

BRITISH OPPONENTS OF THE GREAT WAR

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I.	BRITISH WAR CRITICS: THEIR ORGANIZATIONS, LEADERS AND IDEALS	1
II.	DIVISION IN THE RANKS OF WAR CRITICS	26
III.	CONSCRIPTION, CONSCIENCE, AND LLOYD GEORGE, 1915-1916	48
IV.	THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE OVERTURES ON WAR CRITICISM IN GREAT BRITAIN IN 1917	78
V.	THE DECLINE OF OPPOSITION TO THE WAR	113
VI.	ANALYSIS OF THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF BRITISH WAR CRITICS	128
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	139

CHAPTER I

BRITISH WAR CRITICS: THEIR ORGANIZATIONS, LEADERS, AND IDEALS

The intensely divided but vocal minority that denounced Great Britain's declaration of war in 1914 and decried Britain's continuance in the war illustrated both the strengths and weaknesses of their nation's politics and the impotence of dissent against a majority united in arms. Each pacifist group, whether basing its criticism on political, moral, or religious grounds, was critical of the militaristic mental attitude which they felt would engulf the majority of British citizens. Objection to Britain's entry into the war was expressed by some members of the Liberal Party, the British Socialist Party, some intellectuals, and various Christian moralists. As war gradually became a way of life in Britain, membership in peace groups grew. But even with this growth, those who objected to the war were always a small minority, and they were intensely divided among themselves. The message of peace was never popular with the majority of British citizens, and in government circles it was rarely even heard. Many factors led to the failure of pacifist groups to play a vital part in the shaping of public opinion and government policy. Among these factors were internal divisiveness, inadequate political representation, and minority status.

War critics had feared that militarism and anti-Germanic sentiment were becoming popular attitudes before the war. From about 1907 to 1914, pacifists feared that nationalistic spirit was engulfing the majority of British people.¹ Pacifists argued that nationalism arose out of the acceptance of militarism, which they felt was the child of imperialism.² Rising German economic and naval power had alarmed some prestigious citizens who feared competition. As early as 1897 the London Saturday Review announced that Britain should accept the inevitability of war with Germany, echoing, "Germanium esse delendum."³ The militaristic attitude tended to increase in strength with every minor war--from the Boer War to the Moroccan Crisis, from the Balkan Wars to the Great War--and pacifists of every brand were determined to correct this jingoistic nationalism.

British citizens were not convinced of the necessity of war until war became a reality, even though by 1911 some military leaders and diplomats regarded war with Germany as

¹Caroline E. Playne, Society at War, 1914-1916 (New York, 1931), p. 18.

²Archibald Paton Thornton, Doctrines of Imperialism. New Dimensions in History (New York, 1965), p. 201

³Saturday Review, September 11, 1897, cited in John Bakeless, The Economic Causes of Modern Wars (New York, 1937), p. 145n.

inevitable.⁴ With the issuance of the declaration of war the vast majority of British men and women rallied to the national cause.⁵ Colonel Wedgewood, a Liberal war critic, explained this rallying when he wrote that in a war, ". . . the safety of the state makes it quite vital that everyone should believe the other side is the aggressor. In no other way can the morale of a nation be stiffened to the horrors of war."⁶

Pacifists believed that the government and the press were trying to convince the people of the threat of Germany to world peace, to insure a hatred of the German race, and to infuse a mystic belief of British national holiness in the minds of the people. Some groups in Great Britain could not be convinced that war with Germany was in their best interest.

Most of the opposition to the war came from people who believed that they or the ideas they espoused had not received just treatment from the British government. From

⁴Frank Percy Crozier, A Brass Hat in No Man's Land (New York, 1930), p. 17.

⁵For an analysis of the effect of the press on British diplomacy see Arthur Bullard, The Diplomacy of the Great War (New York, 1918), p. 208. Sergei Dmitrievich Sasanov, Fateful Years, 1909-1916 (London, 1938), p. 219.

⁶Wedgewood "Introduction", F. Seymour Cocks, E. D. Morel; The Man and His Work (London, 1920), p. 6.

the ranks of the idealistic, the disfranchised, and the ignored came the members of the anti-war movement. Disgruntled and dismayed segments of British society felt threatened by the declaration of war and aligned themselves with the anti-war cause. Although the mainstream of British thought supported the war effort, minority groups within the nation did not respond to the call to arms. These minority anti-war groups felt that government policy had ignored their position before the war, and that war would further intimidate them. Some war critics opposed the war on economic grounds, as did left-wing socialists.⁷

Other critics based their denunciation on moral, humanitarian grounds, as did Christian pacifists and Liberal idealists. It was within these groups, divided in motivation and goals, that war criticism gained its strongest support.

Although war critics were disunited and at times inconsistent, the importance of the pacifist reaction lay not so much in its success as in its very existence. During the war to end all wars there were groups and individuals who disbelieved their government, and who set a pattern which later pacifists did not ignore. Most members of pacifist groups felt threatened either in position or prestige

⁷Roman Romanovich Rosen, Forty Years of Diplomacy (London, 1922), II, 281; Beatrice Potter Webb, Diaries, edited by Margaret I. Cole with an introduction by Lord Beveridge (London, 1952), I, 25; G. D. H. Cole, Workshop Organization, No. 10 of Economic and Social History of the World War British series (Oxford, 1933) pp. 102-103

by the outbreak of war. Nevertheless, the arguments they used against the war proved to be intellectually tenable, and although largely ineffective in Britain during the Great War, the supporters of these arguments against the war grew in intensity and in numbers.

The pacifist reaction to war may have been based on a desire to maintain or acquire a material stake in society. Socialists and working class men wanted an effective voice in factory management. Suffragettes wanted a voice in politics. Liberal idealists wanted to stop the tide of colonial aggrandizement. But while the war was being waged, none of these steps could be taken. Although some of the motives causing groups to object to the war were not altogether idealistic, the ideals they supported were visionary. Although anti-war groups were small and were never united, their visionary ideas included one-worldism, a classless society, and disarmament.

Some reaction against the total war took place within the political party that controlled Parliament when Britain declared war, the Liberal Party. Although many war critics believed the policies of the Liberal Party had helped to cause the situation that led to war,⁸ during the war years

⁸Gerda Richards Crosby, Disarmament and World Peace in British Politics, 1914-1919 (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), p. 7; J. R. Jones, "England," The European Right: An Historical Profile, edited by Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber (Berkeley, 1965), p. 32.

a group of Liberals denounced the theories of their party, and joined in the lamentations voiced by the critics. These individuals included John Le Breton Hammond, a Liberal journalist and historian who, with his wife Barbara, wrote the Town Labourer⁹ and joined the Union of Democratic Control; Arthur Ponsonby, a Liberal member of Parliament for Stirling Burghs, who later joined the Labour Party because of his pacifist convictions;¹⁰ and Frederick William Pethick-Lawrence, Liberal suffragette leader, who would join the Parliamentary Labour Party after being imprisoned in 1918 as a conscientious objector.¹¹ Others included a Liberal cabinet minister, John Morley, who resigned his position because of his opposition to the war and thereafter remained silent through the war years,¹² and E. D. Morel, who voiced his opposition before and after the declaration of war by publishing a number of books critical of British foreign policy. Morel had stood for Parliament in 1912 as a Birkenhead Liberal defending Liberalism as the ". . . point blank opposite of militarism." When the Liberal government

⁹Webb, Diaries, I, 25, n. 1.

¹⁰Ibid., I, 34, n. 1.

¹¹Frederick William Pethick-Lawrence, Fate Has Been Kind (London, 1942), pp. 66-118.

¹²John Morley, Memorandum on Resignation, August, 1914 (London, 1928), pp. 26, 32; Godfrey Elton, The Life of James Ramsay MacDonald; 1866-1919 (London, 1939), p. 243; Webb, Diaries, I, 26.

declared war on Germany he resigned from Parliament to protest secret diplomacy and the policy of Sir Edward Grey. Later he joined other disenchanted Liberals who displayed their criticism of the war by joining the ranks of the Independent Labour Party.¹³ The criticism of militaristic policies exhibited by the actions and publications of these idealistic Liberals indicates that anti-war sentiment was not confined to persons lacking political experience. However, because two high-ranking Liberal critics resigned when war was announced, they presented no active political resistance to carrying out war measures. The action of these pacifist Liberals was indicative of most of the pacifist criticism in that the reaction against war was almost totally confined to individuals working outside official government circles.

While it is true that almost all anti-war agitation took place outside the parliamentary sphere, there was one minority political party active in arguing against the war. This group was the Independent Labour Party, established in 1893 under the leadership of Keir Hardie.¹⁴ The

¹³Cocks, E. D. Morel, pp. 200-203; Norman Angell, After All (New York, 1951), pp. 191, 193; Emmanuel Shinwell, The Labour Story (London, 1963), p. 111.

¹⁴G.D.H. Cole, A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, rev. ed. (London, 1948), p. 251. George N. Barnes, From Workshop to War Cabinet, introduction by David Lloyd George (London, 1924), pp. 38-39. Barnes was an active member of the I. L. P. until the outbreak of war. He supported

main objective of the I. L. P. was to better the condition of the working class.¹⁵ Its thirty thousand members¹⁶ came from socialist parties, trade unions, and other groups sympathetic to movement toward a classless society. Although affiliated with socialist organizations (including the British Socialist Party and the Fabian Society), the I. L. P. had not yet become a socialist party. The pacifist spirit pervaded the party¹⁷ for its members saw international war as a method of curtailing the advancement of the working classes throughout the world. The advancement of the position of working class men and women was the constant goal of the party's founder, Keir Hardie. Hardie, who was born of working class parents, had spent the first twenty-five years of his life as a poorly educated factory worker. He had always stood as a champion against militarism. As early as 1900 he had warned the world that militarism was the greatest danger facing the twentieth century. All his life he had been the uncompromising critic of the theory of military preparedness to insure peace.¹⁸ His ideals and actions inspired his followers who upheld his pacifist spirit as

¹⁵Robert Smillie, My Life for Labour, foreward by J. Ramsay MacDonald (London, 1924), p. 10.

¹⁶Joseph Clayton, The Rise and Decline of Socialism in Great Britain, 1884-1924 (London, 1926), p. 165.

¹⁷Crosby, Disarmament and World Peace, p. 7. cf. Shirwell, The Labour Story, p. 87.

¹⁸Emrys Hughes, Keir Hardie (London, 1956), p. 10.

as the banner of the party. The newspaper he had established and edited, The Labour Leader, the official organ of the I. L. P.,¹⁹ continued to expose the vagaries and ineptitude of the war effort.

Arguments against the war were carried on by other prominent members of the I. L. P. after Hardie's death. These leaders included Phillip Snowden, who remained an ardent pacifist throughout the war,²⁰ Clifford Allen, leader of the conscientious objectors during the war and member of the Fabian Society executive and the I. L. P.;²¹ and Robert Smillie, who opposed the war as head of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. Each of these men had consistently criticized moves which they felt led to war, and after war was declared moved conscientiously toward the objective of peace. In describing the I. L. P. pacifists, Ramsay MacDonald stated:

Their oppositions not being based on hatreds but on visions, not upon pockets but on conscience [were] always tempered by charity, and for that very reason [could] neither be drugged nor bought off. Economic interests are mighty things, but they can never²² bring peace in a rational and a moral society.

¹⁹Webb, Diaries, I, 29, n. 1; Playne, Society at War, p. 291; Cole, A Short History, p. 210.

²⁰Phillip Snowden, An Autobiography (London, 1934), I, 359-366; Shinwell, Labour Story, p. 91.

²¹Webb, Diaries, I, 33.

²²James Ramsay MacDonald, "Introduction", Smillie, My Life for Labour, p. 19.

These men of the I. L. P. carried on the campaign against the war in the face of derision and persecution, but their object in denouncing the war was not so much to attain world peace as to better the conditions of the working class. Robert Smillie, born in 1857 in the coal-mining districts of Scotland, had suffered a life of hardship before the war was declared. After living six to a room he decided that the workers did not get an equitable share of the wealth they produced. According to Smillie, the Labour Party had always fought to bring thousands of decent folk the ordinary amenities of life. It was within this context that the I. L. P. waged its fight against the war. Smillie described opposition to war as the patriot's most difficult task.²³

As evidence of the difficulty of the task it can be noted that one week before Britain's entry into the war members of the I. L. P. stood solidly against the war, and yet within a month a majority of its members broke off in support of the war. One week before Britain's declaration of war on Germany, the International Socialist Bureau (of which the I. L. P. was a part) met in Brussels to express their opposition to European war. At this meeting on July 29, 1914, the British issued a manifesto signed by Keir Hardie and Arthur Henderson (who by August 5 was a supporter

²³Smillie, My Life for Labour, pp. 13-109.

of Britain's declaration of war) urging workers to oppose any government move toward war.²⁴ The evening of July 29, 1914, seven thousand socialists thronged the Cirque Royale in Brussels and heard Keir Hardie reflect on the opinion of British workers by saying the ". . . proletariat of Europe do not want bloodshed."²⁵

On August 1 and 2, 1914, there were huge demonstrations in London and in other cities urging British neutrality. On Sunday, August 2, 1914, fifteen thousand working class men and women met in London to adopt a resolution protesting British support of Russia, ". . . either directly or in consequence of any understanding with France, as being not only offensive to the political traditions of the country, but disastrous to Europe." The resolution further declared that ". . . the government of Great Britain should rigidly decline to engage in war, but should confine its efforts to bring about peace as speedily as possible."²⁶ Ramsay Mac Donald held out for neutrality as late as August 3.

²⁴ Joseph Clayton, The Rise and Decline of Socialism in Great Britain, p. 161; Mary Agnes Adamson Hamilton, Arthur Henderson (London, 1938), pp. 93-94; Merle Fainsod, International Socialism and the World War, (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), p. 32, citing A. W. Humphrey, International Socialism and the World War (London, 1915), pp. 103ff.

²⁵ L'Humanité, July 30, 1914, p. 1.

²⁶ Justice, August 6, 1914, cited in Fainsod, International Socialism and the World War, pp. 32-33; Clayton, Rise and Decline of Socialism, pp. 162-163; Hamilton, Arthur Henderson, pp. 94-95.

when Grey addressed the House of Commons with the declaration that war was imminent.²⁷ But by August 5 when war was declared, Ramsay MacDonald and Arthur Henderson had become convinced that they had to support Britain's decision to fight.²⁸ Although Hardie, Smillie, and Allen continued to denounce the war, the majority in British Labour supported the war effort after Germany violated Belgian neutrality. Therefore, even within the Independent Labour Party, there were supporters of the war.

The incomplete pacifism of the I. L. P. infuriated a group of British working class individuals who advocated socialism and class war against the capitalists. In 1907 the International Socialist Congress had formulated the duty of the working class in war. If prevention of war failed, and war broke out, the Socialists must try to bring it quickly to an end or to ". . . use the political and economic crisis created by the war to rouse the populace from its slumber, and to hasten the fall of capitalist

²⁷ Elton, Jane Ramsay MacDonald, pp. 244-247; Fainsod, International Socialism and the World War, p. 33.

²⁸ Elton, James Ramsay MacDonald, p. 262; Hamilton, Arthur Henderson, pp. 95-97.

society."²⁹ Members of the Socialist Labour Party, the Socialist Labour Federation, and the British Socialist Party felt that this goal had been ignored by the I. L. P. William Gallacher, who would lead the Clyde munitions strikes in 1917, declared that the I. L. P. had failed to lead the fight against war. Left-wing socialists who did not respect any political leadership criticized the I. L. P. for being too easy to compromise and adapt to circumstances. They felt that the I. L. P. dodged the war issue. Even though individuals in the I. L. P. played their part in pacifism, the official party was incapable of playing any decisive role in the fight against the war.

The most energetic and consistent agitators against the war were a group of Socialist Labour Party members who formed the leadership of the shop stewards movement.³⁰ The shop stewards were unofficial representatives of workers in munitions factories. They gained prominence after Trades Unions officials declared a moratorium on strikes and

²⁹ Cole, A Short History of British Working Class Movement, p. 352; Fainsod, International Socialism, p. 18; Olga Hess Gankin and H. H. Fisher, The Bolsheviks and the World War; The Origin of the Third International, No. 15 in Hoover Library on War, Revolution, and Peace (Stanford, c. 1940), pp. 57-59, citing Resolution on Militarism and International Conflict of the International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart, August 18-24, 1907.

³⁰ Cole, Workshop Organization, pp. 94, 98-101; Humbert Wolfe, Labour Supply and Organization, No. 7 of Economic and Social History of the World War, British series (London, 1923), pp. 130-133; William Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde; An Autobiography (London, 1949), pp. 24-25.

pledged to help the government win the war. Most of these shop stewards were left wing socialists who detested the action of the Trades Union Congress, and who considered acceptance of the war as treason to the cause of factory reform. They formed the leadership of the extreme socialist reaction against the war. Among their leaders were William Gallacher, a shop steward who became a Communist M. P. in the thirties;³¹ Arthur McManus, a volatile shop steward of the Clyde Workers' Committee which denounced Arthur Henderson as opportunistic,³² and J. W. Muir, who left the revolutionary movement in 1916 after a year in Calton Jail.

There were other left wing socialists who were not members of the shop stewards movement. The leaders of these opponents of war included John McLean, a school teacher in Glasgow who was imprisoned three times during the war for making seditious speeches under the Defence of the Realm Act; George Yates, who at the Socialist Labour Federation taught economics along the Leninist line of revolutionary socialism;³³ and George Lansbury, a Labour M. P. who actively upheld the socialist cause. Lansbury

³¹Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, p. 26; Cole, Workshop Organization, p. XIV

³²Thomas Bell, Pioneering Days (London, 1941), pp. 101-119.

³³Bell, Pioneering Days, pp. 107-108; Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, p. 15.

had always abhorred war. In April, 1913, he went to prison for his defense of violence in the cause of women's suffrage. He consistently warned against a socialist combination with radicals by stating that socialists ". . . must keep clear of all alliances, whether explicit or implicit, and keep the Red Flag of Socialism flying."³⁴ During the war years Lansbury did extensive anti-war work by editing the pacifist newspaper, the Daily Herald.

Only a minority of socialist party members waged the active fight against the war. When Britain declared war on Germany the majority of socialists reversed their previously held pacifist position and supported the war. "The war which they denounced as a 'universal imperialist aggression' in July, became converted in their minds in August into a war of general national defense," thus causing the failure of the Socialist Second International.³⁵ Socialist parties split into factions after the outbreak of war. The right wing was led by W. H. M. Hyndman, and his followers supported the fatherland entirely. The left wing was dominated by the ideas of both Lenin and Rosa

³⁴George Lansbury, My Life (London, 1928), pp. 11-12, pp. 120-121.

³⁵Clayton, Rise and Fall of Socialism, pp. 164-167; Lewis L. Lorwin, Labor and Internationalism (New York, 1929), p. 139; Adam Bruno Ulam, The Bolsheviks: The Intellectual and Political History of the Triumph of Communism in Russia (New York, 1965), pp. 302-303.

Luxemburg, who denounced the chauvinism of majority socialists who adhered to the Hyndman position.³⁶ This split in party ranks led directly to the 1917 domination of left wing ideas in the Zimmerwald Left, the origin of the Third International.

In Great Britain the left wing socialists tended to associate with the shop stewards. In spite of their minority position, these revolutionary socialists made their reaction against war heard in government circles. Because the shop stewards were unofficial labor representatives in important munitions factories they could use illegal strikes to force the government to listen to them. This method was effective in the later war years. With every new technique introduced by the government to insure effective munitions production and at the same time provide military use of the largest possible number of men, shop stewards increased their reaction against the war. With the introduction of conscription, the increased use of women workers, and government control of deferred workers in factories, a growing number of workers desired an end to the war. Left wing socialists who led the workers posed a significant threat to munitions production and therefore to the effective prosecution of the war effort.

Pacifist arguments were not confined to visionary Liberals, progressive Independent Labourites, or revolutionary

³⁶Fainsod, International Socialism, p. 43; Gankin and Fisher, Bolsheviks and the World War, pp. 399-400.

socialists. There were other groups active in the pacifist movement which were not associated with political parties. Most dissenters of this type based their pacifism on moral convictions, and can be classified as former suffragettes, as Christian pacifists (almost exclusively Quakers), or as intellectual dissenters. Their anti-war proposals were seldom politically effective, but they did indicate the breadth and diversity of the pacifist conscience in Great Britain.

