THE FORMATION OF BRITISH LABOUR'S FOREIGN POLICY

1914 - 1920

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being a thesis presented to the University of St. Andrews in application for the degree M.Litt.

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Degree of M.Litt.

I hereby certify that Mr.Chester Duane Armistead has complied with the relevant Resolution of the University Court (1967, No.9) and with the Regulations annexed to the said Resolution.

R.F. Mackay
Supervisor

1 May 1970.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the following Thesis is based on research carried out by me, that the Thesis is my own composition, and that it has not previously been presented for a Higher Degree.

The research was carried out in the University of St. Andrews and elsewhere after my admission as a research student and M.Litt. candidat in October 1968.

C.D. Armistead

CERTIFICATE

I certify that the aforesaid candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Ordinance and Regulations prescribed for the degree of M.Litt.

Supervisor

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ABBREVIATIONS

B.S.P.	British Socialist Party
G.F.T.U.	General Federation of Trade Unions
I.L.P.	Independent Labour Party
I.S.B.	International Socialist Bureau
L.R.C.	Labour Representation Committee
N.E.C.	National Executive Committee of the Labour Party
N.S.P.	National Socialist Party
P.L.P.	Parliamentary Labour Party
S.D.F.	Social Democratic Federation
T.U.C.	Trades Union Congress
U.D.C.	Union of Democratic Control
W.E.W.N.C.	War Emergency Workers' National Committee

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I have tried to describe the formation of British Labour's foreign policy between 1914 and 1920. The four chapters in it have been an attempt to depict what I believe are the more important events in that formation. Because of the word-limit imposed on the M.Litt. thesis, I have offered very little analysis of these events in the chapters themselves. In the conclusion, however, I have assembled several of the more important of them and offered a brief interpretation of the effect they had on Labour's foreign policy. I have also emphasised in the conclusion two factors which, while not having a direct bearing on the actual formation of that policy, contributed greatly to it: unity within the Labour Party during the war, and the development of Labour's independence after the first Russian Revolution.

In the bibliography of English History, 1914-1945, A.J.P. Taylor has stated that "most Labour memoirs are distinguished . . . by their pedestrian quality and are best avoided" (p. 614). After having consulted a number of Labour biographies and autobiographies, most of which were written in the 1920s and 1930s, I am very much in agreement with Mr. Taylor's assessment of them. Not only are they pedestrian,

but for a study of Labour foreign policy they are desultory as well. This is not to say that they are completely devoid of important information about the war period. Indeed, I have drawn quite heavily from those concerning the major figures in the Labour movement during this time - Henderson, Snowden, Clynes, MacDonald. The memoirs dealing with more minor figures in the movement during the war, however have been almost entirely avoided. These include thememoirs of G.N. Barnes, Ernest Bevin, J.H. Thomas, James Sexton and James Maxton.

Because of the time element involved in writing the thesis, I have had to rely more heavily on secondary source material than I would have liked. I have not had time to consult Hansard for parliamentary debates, nor have I been able to go through The Times. Undoubtedly, both would have yielded a great deal of material which would have been extremely valuable to me. By way of clarification, it was impossible for me to begin in earnest on my research before the first of October, 1969.

Most of the material used in the thesis was found in printed sources at the British Museum, but I have also included a few items from the Lloyd George Papers at the Beaverbrook Library in London, where I was fortunate enough to be allowed to work for a week in November.

A word needs to be said about the source material for the Independent Labour Party. I decided to refrain from using Robert

Dowse's book Left in the Centre, which is a concise history of the I.L.P. between 1893 and 1940. His statements of fact are unreliable and I cannot agree with at least some of his opinions. I also find that Fenner Brockway in Socialism over Sixty Years is particularly prejudiced in favour of the I.L.P., and in some instances he has even distorted or failed to mention certain facts which would have given a different interpretation to that organisation's history. Since that book and his other one on the I.L.P., Inside the Left, are major works on that organisation, however, I have had to draw quite heavily from them.

I would like to thank Mr. Ruddock F. Mackay, of the Department of Modern History, University of St. Andrews, for reading my thesis and pointing out numerous difficulties in the rough draft. Also, I would like to thank the Beaverbrook Library in London for permitting me access to the Lloyd George Papers contained there.

CHAPTER I

PRE-WAR POLICY, THE DAYS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE WAR, AND INITIAL REACTION AT ITS OUTBREAK

On the 27th February, 1900, at the Memorial Hall in Farringdon Street, London, a British Labour Party was founded under the auspices of the Trades Union Congress and three British socialist societies - the Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.), the Fabian Society, and the Social Democratic Federation (S.D.F.).[1] The Labour Representation Committee (L.R.C.) was the name initially adopted by the party, but this was changed in 1906 to the Labour Party. From the beginning the new party was concerned primarily with the representation and protection of the economic interests of the working class. That it should show little interest in foreign affairs at its inception was quite understandable. Its chief interest was in the area of social reform, and, consequently, all other matters of party policy were relegated to subordinate positions.

At first the party's foreign policy developed very slowly, being for the most part a continuation of "Gladstonian Liberalism". During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the working class had

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1. The S.D.F. withdrew in 1901 after it had failed to persuade the other members of the organisation to adopt socialism as their ultimate goal.

generally accepted the policy espoused by many of the more radical Liberals, namely, pacifism, humanitarianism, anti-militarism, and anti-imperialism. It was only natural that they should do so since the radicals tended to be strong advocates of social reform. The foreign policy of the Conservatives coupled with high expenditure on armaments was hardly the kind of policy which could be expected to appeal to a class predominantly interested in social reform.

When the L.R.C. was founded in 1900, the Liberal Party had just split over its attitude toward the Boer War. Kruger's ultimatum on 11th October, 1899, demanding the withdrawal of British troops from along the frontiers of the Boer Republics, had initiated the conflict. The Conservatives immediately threw their support behind the war, but the Liberals split into "Liberal Imperialists" and "pro-Boers", the latter group drawing a number of Liberal Unionists into its ranks. For the most part Labour, too, sided with the Boers and denounced the imperialistic war being waged in South Africa. The I.L.P. led the attack of the L.R.C. on the Government's policy, passing at its own annual conference in 1900 resolutions against imperialism, militarism and conscription, and declaring itself at its 1901 and 1902 conferences to be definitely pro-Boer. It regarded the war as an example of the then accepted theory of Socialism that all wars were caused by capitalists seeking to obtain profits. Therefore, the I.L.P. criticised the Government's action and actively opposed its policy of war in South

Africa.[1]

But Labour was not unanimously on the side of the Boers. The majority of an important section of the L.R.C., the Fabian Society, hoped for a British victory. According to the society's historian, Edward Pease, "The majority of the Society recognized that the British Empire had to win the war, and that no other conclusion to it was possible."[2] While such prominent Fabians as Ramsay MacDonald, J.F. Green and G.N. Barnes were avid Boer supporters, still the bulk of the society followed the lead of the "old guard" Fabians, Sidney Webb, Bernard Shaw and Paul Bland, in supporting the Government's war effort. True, the society criticized the mistakes of policy which had preceded the war, accusing with equal enmity the British capitalists and Kruger for bringing on the conflict. Now that the war had begun, however, it had to be fought to a successful conclusion. Nevertheless, the Fabians did recommend that at the end of the war, far-reaching administrative reforms should be made: the South African mines should be take over by the British Government, but South Africa should be granted wide powers of self-government.[3]

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1. M. Beer, A History of British Socialism, Vol. I (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1920), pp. 327-29; A.M. McBriar, Fabian Socialism and English Politics, 1884-1918 (Cambridge: At The University Press, 1962), pp. 305-6; Edward R. Pease, The History of the Fabian Society 3rd Edn. (London: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1963), p. 129.
2. Ibid., p. 128.
3. McBriar, Fabian Socialism and English Politics, 1884-1918, p. 128.

