the three main parties through individuals who had already invested themselves in the ecumenical movement before the war years. Both the Conservative scion Robert Cecil and the Labour patriarch Arthur Henderson devoted the remainder of their political careers to the League of Nations through the 1920s and 1930s. For the decade after the armistice, the World Alliance could depend upon a favorable faction within either party, so that a consistent pro-League element came to bear on British foreign policy regardless of which political party was in control. Meanwhile in the United States, the Federal Council of Churches, a predominantly Republican institution, enlisted the Democratic President Woodrow Wilson to the cause in 1916. Wilson proved to be the single greatest asset of the League movement through the peace talks. But after 1918 the Federal Council of Churches struggled to bring the same influence to bear on its own political party. Within the Republican administrations of Harding and Coolidge, political internationalism remained
a minority position. During the war, the ecumenical movement’s success in recruiting politicians allowed it to convert its political dreams into postwar reality.

In the introduction to Chapter Three, I criticized the moralistic tone of much of the historiography on Protestantism in the First World War. Specifically I claimed that the majority of the scholarship was overly concerned with narrating a tragedy. Because faith and nationalism failed to maintain a healthy distance from one another, it is claimed, a crusading mentality emerged that would not allow negotiation and compromise to end the war. The supposed results were a religious-inflamed jingoism, on the one hand, and, on the other, a mass rejection of Christianity by the lower classes. This historiography only sees part of the picture. It overemphasizes the early public denunciations that passed between German and British church leaders. Until recently historians have under-utilized the extensive private correspondences that were more tormented and conciliartory. Historians have also under-studied the extraordinary success of Protestant internationalist organizations during the war years, whose new programs permanently altered the way that diplomats and humanitarians conceive of international relations.

Because a tragic, cautionary historiography dominates our approach to Protestantism from 1914 to 1919, we have failed to perceive that the Great War acted in fact as a stimulant on the Protestant churches and the ecumenical movement. This dissertation hopefully offers a small corrective to the larger narrative, but more work remains to be done. I must be content with emphasizing that the First World War did not negate or invalidate Protestant internationalism. Instead the war reenergized ecumenical leaders as they mobilized churches into a political crusade to Christianize the battlefields of Europe and, after that, the larger world order.
In 1918, just four years after its founding, the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches was a vibrant global network of Protestant leaders with access to ample financial resources, important connections and a burgeoning media presence. Related ecumenical organizations, such as the YMCA or the WSCF were blossoming into nascent NGOs. A ‘church of letters’, as it were, developed during the early twentieth century that was capable of circulating monies, information and volunteers around the war. After the war the League of Nations came to depend on this network to fulfill its humanitarian mission around the world. In doing so the League of Nations inherited many of the World Alliance’s virtues – and weaknesses.

The Great War accelerated the growth of an ecumenical network by providing Christians with an immediate, practical focus on international relief. The League movement expanded the church’s vision to include a political vision for the entire globe that meshed with the supernatural reality of the transnational Church. As one student volunteer put it, “The mere fact that practically the entire student body [of the World Student Christian Federation] either crossed the Atlantic or was preparing to do so gives a new reality to our movement.”\(^924\) A new set of convictions circulated in Protestant churches: the melding of missions and relief work; a new focus on secular service and sacrifice; a refreshed sense that a united Church had a premier role to play in the policial structure of a multinational Christendom; the need for a religious revival in order to over the forces of secular nationalism and militarism and achieve a lasting peace. The capstone to all of these new ideals was the League of Nations.

\(^924\) WCCA 213.05.06: David Porter, *Reports of Student Movements for St. Beatenberg, 1920*, 90. See also Ruth Rouse, *The Federation in the World War, 1914 – 1918* (Geneva: World’s Student Christian Federation, 1940), 64.
Yet the growth of this network remained somewhat uneven. The leadership remained European and North American. The ecumenical movement became financially dependent upon the explosion of generosity in the United States that dwarfed its fundraising in other parts of the world, particularly after the financial collapse of the Central Powers in 1918-1919. Membership multiplied disproportionately in Canada, the United States, Great Britain and Scandinavia, while the German Council struggled to find popular support and the French Council remained within a self-imposed ghetto.

While the League movement became a virtual orthodoxy for much of the Protestant West, it never became fully adopted by the German contingent of the World Alliance until after the collapse of the Central Powers was reality. In 1914 the ecumenical movement faced a severe setback after British church leaders endorsed the Allied cause. In 1917-1918 the churches existed in relative isolation. Yet a small group of ecumenists did keep the League ideal alive, if dormant, until the ascendancy of Max von Baden in the final days of the war. Unfortunately the German Council focused on influencing the Imperial Government instead of the churches, a choice that again crippled the movement in 1918 when the Imperial Government folded as a precondition of surrender.

The League of Nations became what was because its religious roots. Much of the early staff in Geneva had previous experience in an ecumenical agency. An entire generation of church leaders, both men and women, emerged from their service in the Red Cross, the Ys or Near East Relief with a global perspective and firsthand experience of the brutalities of war. Several moved to Geneva in the 1920s to craft careers in the League. The success of the Nansen passport in relocating thousands of stateless refugees
in Eastern Europe, which was the first largescale endeavor of the League, relied heavily on YMCA camps and supplies already in place for POW relief. Its head, Fridtjof Nansen, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1922, was previously the head of the Norwegian YMCA and the Norwegian Council of the World Alliance. Other ecumenical leaders played a hand in the League’s postwar governance of Istanbul (briefly renamed Constantinople) and the emerging mandate system in the Middle East. Mission leaders helped the League’s early campaigns against “white slavery,” the opium trade and the struggle against infectious diseases in Asia. The League’s Covenant charged the international agency with the protection of religious freedom in the former Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, a mandate that largely involved protecting Protestant minorities in the wake of the Armenian genocide. The casual observer today perhaps thinks of the League of Nations as an organization that failed to keep the peace, but in reality the Great Powers never allowed the League any actual control over their foreign policies. Peace was not really within its purview. To understand the League’s true function, one must look away from the diplomat’s table. Its workers labored in the realm of international health, the relocation of refugees and the promotion of religious freedom and they did so in close cooperation with ecumenical agencies.

At the Paris Peace Conference Woodrow Wilson insisted that the League of Nations be located in Geneva. Despite the objections of practically every other power (including the delegate from Berne) that the Swiss city was too parochial and too remote to serve as a functional base, Wilson would not budge on this fact. His precise reason is unknown. Yet many ecumenists claimed that Wilson insisted on this fact so that it could work closely with the ecumenical organizations such as the YMCA, the Evangelical
Alliance or the International Missionary Council that already existed there. Geneva may have been a remote village to most diplomats, but it was the central node of the Protestant internationalist movement.

The first assembly of the League of Nations convened on 15 November 1920 in the headquarters of the Evangelical Alliance, one of the few buildings in Geneva large enough to host the occasion. At the same time the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches met across town. The previous night the YMCA and the World Alliance sponsored an interdenominational service at the main cathedral in town followed by a short ceremony at the Reformation memorial that had been built for Calvin’s five-hundredth birthday. Every delegate was invited to attend. Few came. Some socialist delegates held a competing event at the statue of Jean-Jacques Rousseau down by the river. The ecumenical movement succeeded after six long years to invite the world to Geneva to inaugurate a new era of Christianized international politics. The problem was that then the world showed up.
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