The women's movement toward world peace was organized by British women who had previously been active in the suffragette cause. These women included Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, active in the Women's Peace Congress which met at the Hague, April, 1915;³⁷ Irene Cooper Willis, author of England's Holy War and co-founder of the Women's International League of Great Britain; Chrystal MacMillan and Kathleen Courtney, both planners of the Women's Peace Congress.³⁸ The suffragette pacifists carried on peace campaigns in conferences and meetings throughout the war. They stressed international understanding, feminine unity

³⁷ Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, My Part in a Changing World (London, 1938), p. 313; F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, Fate Has Been Kind, pp. 111-113.

³⁸ Pethick-Lawrence, My Part in a Changing World, p. 313; Webb, Diaries, entry of June 22, 1915, I, pp. 40-41.

against war, and reconciliation of nations at war.³⁹ The violent branch of the suffragette movement, led by Christabel Pankhurst, supported the war, but their infamous reputation followed the peace movement of the suffragettes. And since women could not vote, it was difficult to make their avowal of peace heard by the government.

Christian pacifist reaction against the war centered around the Society of Friends (Quakers) and the Fellowship of Reconciliation founded by Quakers and Presbyterians. At the beginning of war the Society of Friends was notably the body ready and organized for radical action. The Quakers held three hundred protest meetings during the first five months of the war. A Service Committee was appointed with the dual function of helping and advising all those who were interested in relief work or who desired to engage in peace activity.⁴⁰

The Fellowship of Reconciliation, based on the reconciliation of man and God for the cause of peace, was the largest Christian pacifist organization. The leaders of

³⁹E. Pethick-Lawrence, My Part in a Changing World, pp. 313-315.

⁴⁰Hugh Brock, The Century of Total War: A Description of Some of the People and Movements Involved in Non-Violent Civil Disobedience in Britain from the Revolt Against the Military Service Act of World War One to the Founding of the Committee of 100, Introduction by Emyrs Hughes (London, 1962), p. 5.

the Fellowship were Henry Hodgkin, co-founder of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and minister of the largest Presbyterian congregation in North London; Vera Mary Brittain, chairman of the board of Peace News, the Fellowship's official newspaper; and Lucy Gardner, a Quaker who presided at the Fellowship meetings at Pinlicko and Cambridge.⁴¹ In March, 1915, Hodgkin addressed the National Free Church Council at Manchester with the message that, "this war. . . is showing us in a very lurid light, how utterly unchristian a thing war is. . . . I for one cannot understand the position of my fellow Christians who call men to arms in the name of Christ."⁴² Membership in the Fellowship of Reconciliation meant ". . . a quest for social justice and peaceful change by methods consistent with Christ's teachings, and hence involved the repudiation of war."⁴³ By November, 1915, the Fellowship had grown to fifteen hundred members active in peace propaganda and in aiding stranded enemy nationals threatened by mob violence.⁴⁴ The Christian peace movement was active and strong in Great Britain. However, their membership in Parliament was weak, and included only two Quaker members and George Lansbury, Christian socialist.

⁴¹Vera Mary Brittain, *The Rebel Passion; A Short History of Some Pioneer Peace-Makers* (London, 1964), pp. 32-34.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 32-34.

⁴³Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 36.

The form of pacifism which was most widespread in Great Britain occurred among the dissenters who were often found sitting in armchairs, idly discussing and bemoaning the unjust and unnecessary war. Some were quite radical in dress, causing them to be considered as mildly eccentric. Some were weak and irresolute.⁴⁵ Members of this group included Lady Ottoline Morrell, leader of disenchanted intellectuals; her husband Phillip, Liberal M. P. until war was declared; Bertrand Russell, then a mathematics professor at Cambridge; John Maynard Keynes, an economist; Arnold J. Toynbee and Charles P. Trevelyan, historians; Arthur Ponsonby, J. Ramsay MacDonald and E. D. Morel, members of Parliament. The group included literary figures such as Thomas Hardy, septuagenarian novelist and poet; Vernon Lee, prolific feminine polemicist;⁴⁶ Norman Angell, literary leader of the new pacifism;⁴⁷ and George Bernard Shaw, who three years later would write a tract, "Common Sense About the War."⁴⁸

⁴⁵Siegfried L. Sassoon, Siegfried's Journey, 1916-1920 (London, 1930). Sassoon makes several references to the eccentricity of the Morells and their group.

⁴⁶Lady Ottoline Morrell, Ottoline: The Early Memoirs of Lady Ottoline Morrell, edited by Robert Gathorne-Hardy (London, 1963), pp. 260, 265, 267, 270; Peter Gunn, Vernon Lee; Violet Paget, 1865-1935 (New York, 1964), p. 206.

⁴⁷Norman Angell, After All, p. 191; F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, Fate Has Been Kind, p. 114.

⁴⁸George Bernard Shaw, "Common Sense About the War," The New York Times Current History: The European War, 1914 (New York, 1917), I, 11-15.

Most of this group met frequently at the Morrell home on Bedford Square to discuss their opposition to the war,⁴⁹ and it is worth notice that they fitted comfortably into one private residence.

Lady Ottoline Morrell testified that from the day the war began "pain and unhappiness never left my life or Phillip's. What ever one did, there was always the black night. . . . I never understood how people could reconcile themselves to it and forget it."⁵⁰ Many people could not, and they began to come to Bedford Square to seek comfort in being in the company of other pacifists. The outcome of these meetings was a society called the Union of Democratic Control (known as the U. D. C.),⁵¹ led by some pacifist M. P.'s who, according to Bertrand Russell, were more concerned with the question of ". . . which of them should lead the anti-war movement than with the actual work against the war. . . ." Lady Ottoline Morrell disagreed, calling the leaders of the U. D. C. ". . . a brave little band, . . . who suffered courageously--some were imprisoned, all were persecuted."⁵² The group was despised and disgraced

⁵⁰Morrell, Ottoline, p. 278.

⁵¹Elton, James Ramsay MacDonald, p. 287; Morrell, Ottoline, p. 267; Angell, After All, p. 191.

⁵²Morrell, Ottoline, p. 267; Angell, After All, p. 198; F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, Fate Has Been Kind, p. 114.

in the eyes of war-supporters. Lady Ottoline Morrell described the ostracism they felt, in her statement:

Great division has come from our being pacifists. Of course, art, literature, and politics have faded away, and now all that is left is War, War, War. Those who are pro-war and anti-war. . . . The intellectuals keep straight about the war, the emotional people go over at once.⁵³

Despite ridicule and derision the intellectual dissenters continued to espouse the pacifist cause throughout the war years, and continually stressed the themes of peace by negotiation and one-worldism.

Pacifists during the Great War were a varied lot; and, although there were often blurrings that wove the groups together, it was their divided nature which assisted in their failure to influence governmental policies. It is true that George Lansbury was a member of the I. L. P., a suffragette sympathizer, a socialist, and a Christian pacifist; that F. W. Pethick-Lawrence was active in the suffragette movement, a Liberal, and a conscientious objector; that E. D. Morel was a Liberal, an author, and an intellectual in the Morrells' group of war critics. But aside from those influential exceptions, the pacifists were divided in both their purposes and their methods. Revolutionary socialists could not tolerate Quaker pacifism, nor could they support what they considered to be the opportunistic pacifism of leaders of the I. L. P. The intellectual

community and pacifist Liberals did not support class war or the pro-German sympathies espoused by left wing socialists.

In addition to the division caused by antagonistic purposes, the geographic conditions further separated pacifist groups. Glasgow was the center of revolutionary socialism. London was the center of Liberal and intellectual pacifists. Ireland contained Sinn Feiners, the violent Irish nationalist revolutionaries, who openly opposed the war. Cambridge contained the majority of Quaker pacifists. War critics were thus hampered by both divisive purposes and methods and by geographic disunity.

The forces motivating pacifist reaction to the war were paradoxical. When war was declared, each of the major anti-war groups reacted with anger because of a real or supposed threat either to their immediate situation or to their long range goals. British socialists saw the war as a threat to previous gains won by working men and women. The dominant goal of British socialists was to broaden the base of capitalism by allowing the working classes to obtain a material stake in society. Socialist pacifists desire peace in order to strengthen their own position in society. Perhaps the British working class tended to support the international peace movement because they hoped peace would bring them a more solid position in British society.

British advocates of women's rights were also threatened by the outbreak of war. Even though pre-war conditions had brought the suffragettes scorn and ridicule, they had been in the limelight. War brought anonymity and obscurity to the suffragettes. Peace became an integral part of suffragettes' goals partly because of the movement's international character, but also because this position was newsworthy and rebellious and within the tradition of the movement.

The Liberal contingent in Parliament contained some pacifists who objected to the war because they felt war was a denial of Liberal philosophy. They regretted that the Labour Party was gaining political success by its support of the war. Liberal reaction against the war was partly based on a defense of past policies. Reminiscences of past power formed a portion of Liberal disillusionment with the war.

The intellectual community of writers, artists, and teachers dominated by the Morrells was outraged at their loss of prestige when war was declared. They resented the loss of their freedom to exchange cultural ideas with the belligerents. They felt that war turned people's minds away from ideas and towards the mundane and the trivial, the bestial and the inhumane. Reaction against war brought intellectuals ridicule and derision but it also gave them notoriety.

Such were the groups which opposed the war and such were the divisions among them. The months and years of increasingly total war that followed saw redefinition of aims and in many cases a deepening of division. This division ultimately would become a factor in the ineffectiveness of war critics.

CHAPTER II

DIVISION IN THE RANKS OF WAR CRITICS

Pacifist denunciation of the war was at its lowest level during the first year of war because the majority of British citizens believed both that Britain entered the war to defend the neutrality of Belgium and that the war would not be a lengthy one. After expressing loud and extreme criticism of the declaration of war on August 4, 1914, the majority of pre-war pacifists joined the government in supporting the war effort. During 1914 and early 1915, the majority continued its objection to the war policy despite the nation's determination to honor Britain's commitment to Belgium.

The week before Britain declared war on Germany, the European situation had grown worse daily. On Tuesday, July 28, 1914, Austria-Hungary had declared war on Serbia, causing a financial panic in Europe, and on August 1 Germany declared war on Russia. By August 2 most British citizens realized that Britain's entry into the war was a possibility. Peace groups warned against war on the grounds that the alliance with France was one of peace, not war, and that

Britain's support of Russia might endanger the European balance of power.¹

However, pacifist arguments could not sway the nation after August 3. On that day Grey made his famous speech in which he declared that war with Germany was imminent and urged the government to prepare for the worst. Only a minority in the House of Commons, including Ramsay MacDonald and Phillip Morrell, criticized the government's steps toward war.²

When Germany ignored the British ultimatum forbidding the violation of Belgium neutrality, Parliament declared war,³ but in the cabinet, the decision to declare war had not been unanimous. Two members of the cabinet, John Morley, an old-school Liberal, and John Burns, a pacifist trade unionist, resigned in opposition to the declaration of war.⁴ This resignation, however, did not seriously

¹Caroline E. Playne, Society at War, 1914-1915 (New York, 1931), p. 31; Gerda Richards Crosby, Disarmament and World Peace in British Politics, 1914-1919, Vol. XXXII of Harvard Historical Monographs (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), p. 12.

²James William Lowther Ullswater, A Speaker's Commentaries (London, 1925), II, 168; Ottoline Morrell, Ottoline: The Early Memoirs of Lady Ottoline, edited by Robert Gathorne-Hardy (London, 1963), August 2, 1914, diary entry, p. 257.

³Ullswater, A Speaker's Commentaries, I, 168; Sergei Dimitrievich Sasanov, Fateful Years, 1909-1916 (London, 1928), p. 218.

⁴Crosby, Disarmament and World Peace, p. 13; John Viscount Morley, Memorandum on Resignation, August, 1914 (London, 1928) p. 12; Winston S. Churchill, The World Crisis, 1911-1918 (London, 1927), II, 129.

hamper the government.⁵

At the immediate outbreak of war pacifist members of the Liberal Party felt shock and dismay. They were, however, representative of only a small minority within the party.⁶ Liberal newspapers, including the Daily News and the Manchester Guardian, previously had urged Britain to maintain neutrality. After Britain declared war both newspapers accepted the necessity and wisdom of supporting the war effort.⁷ The general feeling of Liberals at the outbreak of war was that while they regretted that war had come, they would support it. F. W. Pethick-Lawrence expressed the view of most Liberals by saying that failure to support Belgium would be a breach of faith.⁸ Not until the war had lasted almost a year did some Liberals begin working openly for peace and renewing their criticism of secret diplomacy and war.

The Labour Party's reaction to the declaration of war was representative of its innate characteristic of disunity.

⁵ Churchill, The World Crisis, II, 129.

⁶ Morrell, Ottoline, p. 257; Morley, Memorandum on Resignation, p. 14, p. 26; Churchill, The World Crisis, II, 131; F. Seymour Coombs, E. D. Morel; The Man and His Work (London, 1920), pp. 206-207.

⁷ Irene Cooper Willis, England's Holy War (New York, 1928) pp. 84-87.

⁸ Frederick William Pethick-Lawrence, Fate Has Been Kind (London, 1942) p. 111

The trades union executives (representing over one-half of the party's strength) supported the war. Always critical of socialist members of the Labour Party, the Trades Union Council had no sympathy for pacifism.⁹ Most Labour members of Parliament in 1914 had a trade union background, but Ramsay MacDonald of the I. L. P. led the Parliamentary Labour delegation. He did not, however, represent the opinion of the majority of members of the Labour Party.

The day after the British break with Germany came, the national executive of the Labour Party met and passed a resolution criticizing ". . . British policy in general and the action of Sir Edward Grey in particular" and expressed its aspiration for peace.¹⁰ The critical tone of the resolution did not please trade union members of the party because they considered the war as a struggle between democracy and military despotism.¹¹ MacDonald urged Labour members of Parliament to read the resolution in the House of Commons.

⁹G. D. H. Cole, A History of the Labour Party from 1914 (London, 1948), p. 21; Stephen Richards Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, Vol. XXX of Harvard Historical Monographs (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), p. 12.

¹⁰Labour Leaders, August 8, 1914, p. 1; William E. Walling, The Socialists and the War (New York, 1915), cited in Merle Fainsod, International Socialism and the World War (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), p. 33.

¹¹Cole, Labour Party From 1914, p. 21.

MacDonald lost his leadership of the Parliamentary Labour Party because the majority of Labour members of Parliament disagreed with his idea. They felt that they were bound by duty to support the war.¹² They chose as their new chairman, Arthur Henderson, a war supporter.¹³

The Trade Union Congress echoed the majority in the Parliamentary Labour Party in their decision to support the war. In support of the war the Trade Union Congress (called the T. U. C.) met on August 27, 1914, to urge every union to stop trade disputes for the duration of the war.¹⁴ By September, 1914, the majority (being composed of the Trade Union Congress and the Parliamentary Labour Party) of the Labour Party supported the war.

By the end of August the Labour Party had begun to help the government by making their pro-war position clear. The Parliamentary Labour Party joined with other parties in an appeal for recruits. Twenty-five Labour members of Parliament met late in August and repudiated the August 5 statement issued by the national executive which had criticized the government and Grey. In repudiation of the earlier

¹²B. C. Roberts, The Trades Union Congress (London, 1918), p. 272.

¹³Ibid.; Mary Agnes Adamson Hamilton, Arthur Henderson (London, 1938), p. 96.

¹⁴Roberts, Trades Union Congress (London, 1918), p. 272.

resolution, Labour members of Parliament issued a manifesto stating that Britain had to live up to her commitments, and that ". . . the victory of Germany would mean the death of democracy in Europe."¹⁵ Even Ramsay MacDonald, to his later discomfort, expressed the view that "victory must be ours."¹⁶

When the Labour Party began to espouse the cause of war, they called a moratorium on internal labor disputes. Political parties declared a by-election truce, and trade unions proclaimed an industrial truce. All strikes and disputes (including the building strike in London) halted immediately after the outbreak of the war.¹⁷ Although the declaration of war brought higher prices and the shutting down of some factories, this situation changed in the next few months because of proliferating war production.

The Parliamentary committee of the T. U. C. (Trade Union Congress) issued its pronouncement in support of the war on September 2, 1914. It expressed approval of the Parliamentary Labour Party's decision to lend its support to the national recruiting campaign. The resolution hinted that unless voluntary recruitment proved successful, the trade union movement would be forced to accept conscription,

¹⁵A. W. Humphrey, International Socialism and the World War (London, 1915), pp. 112-113, cited in Fainsod, International Socialism, p. 34.

¹⁶G. D. H. Cole, A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, rev. ed. (London, 1948), p. 353.

¹⁷Ibid.

to which it had long been absolutely opposed.¹⁸ George Barnes, influential member of Parliament and trade union executive, represented the majority opinion of trade unionists when he stated that because Britain must fulfill her international obligations, the government had no alternative to declaring war.¹⁹

Although the majority of the Labour Party supported the war, a minority of socialists within the party did not. The Independent Labour Party, composed of intellectuals, pacifists, and non-revolutionary Marxists, was the most politically prestigious of all socialist groups in Britain. However, the I. L. P. was a discredited minority in 1914. Members of the I. L. P. had voiced continued opposition against all influences of militarism in British foreign policy. From 1909, members of the I. L. P. had criticized the influence of armaments firms on British naval policy.²⁰ Their leaders in Parliament, Keir Hardie, F. W. Jowett, Phillip Snowden, and Ramsay MacDonald, were excellent speakers who had a popular following among workers in the north of England.²¹

¹⁸Roberts, Trades Union Congress, p. 273.

¹⁹George Nicoll Barnes, From Workshop to War Cabinet (London, 1923), pp. 108-109.

²⁰Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), LIX, 1914, Col. 2135-2146; Crosby, Disarmament and World Peace, p. 6.

²¹Henry Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party, 1880-1900 (London, 1954), cited in Graubard, British Labour, p. 8.

After MacDonald resigned his chairmanship of the Parliamentary Labour Party, four of the six I. L. P. members of Parliament continued to work against the war, Ramsay MacDonald, Keir Hardie, Fred Jowett, and Tom Richardson.²²

The National administrative council of the I. L. P. met on August 13 to adopt a resolution strongly critical of British participation in the war. The leaders of the I. L. P., however, were not extremists. They disliked the war, but they did not undertake any militant anti-war activity, nor were they in favor of breaking with the Parliamentary Labour Party, whose policy was one of completely supporting the war.²³

The weakness of the I. L. P.'s protest against the war was in part due to the old age and ill health of their leader, Keir Hardie. Hardie, an ardent pacifist and champion of non-violence, felt that war was ". . . disruptive of the ideals for which he had consecrated his life." He felt anguish and despair over Britain's entry into the war, and he especially disliked Britain's alliance with the Russian

²²Fainsod, International Socialism, pp. 33-34; Olga Hess Gankin and H. H. Fisher, The Bolsheviks and the World War; The Origin of the Third International, no. 15 in Hoover Library of War, Revolution, and Peace (Stanford, 1940), p. 134; Roberts, Trades Union Congress, p. 272. Snowden was in Australia at the time of the declaration of war.

²³Vladimir Lenin, Works (Moscow, 1960), XVIII, p. 417, cites the I. L. P.'s rejection of a proposal to break with the P. L. P., April, 1916; Fainsod, International Socialism, p. 50; Labour Leader, April 20, 1916, pp. 1-3.

Czarist regime. Yet Hardie made only one speech critical of the war after August 3, 1914. Later in the month the founder of the I. L. P. asked Sir Edward Grey if he had taken every possible step to avoid the war.²⁴ After that, Hardie criticized the war only in the midst of his followers. His hatred of war probably intensified his weak physical condition. He died in September, 1915, after witnessing the failure of his ideas to avert a world war.²⁵

The I. L. P. a member of the Second International, maintained close cooperation with minority anti-war socialists in Europe. Although war had destroyed the Second International, the I. L. P. continued to espouse peace through international socialism and through negotiations. The fiftieth anniversary of the International Workingmen's Association (a socialist international organization) came in September, 1914. By this date the majority of socialist workers in every country at war had supported their government's role in war, causing an end to the effectiveness of international socialist organizations.