At the end of the war, Labour was still not interested enough in foreign affairs to work out a policy of its own. In fact the party's manifesto for the general election in 1906 devoted only half of a sentence to foreign affairs. "It was this: 'Wars are fought to make the rich richer; . . . '"[1] When the leader of the "pro-Boer" Liberals, Campbell-Bannerman, became Prime Minister in 1905, Labour felt that it could support without any qualms the Liberals' foreign policy. Despite the fact that Grey and Haldane, two former supporters of the war, were in the Cabinet as Foreign Secretary and Secretary of War respectively, Labour was confident that the Liberals would stress social and fiscal reform, and that, for its own part, it need not worry about an antagonistic foreign policy as long as Campbell-Bannerman was Prime Minister. While Labour M.P.s were certainly outspoken on foreign affairs in the 1906 parliament, for the most part their speeche echoed the policy of their former pro-Boer allies.

Campbell-Bannerman had been able to reunite the Liberals over the issue of protection in 1905, but he had not been able to reconcile the differences of opinion in the party over fundamental principles of foreign policy. He continued for a time to head the "radical" Liberal section of the party, but when Asquith succeeded him in 1908, this group was left without a leader. They continued to advocate their

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1. A.J.P. Taylor, The Trouble Makers: Dissent over Foreign Policy, 1792-1939, Panther Edn. (London: Panther Books, 1969), p. 95.

own foreign policy, which in time came largely to centre around the amelioration of Germany's economic grievances. Furthermore, they became increasingly hostile toward Czarist Russia, particularly after Britain extended her Entente with France to include that country, too. Because of their traditional antipathy towards the balance of power concept, the radicals were determined to weaken this new alliance. Thus, non-involvement in European affairs came to be one of the chief tenets of their programme.

The Labour Party supported much of the radical Liberals' foreign policy. In The Trouble Makers A.J.P. Taylor has said that generally speaking he agrees with the opinion expressed by Clement Attlee many years later in The Labour Party in Perspective: "'The party . . . had no real constructive foreign policy, but shared the views which were traditional in radical circles.'" It was anti-imperialist and like the radicals had opposed the Boer War. It was anti-militarist and was pleased when Asquith was able to cut the military and naval estimates in 1906 and 1907. Antagonism toward Russian despotism was a tenet of working-class faith, and Labour could support the radicals here.

Labour's primary point of disagrement with the radicals' foreign policy, however, was over the question of involvement in European affair Like the radicals, Labour was against the balance of power concept, and was therefore willing to see the Entente undermined. But it was still interested in European affairs, particularly as they were related to the

Second International.[1] In place of the radicals' non-involvement policy, Labour substituted internationalism, based on the socialist doctrines articulated by the International. In 1904 the L.R.C. had applied for membership of this organization. The three leading socialist bodies in Britain - the I.L.P., the S.D.F. and the Fabian Society - were already members of it. While the L.R.C. was not specifically dedicated to the cause of socialism, still it was allowed to join the International on the grounds that it was carrying out the class struggle despite the fact that it had not declared itself to be in favour of socialism.[2]

From the beginning the International had concerned itself with the question of the prevention of war. At its conferences in 1891, 1893, 1896 and 1900, it had begun to outline a programme designed for just such a purpose. Finally, it had taken the question under serious consideration at its conferences at Stuttgart in 1907 and Copenhagen in 1910. At the Copenhagen Conference, Keir Hardie, the leader of the British section of the International, had moved a resolution which called for a general strike by the workers of all countries if the threat of war should appear. The resolution had been defeated, but a

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1. The Second International was founded in 1889 as the successor to th First International - formerly the old Communist League - which had been constructed in 1864 but was dissolved in the early 1870s.

2. Taylor, The Trouble Makers, p. 97; R.W. Postgate, The Internation during the War (London: The Herald, 1918), pp. 1-3; G.D.H. Cole, A History of the Labour Party from 1914, 3rd. reprint (London: Routledg and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1969), p. 6.

similar, though more ambiguous one drafted by the French socialist, Jaurès, had passed. This resolution had stated that it was the duty of the working class should war threaten in Europe to attempt to prevent it by any means that seemed appropriate. If war should start, however, then they should bring it promptly to an end (the resolution did not state how) and then exploit the political and economic chaos resulting from it in their respective countries to hasten the downfall of capitalism.[1]

This was the resolution that was in force at the time of the beginning of the Great War, the resolution upon which British Labour had in part based its foreign policy. A conference had been held in Basle in 1912 in an attempt to redefine more explicitly just what course the International should take in the event of war; but it had merely referred the question to committees of the individual groups represented there. They were to have studied the question and submitted their recommendations to the conference scheduled to meet in Vienna in the latter part of August 1914. Before the Vienna Conference was convened, however, the war began.

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The assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand in June 1914, and Austria's subsequent ultimatum to Serbia on the 23rd of July and her

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1. Postgate, The International during the War, pp. 4-6.

declaration of war on the 25th set in motion a chain of events which culminated in the start of the Great War. On July 28th the British Socialist Party (actually the S.D.F., which had been reconstructed in 1912) became the first political body in Britain to pass a resolution protesting against the Austrian Note and that country's later declaration of war. The resolution went on to congratulate the Continental socialists on their efforts to maintain peace. The following day the International Socialist Bureau (I.S.B.) in Brussels issued a declaration on behalf of the Second International which attempted to rally the socialists and working classes in the countries concerned. It called on them to carry out the Copenhagen Resolution by strengthening their demonstrations against war and pressing their governments to call upon Austria and Serbia to settle their dispute through arbitration.[1]

On July 30th Labour's M.P.s met and passed unanimously a resolutio expressing gratitude to Sir Edward Grey for taking steps aimed at gettin Austria and Serbia to settle their dispute peacefully. At the same time they expressed the party's desire to remain neutral in the event of a general European conflict. Two days later Keir Hardie and Arthur Henderson, the President and Secretary of the British section of the International respectively, issued a manifesto to the British people calling upon them to "'Hold vast demonstrations against war in every industrial centre.'" This injunction was duly carried out the next day

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1. G.D.H. Cole, Labour in War-Time (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1915), pp. 22-24; Beer, A History of British Socialism, I, p. 385.

August 2nd, the most impressive demonstration being held at Trafalgar Square. At the demonstration a resolution was passed protesting "'against any step being taken by the Government of this country to support Russia'" and calling upon the Government to remain neutral in the event of a European war. While Britain herself should not participate, she should strive to restore peace on the Continent as quickly as possible. Undoubtedly, to many of the spectators the demonstration must have seemed quite a momentous occasion. To Beatrice Webb, however it was nothing more than an "undignified and futile exhibition".[1]

The following day Ramsay MacDonald, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party (P:L.P.), stated Labour's position in the House of Commons. At the time of his speech, the country was not aware of Germany's invasion of Belgium and, consequently, the party gave its taci approval as he told the other parties that whatever happened the country ought to remain neutral. When Germany's violation of Belgium was known however, the majority of the Labour movement gradually came round to the Government's position.

But why should the majority of the Labour movement consent to support a European war when it had been so emphatically against the Boer War just fifteen years earlier? Was it the moral issue of Belgian

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1. G.D.H. Cole, Labour in War-Time, pp. 24-25; Mary Agnes Hamilton, Arthur Henderson (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1938), p. 94; Margaret I. Cole (ed.), Beatrice Webb's Diaries, 1912-1924 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1952), p. 25.

neutrality and the sanctity of international law which had now been violated by Germany's invasion that drew the party into the conflict; or was it the imagined, or possibly real, threat to Britain herself which evoked from Labour this response? The moral issue was the one seized upon by the leaders of the party and the trade union movement. Arthur Henderson, Harry Gosling, J.A. Seddon, W.A. Appleton, Ben Tillett and numerous other Labour leaders wrote pamphlets and gave interviews to the news media during the course of the war in which they damned Prussianism and pledged British Labour to avenge Germany's violation of Belgium. Indeed, the impression given by most of these leaders during the early part of the war was that Labour was fighting solely to restore Belgium and destroy Prussian militarism.

But at least one Labourite, G.D.H. Cole, saw the party's pro-war stance as being justified not on moral grounds, but on the grounds of national survival. According to him it was not the righteousness of the cause which drew Labour into the conflict, but the fact that the national existence was threatened. Thus, the difference between Labour's attitude toward the Boer War and its attitude toward the Great War was not attributable to moral scruples, as he saw it, but to the actual threat in the present instance to the very existence ofthe State.

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1. Op. cit., pp. 6-7. For trade union opinion as to the origins of the war and Germany's sole responsibility for perpetrating it see the following:- Arthur Henderson, Prussian Militarism (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1917); Harry Gosling, Peace: How to Get and Keep it (London: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1917); J.A. Seddon, Why British Labour Supports /.....

Great Britain officially declared war on Germany at 11.0 p.m. on August 4th, 1914. The next day, the National Executive Committee (N.E.C.) and the P.L.P. met and decided to support the war effort. The party's support, nevertheless, was qualified: "' We condemn the policy which has produced the war, we do not obstruct the war effort, but our duty is to secure peace at the earliest possible moment.'" On August 3rd, Grey told the members of the House of Commons that in his opinion Britain was morally bound to come to the aid of France and Russia in the event of a European war. Labour had always been opposed to secret diplomacy, the policy which had apparently involved the country in war. The support which the P.L.P. now decided to offer the Government might in fact be deemed "negative" support. All that it definitely committed itself to was not to "obstruct the war effort". When MacDonald as Chairman ofthe P.L.P. asked that body for permission to read its statement on the war the next day in the House of Commons, however, his request was refused. Therefore, he resigned his position and Arthur Henderson was elected the new Chairman.[1]

Two days after the P.L.P.'s initial statement on the war, the N.E.C. issued a circular which further qualified the party's position. It reiterated its condemnation of Grey and the Government's foreign

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... Supports the War (London: 1917); W.A. Appleton, The Workers Resolve (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1917); Ben Tillett, Who was Responsible for the War - and Why? (London: 1917).

1. Lord Elton, The Life of James Ramsay MacDonald (London: Collins, 1939), pp. 248-49.

policy and declared that it would seek to procure peace at the earliest possible moment. The N.E.C. also declared that in the meantime it woul attempt to carry out the resolutions passed at a joint meeting of Labour organisations on the 5th which were aimed at mitigating the "'destitution which will inevitably overtake our working people while the state of war lasts'".[1]

Before war had actually been declared, the Joint Board of the Labour Party - the N.E.C., the Trades Union Congress (T.U.C.), and the General Federation of Trade Unions (G.F.T.U.) - had summoned a representative conference of the important sections of the party for the purpose of forming a National Labour Peace Emergency Committee to carry on agitation against British intervention. War was declared, however, before the committee could meet for its intended purpose; and, when it did finally meet on August 6th, its character was changed from that of a peace committee to one of a war relief committee. The War Emergency Workers' National Committee (W.E.W.N.C.) was concerned first and foremost with the protection of Labour's economic interests. Because it concentrated on domestic problems instead of dealing with issues of foreign policy, it played an important rêle in helping to maintain unity within the party. Its executive committee was composed of member who represented the widest possible range of views in the Labour Party. Henderson, MacDonald, Webb, Hyndman, Smillie were all members of the

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1. G.D.H. Cole, A History of the Labour Party from 1914, pp. 18-19.

executive; and it was largely because of the existence of this committee that the cleavage which did develop in the party during the war over foreign policy issues never reached the magnitude that it did within the labour and socialist parties on the continent. The W.E.W.N. met periodically for the first year and a half - weekly until the end of the year 1914 and fortnightly during the next twelve months - to discuss the domestic hardships which the war was inflicting upon the workers at home.[1]

During the years immediately preceding the war, industrial unrest had resulted in a tremendous increase in strikes throughout the country When the war came, a great many of these disputes still remained unsettled, and they would undoubtely hamper the military effort considerably. Realizing this, the Joint Board called a special conferenc on August 24th. An "industrial truce" was agreed upon by which all existing trade disputes were to be terminated immediately. Furthermore, it was agreed that a serious attempt should be made to settle amicably any new disputes which might arise before resorting to a strik The truce in effect sent hundreds of thousands of men back to work.[2]

About the same time that the industrial truce was agreed upon,

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1. G.D.H. Cole, Labour in War-Time, pp. 27-28; Margaret I. Cole, The Story of Fabian Socialism (Stanford; Stanford University Press, 1961 p. 163; Hamilton, Arthur Henderson, p. 100; Elton, The Life of Jame Ramsay MacDonald, p. 308; William Aylott Orton, Labour in Transition (London: PhilipAllan & Co., Ltd., 1931), p. 14.