²⁴Speech of Keir Hardie, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), XLV (1914), Col. 123.

²⁵Barnes, Workshop to War Cabinet, pp. 100-101; Emrys Hughes, Keir Hardie (London, 1965), p. 239; F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, Fate Has Been Kind, p. 111.

Editorials in the October issue of the Labour Leader reported that if the International were dead, then so also were peace, Christian faith, and justice.²⁶ The Labour Leader agreed with the Socialist Party of Holland that a meeting of all socialists in Europe should occur for the purpose of discussing common goals for peace. The I. L. P. advocated as common goals for peace the following points:

- 1) Race, language, religion, and customs should be the basis for national boundaries. Military conquests should not be a factor in frontier settlements.
- 2) Plebiscites should be the method of deciding suzerainty, and self-government should be the goal of subject peoples.
- 3) European nations should join together in a League of Europe. The members of the League should appoint a body to settle international disputes, thus eliminating the balance of power concept in Europe.
- 4) The people should control governmental policies. To achieve democratic government there should be democratized constitutions, people's control of the legislature, and women's suffrage. Parliament should control foreign policy and should abolish secret diplomacy.
- 5) Nationalized armaments industries would guarantee ". . . that syndicates may no longer be tempted to exploit national jealousies for profit."
- 6) European nations should form a United States of Europe

²⁶ Labour Leader, February 18, 1915, p. 1.

placing national Armies and Navies under an international police force. Finally, the I. L. P. (in agreement with the Dutch socialists) expressed the hope that ". . . the working classes of the different countries will before long find themselves united again in their struggles against militarism and capitalist imperialism."²⁷

Hardie, MacDonald, W. C. Anderson, and Bruce Glasier (four prominent members of the I. L. P.) supported this socialist platform for peace negotiations. Labour leaders in the I. L. P. and socialists in neutral countries did have an active plan for negotiations leading to peace. However, in Britain labor opposition to the war was concentrated in the small socialist organizations.

Another more serious weakness of the anti-war minority was the division within it. Radical socialists in Great Britain did not support the methods of argument, although they would agree with the basic purposes, of the pacifist I. L. P. Within the socialist anti-war movement in Britain were revolutionary socialist who advocated more violent measures to achieve peace than was acceptable to I. L. P. . leaders. Most members of the revolutionary socialist movement were workers in munitions factories, in coal mines, and in shipyards. They belonged usually to the British Socialist Party, the Social Democrat Federation, or the

²⁷ Ibid., February 16, 1915, p. 1.

the Socialist Labour Federation and were led by shop stewards, who maintained active communication with European socialists. The international socialist movement had been strong enough to make a Liberal Party observer note that ". . . any conflicts which might arise in the future would not be between nations but between classes. . . ."28

Socialists believed that their ideas could prevent international war,²⁹ but British socialists' hopes for a workingmen's peaceful society were unrealistic because of two major factors at work in Great Britain. First, they were a small minority in Parliament; and, more important, many socialist workers resented that I. L. P. Parliamentary representatives were weak-kneed pacifists, rather than Marxist socialists.

Even before war broke out in 1914, there existed in Britain working class socialists whose message was revolution against the capitalists. One of these revolutionary socialists was Thomas Bell who in 1913 had worked in a London brass foundry. He returned to Liverpool after the declaration of war both because of homesickness and because he disliked the ". . . pacifist, theosophical, utopian socialism" he had found in London.³⁰ Other radical socialists expressed

²⁸F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, Fate Has Been Kind, p. 108.

²⁹George Bernard Shaw, "Common Sense About the War," The New York Times Current History: The European War, August-December, 1914 (New York, 1917), I, 46.

³⁰Thomas Bell, Pioneering Days (London, 1941), Chapter 8.

deep hatred of the war and saw the war as an extreme method of exploiting the working class. They argued in characteristic socialist slogans that despite the lofty ideals of the politicians ". . . the employers and capitalists were [only]. . . concerned about the exploitation of the 'National Emergency' to increase rent, interest, and profits."³¹ Their socialist organizations had ". . . continually exposed the war intrigues of the British government" so that few socialist workers felt great surprise at the declaration of war.³²

These revolutionary socialists, most of whom were engaged in factory work, detested the recruitment campaign led by Lord Kitchener, Minister of War under Prime Minister Asquith. The famous Kitchener poster reading "Your King and Country Need You" was followed, in Glasgow, by the slogan,

Your King and Country need you,
 Ye hardy sons of toil
 But will your King and Country need you ³³
 When they're showing [sic] out the spoil?

Revolutionary socialist workers fought against the war by participating in strikes (made illegal by the Trade Union Congress moratorium) in order to make the government and

³¹John Thomas Murphy, New Horizons (London, 1941) p. 44.

³²William Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde; An Autobiography (London, 1949), pp. 18-19.

³³Murphy, New Horizons, p. 44.

employers realize that working class socialists would not tolerate poor working conditions caused by the war. During 1914-1915, the strikes were aimed at bettering economic conditions, but as the war progressed they became increasingly aimed against the war because the strike leaders were socialist war critics.

Radical socialists felt a severe hatred of all members of the establishment, a fear of smooth-talking intellectuals, and a distrust of "petty bourgeois pacifists."³⁴ Revolutionary socialists blamed the anti-war positions of Phillip Snowden and Ramsay MacDonald on their desire to maintain political leadership of the I. L. P. because ". . . the bulk of the active leaders of the I. L. P. in the districts were young school teachers or petty bourgeois pacifists" whom they needed to placate.³⁵

Radical war critics led by shop stewards and John MacLean, the revolutionary Marxist, were greatly influenced by the doctrines expressed by Lenin. They agreed with him that ". . . one of the forms of stultifying the working class is pacifism and abstract advocacy of peace."³⁶ Lenin further expressed the opinion that:

The smart exploiters of the leading capitalist country [England] are for peace [in order to

³⁴Callacher, Revolt on the Clyde, p. 69.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Lenin, Works, XXI, 87.

strengthen capitalism.] But we should not be confused with the petty bourgeois, sentimental liberals, etc. The era of the bayonet has come. That is a fact, and hence we should fight with the same weapon.³⁷

The impact of this revolutionary socialism on shop stewards and their followers was but one factor which hampered the anti-war crusade. They bitterly opposed any war criticism which did not advocate a worker's revolution. Revolutionary socialists particularly despised Christian pacifism.

There were three members of Parliament who opposed the war on Christian socialist grounds. Two anti-militarist M. P.'s were Quakers, Arnold S. Rowntree and T. Edmund Harvey. George Lansbury was the third M. P. representative of Christian socialism. Their reaction after the declaration of war was to criticize the government for its military preparedness campaign, a step which they blamed for the outbreak of war. Nobody had wanted war, they declared, but everybody had prepared for it.³⁸ Years later, in his Labour Weekly of March 7, 1925, George Lansbury would blame the press for convincing previously anti-war people that honor compelled the British to resort to war.³⁹

³⁷ Lenin, Speech of November, 1914, Lenin Collection (Moscow, 1924), I, 198, cited in Adam B. Ulam, The Bolsheviks; The Intellectual and Political History of the Triumph of Communism in Russia (New York, 1956), p. 92.

³⁸ Vera Mary Brittain, The Rebel Passion; A Short History of Some Pioneer Peace-Makers (London, 1964), pp. 31-32.

³⁹ Lansbury, Labour Weekly, March 7, 1925, p. 4.

At a Quaker Conference, six weeks after the declaration of war, Rowntree (one of the two M. P.'s who were Quaker pacifists) discussed the moves which if taken could have prevented war, measures which included the formation of a Federation of European States and an attempt by the British government to communicate with German leaders disirous of peace.⁴⁰ In a House of Commons speech on August 3, 1914, Harvey, the other Quaker pacifist in Parliament, voiced his opposition to a war caused:

. . . by men in high places, by diplomatists working in secret, by bureaucrats who are out of touch with the peoples of the world. . . . I want to make an appeal on behalf of the people, who are voiceless except in the House, that there should be a supreme effort made to save this terrible wreckage of human life, that we may not make this further sacrifice upon the altar of the terrible bloodstained idol of the balance of power, but should be willing to make great sacrifices in the sacred cause of peace.⁴¹

Quakers and Christian socialists opposing the war composed a minority of British Christians. Vast numbers of both ministers and laymen felt that this war was a necessary one, a view the pacifists criticized. Pacifists especially criticized the role of Christian ministers in upholding the war effort. Lady Ottoline, leader of intellectual pacifists, wrote in her diary on August 9, 1914:

⁴⁰Brittain, The Rebel Passion, pp. 31-32.

⁴¹Speech of Edmund Harvey, August 3, 1914, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) LXV Col 1839

. . . instead of helping to make people realize the horror and wickedness of war, clergy write to the papers, and preach, and do all they can to praise it. They have lost all [love of] humanity and all realization of what man was created for. . . . It does not seem to shock them at all that man, whom they believe is made in the Divine Image, should be. . . used as food for cannon.⁴²

George Bernard Shaw echoed this contempt for the pro-war stand of the majority of churchmen by saying that churches should close their doors for the duration of the war. He felt that it was illogical for churches to praise war, and that in doing it churchmen strengthened the position of atheism.⁴³

A minority of British Christians participated in the fight against the war in 1914 and 1915. George Lansbury became a Christian socialist when the war broke out. He had been a capitalist in East London from March, 1896, to August, 1914. When the war began he closed his business, partly because of economic difficulties (for which he blamed the war crisis) and partly because of a desire to lead the anti-war movement. From August, 1914, he concentrated all his energies on the Daily Herald, his peace propaganda newspaper.⁴⁴ Lansbury said that the government

⁴²Morrell, diary entry, August 9, 1914, Ottoline, p. 264.

⁴³Shaw, New York Times History; European War, 1914, I, 52.

⁴⁴George Lansbury, My Life (London, 1928), p. 10.

issued so much pro-war propaganda that in order to avoid including the bulk of it, he had to change the Daily Herald to a weekly newspaper on September 18, 1914. According to Lansbury the basis of the Herald's message of peace was based on Christian love.⁴⁵

Once it became clear that Britain's participation in the war was an unalterable reality, Christian socialists saw government censorship and conscription as their two main targets. Quakers refused to render their publications to censorship, and the government attempted to indict them as violators of the Defence of the Realm Act. The government began proceedings against two women for distributing an anti-war pamphlet, "A Challenge to Militarism," but the charges were dropped when the Cabinet learned that twenty thousand members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) were responsible for its publication. Being a Quaker, though was no protection; by 1915, most of the executive committee of the Society of Friends were in jail for civil disobedience for protesting the Military Service Act and the war.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 182-183. The change from a daily to a weekly of the Daily Herald further indicates the unpopularity of the anti-war position. Although Lansbury may have been motivated by selfish motives in opposing the war, this is not certain. He became a leading Christian socialist, suffered imprisonment, and never swerved from his denunciation of war and capitalism.

⁴⁶ Hugh Brock, The Century of Total War; A Description of Some of the People and Movements Involved in Non-Violent Civil Disobedience in Britain from the Revolt against the Military

The first Military Service Act created a national registration for military aged men and caused war critics to fear the introduction of conscription. The reaction against the possibility of conscription led to the founding of the No Conscription Fellowship. This organization included young socialists and Quakers who had responded to a letter sent to the Labour Leader by a young socialist in 1914, urging united opposition to conscription. The No Conscription Fellowship declared that in the event of conscription members would refuse to bear arms and would oppose every effort to introduce compulsory military service in Great Britain.⁴⁷ The No Conscription Fellowship did not become an effective anti-war organization until the introduction of conscription in 1916.

Until that year most Christian reaction against war centered in the Quaker dominated Fellowship of Reconciliation, a pacifist organization whose one hundred and thirty charter members pledged to fight against war with Christian love.⁴⁸ By November, 1915, membership in the Fellowship in Britain was over fifteen hundred people.⁴⁹ By 1917, it was a very large international organization.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Brittain, The Rebel Passion, p. 34.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 182-185.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 37. Murray B. Siedler, Norman Thomas; Respectable Rebel, sec. ed. (Syracuse, 1967), p. 18.

One group which reacted against the war during the first year was the intellectual community of artists, writers, and a few politicians. During the first year of war one member of this group, Violet Paget (who used the pseudonym Vernon Lee) began publishing letters and articles attacking ". . . the waste, sacrifice, and suffering entailed by war" in the limited number of journals that accepted them.⁵¹ In the unpublished notes called "Myself" she analyzed her reasons for opposing the war. She distinguished her own feelings from other pacifists who, in her opinion, regarded the war as a surprising, outside odious force. She explained, "With me there's no such condemnation; rather an overwhelming sense, throughout all my antagonism, of the extraordinary naturalness and inevitableness of it all. It is not at all incomprehensible."⁵² Violet Paget frequently visited the Morrell's home on Bedford Square, a center for pacifist work.

Intellectual pacifists at Bedford Square continually criticized the war as barbarian and uncivilized. They also worked to help aliens and their wives during the war. Most Germans in Great Britain lived in concentration camps during the war, and pacifists continued giving financial support

⁵¹Peter Gunn, Vernon Lee: Violet Paget, 1865-1935 (New York, 1964), pp. 206-207.

⁵²Ibid., p. 206.

to the families of interned aliens.⁵³ Most of this pacifist agitation was avowedly futile, but this small group of intellectual humanists continued their opposition to what they considered a return to barbarism.⁵⁴

During the first year of war the British nation moved from a feeling of amazement at being in war to a grim, determined effort to see it through, while conducting "business as usual." The majority of British citizens believed that their national honor demanded that Britain defend Belgium by declaring war on Germany. All the pre-war critics of militarism and preparedness felt surprise and shock when war came. The declaration of war did not surprise them as much as did the unexpected support of the war by socialists (hitherto regarded as the vanguards of anti-militarism) that occurred in every nation.

The first five months of war were months of unity among pacifist groups, because the major argument during this period was one which had as its basis a reluctance to acknowledge that Britain was actually involved in a major war. No one imagined that the war would last over a year; and therefore, the very small amount of opposition to war which did exist was almost unanimous in limiting its

⁵³Ibid., pp. 261, 271.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 272.

criticism to the causes of the war and in neglecting methods for ending the war.

During 1915, pacifists groups began organizing to bring the war to an end. With organizations and clearly stated purposes and methods came the division characteristic of the peace movement. Liberals and intellectuals tended to align with the U. D. C. which focused on ending the war through negotiations based on principles similar to Woodrow Wilson's later Fourteen Points. Radical socialists wanted to end the war through Marxian class warfare and illegal strikes. Christian pacifists hoped to end the war through Christian love.

Much of the pacifist reaction in 1914-1915 centered on opposition to censorship and on the possibility of conscription. In the first year of World War I, British pacifists were largely ineffective because of government censorship of their criticism,⁵⁵ and because the majority of British people believed in the necessity and honor of the war against Germany. The first year of World War I was one of ineffective and almost negligible pacifist action in Britain, caused as much by public opinion and governmental pressure as by the pacifists' lack of both organization and mutual goals for peace.

⁵⁵ Officials raided the offices of the Labour Leader in August, 1915.

CHAPTER III

CONSCRIPTION, CONSCIENCE, AND

LLOYD GEORGE, 1915-1916

British war critics in 1915 suffered from disunity and a lack of specific purposes for ending the war, but during 1916, they reacted against specific war-time grievances with unity of purpose. During the second year of war, war critics denounced the economic abuses caused by the war and searched for a method to bring the war to an end. The division of war critics in 1915 was illustrated by the antithetical methods of ending the war which left-wing socialists supported and those which pacifists in the I. L. P. and the U. D. C. upheld. However, during 1916, in opposing conscription and economic difficulties, war critics united in denunciation of the war--revolutionary socialists through strikes and demonstrations, and idealistic pacifists by loudly supporting an international socialist peace. Dissatisfaction with Prime Minister Asquith's inability to quell labor agitation was one cause of the dissolution of Asquith's government and the subsequent formation of Lloyd George's coalition government in December, 1916. In addition to the

Unionist (conservative) politicians who were added to the government, Lloyd George wished to increase Labour Party representation there because of his desire to assuage war critics in the rank and file of labor.¹

In 1915, British women attended two peace conferences reflecting the internationalist, pacifist spirit of war criticism. The first of these conferences took place at Berne, Switzerland, in March, 1915. At the International Conference of Socialist Women, March 26-28, 1915, left-wing socialist women from Germany, Austria, England, France, Bulgaria, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries met to unite in their opposition to the war. Russian Bolshevik women had suggested this meeting to urge left-wing socialist women of all nations to remain true to socialism and to the class struggle.² Secretary of the International Socialist Bureau, Klara Zetkin, presided over the meetings which included women from belligerent and neutral nations and included four representatives of the I. L. P. and other

¹David Lloyd George, War Memoirs (London, 1938), I, 624. Lloyd George named six Labourites to ministerial posts, four of whom were trade unionists.

²Olga Hess Gankin and H. H. Fisher, The Bolsheviks and the World War, No. 15 of Hoover Library on War, Revolution, and Peace (Stanford, 1940), p. 286; Margaret Bondfield, A Life's Work (New York, 1948), pp. 144-149, makes no mention of this conference.

socialist organizations in Britain.³ British representatives were Marion Phillips, Mary Longman, Margaret Bondfield, and Ada Salter, all of whom were suffragettes and left-wing socialists.⁴ Even though delegates at Berne represented left-wing socialist doctrine, they did not adopt anti-war resolutions urging class warfare. Instead they passed pacifist resolutions denouncing war.⁵ The English delegation, dominated by suffragettes, stated, ". . . that all women in England, even bourgeois women and suffragettes, were against the war and wished for peace. The delegation expressed its hope that this war would be the last war and that soldiers would stop shooting."⁶ The pacifist philosophy expressed in the resolutions of the Women's International were not representative of revolutionary socialism but of British suffragettes' desires for an end to all war.

³Carl Baevsky, "Lenin i Tsimmervaldskaia levia", Borba Klassov, No. 3, March, 1934, pp. 35-36; Nadezhda Krupskaya, Memories of Lenin (London, 1942), II, 158-162; Gankin and Fisher, The Bolsheviks, p. 288; Labour Leader, April 8, 1915, p. 7.

⁴I. L. P., Report of the Annual Conference, 1915, p. 15, cited in Labour Leader, April 8, 1915, p. 7.

⁵Gankin and Fisher, The Bolsheviks, p. 288. The pacifist position of the English, Dutch, and Swiss contrasted with the revolutionary proposals of the Russian Bolsheviks and the Germans.

⁶Olga Ravish, "Mezhdunarodnaia zhenskaia sotsialisticheskaya konferentsiia 1915 g.," Proletarskaya Revoliutsiia, No. 10 (45), pp. 165-77, cited in Gankin and Fisher, The Bolsheviks, p. 289.

British suffragettes later met at the Hague as a result of a coalition with American pacifist women. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, a British leader of the suffragette movement, had gone to New York in October, 1914, to enlist ". . . the support of the suffrage movement in the neutral country of America for the idea of a world peace secured by negotiation."⁷ Pacifist women in the United States had formed the National Women's Peace Party,⁸ the American nucleus of the Women's International League.⁹ In the spring of 1915, Dr. Alletta Jacobs, leader of the Women's International Suffrage Alliance, proposed a Women's Peace Congress at the Hague to bring together women of the United States and Europe.¹⁰ In April, 1915, the Pethick-Lawrences and the American representatives, Jane Addams, president of the Women's Peace Party, and Madeiline Doty, another of the founders of the peace movement, sailed from New York on the Noordam.¹¹ The International Congress of Women opened on April 25, 1915, with fifteen hundred representatives from

⁷Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, My Part in a Changing World (London, 1938), p. 308.

⁸ibid.

⁹Frederick William Pethick-Lawrence, Fate Has Been Kind (London, 1942), p. 111.

¹⁰E. Pethick-Lawrence, My Part, pp. 311-312.

¹¹Ibid.

Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United States. The British delegation included only four members, the Pethick-Lawrences, Chrystal MacMillan, and Kathleen Courtney, all active in women's suffrage. The Pethick-Lawrences had left from New York, and the latter two were in Holland as they had helped plan the meeting. The British government forbade about one hundred fifty other women passage to Holland because enemy delegates would be present.¹² The delegates passed an anti-war resolution expressing sympathy for all ". . . who are fighting for their country or labouring under the burden of war."¹³ The resolution urged an end to the war and chose envoys to appeal to belligerent and neutral countries to end the war by negotiation. These women (from Italy, Germany, Holland, the United States, and Great Britain) traveled to heads of state around the world to appeal for peace.¹⁴ The dignitaries received the women cordially, but their general impression of the overture was that the women were well-meaning, but totally unrealistic sentimentalists. Since women did not

¹²Ibid., pp. 311-313

¹³Ibid., pp. 313-314

¹⁴Ibid.; Beatrice Potter Webb, Diaries, edited by Margaret I. Cole, with an introduction by Lord Beveridge (London, 1952), 1, 26.

have the vote, they were a less than powerful influence on any government's foreign policy. In this optimistic attempt to convince world leaders of the desire of all women to end the war, the women revealed the same hopefulness that others in the peace movement would express later. Women in 1915, held peace meetings and urged peace by negotiations and recognition of the plight of all men at war.

In contrast to the platform of peace through negotiations suffragette pacifists offered, left-wing British socialists listened to the explosive avowal of class warfare which Lenin supported. Lenin's article, "Pacifism and the Slogan of Peace," issued one day after the women's declaration,¹⁵ denounced any form of pacifism.¹⁶ Lenin, whose ideas significantly influenced British shop stewards and other revolutionary socialists, argued that the world war was imperialistic and caused by the growth of capitalism.¹⁷ His method of fighting the war was to turn the international war into a class war. To achieve civil war the working class representatives should withdraw from ". . . the bourgeois cabinets," workers should form illegal

¹⁵Vladimir Illich Lenin, "Conference of the Social-Democrats," Collected Works (Moscow, 1964), XXI, 159-63.

¹⁶Lenin, "Pacifism and the Peace Slogan," Collected Works, XXI, 162-63.

¹⁷Lenin, "On the Character of the War," Collected Works, XXI, 159.

organizations to oppose the abolition of constitutional liberties, and the proletariat should engage in ". . . all kinds of revolutionary mass activities."¹⁸ Lenin stated that the war had enabled the bureaucracy of labor to appeal to workers' nationalistic spirit in order to divert and divide them. Lenin argued that "the words of the Communist Manifesto that 'workers have no fatherland' are now truer than ever."¹⁹ Lenin stated that only an international struggle of workers against the bourgeoisie could open a new society dominated by the workers.²⁰

The influence of Lenin's ideas of revolutionary socialism on his revolutionary counterparts in Britain, the shop stewards, was significant. These unofficial, but influential, workers' representatives in the shop stewards movement were extreme left-wing socialists. Their specific method of criticizing the war was by making economic and political demands. Although other anti-war groups mentioned economic inequities of the war, British shop stewards fought against specific grievances. By early 1916, workers in vital industries suffered under several restrictions, all related to the war effort. Because of trade union agreements with the

¹⁸ Lenin, "The Slogans of the Revolutionary Social-Democrats," Collected Works, XXI, 160-161

¹⁹ Lenin, "The 'Defense of the Fatherland' Slogan," Collected Works, XXI, 159-60.

²⁰ Ibid.

government, workers could not strike, and they had to accept compulsory arbitration. With the war had come dilution, the replacement of skilled workers by unskilled men and women. Another factor which tended to increase workers' dissatisfaction was the imprisonment of many shop stewards under the Defence of the Realm Act. The cooperation of Labour members of Parliament and the Trade Union Congress had helped the government pass these measures. By accepting these measures, these groups lost some support of the workers.

It was not a difficult task, after the first burst of patriotism had dwindled, for revolutionary shop stewards to convince workers that the official representatives were not supporting the interests of the workers. Basing their reaction against war on Leninist slogans, shop stewards gained followers less because of their revolutionary ideas than because the workers believed that labor representatives had neglected workers' interests. By early 1916, the role of shop stewards in munitions factories was quite important, forcing the government to suppress their influence.

By February, 1915, prices had risen twenty-three per cent. The Asquith government claimed that prices would decrease after the June harvests brought a greater supply of agricultural products. Workers had received some wage increases, but not enough to meet the increased cost of living. Even the railwaymen, who had received the first war bonus, had gotten only an eight and one-third per cent wage increase.

The Board of Trade Gazette indicated a rise in importation of foodstuffs in 1914; thus, the I. L. P. argued, the rise in prices was due to shipowners practicing "robbery - pure and simple."²¹

Even though some industries immediately received a war bonus on wages, the munitions workers did so only through forcing arbitration by an illegal strike. Engineering workers on the Clyde began an unofficial strike in February, 1915. The Trades Union Council and the government demanded that workers return to their jobs, ". . .but the Central Withdrawal of Labour Control Committee, the unofficial rank-and-file delegates in charge of the movement, waited a few days to order a return." They then referred the dispute to government arbitration and received an increase in wages.²² The February strike led by socialists who advocated illegal strikes, was successful. Its success led to a more important role of shop stewards in munitions areas.

Rank and file workers in munitions factories wanted increased wages and better living conditions. It was difficult for them to agree with the official union position of a ban on strikes and compulsory arbitration. In the Treasury

²¹Labour Leader, February 18, 1915, p. 1; G. D. H. Cole, A Short History of the British Working Class Movement (London, 1948), rev. ed., p. 354; Brian R. Mitchell with collaboration of Phyllis Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics, Cambridge University Press, 1962, pp. 331-2. The Abstract omits the war years.

²² Cole, A Short History, p. 354.

Conference of March, 1915, most unions accepted both compulsory arbitration and a denial of strikes. They accepted these matters on the condition that the government would restore to labor the status quo ante bellum when the war ended.²³ Officials of the labor movement felt that workers would be in a better position after the war if they agreed to a restriction of certain privileges during the war.²⁴ The Treasury Agreements became law in July, 1915, through the actions of David Lloyd George, the wily Welsh Minister of Munitions. In July he secured passage of the Munitions of War Act which provided for compulsory arbitration in engineering and shipbuilding, or in "any industry supplying vital war needs." The Miner's Federation in South Wales tested this law with a strike in that same month. Through this illegal strike the miners received higher wages and forced the government to back down.²⁵

In November, 1915, coal miners in Sheffield held another strike. Although the strikes were aimed at receiving economic gains, strike organizers were shop stewards inspired by Leninist doctrine. Shop stewards hated the war and reminded their followers that the war had caused a ban on strikes. These war-time strikes were indicative of workers' estrangement

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., Stephen Richards Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), p. 13.

²⁵Cole, A Short History, pp. 354-355.

from their official representatives, of a desire for economic betterment, and, increasingly, of a spirit of ". . . war-weariness and disillusionment,"²⁶ probably stirred up by the shop stewards. Even though economic grievances were the basis for most strikes, the socialist doctrine of "war on war" was intertwined in all strikes and became increasingly important as the war continued. The government faced a difficult task in persuading the workers to work overtime and to agree to ". . . an extensive dilution of skilled by unskilled workers."²⁷ By the end of 1915, labor troubles had begun to interfere with munitions output. Although the Trade Union Congress and official labor representatives remained loyal to their agreement to the government, shop stewards aroused the greatest opposition to the government and to the war.²⁸ Shop stewards' revolutionary socialism gradually became a formidable disturbance in Glasgow and the surrounding Clydeside.²⁹

On December 24, 1915, Lloyd George as Minister of Munitions traveled to Glasgow to address the workers regarding dilution of labor.³⁰ Arthur Henderson, Labour Party member

²⁶John Thomas Murphy, New Horizons (London, 1941), p. 57.

²⁷Lloyd George, Memoirs, I, 258.

²⁸Cole, A Short History, pp. 354-355.

²⁹Lloyd George, Memoirs, I, 274.

³⁰Ibid., I, 275; William Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde; An Autobiography (London, 1949), p. 80.

of the Asquith government, and trade union officials accompanied Lloyd George to encourage support of the war effort. Sixty of the seventy members of the Glasgow Amalgamated Society of Engineers, who purposely met separately that evening, refused to attend Lloyd George's address, and only appeared there after Arthur Henderson brought over a fleet of taxis. Gallacher broke the taxi windows saying Henderson could pay for it with the money he had stolen from the workers. On Christmas Day Lloyd George addressed an unruly crowd, and although some persons waved the red flag of socialism, Lloyd George said he regarded the meeting as somewhat of a success.³¹

However, within a few weeks, leaders of the Christmas agitation were in prison. On February 6, 1916, John MacLean, James Maxton, Jack McDougall, Jack Smith (an anarchist working in Clyde engineering shops), Johnny Muir, and Thomas Bell were arrested. Their trial took place in Edinburgh, which is traditionally aristocratic and conservative, a few days after some German Zeppelin raids on that city. The press blamed the raids on the shop stewards whom the press called paid agents of the Kaiser. All the leaders of the Clyde "revolution" were sentenced to prison terms of from one to three years. On March 25, 1916, the government arrested and deported to other British cities ten

³¹ Lloyd George, Memoirs, I, 275.

of the remaining shop stewards in the Clyde Workers' Committee,³² thereby ending shop stewards' agitation during 1916.

The government was able to quell temporarily the influence of a minority revolutionary faction in munitions areas by imprisonment and deportation. However, the government found it impossible to quiet the criticism of another aspect of the war, the introduction of conscription in 1916. While 1915 was a year of division in criticism against specific aspects of the war, opposition to conscription unified the war critics.

Every group active in anti-war criticism vehemently denounced conscription. Christian pacifists in the Quaker Service Committee registered under the National Registration Act of July, 1915, but added, "I cannot conscientiously take part in military service, in any employment necessitating the taking of the military oath, nor in the production of materials the objective of which is the taking of human life."³³ Opponents of conscription were not confined to religious peace organizations. There existed widespread and official opposition to conscription until its introduction.

³²Ibid., II, 158; Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, pp. 117-121; Thomas Bell, Pioneering Days (London, 1941), p. 117.

³³Hugh Brock, The Century of Total War; A Description of Some of the People and Movements Involved in Non-Violent Civil Disobedience in Britain from the Revolt Against the Military Service Act of World War I to the Founding of the Committee of 100 with an introduction by Emma Huber (London

Lloyd George, a champion of conscription, said Liberal Party critics of conscription opposed it on moral and traditional grounds. Most British citizens traditionally saw a large army as an instrument of tyranny and as an infringement of personal liberty.³⁴ In Asquith's coalition government of May, 1915, three Liberal ministers, Simon, McKenna, and Runciman opposed the introduction of conscription. Max Gilland, Chief government whip, said he had received letters from all over the country denouncing conscription and predicting that its introduction might bring Britain to the verge of revolution.³⁵ Nevertheless, the failure of the volunteer plan, increased casualties, and a feeling in the government that compulsion would convince both France and Germany of Britain's determination to win the war--all convinced the government of the necessity of conscription.³⁶

The first Military Service Bill, providing for conscription of single men, became law in January, 1916. Gradually conscription was strengthened to include most men. Finally, "on every possible job women and older or unfit men

³⁴Lloyd George, Memoirs, II, 158.

³⁵Oxford and Asquith, Earl of, Memories and Reflections, 1852-1927 (Boston, 1928), II, 131.

³⁶Cole, A Short History, p. 357; Reginald Balliol Brett Esher, Journals and Letters of Reginald Viscount Esher (New York, 1934-38), IV, 20.

were substituted for men serviceable to the fighting forces.³⁷ The enforcement of conscription, opposed strongly by the Trades Unions,³⁸ ". . . inevitably placed a huge power over the workers' lives in the hands of the government."³⁹ The government negotiated with local trades unions to decide which men should serve in the armed forces.

Thus to a growing reluctance among the workers to join the army was added an increased amount of friction over the terms of 'substitution' and 'dilution'; and these factors combined with a growing war-weariness and a developing suspicion of the purity of the aims with which the war was being carried on to create a stronger and stronger movement of unrest.⁴⁰

All over Great Britain there were active branches of the No Conscription Fellowship. Its members played an important role in concealing and feeding "absentees" and in keeping in touch with those conscientious objectors who were in prison. Revolutionary socialists had close ties with the No Conscription Fellowship in Glasgow. Some shop stewards accused the government of sending spies into the Workers' Committees and of falsely accusing socialists of treason.⁴¹

³⁷Cole, A Short History, p. 357.

³⁸Oxford and Asquith, Memories and Reflections, II, 130-131.

³⁹Cole, A Short History, p. 357.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Bell, Pioneering Days, p. 126. The Alec Gordon case involved an alleged government spy. Bell says Gordon's false story led to the imprisonment of a family named Wheeldon. One of the Wheeldon daughters, Hettie, married Arthur McManus, the Glasgow shop steward.

The No Conscription Fellowship held its first meeting at Quaker headquarters in East London shortly after the introduction of conscription.⁴² At this meeting Clifford Allen, member of the executive branch of the Fabian Society and of the I. L. P., moved to oppose compulsion and to refuse military service.⁴³

The British government tried to destroy the No Conscription Fellowship by persecuting its members. The No Conscription Fellowship executive committee, headed by Fenner Brockway and Clifford Allen,⁴⁴ was summoned and fined £800 for issuing a leaflet, Repeal the Act. Five members refused to pay the fine and surrendered to police on July 17, 1916. These included Fenner Brockway, Secretary and founder of the No Conscription Fellowship, and W. J. Chamberlin, editor of the organization's newspaper, The Tribunal. This newspaper went underground after police smashed the printing presses of the No Conscription Fellowship. According to pacifist members of the organization, the paper reached one hundred thousand readers,⁴⁵ probably an accurate figure as its readers were in the Society of Friends, the British Socialist Party, the I. L. P., and the Social Democratic Federation.

⁴²Brock, Century of Total War, p. 7.

⁴³Ibid.; Beatrice Webb accused Allen of being pro-German. Webb, Diaries, I, 26.

⁴⁴Labour Leader, June 3, 1915, p. 10.

⁴⁵Brock, Century of Total War, pp. 7-8.

Christian pacifists in the Fellowship of Reconciliation witnessed six hundred of its members go to prison after refusing military service. Older members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation attended courts-martial, visited prisoners, and set up funds to help the families of conscientious objectors. The Fellowship of Reconciliation cooperated with the No Conscription Fellowship and the Friend's Service Committee in opposition to conscription.⁴⁶

The Military Service Acts of 1915 and 1916, provided for the registration of all men from the ages of eighteen through forty-one to enroll in the Regular Army. In order to claim the status of conscientious objector after registration, the law provided that ". . . exemptions, absolute, conditional, or temporary. . ." would be granted by local tribunals.⁴⁷ Their degree of leniency or stringency in determining the status of conscientious objectors depended less on the ambiguous law than on the number of sons the local judge had on the front.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Vera Mary Brittain, The Rebel Passion; A Short History of Some Pioneer Peace-Makers (London, 1964), p. 40.

⁴⁷Great Britain, Supplementary Volume Containing Amendments and Additions to the End of 1918, edited by Bertram Jacobs, Vol. XVII of Encyclopedia of the Laws of England, edited by Max Robertson, sec. ed., rev. (London, 1923), 519

⁴⁸Phillip Snowden, An Autobiography; 1864-1919 (London, 1934), I, 402-410.

The Central Appeals Court in London was the final tribunal for conscientious objectors' contesting their local tribunals' decision. Six to eight members of the court, on which George Barnes sat, tried cases of appeal from local tribunals. Barnes stated that while he had voted for the inclusion of conscientious objector clauses in the Military Service Acts, he became convinced that many of the cases tried involved men who were either political objectors or cowards rather than true pacifists.⁴⁹

According to the conscientious objection clauses in the Military Service Act, individuals who opposed all wars on moral or religious grounds could be exempted from fighting duty. Those who opposed only the existing war on grounds other than moral or religious, were classified political objectors.⁵⁰ If the court gave a man conscientious objector status, the man could work in factories or on farms. If a man was judged a political objector, he was deemed enlisted and was taken to the Army.

Once in the Army, these critics of the war refused to obey military orders as a form of passive resistance. They were thus court-martialled for incitement to sedition or

⁴⁹George Nicoll Barnes, From Workshop to War Cabinet (London, 1923), pp. 131-136.

⁵⁰Great Britain, The Complete Statutes of England (London, 1930), XVII, 633.

insubordination under the Army Act, part two, note seven.⁵¹

If found guilty, the maximum sentence at the court-martial was death,⁵² but this sentence was never given to any persons claiming to be conscientious objectors; rather, they were sent to prison for twelve months at hard labor. After having served the sentence, these war critics were sent back into the Army, court-martialled again, and imprisoned once more.

Over six thousand objectors to the war were tried as soldiers for refusing to obey military orders. Once in the Army, there was nothing to prevent these war critics from being sentenced over and over again. Of these six thousand persons, six hundred and fifty-five were court-martialled twice; five hundred and twenty-one, three times; three hundred and nineteen, four times; fifty, five times; and three men were court-martialled six times.⁵³

One of this number, Emrys Hughes, a socialist who was to become a member of Parliament in the thirties, was sent to the Army. He was court-martialled five times and remained in prison until 1919, when he was discharged from the Army for misconduct.⁵⁴ Yet he later stated that he had

⁵¹Ibid., XVII, 134-135.

⁵²Ibid., XVII, 200.

⁵³Brock, Century of Total War, p. 8.

⁵⁴Emrys Hughes, "Introduction", Brock, Century of Total War, p. 1.

never regretted his decision to go to jail rather than the Army.⁵⁵

Opponents of conscription dominated every group critical of the war--from shop stewards to Quakers, from suffragettes to Liberal idealists.⁵⁶ But even though there were many critics of conscription in and out of the government, it passed because of the need of men.⁵⁷ There was some degree of persecution of war critics and many of these persecutions took place under the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA). People were charged with ". . . making statements or issuing printed matter calculated to prejudice recruiting and discipline in His Majesty's Forces, or in other ways to hinder the prosecution of the war."⁵⁸ Pacifists and war critics faced constant police supervision,⁵⁹ press censure, and public violence.⁶⁰

But with the formation of Lloyd George's coalition government in December, 1916, the persecution of well-known

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶The Sinn Fein movement of Irish revolutionary nationalists opposed Irish enlistment in the British Army, and, of course, conscription was anathema to them. The desire for non-participation may have been one cause of the Easter Rebellion, April 26, 1916. Francis P. Jones, History of the Sinn Fein Movement and the Irish Rebellion of 1916, with an introduction by John W. Goff (New York, 1917), pp. 36-37.

⁵⁷Bondfield, A Life's Work, p. 152.

⁵⁸Phillip Snowden, An Autobiography, I, 421

⁵⁹Brittain, The Rebel Passion, p. 36.

⁶⁰F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, Fate Has Been Kind, p. 114.

respectable war critics ended. Phillip Snowden indicated Prime Minister David Lloyd George's attitude against martyrdom of war critics in the following passage:

As we were leaving the room, Mr. Lloyd George said to me: 'I see you have managed to keep out of prison so far.' I replied, 'I do not suppose I shall keep out much longer now that you have the power to put me there.' 'I shall not do it,' he said. 'You'd be much more dangerous in than out.'⁶¹

George Lansbury, another outspoken war critic, stated that Lloyd George never prosecuted him, although the government knew he was hurting the cause of the war.⁶²

In December, 1916, the Asquith government fell.⁶³ Lloyd George's new government conducted the war in a more energetic fashion than the irresolute Asquith government had done.⁶⁴ According to Snowden, the Lloyd George government was formed ". . . for the ruthless prosecution of the war, that every consideration should be subservient to that aim." Believing this, war critics completely opposed Lloyd George's announced policy of delivering a knock-out blow to Germany. Even though

⁶¹Snowden, Autobiography, I, 446.

⁶²George Lansbury, My Life (London, 1928), p. 188.

⁶³Cole, A Short History, p. 355; Lloyd George, Memoirs, I, 624; Hamilton Fyfe, The British Liberal Party (London, 1928) pp. 206-220; Arno J. Mayer, Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 1917-1918 (New Haven, 1959), pp. 149-150.

⁶⁴Khuostov and I, Mintz, La Diplomatic des Temps Modernes, 1872-1919, Vol. II of Histoire de la diplomatie, translated by Xenia Pamphelova and Michel Eristov (Paris, 1949), II, 312.