2. G.D.H. Cole, Labour in War-Time, p. 44; J.R. Clynes, Memoirs, 1869 1924, Vol. I (London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1937, p. 180.

the Government decided that a Parliamentary Recruiting Campaign should be launched. On August 29th the N.E.C. endorsed the party's participation in such a campaign. The day before, Arthur Henderson had received a letter from the Prime Minister asking that Labour join with the Liberals and Unionists "'for the purpose of enlisting recruits - which is the urgent necessity of the moment'". He had submitted the proposal to the P.L.P. that same day, and they had agreed that the Party Whips should co-operate in a recruiting campaign. Now, on the 29th, the N.E.C. was simply endorsing the earlier action of the P.L.P. It did go one step further, however, and agreed "to place the Head Office organization at the disposal of the campaign".

Henderson was to be a joint president of the Recruiting Campaign Committee along with Asquith and Bonar Law. Three other Labourites were also to serve on the committee: F.W. Goldstone, M.P.; J. Parker, M.P.; and Arthur Peters, the party's National Agent. The I.L.P. of course was bitterly opposed to the idea. Jowett and his colleagues later came to view the recruiting campaign as an attempt to compromise the Labour movement and prepare the public for conscription. On the same day that it endorsed the campaign, the N.E.C. also agreed to an electoral truce, consenting "not to contest any vacancies that might arise during the continuance of the war, but that each seat thus fallen vacant should be retained by the Party to which the late Member belonged

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1. G.D.H. Cole, A History of the Labour Party from 1914, p. 20; Peter Stansky (ed.), The Left and War: The British Labour Party and World War / .....

Early in the war the Joint Board of the Labour Party stated its position in a pamphlet entitled The British Labour Movement and the War. The pamphlet was published on September 3rd, 1914, and included a declaration by the Board itself and individual manifestos by the T.U.C. and the G.F.T.U. The joint declaration stated that, "in order to clear away [any] misconceptions once and for all, we place on record what the policy of the Movement has been, why the policy was adopted, and what the Movement has done to carry out its policy."

While the British Labour movement had always stood for peace, and while it had constantly striven to promote friendly relations between Britain and Germany, still the military caste in that country had been bent on war if the rest of Europe could not be cowed into submission to its demands. Germany, through the deliberate act of the Kaiser, had rejected Britain's proposal that a conference of the European powers should be held to deal with the dispute between Austria and Serbia and had gone rapidly on to prepare for the invasion of France.

British Labour recognized the threat to European democracy posed by German aggression. If Britain had not stood by Belgium, it was argued, Germany would probably have won in the first few days of the conflict, and this would have meant "the death of democracy in Europe". Germany's dominance in Europe would have crushed working-class aspirati there for greater political and economic power. "Democratic ideals cannot thrive in a state where militarism is dominant; and the militar state with a subservient and powerless working class is the avowed

political ideal of the German ruling caste."

The declaration went on to state that the Parliamentary Recruiting Campaign had been heartily endorsed by the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C., which represented the overwhelming majority of the trade unionists of the country. Labour had responded to the challenge to rise up and defeat military despotism. When the time came for peace, "the Labour movement /would/ stand, as it always stood, for an international agreement among all civilized nations that disputes and misunderstandings in the future /should/ be settled not by machine guns but by arbitration." The declaration was signed by numerous Labour M.P.s, The Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C., and the Management Committee of the G.F.T.U.[1]

Following the declaration of the Joint Board came a manifesto entitled "Trade Unions and the War," issued by the G.F.T.U. to its members and affiliations in Europe and America. It stated that the G.F.T.U. was now and always had been on the side of international as well as industrial peace. The manifesto did not attempt to "analyse and discuss the causes of the war and the responsibility for its outbreak",

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(note continued from p. 14) ... War I (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 153-54; Hamilton, Arthur Henderson, p. 99; Archibald Fenner Brockway, Socialism Over Sixty Years: The Life of Jowett (1894-1944) (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1948), p. 140.

1. Among the M.P.s were G.N. Barnes, J.R. Clynes, W. Crooks, A. Henderson, J. Hodge and W.S. Sanders. For the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C., J.A. Seddon, H. Gosling and J. Sexton were among those signing the declaration. Among those endorsing it for the G.F.T.U. were J.N. Bell, Ben Cooper, Ben Tillett, and W.A. Appleton.

but it did say that it was in no way incident upon the policy or conduct of Great Britain. That country was fighting not only for Belgium, but also for the honour of all nations and the inviolability of treaties.

The manifesto went on to declare that while the problems of national defence in Britain were of extreme importance, those which affected the political and economic life of the State were, too. War had "compelled the Government to give practical effect to the admission long made verbally, that the state was responsible for the physical efficiency of its units, and measures of relief have to be planned."

Next, the G.F.T.U. called for bigger sacrifices from those members of the "comfortable class" and asked the Government to make better provision for soldiers and their dependents. The Army should be reformed, particularly in regard to increasing allowances and facilitating promotion within the ranks. The G.F.T.U. believed in a voluntary army, and while it did not say so explicitly, it indicated that it would oppose conscription. Finally, while it believed in helping workers in other lands and was devoted to the cause of internationalism still for the time being its efforts had to be concentrated at home.

The manifesto of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress came next in the pamphlet and was addressed "To The Trade Unionists of The Country. To The Officials and Members of Affiliated Societies." It stated that the Parliamentary Committee was grateful

for the way "the Labour Party in the House of Commons had responded to the appeal made to all parties to give their co-operation in securing the enlistment of men to defend the interests of their country"; and, it readily gave its endorsement to the Labour members selected to serve on the Parliamentary Recruiting Campaign and to "the placing of the services of the National Agent at the disposal of that Committee to assist in carrying through its secretarial work".

The T.U.C. adopted a slightly different attitude to conscription from that of the G.F.T.U.. While the G.F.T.U. had inferred that it would be opposed to it, the T.U.C. recognized that should the voluntary system of military service fail, the forces in favour of compulsory military service might "prove to be so persistent and strong as to become irresistible". This threat with all its accompanying evils should, therefore, be enough to "stimulate the manhood of the nation to come forward in its defence". The manifesto did not imply that the T.U.C. would support conscription should it become necessary, but, rather, seemed to leave the question open. The most important thing for the trade unions to realize was that on the outcome of the struggle rested "the preservation and maintenance of free and unfettered democratic government". While the T.U.C. manifesto did not categorically list the areas in which the Government should assist the workers and soldiers and their dependents as did the G.F.T.U. one, still it declared that while the citizens had a duty to the State, the State likewise had

a duty to its citizens.[1]

By the middle of October most of the official Labour movement was supporting the war effort. The Labour M.P.s in conjunction with the T.U.C., the G.F.T.U. and other Labour leaders came out clearly in favour of the war on October 15th when they issued a manifesto stating the party's position toward the conflict. The party placed the entire blame for the war on the German Government. It depicted the war as one of democracy against military despotism and endorsed the party's fullest participation in the Government's recruiting campaign.[2]

While the official Labour Party had spoken unequivocally in favour of the war, the rank and file remained silent during the early months of the conflict. The unions themselves were primarily concerned with protecting their own economic interests as best they could. The T.U.C and the G.F.T.U., while they had taken an active part in forming the position Labour had adopted toward the war, were primarily concerned with co-ordinating the activities of the individual unions. Since the T.U.C. conference which was to have met on August 13th had been postponed, the opinions which were circulating within the trade unions themselves were for the time being muted.[3]

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1. The British Labour Movement and the War : A pamphlet issued by the Joint Board of the Labour Party on September 3rd, 1914 (London: Harrison and Sons, Ltd., 1915).

2. Orton, Labour in Transition, p. 19; Cole, A History of the Labour Party from 1914, p. 21.

3. Cole, Labour in War-Time, pp. 41-43.

The Fabian Society during the early days of the war made no pronouncement on it. In fact it looked for a while as if the society was going to split. The majority of the Fabians eventually came out in support of the war effort though a declaration to that effect was never made by the society. A considerable minority, however, followed the lead of the society's I.L.P. members and opposed it.[1] This diversity within the society was tolerated only because the Fabians had always been much more concerned with domestic affairs rather than foreign policy.

The I.L.P. on the other hand came out quite early in definite opposition to the war. Because of the anti-war stance which it took, the party suffered a heavy loss in its membership. It was estimated that during the first few months of the war nearly one fifth of its membership left it to support the pro-war attitude of the majority of the Labour movement.[2] The I.L.P. was to a great extent composed of working-class members most of whom probably felt a much stronger allegiance to their individual unions than they did to the party.

Ramsay MacDonald's early criticism in the House of Commons of Grey and the Government's foreign policy, and a later article printed on August 13th in the Labour Leader entitled "Why We Are At War", ralli

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1. M. Cole, The Story of Fabian Socialism, p. 166; G.D.H. Cole, Labou in War-Time, p. 34.

2. Archibald Fenner Brockway, Inside the Left: Thirty Years of Platfo Press, Prison and Parliament (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1942), p. 47.

the I.L.P. around him. Not only did the I.L.P. members feel as he did about the war, but they sympathized with him when the press responding to his remarks launched a barrage of vituperative criticism at him. Even Fred Jowett, who had disagreed with MacDonald before the war over the question of Labour's backing of the Liberal Government, now gave him his support.[1]

On August 13th the I.L.P. became the first political organization in Britain to come out in direct opposition to the war by issuing a manifesto on behalf of International Socialism. The manifesto condemned the iresponsible foreign policy pursued by the Government, particularly the doctrine of the balance of power and the armaments race. It went on to extend its "'sympathy and greeting to the German Socialists'" who had laboured with them before the war to promote good relations between the two countries. The war had sealed the doom of the rulers, the diplomats and the militarists of the belligerent countries who had brought it on. In conclusion the manifesto echoed the now hollow notes of international solidarity: "'Long live Freedom and Fraternity! Long live International Socialism!'"[2]

Two Parliamentary members of the I.L.P., J.R. Clynes and James Parker, dissented from the party's position as set forth in the manifesto. There were only seven I.L.P. M.P.s in all, and the fact that two of them became pro-war advocates despite their strong sociali

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1. Ibid., p. 45.
2. G.D.H. Cole, A History of the Labour Party from 1914, pp. 19-20.

leanings gives some indication of the intensity of the conflict of ideals which confronted British socialists during the war. With this in mind, Fred Jowett, the Chairman of the I.L.P., and Bruce Glasier, the party's Secretary, campaigned throughout the country during the early months of the war. Jowett apparently saw that it was useless to try to stop the war in its early stages, and, therefore, he determined that the first thing which should be done was to secure I.L.P. unity.[1] In May 1915 Beatrice Webb would write that the organisation had probably lost 10,000 working-class members, nearly a third of its membership. Unity within the ranks of the I.L.P. was the first thing that must be secured. When that had been achieved, the party would then be able to begin its anti-war propaganda. In fact the party's propaganda machine seems to have been temporarily halted, or at least slowed down, until the Norwich Convention in the spring of 1915.

But what were the principles espoused by the I.L.P. during the war? Ramsay MacDonald writing in 1920 mentioned four basic ones to which the party had devoted itself. It was concerned with civil liberty within the country itself and the rights of the individual soldier, whether at home or abroad. Furthermore, the I.L.P. believed that the diplomatic powers of the Government should be exercised to achieve peace as well as the military ones. Finally, the party had sought to prevent the growth of national hatred within Britain "because

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1. Brockway, Socialism over Sixty Years, pp. 131, 133.

that would prolong the war, submerge its real purposes and causes, and produce a military peace which would be no peace." According to MacDonald, these were the four principles which the I.L.P. fought for during the war.[1]

While the I.L.P. generally agreed on these principles, still its attitude toward the war itself was diverse. In fact the anti-war position of the I.L.P. was quite diverse. Within the organisation were many nuances of opinion ranging all the way from those who were purely pacifist to those who believed in national defence but deprecated the apparent duplicity of theGovernment's policy prior to the war. Jowett was of the latter opinion. He acknowledged the moral obligation of Britain to support France because of secret understanding with that country, but he argued that those who had opposed that policy were not now bound to support the Government.[2] While the I.L.P. was divided as far as its attitude toward the war went, the fact remains that it was the only political party in Britain to oppose the war from the beginning.

It is now necessary to look at two groups which, while not affiliated with the Labour Party at the start of the war, were nevertheless to play an important part inthe formation of its foreign policy both during and after the war. The first of these, the British

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1. J. Ramsay MacDonald, The History of the I.L.P. (London: National Labour Press, 1920), pp. 17-18.

2. Brockway, Socialism over Sixty Years, pp. 131-32.

Socialit Party (B.S.P.), was a definitely political organisation of strong revolutionary, Marxist leanings. The second, the Union of Democratic Control (U.D.C.), was not really a political body in the true sense of the word. Initially comprised of dissident Liberals and a few left-wing Labourites, it captured the allegiance of a vast number of trade unions and local Labour parties during the latter part of the war.

While not actually affiliated with the Labour Party at the beginning of the war, the B.S.P. had applied for membership in it early in 1914. It was not until the Manchester Conference in 1917 that its application was finally accepted. In 1913 the B.S.P. had split over the question of national defence. This split had been patched up the same year with the result that those in favour of national defence were left in almost exclusive control of the executive committee of the party. H.M. Hyndman was the leader of this group. While he and his followers favoured such a position, nevertheless they hesitated at the beginning of the war to come out in support of the Government. The B.S.P. was a member of the Second International and its members had placed their hopes in its ability to prevent war. When the International failed to do this, however, and when it did not take immediate action to try to bring the war to a rapid conclusion, the party executive came out in wholehearted support of an Allied victory.