Lloyd George added Labour Party representatives, Henderson, Hodge, and later Barnes, to the cabinet,⁶⁶ from December, 1916, to the end of the war relations between labor and the government grew more strained as the demand for peace gained strength in the working class.

Lloyd George's government faced many difficulties which began immediately after its formation. In the War Cabinet were Bonar Law, Alfred Viscount Milner, Earl Curzon of Kedleston, and Arthur Henderson.⁶⁷ The issues which dominated the first month of the daily War Cabinet meetings, aside from military tactics, were conscription, dilution of labor, and peace proposals. Because conscription and dilution affected the workers, and tended to increase labor unrest, the War Cabinet found it necessary to rely on Henderson when considering these important domestic issues. Cabinet meeting discussions reflected a thorough knowledge of workers' attitudes, and this information was a result of Labour Party representation in the government. The inclusion of Henderson in the War Cabinet meant that workers' attitudes and actions would be considered, but Henderson's attitudes at times conflicted with other members of the War Cabinet.

The formation of Lloyd George's coalition government was an important development in internal British politics for two

⁶⁶Ibid.; Cole, A Short History, p. 355.

⁶⁷War Cabinet 1, December 9, 1916, CAB 23/1, Public Record Office, London, England (microfilm).

major reasons. First, even though the Labour Party received increased administrative power in the government, the policy makers in the War Cabinet represented a coalition favoring the active prosecution of the war. In other words, the inclusion in the government of conservatives like Curzon, Milner, Carson, and Robert Cecil indicated that the pro-war faction was now victorious.⁶⁸ Even Henderson of the Labour Party acquiesced to a total war policy. Secondly, the specific actions in the War Cabinet during its first month in operation tended to foreshadow the difficulties the government would face in 1917--the problems of formulating clearly defensible war aims, settling labor unrest, and dealing with peace overtures. The rather uncompromising, severe attitude which dominated War Cabinet discussions of conscription and dilution coupled with its renunciation of the German peace proposal characterized the Cabinet's allegiance to the concept of total military victory. This same attitude would, in 1917, become the target of poorly organized internationalists in Britain.

Government treatment of workers was used by revolutionary shop stewards to increase anti-war sentiment. Lloyd George realized that maximum munitions production was necessary for

⁶⁸ Mayer, Political Origins, pp. 12-14. Mayer calls these men representatives of the forces of order in opposition to the forces of movement (the U. D. C. and I. L. P. coalition).

effective prosecution of the war, and he and the War Cabinet in their first month of activity increased pressure on munitions workers. The government's emphasis on conscription, curtailment of railway traffic, dilution of labor, and rejection of peace proposals were the specific grievances that anti-war groups used to increase the worker's agitation against the government in the form of strikes designed by shop stewards to hamper effective munitions production. In other words, the workers disliked the specific actions the government recognized as necessary for victory, and this dissatisfaction was used by anti-war leadership in the factories.

Conscription was one of the grievances of the workers. A director of National Service was appointed to have charge of military and civil compulsory service.⁶⁹ Henderson's duty was to define with the ministry of Labour and the director of National Service the function and duties of these newly created agencies.⁷⁰ The base of conscription was increased with the withdrawal of exemptions to men officially starred or badged for munitions work, an arrangement which had been made by the War Council and Minister of

⁶⁹ War Cab. 6, December 14, 1916, CAB 23/1, P. R. O.

⁷⁰ War Cab. 6, December 14, 1916, CAB 23/1, P. R. O. In the secretary's notes the word "defined" was typed as "defended". Haakey probably realized that compulsion would have to be defended, too.

Munitions in November, 1915. Because of the increased number of men needed in military service this policy was abandoned beginning December 1, 1916.⁷¹ Starring had favored skilled munitions workers, and by abandoning this policy the government further estranged workers and made them increasingly susceptible to the shop stewards anti-war policy.

Another government policy which seemed oppressive to workers and which shop stewards used to increase the workers' dissatisfaction with the government was the curtailment of railway traffic. Because of the need for increased railway transportation on the Western Front, the government curtailed the domestic use of the rails. Munition workers could not have week-end leaves after December 12, 1916.⁷² Anti-war shop stewards, after being released from prison early in 1917, were able to exploit curtailment of railway traffic to stir up workers' latent war-weariness into a political and economic movement aimed at ending the war.

Because the government increased the use of dilution, a practice which skilled munitions workers disliked intensely, and because the workers' official trade union representatives agreed to dilution, munitions workers increasingly followed shop steward leadership. At a Ship Building Trade Union

⁷¹War Cab. 13, December 21, 1916, CAB 23/1, Appendix III, P. R. O.

⁷²War Cab. 4, December 12, 1916, CAB 23/1, Appendix I, extract from proceeding of War Committee meetings November 30, 1916, P. R. O.

Conference at Westminster, in November, 1916, official union leadership recommended to their members the principle of dilution in both private and commercial work. They agreed to dilution only under the conditions that dilution should be carried out by local committees, and that after the war had been won the government would agree to granting workers a return to their pre-war position.⁷³ The Westminster Conference represented the trade union alliance in support of the war effort which had existed throughout the war, only to be threatened in the summer of 1917, because of the growing agitation of revolutionary shop stewards against the government's prosecution of the war.

Conscription, restriction of railway travel, and dilution of labor were the specific grievances which caused many workers in munitions industries to believe that the shop stewards could help them achieve economic security through strikes. In spite of the importance of strikes at Glasgow, South Wales, and Sheffield in 1915, there had been relatively few strikes during the first two and one-half years of the war. That indication of labor satisfaction was more apparent than real, based as it was on a trade union moratorium on strikes. On December 15, 1916, an illegal strike of

⁷³ War Cab. 4, December 4, 1916, CAB 23/1, Enclosure (ii), Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades Conference of Trade Unions at Central Hall, Westminster, November 2, 1916, P. R. O.

boilermakers began in Liverpool. This strike foreshadowed increased labor unrest which in 1917, would be linked with anti-war propaganda. The workers were striking for an increase in war bonus wages, which, if adopted, would raise wages from eight shillings a week at the outbreak of the war to eleven shillings.⁷⁴ John Hodge, Minister of Labour, recommended the arrest of three men and no negotiation until the men returned to work.⁷⁵ Characteristically, the War Cabinet accepted this relatively harsh policy.

But perhaps the most significant factor which would help the growth of the anti-war movement during 1917, was the government's refusal to openly discuss either war aims or an adequate platform for peace by negotiations. In 1917, less threatening but more widespread than labor unrest, would be the war critics' plea for the government to publicly state its war aims and to seek inroads to peace through negotiations. The Lloyd George War Cabinet indicated in December, 1916, the hard line it would take against peace overtures and statement of war aims by summarily dismissing the German peace proposal of that month as "disingenuous." The War Cabinet, on December 18, 1916, considered the peace

⁷⁴War Cab. 7, December 15, 1916, Appendix IV, CAB 23/1, P. R. O.

⁷⁵War Cab. 7, December 15, 1916, CAB 23/1, P. R. O.

proposal issued by German Minister Von Bethmann-Hollweg on December 12, 1916. They decided that even though it probably was not sincere they should talk it over. The general feeling about the proposal was that it was an attempt to stir up socialist propaganda.⁷⁶ The War Cabinet discussed and dismissed the Germans of negotiations in one afternoon.⁷⁷ The rejection of the peace offer was the first of the many rejections the government would make during 1917-1918.⁷⁸ Lloyd George's whole-scale war effort helped cause greater worker dissatisfaction which, in 1917, would increasingly be expressed by labor leaders in demands for an end to the war, a statement of war aims, and a non-imperialist basis for negotiations.

From mid-1915 to December, 1916, the emphasis of war criticism was on the fight against conscription, a fight which brought dissident anti-war groups into closer communication with one another, especially within the No

⁷⁶War Cab., 10, December 18, 1916, CAB 23/1, Appendix I, letter from Von Bethmann-Hollweg to Mr. Joseph Clark Grew, Berlin, December 12, 1916, P. R. O.

⁷⁷Baron Sonniono in Italy informed the War Cabinet by telegram that he thought Germany was courting direct refusal of peace terms to justify continuing the war. War Cab. 10, December 18, 1916, CAB 23/1, Appendix II (a) Rome Telegram, No. 1202, December 14, 1916, from Baron Sonniono, P. R. O.

⁷⁸Discontent against the war spread throughout the empire. Irish opposition to the war caused a troubled situation to develop in Australia, according to the Australian Prime Minister, War Cab. 13, 1916, CAB 23/1, Appendix II, telegram from Australian Prime Minister.

Conscription Fellowship. During these months war critics elaborated the basic principles on which their opposition to war rested. Identification of optimistic, idealistic pacifists in contrast to socialist extremists occurred, although during the struggle against conscription these differences blurred.

The differences of extreme and moderate war critics was reflected in their allegiance to antithetical methods of achieving peace. Extremists gathered in the revolutionary socialist organizations; moderates flocked together under the aegis of the I. L. P-U. D. C. coalition. The conflict and ultimate separation of these two groups was not accomplished in the mid-war years merely hinted at. The idealistic peace goals expressed by women at the Hague in 1915, were illustrative of the demands that would dominate war criticism in the last year of the war; while the Liverpool strike in 1916 was illustrative of the demands that would form a minority position in the 1917 anti-war movement.

The middle years of the war were relatively quiet and and unsuccessful ones in the anti-war movement. The most significant event relating to war criticism was the formation of Lloyd George's coalition government coming on the heels of conscription. Lloyd George's stringent demands on workers and all that related to their support of the war, *i. e.*, longer hours, increased dilution, conscription, and higher prices, tended to decrease working class economic

stability (which had heretofore been almost non-existent), thus making workers more easily convinced that revolutionary shop stewards clearly understood the cause of war. The majority of war critics, being rather amorphous in their interests of working class conditions could and would in 1917, view the War Cabinets' rejection of the German peace proposal as the result of imperialistic war aims. Thus, by the end of 1916, there were several indications of the increased dissatisfaction with the war which would become full-blown in 1917.

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE OVERTURES ON WAR CRITICISM IN GREAT BRITAIN IN 1917

From January to August, 1917, British war critics increased in number and in influence due to domestic and foreign events. Domestic causes of increased dissatisfaction with the war effort, notable especially within the rank and file labor movement, included Prime Minister David Lloyd George's increased use of conscription, his hardening policy concerning strikes and workers' exemptions from armed service, and his orders for the arrest of some prominent shop stewards. Foreign events which caused increased criticism were interrelated with domestic pressures on labor and included two peace proposals, one by the Pope and one by Germany, which the British government rejected; and, more important, the Russian revolutions of March and November,¹ which most British war critics saw as a victory for democracy. All these domestic and foreign events, which created strong pressures to seek peace, were

¹The Gregorian Calendar dates for Russian events will be used throughout.

during 1917, intertwined in the Leeds Conference that British labor held in June and the proposed international peace conference at Stockholm scheduled for August.

In 1917 the Leeds and Stockholm Conferences were significant events to both advocates of peace and supporters of war. The Leeds Conference reflected overwhelming working class support for the revolution in Russia, and the support labor gave the revolution deeply alarmed government circles. But even more important to war critics was the stillborn Stockholm Conference. Perhaps no other single event showed a clearer conflict between the philosophy of the nation's majority who supported the war and that of the minority who criticized the war. The proposed socialist conference at Stockholm was the great dividing line. Those who wanted British socialists to attend the conference could no longer support Lloyd George's method of prosecuting the war as long as he refused to state his government's war aims; those who opposed British socialist representation at Stockholm could not abide what they considered to be the pro-German sympathies of its supporters.

On the issue of the Stockholm Conference Arthur Henderson, staunchest patriot in the Labour Party, resigned his War Cabinet position. This act signalled the marshalling of labor forces in order to gain a voice in foreign affairs and, moreover, created a wider gulf between war critics and war supporters.

Arthur Henderson's action in supporting Stockholm was probably based on an attempt to strengthen pro-war British Labour Party influence at the conference and on a desire to maintain his own leadership of the Labour Party. In supporting Stockholm, Henderson lost what little influence he had enjoyed within the War Cabinet; but, he did strengthen his own leadership of the Labour Party. This in itself was indicative of the growing disparity between the philosophies of labor and the government--labor lauding, and the government damning persons who supported peace overtures.

By this time most war critics were within the Labour Party or its affiliated organizations. Those components of the Labour Party included many whose factions divided between pro-war and anti-war sympathies. The Fabian Society, with Sydney and Beatrice Potter Webb, and George Bernard Shaw as influential members, was supportive of the war. The Independent Labour Party, led by Phillip Snowden, Ramsay MacDonald, and F. W. Jowett, was overwhelmingly pacifist. The Socialist Democratic Federation, founded in 1881 by Max Hyndman, was entirely critical of the war. By 1917, the majority of the British Socialist Party opposed the war; in that group the anti-war faction had become so strong that they purged the moderate Hyndman. The largest of the groups critical of the war was the I. L. P. with a membership of over one million in 1917, and all those groups together composed about one-half of the Labour Party's strength.

The other half of its membership, and the most influential body within the Labour Party, was the Trade Union Congress, a loosely organized union of unions created in 1868.² On its executive board sat representatives from the Miners' Federation, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the Sailors' and Firemen's Union, and others. The Trade Union Congress represented a fast growing trade union membership³ and served as the Labour Party's guide to the opinions of its major constituent--the worker. Throughout the war the Labour Party grew in size, if not in influence, and its growth was a factor in computing war-weariness. The only voice that the Labour Party, representing at least five million people, had in policy making decisions at the War Cabinet level, was that of Arthur Henderson, Minister of Education in Lloyd George's War Cabinet.

Lloyd George's coalition government, established December 9, 1916, was designed to represent all factions of British politics. A small union group met daily as a War Cabinet to discuss domestic and foreign affairs as they related to the war effort. Most members of this War Cabinet, which functioned as a policy-making body, were free

²Stephen Richards Gaubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, 1917-1924 (Cambridge, 1956), p. 7.

³From 1899 to 1914 trade union membership increased from 1,848,570 to 3,918,809. Sydney and Beatrice Webb, The History of Trade Unionism (rev. ed.; New York, 1926); App. VI, p. 750.

of all other administrative duties. The important members of the War Cabinet from December 9, 1916, to August 10, 1917, were Earl Curzon of Kedleston, Viscount Alfred Milner, both Ministers without portfolio, who acted as steadying, conservative forces on Prime Minister Lloyd George.⁴ L. S. Amery, a member of the secretarial staff to the War Cabinet, pictured Curzon and Milner as men restraining and guiding a raging elephant turning wildly about. Lloyd George, the leader and most expressive member of the War Cabinet, frequently consulted other people, thus causing him frequently to change his mind and giving an "air of unscrupulousness" to his guidance of the Cabinet.⁵ Other members of the War Cabinet were Bonar Law, Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the Unionist Party, and Arthur Henderson, Secretary of the Labour Party.⁶ Sir Maurice P. Hankey as secretary to the War Cabinet kept minutes and records of all meetings and catalogued memoranda considered by the Cabinet.⁷

Although Lloyd George had intended Henderson to represent Labour Party sentiment in the War Cabinet, Henderson

⁴L. S. Amery, War and Peace, Vol. II of My Political Life (London, 1936), p. 93; War Cabinet 128A, May 1, 1917, War Cabinet Records 23/13, Public Record Office, London, England, (microfilm)

⁵Amery, My Political Life, II, 95-99.

⁶Ibid., II, 93; Mary Agnes Adamson Hamilton, Arthur Henderson (London, 1938), p. 114.

⁷Amery, My Political Life, II, 93-94; War Cabinet Records, CAB 23/10-CAB 23/17, P. R. O.

really represented only the patriotic (or pro-war) section of his party.⁸ Patriotic fervor declined in the Labour Party to the extent that by summer of 1917, Henderson's role as leader of the party was in grave danger of being upset.⁹

One of Henderson's most important functions in the War Cabinet was to report to the Cabinet socialist actions throughout the world and Labour Party actions and opinions in Great Britain.¹⁰ For example, on January 2, 1917, Henderson reported an increase in pacifist opinion expressed at the Socialist Conference in Paris. That meeting, Henderson reported, exhibited a large growth of pacifist sentiment although the delegates representing the French Socialist Party's pro-war factions still maintained a slim lead over the pacifists, twenty-one to eighteen. Nevertheless, Henderson continued, ". . . the Conference may be regarded as satisfactory, [as] there was a declaration in the resolution to assist the Government in the prosecution of the war."¹¹ Henderson warned the War Cabinet that socialists in France were becoming less eager to support the war, but the War Cabinet did not consider pacifist sentiment a dangerous threat in January in either other allied nations or their own.

⁸Amery, My Political Life, II, 97.

⁹Hamilton, Henderson, p. 116.

¹⁰War Cab. 32, January 2, 1917, CAB 23/13, P.R.O.; War Cab. 42, January 29, 1917, CAB 23/13, P. R. O.

¹¹War Cab. 32, January 2, 1917, CAB 23/3, P.R.O.

Because of the government's desire to deal Germany a crushing military blow, workers suffered under increased conscription during the first month in 1917.¹² Facets of increased government control, also included nationalization of Irish and British coalfields under the direction of the Board of Trade.¹³ On January 19, 1917, the War Cabinet considered the report of the director general of National Service and decided that by the end of January, thirty-thousand men in munitions work should be made available for general military service. Conscription bit deeply into the railroad engineers and firemen who the government thought were needed for duty at the front. Even eighteen year olds were subject to conscription.¹⁴ War Cabinet members, thus, concentrated on achieving full scale mobilization¹⁵ in order to defeat the German menace.

At the same time that the government exerted increased pressure, the workers increased their agitation against these

¹²In other words, the government was vigilant concerning seditious speeches made by factory workers.

¹³War Cab. 48, January 13, 1917, CAB 23/1, P. R. O.

¹⁴War Cab. 32, January 19, 1917, CAB 23/1, Appendix K, II, P. R. O.

¹⁵War Cab. 36, January 23, 1917, CAB 23/1, Tables I-IV, P. R. O. These tables indicated the relationship of men in service to the total male population in England, Scotland, Wales, and all the Dominions.

very restrictions. On January 29, 1917, the Labour Party Conference appointed a committee to investigate charges against the government made by David Kirkwood, one of the Clydeside rebels who had recently been deported from Glasgow without trial. Cabinet members shrugged this incident off by deciding that not only should Kirkwood be re-arrested, but that the Minister of Munitions should publish a statement saying Kirkwood had voluntarily agreed to deportation. Their justification for this statement was that at the time of his arrest, Kirkwood, in, for him, a typical state of anger and distrust, had stated that he would rather be deported than tried.¹⁶ He was shouting a very typical shop steward distrust of the government.

Workers' agitation against and distrust of the government increased when, on February 3, 1917, James Maxton, one of the Glasgow shop stewards, was released from Calton jail where he had served a one year sentence for making allegedly seditious speeches. He had been imprisoned there with Gallacher, Muir, MacLean, and MacDougall, who had all been sentenced to prison as a result of illegal strikes in the Glasgow munitions factories. As these men were released, they began again to criticize all aspects of government war time programs.¹⁷

¹⁶War Cab. 42, January 29, 1917, CAB 23/1, P. R. O.

¹⁷Gilbert McAllister, James Maxton (London, 1935), pp. 63-67; Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, p. 132; Cf. Emmanuel Shinwell, The Labour Story (London, 1949), p. 92.

External factors, such as the revolution in Russia, influenced British war critics significantly. On March 26, 1917, Henderson reported to the War Cabinet that he had received a telegram from the French Socialist Party which by late March, in contrast to the situation in January, was controlled by anti-war socialists sympathetic to the Russian Soviets. The telegram informed Henderson that French Socialist delegates were going to Petrograd on a mission to the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries. The War Cabinet, unflinchingly sure of Henderson's loyalty, instructed him to secure "a suitably composed British Labour [Party] deputation" to accompany the French party to persuade Russian Socialists to bring the war to a satisfactory conclusion.¹⁸ Henderson chose persons who supported the war--Will Thorne, James O'Grady, and William Sanders--as labor delegates to Russia. The first two were members of Parliament, and Sanders was a leader of the Fabian Society. Strong criticism of this delegation was expressed in the Russian press, perhaps as a result of an I. L. P. telegram sent to the Soviet which claimed that the delegates were paid emissaries of government and were not representative of British labor.¹⁹

¹⁸War Cab. 106, March 26, 1917, CAB 23/2, P. R. O.

¹⁹David Lloyd George, War Memoirs (London, 1933-34) 136; Robert D. Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution (Durham, N. C., 1956), p. 5; Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates, XCII, April 23, 1917, Col. 2035.

The March revolution in Russia had inspired British socialists as no previous event had done.²⁰ On hearing the fairly cloudy news, Thomas Bell interpreted it as a "stimulus to widespread discontent and war weariness beginning to set in."²¹ George Lansbury rented London's Albert Hall for a congratulatory demonstration on March 31, 1917, to celebrate the revolution. In Lansbury's words, "it seemed as if all the long pent-up feelings of horror and shame of war and intense longing for peace were at last let loose."²²

Government circles were not pleased with the news of the revolution. They feared that it might mean the decline of Russia as an effective ally.²³ Milner interpreted the revolution as a reaction against "bureaucratic incompetence" rather than a conspiracy against the government.²⁴

²⁰Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, p. 137.

²¹Thomas Bell, Pioneering Days (London, 1941), p. 148.

²²George Lansbury, My Life (London, 1928), p. 185. Large sections of the population were not receptive to the revolution or to peace. Pethick-Lawrence, not a socialist, stood for Parliament in March on a platform of peace-by-negotiations. He received 333 votes out of 6123. F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, Fate Has Been Kind (London, 1942), p. 115; Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, My Part in a Changing World (London, 1938), p. 317.

²³Amery, My Political Life, II, 119.

²⁴Alfred Milner, letter to C. R. Enock, April 12, 1917, Evelyn Wrench, Alfred Lord Milner (London, 1958), pp. 327-328.

Unrest and dissatisfaction in munitions areas did not hinder Lloyd George's desire to increase munitions production in order to send a greater supply of armaments to Russia. He wanted to increase Russia's potential threat to Germany and realized that to build an effective Eastern front increased munitions would be necessary; therefore, he sent a British delegation headed by Milner and Sir Henry Wilson, one of the recognized intellectuals in the British Army, to determine Russia's internal and military needs. The expedition remained in Petrograd from March to mid-April but was ineffective in determining Russia's needs.²⁵

Milner returned with a very low opinion of Russia's military efficiency, an attitude which would become an important factor in formulating official British response to later revolutionary activities there. Lloyd George probably began to doubt Russia's effectiveness as an ally early in March, an opinion which would become important in relation to United States' entry into the war, the Russian Revolution in November, and governmental pressure on munitions factories.

Milner's fatalistic opinion of Russia as an ally was very important in explaining Britain's crackdown on munitions workers. Although Britain had supplied Russia with money,

²⁵Lloyd George, Memoirs, I, 261-273; Callwell, Wilson (London, 1937), I, 301-327, cited in Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution, pp. 18-22; Wrench, Milner, pp. 320-322.

she had never been able to send the necessary amounts of munitions.

Lloyd George's concern stemmed more from the results of the revolution on British workers than from the revolution itself. He reported to the War Cabinet that "violent anarchists" might exploit the worker's legitimate grievances against the government. These anarchists were part of a "very considerable and highly organized labour movement with seditious tendencies, which was developing in many industrial areas...."²⁶

April, 1917, was an eventful month in Great Britain. The reactions to the Russian revolution of March had barely been expressed when the United States entered the war, a tremendous moral boost for the Allies. British leaders tended to minimize the problem of Russia and the domestic unrest in Britain caused by the revolution because they were so elated about the United States' entry. Although Lloyd George worried about the Barrow strikes,²⁷ and Henderson warned of the seriousness of the workers' unrest, the War Cabinet did not release its pressure on factory workers.²⁸ Members of the War Cabinet, especially Milner,

²⁶War Cab. 115, April 6, 1917, CAB 23/2, P. R. O.

²⁷War Cab. 110, April 2, 1917, CAB 23/2, P. R. O.

²⁸War Cab. 125, April 27, 1917, CAB 23/2, P. R. O.

were unable to see the workers as a threat. Milner was supremely happy that the Americans had finally begun "playing the game."²⁹ Although British leaders doubted the military effectiveness of the United States, they appreciated the moral appeal that Wilson's endorsement had given the war.³⁰

On May 1, as top British officials were formulating a hard line war policy³¹, some British workers celebrated May Day by refusing to go to work. In Glasgow workers shouting against the war marched to Duke Street prison to demand the release of their leader, John MacLean. Their pleas were unsuccessful, however, for on May 9, 1918, MacLean was sentenced to five years in prison.³²

The actions of these militant British war critics probably would have been unimportant had they not been an indication of the growing strength of socialist demands for an end to the war. One aspect of the Russian revolution in March was the resulting ferment for peace "which gave rise to the Soviet call for an international socialist conference."³³ The neutral socialists of Holland had taken the preliminary

²⁹Milner, to Mrs. Chapin, London, April 18, 1917, Wrench, Milner, p. 330.

³⁰Hajo Holborn, The Political Collapse of Europe (New York, 1951), p. 106; Cf. Arthur Marwick, The Deluge, (London, 1965), p. 189

³¹Imperial War Cabinet 13, May 1, 1917, CAB 241/1, P.R.O.; Imperial War Cab. 128, May 1, 1917, CAB 23/3, P.R.O.

³²Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, pp. 195-199.

³³Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution, p. 67.

steps toward a conference at Stockholm.³⁴ In late April, a Danish Social Democrat, Frederick Borgbjerg, arrived in Petrograd with an invitation to the Russian Societ to attend a conference at Stockholm. The Mensheviks accepted, and the Bolsheviks declined.³⁵ On May 8, with the Bolsheviks abstaining, the Soviet Executive voted to extend invitations to neutral and allied socialists to meet with Soviets to plan the Stockholm Conference.³⁶

Although the British Labour Party Executive rejected the Dutch invitation to Stockholm because they feared non-participation of other Allied socialists, they appointed two representatives to go to Petrograd since the Russians supported the policy.³⁷ They did not want to seem to be conspiring with the enemy. The Executive appointed G. H. Roberts, Labour member of Parliament, and W. Carter, a leader of the Miners' Federation, to discuss the proposed

³⁴Emile Vanderveelde, Three Aspects of the Russian Revolution (London, 1918), p. 211.

³⁵Pravda, No. 41, May 9, 1917, cited in Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution, p. 67.

³⁶Frank A. Golder (ed.), Documents of Russian History, 1914-1917 (New York, 1927), pp. 339-340; Shinwill, The Labour Story, p. 94.

³⁷Also in May a Conservative Russian delegation visited other Allied nations. Roman Ramanovich Rosen, Forty Years of Diplomacy (London, 1922), p. 221; cf. Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution, p. 12.

Conference in Petrograd and if they thought fit, in Sweden.³⁸

As Russian socialists moved closer to agreement on Stockholm, the British War Cabinet increasingly contemplated a future without Russian help. To fight a war without Russian help Lloyd George apparently thought preferable to fighting alongside a Russia bent on peace. Because of the effect that Russias' leaving the war would have in Britain, Lloyd George advised making a separate peace with Austria. If Britain failed to do this "he could see no hope of the sort of victory in the war that we desired."³⁹ In order to achieve this sort of victory the War Cabinet considered sending delegates to Stockholm, against the advice of the French, so that German delegates would be denied the opportunity of impressing Russian delegates that Britain and France were alone standing in the way of peace.⁴⁰

The War Cabinet could envisage only one difficulty in the proposal to admit British delegates to Stockholm. That problem was--could suitable British representation be found? The War Cabinet felt that I. L. P. pacifist representation would be harmful. Cabinet members thought that although Henderson would be the best possible delegate, he could not

³⁸Wrath, The Allies and the Russian Revolution, p. 12

³⁹War Cab. 235A, May 9, 1917, CAB 23/16, P. R. O.

⁴⁰Ibid.

go without "compromising our position in the eyes of the world." Henderson would be good because he could represent British aims "in their true light." Other arguments for British attendance were that it would be valuable for determining German morale, and that it could stimulate movement toward democratic government in Germany if the Allies indicated they would only discuss terms of peace with such a government. The War Cabinet then, on May 9, thought of Stockholm as a good instrument for British patriotic labour groups to influence other European social-ists.⁴¹

In order to assure that British Labour representation would be acceptably pro-war, the War Cabinet decided to postpone its decision on Stockholm until Henderson made his report on the afternoon's Conference of the Executive Committee of the Labour Party. The War Cabinet advised Henderson to ask pacifist members of the I. L. P. how they would interpret the policy of peace without annexations or indemnities in reference to people in Poland, Armenia, and German Africa. Also Henderson was asked to find out who the representatives to Stockholm would be.⁴²

The Russian provisional government favored Allied representation at the proposed Stockholm Conference. The

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

growth of socialist strength in the Russian government made Lloyd George feel that Buchanan, an old school aristocrat diplomat, should perhaps be replaced by a more liberal spokesman. When six socialists were added to the Russian cabinet, Lloyd George feared unjustifiably, that Buchanan no longer would be acceptable to the Russians, and so, he appointed Henderson to lead a mission to Petrograd.⁴³ In the meeting of May 23, 1917, War Cabinet members advised that Henderson might replace Buchanan if he thought it necessary. Henderson was advised to leave for Russia as quickly as possible. The members further authorized Ramsay MacDonald, a well-know pacifist, and others, who would be representative of the majority (pro-war) Labour Party to attend the proposed Stockholm Conference, a decision which the government would later denounce. There were many contributing factors to Henderson's appointment to Russia, but one little publicized result was that George N. Barnes, conservative Labour member of Parliament, on May 25, began to take Henderson's place in War Cabinet meetings.⁴⁴

Henderson, who had always been considered a conservative Labour representative, arrived on June 2 in Petrograd

⁴³William Henry Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution (New York, 1935), I, 149; Lloyd George, Memoirs, 140-141.

⁴⁴War Cab. 146, May 23, 1917, CAB 23/2, P. R. O.

where he learned that his political philosophy more closely resembled Buchanan's than that of the unwashed Russian proletariat. He was intellectually unprepared for this visit and became convinced of Buchanan's fitness for the job. He wrote a letter to the British government commending Buchanan, and he commented that the only groups critical of the Ambassador were the extremists.⁴⁵ Henderson remained in Russia through the month of June, impressed daily by the growing hatred there of the war. He became increasingly convinced of the necessity of British representation at the proposed Stockholm Conference.

In overwhelming support of the Russian March Revolution, British socialists attended a conference at Leeds in early June. British socialists in the I. L. P., the British Socialist Party, and the Socialist Labour Federation, welcomed the fall of Russian czardom as a sign of hope for peace and justice. The conference was sponsored by the United Socialist Council, and the purpose of the conference was to unite socialists in the quest for peace.⁴⁶ The split among socialist critics of the war was evident at Leeds.

⁴⁵ Hamilton, Henderson, p. 127; Muriel Buchannan, Dissolution of an Empire (London, 1932), pp. 210-212; Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution, pp. 70-71; Richard B. Ullman, Intervention and the War, Vol. I of Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921 (Princeton, 1963), p. 9.

⁴⁶ Shinwell, The Labour Story, p. 94.

Thomas Bell, Arthur MacManus, and Thomas Gallacher, represented the Revolutionary Socialist Federation, and they supported the creation of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils patterned on the Soviet example.⁴⁷ MacManus, Gallacher and Bell, who favored class warfare, harassed Snowden, MacDonald and Lansbury, who praised the virtues of parliamentary democracy.⁴⁸ Lansbury praised the Leeds Conference as an effective voice for peace.⁴⁹ Yet he admitted that the Workers' and Soldiers' Council failed because of the insane rivalry between the British Socialist Party and the I. L. P.

Another aspect of the divided nature the Leeds Conference was the cold reception it received from segments of the Labour Party. As a result of the Leeds Conference, the Seamen's and Firemen's Union, the British Workers' League, a portion of the press protested against what they considered socialist excesses. These groups (militant anti-Germans) especially disliked the plan of sending British pacifist representation to Stockholm.⁵⁰

The Leeds Resolution, signed by representatives from every group critical of the war, stated the aim of peace

⁴⁷Bell, Pioneering Days, p. 149; G. D. H. Cole, A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, rev. ed. (London, 1948), p. 356; Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, p. 149.

⁴⁸Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, p. 149; Bell, Pioneering Days, p. 58.

⁴⁹Lansbury, My Life, pp. 187-188.

⁵⁰Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, pp. 155-157

could only be achieved by ". . . concerted action on the part of the working class, now rapidly returning to their adherence to the principle of the International solidarity of Labour."⁵¹ Snowden, who authored the part of the Leeds Resolution dealing with war aims, welcomed the fall of the Czar. The resolution stated that ". . . the consolidation of democratic principles in Russia's internal and external policy will create in the democracies of other nations new aspirations toward a stable peace and the brotherhood of nations."⁵²

During June British workers continued in their work against the war. The Women's Peace Crusade, a new anti-war movement led by an ex-suffragette, Helen Crawford, established itself in Glasgow. In demonstrations these women demanded an immediate peace without annexations or indemnities.⁵³ Lloyd George tried to appease labor temporarily during this critical month. He withdrew deportation orders on Clark, MacManus, and Messer to appease labor.⁵⁴ For his efforts at appeasing labor, he received some rebuffs, and considerable success. One of these rebuffs came from Robert Smillie, who refused Lloyd George's offer to appoint him Food Comptroller; in addition, Smillie reported that when asked what he had done in the war, he had replied,

⁵¹Leeds Conference Document, June 3, 1917, quoted in Phillip Snowden, An Autobiography (London, 1934), I, pp. 450-452.

⁵²Ibid., p. 454; Labour Leader, June 7, 1917.

⁵³Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, pp. 152-157.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 15.

"Tried to stop the bloody business!"⁵⁵ Yet despite labor's continued resistance, Glasgow offered Lloyd George the Freedom of the City on June 29. On June 30, 1917, MacLean was released from prison, and two weeks later, at a welcome home reception, he made a "tremendous speech urging revolution in England against the capitalists."⁵⁶

War Cabinet members discussed pressures operating against their decision of May 23 to allow British representation to Stockholm. Neither France nor the United States was pleased at Britain's decision. France's General Pétain feared that significant Allied participation in a socialist peace conference might lower the morale of soldiers and thereby force the allies into a premature and unsatisfactory peace.⁵⁷ Once more the ineffectiveness of Russia as a fighting ally was mentioned with the implication that, therefore, coddling the Russians by agreeing to Stockholm was no longer necessary. But other members remained hopeful concerning the Russian situation and concerned over the effects of renouncing a government decision reached as late as May 23. These members argued that forbidding MacDonald

⁵⁵ Robert Smillie, My Life for Labour (London, 1924), pp. 174-177.

⁵⁶ Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, pp. 155-157.

⁵⁷ War Cab. 156, June 5, 1917, CAB 23/3, P. R. O.

to go to Stockholm might rally a good deal of sympathy to him, giving the idea of Stockholm too much importance. The Cabinet decided to consult "Uncle Arthur" Henderson and to further clamp down on the pacifist movement by undertaking an active campaign to discredit it.⁵⁸

The socialist branch of the international pacifist movement became, the government thought, a major threat to effective prosecution of the war. In the first two weeks of June, French soldiers threatened mutiny, and both the British and French governments thought it was the result of socialist propaganda.⁵⁹ Sir Douglas Haig's report on the French military conditions was considered by Lloyd George, Curzon, Milner, Barnes, and Smuts in an ultra-secret War Cabinet meeting. Haig, using Esher's report on the low morale of the French army as evidence, said he doubted that military victory would be possible without the United States' intervention on a massive scale.⁶⁰

Because of increased labor unrest, the threatening French military situation, and pressure from other Allies, the British War Cabinet became, during the summer months of 1917, more insistent on a hard-line war policy. Milner

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ War Cab. 157, June 6, 1917, CAB 23/3 P. R. O.

⁶⁰ War Cab. Unnumbered X, June 11, 1917, CAB 23/16, P. R. O.

for one, demanded a total re-evaluation of Britain's war policy. He felt that a new policy was necessary due to the "deflection [sic] of Russia" and the entry of the United States into the war.⁶¹ Because the War Cabinet realized that the United States vehemently denounced socialist representation at Stockholm,⁶² and because Britain would necessarily depend increasingly on United States' aid in fighting the war, the War Cabinet ". . . considered [it] undesirable to take any steps which might create a peace atmosphere."⁶³ Thus, despite the intensity of British socialists desire to send delegates to Stockholm, the British War Cabinet, after several vacillations, decided that MacDonald should be advised not to count on going to Stockholm.⁶⁴ But their problem of informing him of the decision was solved when the pro-war Seamen's and Firemen's Union refused passage to the pacifist labor delegation to Petrograd and to Stockholm. The delegates, chosen at the

⁶¹Note by Lord Milner, June 7, 1917, War Cab. unnumbered X, June 11, Appendix, P. R. O.

⁶²U. S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917, Supplement 2, The World War (Washington, 1932), I, 739.

⁶³War Cab., 157, June 6, 1917, CAB 23/3 P. R. O.

⁶⁴The War Cabinet decided to allow MacDonald (one of the two minority party representatives) to travel to Petrograd with four majority representatives from Britain's Labour Party. War Cab 158, June 17, 1917, CAB 23/3 P. R. O.

Leeds Conference, included MacDonald and Jowett of the I. O. P., and E. D. Fairchild of the British Socialist Party. George Roberts and E. C. Carter, delegates from the Labour Party, and Julius West of the Fabian Society, also planned to travel to Petrograd. Ambassador Buchanan and Henderson had supported the trip believing British pacifists might be less enthusiastic after viewing the ". . . proceedings of the Russian extremists."⁶⁵ This violently anti-German union refused to allow the pacifist delegation to board ship at Aberdeen, Scotland, and Lloyd George gladly let the matter lie.⁶⁶

Publicly, the government tried to maintain a favorable stance on Stockholm, a stance that would neither infuriate Russian extremists nor discourage their moderate colleagues.⁶⁷ Therefore, the British government issued statements somewhat favorable to Stockholm, but followed the American, French, and Italian lead in refusing passports to the delegates.⁶⁸

⁶⁵George Buchanan, My Mission to Russia and Other Diplomatic Memories (Boston, 1923), II, 147; Godfrey Lord Elton, The Life of James Ramsay MacDonald, 1866-1919 (London, 1939) p. 316.

⁶⁶War Cab. 160, June 11, 1917, CAB 23/3, P. R. O.; Lloyd George, Memoirs, IV, 146. For a lively account of the incident see Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution, pp. 73-74.

⁶⁷Ullman, Anglo-Soviet Relations, I, 10.

⁶⁸Lensing to Page, circular telegram, Washington, May 22 1917, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917, Supplement 2, The World War, I, 739; Raymond Poincare, Au service de la France, 10 vols. (Paris, 1926-1933), IX, 148-149; Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution, pp. 75-76.

The government refused to issue Sylvia Pankhurst, a revolutionary socialist violently opposed to the war, a passport to Russia on June 19. But she had no invitation from the Russian government.⁶⁹ The government, not wanting to antagonize the labor movement, hesitated in denying passports to legitimate delegates. They desired to consult Henderson more fully on the importance of pacifist strength in the Labour Party.

In mid-July, Henderson left Petrograd and from Aberdeen to London was accompanied by four Soviet delegates who wished to convince British officials of the desirability of Stockholm.⁷⁰ Henderson, too, supported Stockholm, not, as Lloyd George believed, because he had been infected by "the revolutionary malaria,"⁷¹ but because he felt it was the only way to placate the Soviet and keep Russia in the war.⁷² And perhaps more significantly, Henderson feared he would lose the leadership of the Labour Party if he refused to support Stockholm.⁷³

⁶⁹War Cab. 165, June 19, 1917, CAB 23/3, P. R. O.

⁷⁰Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution, pp. 77-78.

⁷¹Lloyd George, Memoirs, IV, 148.

⁷²Buchanan, My Mission to Russia, II, 161.

⁷³War Cab. 196A, July 26, 1917, CAB 23/13, P. R. O. George Barnes, Henderson's replacement on the War Cabinet, asked Labour delegates (meaning Henderson) to report to the Cabinet. War Cab. 173, July 2, 1917, CAB 23/3, P. R. O.