On August 12th the executive of the B.S.P. issued a manifesto supporting Britain's entry into the war. It stated, however, that thi

was not a "war of the people". The German workers had declared vehemently against the war, and it was hoped that the socialists in Germany would take a stand against their Government. Surprisingly enough this first pro-war declaration was not challenged by either Albert Inkpin or E.C. Fairchild, both members of the executive who were later to become the chief anti-war critics in the party after it split in 1916.

A stronger declaration of the party's support for the war was issued on September 15th. This manifesto recognized the threat of Prussian militarism to the country and strongly advised its members to support the recruiting campaign which was just getting under way. It drew a storm of protest from most of the local branches of the B.S.P., and thus began the internal strife within the party.[1]

The Union of Democratic Control was largely the result of pre-war criticism of the Government's foreign policy by radical Liberals. E.D. Morel, a Liberal journalist, Charles Trevelyan, a subordinate member of the Government, Arthur Ponsonby, a Liberal aristocrat, had all been critics of their party's policy. After a number of meetings at Trevelyan's home during the early days of the war, these radicals along with Ramsay MacDonald and Norman Angell issued a private circular letter in August to a number of persons whom they thought might be interested in the peace programme they had just worked out. The

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1. Walter Kendall, The Revolutionary Movement in Britain, 1900-21 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), pp. 83-88.

circular was followed in September by a public letter issued to the press listing what the Union considered to be the four conditions on which peace should be established and appealing for financial support to help with the expenses incurred in the advocacy of such a policy.[1]

The first general meeting of the U.D.C. was held on November 17th, 1914. At its founding the organisation reported a membership of 5,000 and various affiliations including twenty branches of the I.L.P. and sundry trade union organisations. The Union's primary efforts were to be directed toward the permeation of Trade Councils and local Labour parties. By the fall of 1915 it had secured the affiliation of about thirty of these Trade and Labour Councils and local Labour parties with twenty-six others having the question under consideration; and by October, 1918, the membership of the Labour organizations affiliated to it was nearly 650,000. The first executive committee of the Union included Ramsay MacDonald as chairman, E.D. Morel as secretary, Charles Trevelyan, Norman Angell, Arthur Ponsonby, J.A. Hobson and Mrs. Barbara Mackenzie. Other early supporters of the U.D.C. included Bertrand Russell, H.N. Brailsford, Arthur Henderson, Fred Jowett, and W.C. Anderson.[2]

Shortly after its founding a declaration of policy embodying the

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1. Charles Trevelyan, The Union of Democratic Control: Its History and Its Policy (London: Simson & Co., Ltd., 1919), pp. 2-4.

2. H. Swanwick, Builders of Peace: Being a Ten Year History of the Union of Democratic Control (London: Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1924), pp. 36, 51-52. Trevelyan, The Union of Democratic Control, p.

four cardinal principles of the Union was issued and it read as follows

> To secure for ourselves and the generations that succeed us, a new course of policy which will prevent a similar catastrophe to this present war ever again befalling our Empire. The four cardinal points in the Union's policy are as follows:-
>
> 1. No Province shall be transferred from one Government to another without the consent by plebiscite or otherwise, of the population of such province.
> 2. No Treaty, Arrangement, or Undertaking, shall be entered upon in the name of Great Britain without the saction of Parliament. Adequate machinery for ensuring democratic control of foreign policy shall be created.
> 3. The Foreign Policy of Great Britain shall not be aimed at creating Alliances for the purpose of maintaining the Balance of Power, but shall be directed to concerted action between the Powers, and the setting up of an International Council, whose deliberations and decisions shall be public, with such machinery for securing International agreement as shall be the guarantee of an abiding peace.
> 4. Great Britain shall propose, as part of the Peace settlement, a plan for the drastic reduction, by consent, of the armaments of all the belligerents to secure the general nationalisation of the manufacture of armaments, and the control of export of armaments by one country to another. [1]

The U.D.C. was not at its inception a political party nor did it ever attempt to become one. Its sole purpose was "to create and inform public opinion".[2] It was initially created for the purpose of correcting the maladies of British foreign policy. During the war it tried to dissuade national opinion away from the idea of a "Knockout Blow" to that of a negotiated peace. Through its efforts to form public opinion, it played an important rôle in moderating the policies of the

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1. Trevelyan, The Union of Democratic Control, pp. 4-5.
2. Ibid., p. 9.

I.L.P., moulding that party into a democratic, pacifist organisation instead of allowing it to become a revolutionary one. The I.L.P. came virtually to adopt the four cardinal points of the U.D.C. At the same time the Union's influence in the country was greatly reinforced by its association with the I.L.P.[1]

The Union encompassed every aspect of war opinion. Catherine Ann Cline in Recruits to Labour has given a lucid description of the many nuances of opinion within it:-

> Membership in the U.D.C. did not imply adherence to any one of the various shades of pacifist opinion nor indeed to pacifism at all. Arthur Ponsonby considered all war immoral while Norman Angell considered it irrational. Another member, Bertrand Russell, held that while some wars might be justified by their possible consequences (as in the case of the American Civil War), no worthwhile issue was then at stake. Morel based his opposition on causes rather than consequences, maintaining that England's guilt was at least equal to Germany's. Some members of the U.D.C., however, not only supported the war but actively participated in it. H.B. Lees-Smith, a university professor and Liberal M.P., served at the front as a corporal, and William Arnold-Forster, of a family whose members were politically prominent in both Liberal and Conservative governments, served as a lieutenant-commander in the navy and helped to direct the blockade of Germany.[2]

While there was this diversity of opinion, still all the members agreed that secret diplomacy had been one of the primary causes of the war. Therefore, they sought to secure the democratic control of foreign poli which would insure in the future "that the nation would never again fi itself involuntarily committed to war".[3]

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1. Trevelyan, The Union of Democratic Control, p. 9; Brockway, Inside the Left, p. 55; T.P. Conwell-Evens, Foreign Policy from a Back Ben 1904-1918 (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 136.
2. Catherine Ann Cline, Recruits to Labour: The British Labour Party 1914-1931 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1963), p. 11.
3. Ibid., p. 12.

CHAPTER II

PRO-WAR AND ANTI-WAR POLICY AND OPINION: FROM THE FIRST INTER-ALLIED SOCIALIST CONFERENCE TO THE FIRST RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The Labour Party Conference scheduled for January, 1915, was postponed until the following year. In February, however, an inter-Allied socialist conference was held in London. This was the first of four such conferences to be held during the war, and it followed a meeting of the Dutch and Scandinavian socialist parties in Copenhagen the month before. While the Copenhagen Conference had claimed to be a meeting of neutral socialist parties, the inter-Allied socialists denounced it as being pro-German. They now met in London to make their own pronouncements on the war, and the resolutions which they passed reflected a compromise between the pro-war and anti-war groups gathered there.