Henderson attended a secret War Cabinet session of July 25, while Lloyd George was attending a conference in Paris. Law, Curzon, Carson, Barnes, and Cecil questioned Henderson about his plan to accompany MacDonald and George Wardle (a Labour member of Parliament) to Paris. The Cabinet feared that the government would be pictured as being favorable to Stockholm if Henderson, a Cabinet minister, accompanied the pacifist leader, MacDonald. Henderson explained that he felt it necessary to accompany the Russian delegates to Paris because they were going to discuss the Stockholm Conference with or without him, and ". . . he considered it essential that he himself should go" in order to guide the arrangements of the conference in a way favorable to moderate influence.⁷⁴ Henderson further explained that the Labour Party executive committee had agreed to approve the Stockholm Conference if a proposed Allied Conference of socialists in London approved it.⁷⁵

Henderson then assured the Cabinet that the government would not be committed to the Stockholm project, and no question would arise until the government's decision on issuance of passports after August 10, date of the Labour Party Conference. Carson and Curzon expressed fear that

⁷⁴War Cab. 196A, July 26, 1917, CAB 23/13, P. R. O. Cf. Lloyd George, *Memoirs*, IV, 149-150.

⁷⁵Report of the Seventeenth Annual Conference of the Labour Party (London, 1918), p. 4, cited in Werth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution, p. 26; War Cab. 196A, July 26, 1917, CAB 23/13, P. R. O.

the government would be embarrassed or forced into accepting unfavorable peace terms. Bonar Law stated that they could neither rule on Henderson's mention of resignation nor against the Paris plan, since Lloyd George, then in Paris, was absent. As his trump card in convincing Cabinet members that he ought to be allowed to go to Paris, Henderson used a telegram from Lloyd George granting him permission to attend an Allied Conference,⁷⁶ but he neglected to mention that the Prime Minister had assumed the Conference would be held in London.

On July 27, the three British and four Russian delegates left for Paris. On the same day Lloyd George left Paris for London leaving a secretary behind to report Henderson's activities.⁷⁷ On July 30, Bonar Law reported to the War Cabinet members that he had received a telegram from Lloyd George stating that at the time of the issuance of telegram 715, the Prime Minister had no knowledge of a trip to Paris. With this information the Cabinet concluded that Henderson had acted strictly on party loyalty and had caused the government serious embarrassment.⁷⁸

⁷⁶Lloyd George, telegram to Henderson, No. 715, War Cab. 196A, July 26, 1917, CAB 231, P. R. O.

⁷⁷Francis Viscount Bertie, The Diary of Lord Bertie of Thame, edited by Lady Algernon Gordon Lennox (London, 1924), II, 161.

⁷⁸War Cab. 198A, July 30, 1917, CAB 23/13, P. R. O.

That evening, Lloyd George having arrived in London, the War Cabinet (composed of the Prime Minister, Carson, Milner, Carson, Law, Barnes, Balfour and Cecil) discussed the implications of Henderson's trip. Lloyd George pointed out again that he had not been aware of the proposed Paris trip when he had issued telegram 715. He explained that the situation had changed since some cabinet members had advised British representation at Stockholm.⁷⁹ The two most important factors that had caused a re-evaluation were his virtual acceptance of Russia's defection and increased dependence on United States aid, which because of that nation's distrust of socialists, required a hard line against Stockholm. Lloyd George pointed out that pacifist labor influence might be exerted to maneuver the patriotic element of the Labour Party and the British government into a difficult position. Lloyd George feared that the series of steps proposed by the I. L. P. might tie the government's hand. He felt that only prevention of passports would prevent British representation at Stockholm, but that this would be a serious ". . . breach in the identity of views which has hitherto prevailed on the subject of prosecution of the war between the British Labour Party and other parties represented in the Coalition."⁸⁰

⁷⁹War Cab. 199A, July 30, 1917, 5:30 P. M., CAB 23/13 P. R. C.

⁸⁰ibid.

On August 1, the War Cabinet mentioned the seriousness of Henderson's approval of Stockholm. They realized that accepting Henderson's resignation might have serious repercussions in Russia and among trade unions at home. They even considered that a general election might be necessary.⁸¹ But since Russia was practically written off and labor had become a familiar problem, there was going to be no alternative but to accept his resignation. At the afternoon meeting on August 1, Henderson was kept waiting one hour while War Cabinet members discussed his actions. Furious at this rebuff, Henderson explained that he had gone to Paris in order to postpone the Stockholm Conference and to assure that the proposals arrived at would not be binding.⁸² He had accomplished one of his aims while in Paris; the Conference was postponed until September 9, but a decision on whether resolutions passed at Stockholm were to be binding had not been reached.⁸³ The War Cabinet listened to Henderson and concluded that he should explain his dual position to the House of Commons. They advised him to stress that his contributions of information on labor unrest had benefited the government in prosecuting the war.⁸⁴

⁸¹War Cab. 201A, August 1, 1917, CAB 23/13, P. R. O.

⁸²War Cab. 202, August 1, 1917, 4:30 P. M., CAB 23/13, P.R.O.

⁸³Krasny Arkhiv, XVI (1926), 36, cited in Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution, p. 79.

⁸⁴War Cab. 202, August 1, 1917, CAB 23/3, P.R.O.

Of course, this was one thing which Henderson could not do without seriously jeopardizing his status within the Labor Party. The Bolsheviks in Russia and their counterparts in Glasgow, the shop stewards, already felt that Stockholm was a capitalist-socialist affair designed to maintain parliamentary democracy.⁸⁵ There was considerable labor unrest in Britain, including Soldiers' and Workmen's Council meetings and railway strikes,⁸⁶ which made Henderson feel that maintenance of control over militant opponents of war in labor groups was more important than a War Cabinet position.

On August 8, 1917, Henderson asked the War Cabinet members to clearly state the government's position on British representation at Stockholm. They again discussed the changed situation, citing the United States' denial of passports and the declining influence of the Soviets in Russia. They decided that, although the government did not want British representatives to attend Stockholm, they would wait to announce opposition until after the special Labour Party Conference scheduled for August 10.⁸⁷ Lloyd George

⁸⁵Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, pp. 164-6; Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. XXI, Bk. 1, pp. 94-96.

⁸⁶War Cab. 207, August 8, 1917, CAB 23/3, P. R. O.

⁸⁷Ibid.

believed that Henderson was prepared to accept the defeat of Stockholm.⁸⁸

The Russian Chargé in London, Constantin Nabokoff, felt that Russia's position as an effective ally was endangered by the reports that Russia whole-heartedly supported Stockholm. Realizing the British government's opinion against Stockholm, he asked Kerensky's permission to notify the British government that the Provisional Government interpreted Stockholm as merely a party affair which would have no effect on Russia's relations with her Allies.⁸⁹ Kerensky reluctantly allowed Nabokoff to inform the Cabinet of this position, although it would endanger the Provisional Government's strength in Russia if made public. Henderson had not mentioned anything like that to the War Cabinet, and when they read Nabokoff's telegram they became angry at Henderson.

Their anger increased when they read the notes of a pro-Stockholm speech Henderson had delivered at the special Labour party conference on August 10.⁹⁰ Lloyd George had made sure Henderson saw Nabokoff's telegram, but Henderson

⁸⁸ Lloyd George, Memoirs, IV, 156-157

⁸⁹ Constantin Nabokoff, The Ordeal of a Diplomat (London, 1921), p. 43

⁹⁰ Report of the Seventeenth Conference of the Labour Party, pp. 47-51, cited in Werth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution, p. 82.

did not accept it as accurate, and barely mentioned it in his speech.⁹¹ The Conference accepted Stockholm by a vote of 1,846,000 to 550,000, a vote which indicated the strength of the anti-war sentiment in the Labour Party.

The War Cabinet decided to deny British representation at Stockholm. They discussed Henderson's speech (of which there were shorthand notes), and criticized his neglect of mentioning either the government's opposition to Stockholm or the Russian's changed attitude toward it as expressed by Nabokoff. Because of this speech, "the secretary was instructed not to summon Mr. Henderson to future meetings in the War Cabinet, nor to circulate War Cabinet documents to him."⁹² Members feared that Henderson's support of Stockholm had done serious damage to the British war effort and had been a damaging blow to British unity.⁹³

On August 11, 1917, Henderson gave Lloyd George his resignation from the government which Lloyd George accepted. Lloyd George issued a letter to Henderson and gave copies of that letter to the press. He informed Henderson that the Cabinet had no knowledge that Henderson intended to support Stockholm. He expressed surprise that Henderson had not

⁹¹Ibid., Shinwell, The Labour Story, p. 94.

⁹²War Cab. 211, August 10, 1917, CAB 23/3, P. R. O.

⁹³Ibid.

informed labour delegates to Fussia's "drastically changed position" on Stockholm.⁹⁴ Henderson accepted this rebuff in order to maintain his own position within his party. Convinced of the necessity of placating the strong anti-war group within the Labour Party, recognizing the threat of revolutionary Leninist doctrine in Russia, and yet dedicated to the British nation, Henderson left the government.

Arthur Henderson's role in the planned Stockholm Conference was a curious one which revealed that Lloyd George, the War Cabinet, and the conservative press, had either an alarming misunderstanding or an intended ignorance of socialist peace aims, especially in reference to the Russian Revolution. Lloyd George did recognize Henderson's allegiance to the British government and its prosecution of the war. In estranging himself from Henderson, or seeming to, Lloyd George stood as a representative of the growing public opinion that any peace advocate was not only foolish but was probably secretly supporting the German war effort.

Lloyd George, Milner, and Law in their actions during 1917, indicated unwillingness to accept any indication that anti-war sentiment could deter the British government from seeking military victory. The British War Cabinet could

⁹⁴ David Lloyd George to Arthur Henderson, copy of letter, August 11, 1917, War Cab. 212, August 11, 1917, CAB 23/3, P. R. O.

not recognize the intensity of socialist opposition to the war in Russia or in Britain. However, even if Russia were to actually leave the war, a contingency the British government continued to work against, Britain was prepared to look to the United States for men and munitions.

The failure of British socialists to send delegates to Stockholm, coupled with their inability to bring about a change in the government's policy, marked a significant turning point in British internal affairs. After Henderson left the government, the Labour Party was mollified by other Labour representation in the government and subsequently denounced Stockholm. Henderson, correct in his analysis of the strength of anti-war opinion in Russia, probably over-emphasized its importance in Britain. In supporting the still-born Stockholm Conference, he gave respectability to peace sentiment and tempered it with reason and moral respectability. Patriots and pacifists followed Henderson throughout the remaining months of the war to urge peace by negotiations, and for the most part they de-emphasized their anti-war arguments. The British War Cabinet had erred in thinking a continued Western offensive would increase the morale of the Allies. Within their own borders, workers turned away from continuing the war to seeking peace by negotiations. That pacifist sentiment

in Britain was expressed in democratic rather than revolutionary terms was to some degree determined by Henderson's stand on Stockholm.

The hope for an international socialist conference never quite died in Britain, but nothing ever came of it. Rather British peace advocates settled for an unsuccessful Allied socialist peace conference in late August, 1917. The failure of Stockholm marked a significant turning point in war critics' attitudes. After Henderson left the government he persuaded the majority of previously anti-war groups to follow his leadership by urging a practical implementation of a peace by negotiations platform. War critics increasingly turned from internationalism to nationalism after the Stockholm debacle, as they believed that only a strong anti-imperialist Labour Party could guarantee a just peace.

CHAPTER V

THE DECLINE OF OPPOSITION TO THE WAR

Henderson's resignation from the War Cabinet was the first in a series of inter-related domestic and foreign events occurring between August, 1917, and January, 1918, which, taken together, tended to fuse the majority of war critics into a united, nonrevolutionary group whose aim became the establishment of a new world order based on internationalism through supporting the war. The majority of former war critics saw the greater number of persons who had supported the war accept their aims of peace through negotiations, Allied enunciation of war aims, and creation of an international League of Nations. When Henderson left the government, he became the leader of the movement to end the war, a movement characterized by a reliance on international cooperation. The irony of the pro-war Henderson as leader of the peace movement was indicative of the increasingly moderate position the majority of war critics began to take. The months from September, 1917, to January, 1918, were the dying months of war criticism--only revolutionary socialist who were

a miniscule minority carried on the anti-war crusade after that date. The causes of the decline of war criticism included the acceptance of majority war critics' goals by influential government leaders, the denial of revolution as a means to achieve peace, and a growth in the prestige of majority war critics.

Immediately after Henderson resigned his cabinet post, he concentrated his efforts on creating an effective Labour Party. He turned to J. H. Thomas, Sydney Webb, and Ramsay MacDonald to accomplish this feat.¹ That the formerly estranged leaders concentrated around Henderson indicated the shifting of the I. L. P. and U. D. C. from minority anti-war groups to an integral part of the fledgling opposition party. The Labour Party, soon after Henderson's resignation from the Cabinet, formulated a memorandum on peace terms, terms which the I. L. P. could support.²

These peace terms were presented at Henderson's next project, the Inter-Allied Conference of August 28-29. This Allied conference was the Labour Party's answer to Stockholm,³ but it failed to become a strong move toward peace. British delegates dominated the conference; and

¹Beatrice Potter Webb, Diaries, edited by Margaret I. Cole, with an introduction by Lord Beveridge (London, 1952), entry of August 12, 1917, pp. 92-94, p. 94, n. 1; Arno J. Mayer, Political Origins of the New Diplomacy (New Haven, 1959), p. 314.

²Labour Leader, August 16, 1917, p. 1

there were more anti-war socialists present at the meeting than there were pro-war delegates. The increasingly nationalistic I. L. P. reasoned that the failure of the London Conference was due to the pro-war socialist groups' obstructionist tactics,⁴ rather than a failure of the anti-war socialists representing Italy, Belgium, England, and France to agree on effective methods of ending the war.

The German peace proposal of September caused the government serious dismay because the terms were moderate ones that give the critics what seemed a "just" peace on terms which included restoration of Belgium, cession of Alsace-Lorraine, and territorial and colonial concessions to Italy and Great Britain.⁵ The Prime Minister and Sir Edward Carson, First Lord of the Admiralty, doubted that the British nation would continue to fight if these terms became public; Balfour and Barnes disagreed, saying the nation would fight to keep Germany from gaining strength as a result of the peace.⁶ The government expressed concern over public opinion; yet it continued to deny passports, to censor peace news, and to reject peace overtures.⁷

⁴Labour Leader, September 6, 1917, p. 1.

⁵War Cab. 238A, September 24, 1917, CAB 23/16, Public Records Office, London, England (microfilm).

⁶War Cab. 239A, September 27, 1917, CAB 23/16, P.R.O.

⁷War Cab. 240, September 27, 1917, CAB 23/4, P.R.O. War Cab. 220, August 20, 1917, CAB 23/3, P.R.O.; War Cab. 245, October 4, 1917, CAB 23/4, P.R.O.; War Cab. 253, October 19, 1917, CAB 23/4, P.R.O.

Majority war critics did not relinquish their dream of peace, however, and they hoped their government would welcome foreign peace overtures. The government's dismissal of the Pope's peace proposal of August 15, 1917, had caused the I. L. P. discomfort. They castigated President Wilson's reply to the Pope for being phrased in a manner which would be offensive to Germany.⁸ Of course, Snowden, MacDonald, and Jowett were unaware that the British government had refused the Pope's plea for a statement of war aims because it feared its objectives might be pictured as ". . . imperialistic and grasping." After waiting until the Central Powers had been given adequate time to formulate a reply, the War Cabinet had advised Wilson to reply to the Pope praising the ". . . moral and ideal objects for which the Allies. . . [were] fighting."⁹ Perhaps these instructions were an influence on Wilson when he issued his enlightened Fourteen Points Address on January 6, 1918.

During the interval between August, 1917, and January, 1918, peace propaganda and the hope of Stockholm languished but did not die.¹⁰ The majority of war critics continued

⁸Labour Leader, September 6, 1917, p. 1.

⁹War Cab. 220, August 20, 1917, CAB 23/3, P.R.O.

¹⁰War Cab. 220, August 20, 1917, CAB 23/3, P.R.O.; Labour Leader, September 20, 1917, p. 4.

to uphold the socialist doctrines of international peace which Keir Hardie had inspired in them.¹¹ For example, Fenner Brockway praised Hardie's pacifist spirit, citing the inspiration it had given him and others imprisoned as conscientious objectors.¹²

Although conscientious objectors died in prison or were released on medical grounds the War Cabinet vehemently argued over the propriety of lessening the terms of confinement to less than twelve months at hard labor.¹³ The number of conscientious objectors in prison after nine months of conscription was, according to the Army's own figures, fourteen hundred and nine. The breakdown on these figures reflects the different kinds of imprisonment. There were five hundred and sixty-nine men in prison who had refused to plead at Tribunal; two hundred and eighty-nine had been rejected by the Central Tribunal as not being true C. O.'s; three hundred and six had refused to accept work of national importance in lieu of imprisonment; and two hundred and fifty-two had been released from prison and employed in work of national importance, but had been

¹¹Letters from Sheehy Skeffington and Fred Jowett on the second anniversary of Hardie's death, Labour Leader, September 27, 1917, p. 6.

¹²Letter from Fenner Brockway, Labour Leader, September 27, 1917, p. 7. Brockway had been in Wormwood Scrubbs Prison as a conscientious objector for the past ten months.

¹³War Cab. 257, October 25, 1917, CAB 23/4, P.R.O.

returned to prison for misconduct.¹⁴ Clifford Allen, one of the organizers of the N. C. F., was released from New Haven Fort with tuberculosis. J. Allen Skinner, member of N. C. F. executive, served two sentences at Wormwood Scrubbs in 1917 and another in the same year at Wandsworth. He was released with surgical tuberculosis. The deaths of imprisoned C. O.'s reached seventy-one by the end of the war.¹⁵ Meanwhile the war critics who remained free to publish and speak against the war carried on a fund-raising campaign to prepare the way for socialism.¹⁶ They feebly raised their voices for international peace based on socialism.

The majority of war critics did not thunder as loudly for peace after the Russian revolution, however. News slowly and unreliably slipped into Great Britain about the Bolshevik revolution in November. The most important effect of the revolution on war critics was to swing the majority into a position of tacitly accepting war to bring

¹⁴War Cab. 257, October 25, 1917, CAB 23/4, P.R.O., reported by General Childs.

¹⁵Hugh Brock, *Contry of Total War; A Complete Description of Some of the People and Movements Involved in Non-Violent Civil Disobedience in Britain from the Revolt Against the Military Service Act of World War I to the Founding of the Committee of 100*, with an introduction by Emrys Hughes (London, 1962), pp. 8-9. Illnesses in prison were not uncommon. Brock's objection was that conscientious objectors were imprisoned at all.

¹⁶Labour Leader, October 25, 1917, p. 5.

international peace and to infuse minority war critics with a spirit of revolt. This split caused an end to most war criticism, since most war critics (ex-Liberals, I. L. P. pacifists, Labour Party critics, ex-suffragettes) did not support revolutionary socialism.

The Russian revolution further accented the movement of left wing socialist shop stewards into a political line aimed at international peace.¹⁷ "The 'left wing' found itself, for the first time equipped not only with a theory, but also with an example, and this affected its whole attitude, the character of its propaganda, and its relation to the official Trade Union movement."¹⁸ Many of these shop stewards would later become leaders in the Communist Party.¹⁹ The shop stewards and unofficial Workers' Committees sought to influence the "apathetic masses" toward a more revolutionary outlook. After the Bolshevik

¹⁷G. D. H. Cole, A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, rev. ed. (London, 1948), p. 361.

¹⁸G. D. H. Cole, Workshop Organization, No. 10 of Economic and Social History of the World War, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, edited by James T. Shotwell, British ser. (Oxford, 1923), pp. 98-99.

¹⁹Thomas Bell, Pioneering Days (London, 1941), p. 266. Their philosophy was founded on DeLeonite trade unionism, the basis of the Socialist Labour Party. Cole, Workshop Organization, p. 31. In 1923, Gallacher, Bell, and twelve other Communists were sentenced to one year and six months at Wandsworth Prison.

revolution they favored an end to the war because of the growing demands on industry caused by the war.²⁰

Because the news of the Bolshevik revolution trickled into Britain slowly, clear-cut lines of opposition to Bolshevism in the peace movement did not crystallize until mid-December. Even the War Cabinet received scanty news of the Russian debacle.²¹ As Liberal newspapers reported the events in Russian, they laid the blame more on Britain than on Germany. The Morning News and the Manchester Guardian cited the British government's refusal to state war aims, its press abuse of Kerensky, and its refusal to issue passports to delegates wishing to attend Stockholm as causes of the Bolshevik revolution.²² The Labour Leader reported little news of Russian. As late as November 29, 1917, the Labour Leader reported that the Bolsheviks were in power. The official paper of the I. L. P. concentrated on internal events--a fact which illustrated the increasingly nationalistic, albeit critical, spirit of the "peace" party.²³

²⁰Cole, Workshop Organization, pp. 100-103; John Thomas Murphy, New Horizons (London, 1941), pp. 68-69.

²¹War Cab. 274, November 16, 1917, CAB 23/4, P.R.O. On November 16, Russian "troubles" were reported by the First Sea Lord.

²²Stephen Richards Graubard, British Labor and the Russian Revolution, 1917-1924 (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), p. 45, citing Nov. 9, 1917 issues; Richard Henry Ullman, Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921 (Princeton, 1966), I, 19.

²³Labour Leader, November 8, November 15, November 29, 1917.

Hoever, the publication of the secret treaties in the Manchester Guardian renewed the anger of the I. L. P. and the U. D. C. against the government. Arthur Ponsonby, representing the moderate war critics in the U. D. C., accused the government of prostituting the original disinterested motives for which Britain had entered the war. Ponsonby blasted the government for instead seeking ". . . vengeance and punishment, a sordid desire for gain, and an arrogant demand for Imperial aggrandizement and domination, without the consent of the people. . . ." ²⁴

The publication of these embarrassing secret treaties increased the desire for the government to state its war aims.

The majority of war critics consolidated their activities during December in a well-organized plan to present a Labour Party war aims memorandum that would lay down specific proposals to be used as a basis for peace through negotiations. Almost all energies which had formerly been spent in opposing conscription and other aspects of the war were now centered on a practical scheme to bring international cooperation into fruition.

On December 28, 1917, the Labour Party Executive presented its memorandum on War Issues to a joint T. U. C.-Parliamentary Labour Party meeting. This pronouncement marked an important change in the position of the official

²⁴Speech of Arthur Ponsonby, December 9, 1917, 5 Parliamentary Debates, (Commons), C, 1917, col. 2008.

Labour Party leadership which had hitherto completely supported the war. The I. L. P. supported this document, which advocated

- 1) complete democratization of all countries.
- 2) abandonment of every form of imperialism
- 3) suppression of secret diplomacy
- 4) limitation of military service and armaments,
and
- 5) establishment of a League of Nations.²⁵

Formulation of war aims gave the peace movement a definite basis within the Labour Party,²⁶ so that the Labour Party increasingly became the peace-by-negotiations party. The anti-war minorities within the party tended to uphold this program even though it was not anti-war as much as pro-peace. The T. U. C.-P. L. P. Conference endorsed the proposed basis for a peace settlement and sent a delegation to Lloyd George to convince him of the necessity of issuing a comprehensive, defensible statement of the nation's war aims.²⁷

The moderate war critics within the Labour Party soon realized that their program for peace was not wholly unacceptable to other, more influential, persons in government. I. L. P. pacifists gained closer communication with other disgruntled political leaders as the war aims issue grew.

²⁵Labour's Peace Terms, a draft, archives of Labour Party, Transport House, London, cited in Arno J. Mayer, Political Origins, pp. 316-317; Cf. Labour Leader, January 3, 1918, p. 1

²⁶Cole, A Short History, p. 356.

²⁷David Lloyd George, War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (Boston, 1935), V, 37; Graubard, British Labour, p. 47.

The Snowdens became friends with the Liberal ex-minister Lord Morley in 1917. The semi-official publication of Henry Lory Landsdowne's (a conservative) letter urging a nonannexationist peace and an end to the war through negotiations was praised by former war critics. This letter indicated that the former war supporters were wavering in their commitment to dealing Germany a destructive blow, probably a result more to pragmatic pressures than of an idealistic commitment to internationalism. More importantly, the delighted and flattered reaction of the moderate war critics to Landsdowne's November 29 letter indicated that their commitment to nonimperialist war aims had superseded their anti-war platform.²⁸ Although public opinion overwhelmingly rejected as unpatriotic Landsdowne's plea for negotiations, the former war critics in the Labour Party welcomed this step.²⁹

Thus in early January Lloyd George was surrounded by an increasingly respectable group seeking revised war aims. The reaction against the knock-out blow was seen not only by the I. L. P. and the U. D. C. minorities, but also among patriotic members of the Labour, Conservative, and Liberal

²⁸ Snowden, Autobiography, I, 445; Mayer, Political Origins, pp. 282-283.

²⁹ Labour Leader, December 6, 1917, p. 1; Godfrey Lord Elton, The Life of James Ramsay MacDonald, 1866-1919 (London, 1939), p. 329; cf. Lord P. C. Newton, Lord Landsdowne: A Biography (London, 1929), p. 470.

parties.³⁰ The war was not going smoothly, the government feared the diplomatic and military effects of the preliminary negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, and more men were needed to fight.³¹ Therefore, Lloyd George felt it necessary to strengthen the ideological elements of power to alleviate the transitory military and economic strain.³²

As a dramatic gesture designed to wrest cooperation from workers and heighten the nation's prestige in world opinion, Lloyd George delivered his ambiguous war aims statement at the T. U. C. Congress on January 3, 1918.³³ Although the Prime Minister avoided any reference to adopting a nonannexationist position, he emphasized the broad idealistic war aims for which the nation was fighting. He upheld the ideas of international cooperation in programs similar to the U. D. C. aims. The Labour Leader applauded the speech as a move toward peace, an analysis reflecting the party's own swing away from an extreme anti-war position³⁴ toward a policy which stressed nonannexationist goals for the war.

The final blow to war resistance came with President Wilson's Fourteen Points address of January 6, 1918. Wilson's

³⁰Parliamentary Debates (Commons), C, December 19, 1917 cols. 1993-2097

³¹George F. Kennan, The Decision to Intervene (Princeton, 1958), pp. 3-4; Lloyd George, Memoirs, V, 38.

³²Mayer, Political Origins, p. 312.

³³Ibid.; Lloyd George, Memoirs, V, 38, 67-73; Elton, Ramsay MacDonald, p. 332.

idealistic program was not just a design for international peace, but an instrument of political warfare designed to strengthen nationalism in the Allied nations by giving them hope of a just peace.³⁵ Former war critics in the I. L. P., the U. D. C., ex-suffragettes, and some Christian pacifists accepted Wilson's Fourteen Points as an indication of a change in Allied policy.³⁶ The Annual Labour Conference in January, 1918, welcomed and supported the declarations made by Lloyd George and Wilson. The motion for support was made by Henderson and seconded by MacDonald³⁷—a sign of the decline of anti-war feeling in the I. L. P. leadership. Since the Fourteen Points bore a striking resemblance to the terms proposed by the U. D. C., its membership discontinued its criticism of the war.³⁸ Almost all moderate war critics accepted Wilson's Fourteen Points as a document symbolic of the end of imperialism.³⁹

After Wilson's disavowal of imperialism and his support of international cooperation, the majority of war critics

³⁵Hajo Holborn, The Political Collapse of Europe (New York, 1951), p. 101.

³⁶Graubard, British Labour, p. 49.

³⁷Elton, Ramsay MacDonald, p. 332; Labour Leader, January 10, 1918, p. 1; Robert D. Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution (Durham, N. C., 1954), pp. 210-214.

³⁸Frederick William Pethick-Lawrence, Fate Has Been Kind (London, 1942), pp. 115-116.

³⁹Labour Leader, January 10, 1918, p. 5; Graubard, British Labour, p. 49.

reluctantly accepted continuation of the war as a means of achieving international peace and cooperation they had sought. They worked increasingly as respectable members of the Labour Party in order to strengthen their role in the expected peace conference. Only dedicated members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the British Socialist Party maintained absolute disavowal of the war.⁴⁰

There were isolated instances of war opposition late in the war. Pethick-Lawrence applied for conscientious objector status when conscripted in mid-1918; but he was not imprisoned.⁴¹ John McLean, the Clydeside revolutionary, was sentenced to five years in mid-1918 for preaching seditious statements.⁴²

In spite of these few examples of continued resistance to the war, the Labour Party grew in strength and prestige. The Labour Party took credit for formulating the desires for a restatement of war aims, and for upholding morality and idealism in politics. The Labour Party became a stronger party, but the minority within it who had continually

⁴⁰Vera Mary Brittain, The Rebel Passion; A Short History of Some Pioneer Peace-Makers (London, 1964), pp. 16-17; William Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde; An Autobiography (London, 1949), pp. 179-184.

⁴¹F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, Fate Has Been Kind, p. 118.

⁴²Bell, Pioneering Days, p. 152. He was released on the suggestion of George Barnes on November 16, 1918 according to George Nicoll Barnes, From Workshop to War Cabinet (London, 1923), pp. 201-202.

decried the war began to reluctantly support it after January, 1918. They did so because they believed an Allied victory would bring a new world order based on internationalism. So they, with the rest of the nation, anguished over the German March offensive, hoping victory would enable their party to influence peace negotiations toward internationalism. They met the Armistice of November 11, 1918, with sobriety and hope, thinking that their support of the war would produce the implementation of their goals of peace. By January, 1918, Wilson had convinced the majority of former war critics that the war was being fought to make the world safe for democracy.

CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS OF THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF BRITISH WAR CRITICS

Britain's entry into World War I caused a disunited minority of socialists, intellectuals, and idealists to denounce militarism and to uphold international cooperation. As the war continued membership in peace groups grew. This growth resulted particularly from the specific results of fighting a war--conscription, censorship, and battle casualties. As peace groups intensified their criticism of the war and as their specific goals and methods crystallized, internal divisions appeared although the dominant theme of the peace movement remained internationalism.

The majority of war critics were found in the Independent Labour Party, the Union of Democratic Control, the discontented intellectual community, the Christian pacifist organizations, and a fragment of the suffragette movement. Until August, 1917, these groups consistently criticized and denounced British participation in the war. In 1914-1915, they reacted against the war by denouncing as the steps which had resulted in the war secret diplomacy, the

concept of the balance of power, alliance with the Russian Czar, and militarism. During 1916 they fought against conscription and imperialistic war aims. In that year they continued to support internationalism--based predominately on socialist cooperation. With the formation of Lloyd George's Coalition government in December, 1916, they criticized the knock-out blow philosophy. As the preparations for an international socialist conference at Stockholm began, they increased their support of international cooperation, disarmament, and peace through negotiations. As they witnessed each of their efforts fail, they tended to de-emphasize their anti-war position while maintaining their commitment to world cooperation. The peak of moderate war critics' (who were always a majority in the peace movement) influence came in the summer of 1917. As the plans for Stockholm failed and as Henderson strengthened his position in the Labour Party, the majority of former war critics began to work within the Labour Party. After the Bolshevik Revolution most former war critics disassociated themselves from the anti-war arguments, and instead stressed moderation and reason. In supporting a national labor party they became less anti-war in character, partly because they interpreted Lloyd George's vacillation from the hard line war policy as a victory for their aims. The end of moderate war criticism came with Wilson's Fourteen Points. Most former war

critics became convinced that a victory over Germany would result in a victory for international peace.

A minority of war critics based their denunciation of the holocaust on revolutionary socialist dogma. They were members of the British Socialist Party, the Socialist Labour Party, and the shop stewards movement. They distrusted majority war critics, spending as much of their energies on criticizing moderate war critics as they did in decrying the war. They led strikes based on revolutionary socialism in every year of the war. They fought against conscription, dilution, and price increases, all of which they blamed on the war. Unlike moderate majority war critics their influence never became respectable in government circles. The government treated revolutionary socialist strike leaders harshly--deporting and imprisoning most of them. Revolutionary socialists continued and, in fact, increased their war criticism during the final year of the war, because they did not trust the government regardless of the liberal war aims it might support. Membership in minority anti-war groups was small, but their influence was important as they concentrated their activities in leading strikes, anti-war demonstrations, and anti-government rallies in industrial areas. The revolutionary socialists who languished in jail included David Kirkwood, James Maxton, William Callacher, Sylvia Pankhurst, Johnny Muir, Arthur McManus, John MacLean, Jack MacDougall,

Jack Smith, and Thomas Bell. Many others were deported from their homes to other British industrial cities. In spite of government pressure, the minority war critics continued to denounce the war.

The first year of the war was characterized by considerable unity in the peace movement, but this was due to each group's poorly defined methods for ending the war. In late 1916, war critics coalesced to denounce conscription. But as moderate war critics saw their objectives being voiced by the Allied governments, they lessened their war criticism. The Bolshevik revolution had irrevocably split British socialists into two factions; Wilson's Fourteen Points quelled moderate socialists' war criticism.

The influence of British critics of World War I on British military policy during the war was insignificant. Peace agitation began as a logical development of opposition to militarism, secret diplomacy, and imperialism. By the last eighteen months of the war, the goals of groups which sought an end to the war included creation of an international peace organization based on a socialist platform, negotiations with Germany on the basis of "no annexation--no indemnities," and disarmament enforced by a world court. Because all war critics sought an end to the war, the government and the press too quickly classified all organizations which criticized the war as

one group which they called pacifists, although a minority were in fact revolutionists.

Most war criticism was originally based on opposition to militarism and imperialism. There were several groups of war critics within the non-revolutionary majority framework. These groups were diverse in their origins, but by the last year of the war most could be classified as in some way related to the Labour Party.

Christian pacifists in their various organizations, the Society of Friends, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and No Conscription Fellowship, supported international cooperation and understanding. Much of Christian pacifism had a non-revolutionary socialist background and emphasis. Clifford Allen, member of the I. L. P. executive, was a leader in the N. C. F. George Lansbury, editor of the Herald, a socialist newspaper, based his socialism on Christian principles.

War critics within the Liberal Party coalesced in the Union of Democratic Control, a society which urged international cooperation created through peace by negotiations. The aim of their plan for negotiations included disarmament, a demand for no annexation and no indemnities, and establishment of a world court to settle international disputes. Many influential members of the U. D. C. joined the Labour Party during or after the war because they felt

their ideas were more nearly a part of Labour Party philosophy than that of the Liberal Party. Pethick-Lawrence, E. D. Morel, Arthur Ponsonby, and Colonel Wedgewood, all of them important members of the U. D. C. peace group, would by 1920 join the Labour Party.

In the I. L. P. most war critics based their search for international peace on moderate socialism. Within the I. L. P. were many leaders whom trade union officials and revolutionary socialists called intellectuals. They espoused all non-violent, legal means of achieving disarmament, a world court for arbitration of disputes, no-annexation, no indemnities, and nationalization of major industries. They also worked for better working class conditions. Although government officials realized the ineptness of I. L. P. leadership, they worried about the group's pacifist propaganda, but usually let them express their ideas and goals, even though in fighting against conscription, for Stockholm, and for peace, the I. L. P. was outspoken in its criticism of the government.

Analysis of the above groups indicates a close connection among all moderate peace groups. There existed interaction in the leadership of all these groups, and most peace groups worked within the Labour Party. War critics formed less than half of Labour Party membership, but they increased in numbers as the war continued.

Their strength grew despite the attempts of the leadership of both the T. U. C. and the Parliamentary Labour Party to create a moderating, nationalistic influence on war critics within the Labour Party.

The main reason that anti-war groups stayed within the party was that they believed in the effectiveness of parliamentary democracy. It would be possible, they believed, to better the economic conditions of workers and to influence foreign policy within the framework of parliamentary democracy. Those who were socialists believed the parliamentary framework could encompass a socialist political party. But perhaps the most important reason they maintained faith in the parliamentary system was because the only other groups seeking international peace believed in a world wide workers' revolution against capitalism to achieve their goal. Most war critics declined to accept this view because they could not uphold violence as a legitimate method of achieving peace.

One effect of the Russian Revolution in Britain was to make the government aware of the threat of workers' unrest and to force it to yield to the economic demands of the T. U. C. and Labour Party leadership. By granting minor degrees of economic opportunity the government strengthened the position of moderate socialist leadership in the Labour Party. These leaders tended to compromise

their anti-militarist and internationalist demands for more concrete gains--economic opportunity for workers and political prestige for themselves. Increasingly, after the Allied statement of war aims, any support of proletarian revolution and international socialism as a way to end the war met considerable criticism. Both supporters of the war and former war critics considered revolutionary socialists as members of the lunatic fringe.

Revolutionary socialists, with close Bolshevik ties, reciprocated this feeling of disgust.¹ Theirs were the only groups who vociferously and without restraint continued to oppose any prosecution of the war effort. They continued to strike and to denounce any cooperation with the government. Their membership hated moderate leaders like Henderson, Barnes, and Snowden. But revolutionary socialism was not an easy doctrine for workers to support.

Revolutionary socialists supported international cooperation and peace through supporting a proletarian revolution against the capitalists. They named capitalism as the cause of militarism, and militarism as the cause of war. Therefore, they argued, the only way to achieve world peace was to destroy capitalism. Illegal strikes and demonstrations formed their techniques to achieve an end to the war.

¹John Seanlon, Pillars of Cloud (London, 1936), pp. 314-315.

Revolutionary socialists remained a minority not only because the majority of workers found their program distasteful, but because moderate war critics had an apparently more effective method of achieving peace. By 1918, most workers desired an end to the war, but they did not think they had to become revolutionaries to achieve peace. It was far easier and seemingly more effective for dissatisfied workers to end the war by strengthening the anti-war sentiment within the Labour Party. War critics had a more pleasing alternative for achieving peace than war against capitalism. Another explanation for the reason revolutionary socialists remained a minority was the government's pressure against them and its toleration of most moderate passive pacifists. The most important effect of revolutionary socialists was to make moderate socialist demands more acceptable to the government.

Disgruntled workers, former Liberals, ex-suffragettes, idealistic intellectuals--all could work within the Labour Party to try to make peace a reality. After January, 1918, they believed that when Germany could be forced to negotiate, the basis for negotiations would be the Fourteen Points. They also hoped to be able to participate fully in the eventual peace negotiations, a hope which would prove unrealistic and futile. They became convinced that they

could influence future policy if they cooperated with the government during the war. The war critics who supported Henderson, MacDonald, Snowden, and others gained the promise of political prestige, but lost their internationalist basis for peace.

In 1918, the emphasis shifted as the idealistic aims of international peace seemingly became more possible with Wilson's declaration. The extremism of the Bolshevik revolution made most British war critics fear the tactics of revolution: the idealism of Wilson's war aims gave them false hope for a peaceful, international future. With Henderson's leadership most war critics expressed hope in the Labour Party. They also weakened their commitment to the anti-war resolutions they had joyously supported in the Leeds Conference and in relation to Stockholm. Political compromise, the hope of peace, and moderate leadership tended to strengthen the Labour Party. These same factors weakened the support given by war critics to socialist doctrines of international cooperation, a proletarian revolution, and an end to militarism, nationalism, and imperialism.

The majority of war critics within the Labour Party became content with a hollow dream that peace would be based on the Fourteen Points, and they hoped the Labour Party could help formulate foreign policy if the party

became stronger. The party's strength had increased partly because the government had yielded to the economic demands of the Trade Union Congress and Labour Party leadership. By granting minor degrees of economic improvement, the government strengthened the position of moderate socialist leadership in the Labour Party. These leaders willingly compromised their anti-militarist and internationalist demands for more concrete gains--economic betterment for workers and political power for themselves. Both Henderson and Barnes as members of the War Cabinet had been cooperative in informing the Cabinet of workers' attitudes. Neither had played a role in formulating government war policy. But disgruntled workers flocked to the economic and political successes of Labour. Bread and butter demands, political prestige, and the idealistic hope of peace kept the majority of war critics in the Labour Party. By granting these demands while upholding the idealism of its stated war aims, the War Cabinet was able to placate moderate war critics and continue to fight the war.

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