> The invasion of France and Belgium was condemned, but it was emphasized that the Allied socialists were at war only with the governments and not the people of the Central Powers. They stood for the liberation of Belgium and Poland and for the right of all forcibly annexed peoples, from Alsace-Lorraine to the Balkans, freely to dispose of themselves. A resolve to fight to victory over Germany, characterized as the worst enemy of freedom, was coupled with a determination that the defensive war should not be transformed into one of conquest. Its conclusion must see the peaceful federation of Europe and the world and the revival of the International.[1]

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1. Carl Brand, "British Labor and the International During the Great War," Journal of Modern History, VIII (March, 1936), 43-44.

Shortly before the Inter-Allied Socialist Conference met, Jowett asked his first question in the House of Commons. On February 11th he asked Grey if the Government was prepared to state publicly "'the basis upon which Great Britain and her Allies [were] willing to discuss terms of peace with Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey'". The Foreign Secretary replied in the negative. So, the next month the National Council of the I.L.P. issued a manifesto demanding the same thing. A copy of this manifesto was forwarded to the socialist partie in all the belligerent countries imploring them to do likewise and to press their governments for a formal declaration.[1]

The I.L.P. Annual Conference that year was held during Easter at Norwich. By a vote of 118 to 3 the delegates endorsed the anti-war attitude which the National Council had adopted since the start of the war. It was also decided that the party should resume its propaganda activities which had been curtailed. The most important outcome of the conference, however, was the party's endorsement of its first peace programme. This programme was identical with the four cardinal points of the U.D.C. Only the wording was slightly different and the third and fourth points had been reversed.[2]

Since the hostile reception of its recruiting manifesto in

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1. Brockway, Socialism over Sixty Years, p. 151.

2. Ibid., pp. 133-34; Carl Brand, "The Reaction of British Labor to the Policies of President Wilson during the World War," American Historical Review, XXXVIII (January, 1933), 270. See Appendix A for the four points of the I.L.P.'s first peace programme.

September, the executive committee of the B.S.P. had been wary not to bring the anti-war and pro-war wings of the party together. The annual conference which had been scheduled for December was postponed when the executive suddenly announced on the 3rd of that month that "it was 'impossible to select a central point to which it was certain that anything like a majority of the branches could send delegates'". Realising that the complete cancellation of the party's annual conference would raise a storm of protest from the anti-war wing, the executive went on to say that it felt it advisable to hold six coincident conferences, one in each divisional area. If coincident conferences were held, the opportunity for the anti-war factions to unite upon a common programme and then dispose of the pro-war majority in the executive would be severely restricted.

The conferences were held in February, 1915, and clearly indicated the wisdom of the executive's decision. If the anti-war sections of the party had been allowed to come together, they probably would have been able to defeat the pro-war members and take control of the party machinery. Numerous resolutions were passed and defeated which reflected the growing discontent of the party's members with the executive: a resolution expressing confidence in the executive committ was defeated 78 to 70; one in favour of party participation in recruitin meetings failed by the vote of 76 to 62. "The most significant decision taken was the resounding defeat by ninety-six votes to forty-o of a Hyndmanite resolution affirming that the 'triumph of Central

European autocracies over the politically free peoples of Western Europe' would be 'fatal to the growth of socialist opinion' and postponing to 'the morrow of the war' the 'glorious battle' for socialism." The defeat of this resolution, however, was somewhat balanced by the defeat of an alternative resolution put forward by the Central Hackney branch. It stated that not only the ruling classes of the Central Powers but "'the ruling classes of all the belligerent countries are the enemies of democracy . . . '" The resolution went on to say that the capitalist class was the real enemy of the people and that it had to be defeated before theSocialist Commonwealth could be established. With the defeat of this resolution, the position of the executive was somewhat strengthened and no real challenge to its authority was offere The decision to hold coincident conferences had paid off; and, while the conferences had shown a deep division of opinion within the B.S.P., the party did not split and the pro-war section retained its grip on the party machinery.[1]

The Hyndmanite resolution which had been presented at the conference stated clearly the heart of the pro-war position of that factio within the party. It was re-stated in even more explicit terms later that year by Hyndman himself in a book entitled The Future of Democracy In it he argued that Prussian militarism had caused the war. Most socialists were not peace at any price men, and they were fully aware o

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1. Kendall, The Revolutionary Movement in Britain, pp. 91-92.

the fact that capitalism was not the cause of all war. "Social Democracy" would emerge much stronger from the war. The "National Collectivism and Bureaucratic Administration" which Britain had been forced to adopt would facilitate post-war development of "Co-operative Democratic Socialism" in the country. Indeed, after the war there could be no going back on the system of state collectivism created to meet the demands of the conflict. The war had brought powerful new currents which were guiding civilization in the direction of "Co-ordination and Social Democracy".[1]

In the spring of 1915, the scandal over the shells shortage and the failure of the Dardanelles campaign combined to precipitate a cabinet crisis in the Liberal Government which resulted in the formatic of the first Coalition Government. On May 17th Lloyd George and Bonar Law approached Asquith and asked that he form a coalition. Two days later, the Prime Minister through Henderson extended an invitation to the Labour Party to join with the Liberals and Conservatives in forming such a government.

The N.E.C. was confronted with a difficult decision. It was mindful of the fate of small third parties which entered into coalitio Furthermore, the Constitution of the party forbade it joining in any "capitalist" government. The crisis which the country was now facing

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1. H.M. Hyndman, The Future of Democracy (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1915), pp. 22, 25, 26, 103, 114, 203, 220.

however, had not been foreseen at the time the constitution had been drawn up, and so, by a vote of nine to three, the N.E.C. decided to accept the offer. But the P.L.P. shortly after the executive decision had been made voted against accepting the Prime Minister's offer, by the narrow margin of nine to eight. It was the M.P.s of the I.L.P. who were so violently opposed to joining in a coalition, and for once Clynes joined with his former colleagues to denounce the step Labour was about to take.

Philip Snowden in his Autobiography twenty years later discussed the attitude which those who were opposed to the coalition adopted when, after the P.L.P. vote, a joint session of the two bodies was held, the voting on this occasion being seventeen to eleven in favour of joining:-

> Such a step as joining in a Coalition Government was so opposed to the constitution of the Labour Party that it was felt a decision ought not to be taken without the sanction of a Party Conference. It was not within the powers of the Executive of the Parliamentary Party to take such a step, and even the exceptional circumstances at the time did not warrant it.

Despite the fact that the mjaority of the P.L.P. had been against the proposal, the action was taken anyway. Three Labour members joined the Government: Henderson became President of the Board of Education with a place in the Cabinet; William Brace became Under-Secretary for Home Affairs; G.H. Roberts became a Junior Lord of the Treasury.[1]

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1. Carl Brand, "British Labor and the War-Time Coalitions," American Historical Review, XXXV (April, 1930), 524-526; A.J.P. Taylor, English History, 1914-1945 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 30-31

Philip /.....

The early days of the Coalition were not smooth ones, and as early as June 5th Beatrice Webb wrote in her diary that "... the Coalition Government is threatening to break the Labour Party into warring sections." The I.L.P. and the B.S.P. were extremely critical of the party's action. They argued that the war in no way cancelled capitalism. Jowett, according to his biographer, "was scathing in his comment" on the formation of the new Government. Still, the majority of the party approved the action. The Coalition was seen as the logical outcome of the party's previous co-operation with the Government in the conduct of the war. The I.L.P. and the B.S.P. might be highly critical of the party's action, but the bulk of Labour certainly approved.[1]

During the spring of 1915, the U.D.C. issued a pamphlet which argued in favour of a definite statement of war aims. Why We Should State Terms of Settlement declared that such an act would be an advantage to the Allied powers and a disadvantage to the enemy. Furthermore, such a pronouncement would help prepare the way for a successful post-war settlement. If the Allies' terms for peace were known, then the military leaders of the enemy would be deprived of their greatest "moral asset" and would no longer be able "to encourage

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... Philip Snowden, An Autobiography, Vol. I (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1934), p. 389; Robert McKenzie, British Political Parties 2nd, revised, edition (London: Heinemann Education Books, Ltd., 1967), pp. 400-01.

1. Brand, "British Labor and War-Time Coalitions," AHR, XXXV, 525-26; Brockway, Socialism over Sixty Years, p. 199.

resistance by representing those terms as so disastrous to Germany that sacrifice, however colossal, and resistance, however prolonged, would be preferable to their acceptance." The pamphlet went on to assert that if the war was not ended by a negotiated peace, then Belgium would "be condemned to greater devastation and suffering than that which she has already endured". Finally, it was necessary for the public to have time to form its own judgement on the policy to which it would be committing itself by the terms of the peace. The U.D.C. was not asking for a detailed statement of the exact nature of the settlement which the Allies sought, but, rather, it was asking for a general statement which

> would make it more difficult for our enemy's Government to continue the war whentheir own peoples became weary; would give confidence to our own country to face the privations of a long war, if that should be neeessary; would enable our people to decide with some capacity for judgment as to the policy of the settlement when the war shall end.

There was no response by the Government to the Union's request for a statement of war aims. So, toward the end of 1915, the U.D.C. widened the scope of its work and altered its objectives "so as to cover the forming of 'such a policy as shall lead to the establishment and maintenance of an enduring peace' and the organizing of support for such a policy".[1]

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1. U.D.C. pamphlet, Why We Should State Terms of Settlement, no author given (London: published by the Union of Democratic Control, 1915), pp. 1-6. The exact date of the pamphlet is not given, but the B.M. stamp shows the 11th of June, 1915; Swanwich, Builders of Peace, p.

The tremendous influence which the U.D.C. had on the development of Labour's foreign policy both during the war and after it is reflected in the number of its leaders who were either members of the Labour Party or would join the party later on. Of the eleven on the Executive Committee of the Union in 1918, five - MacDonald, Jowett, Snowden, Bramley and Swanwich - were already members of the Labour Party. The others - C.R. Buxton, C.P. Trevelyan, Morel, Ponsonby, Seymour Cocks, Pethick Lawrence - were to join the party shortly after the war. All of the members of the General Council that year were members or were to become members of the Labour Party. Among them were W.C. Anderson, Norman Angell, H.N. Brailsford, Bertrand Russell, Philip Snowden and Ben Turner.[1]

From the very beginning of the war, the anti-war socialists had been asking the International Socialist Bureau (I.S.B.) to call an all-inclusive conference of the International to discuss the possibilities of an early peace. When the Bureau refused to do so, the Italian and the Swiss Socialist parties proposed a conference at Berne and issued an invitation to the anti-war socialists in every country to attend. When they met in Berne, it was decided that the conference should be moved to the little Swiss village of Zimmerwald to avoid publicity.

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1. Swanwich, Builders of Peace, pp. 52-53; Catherine Ann Cline also lists a number of Liberals who shifted their allegiance to Labour after the war: op. cit., p. 34, fn. 26.

The Zimmerwald Conference met on the 5th September. It was the first meeting of socialists from all of the belligerent countries since the war had begun. Both the I.L.P. and the B.S.P. had wanted to send delegates to it, but the Government had refused to issue them passports. The conference was a meeting of pacifist, not revolutionary socialists, and it confined itself largely to passing resolutions which called "upon the workers and Socialists of all countries to take immediate action for 'the termination of a war which dishonours humanity A manifesto was also drawn up by the delegates which contained a peace formula denouncing annexation and indemnities, and demanding the right of nations to dispose of themselves as they saw fit. Finally, a commission was established with headquarters in Berne to act as a kind of "ginger group" for the purpose of promoting a world-wide peace campaign. According to Postgate, the Zimmerwald Conference in the fall of 1915 was perhaps the most important and influential socialist conference held during the war.

While the I.L.P. was not able to attend the conference, nevertheless a copy of the Zimmerwald Manifesto eventually managed to reach it. The party, however, disapproved of the manifesto's condemnation of other Socialist groups, who were supporting the war in their own countries, and therefore gave it only qualified support. At the same time, the I.L.P. reaffirmed its belief that the I.S.B., even though negligent in its duty in the past, was still the proper authority to convene an International congress. Despite its criticism of the

conference and its manifesto, the party declared that it would like to be represented at the further conference that was being planned, if it could obtain passports.

The B.S.P. executive on the other hand did not give even qualified endorsement of the manifesto. "Instead it welcomed the conference as 'indicating the growing willingness of socialists in all countries to renew international relations' and hoped that the Zimmerwald Conference would speedily be followed by action on the part of the I.S.B." Thus the executive reaffirmed the party's allegiance to the I.S.B. It did, however, appoint a corresponding Secretary, Tom Quelch, to keep in touch with the International Socialist Committee in Zimmerwald. The Hyndmani wing of the party protested against this action, but to no avail, and the split between the wings of the B.S.P. widened.[1]

At the same time that the Zimmerwald Conference was meeting, the T.U.C. was holding its annual conference at Bristol. Since the conference scheduled for August 13th, 1914, had been postponed, this was the first time the trade unions had met since the beginning of the war. The conference was convened on the 6th, and of it Beatrice Webb wrote rather despairingly: "There is no anti-Government feeling, no determination to get evils righted." In fact, the Conference displayed

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1. Brand, "British Labor and the International," JMH, VIII, 45-46; Postgate, The International during the War, pp. 26-27; G.D.H. Cole, A History of the Labour Party from 1914, p. 29; Kendall, The Revolutionary Movement in Britain, pp. 97-98.

something of the T.U.C.'s pro-Government feeling when it passed a resolution endorsing the Labour Party's action in May joining the Coalition. While the conference approved of this action by the party, nevertheless it passed another resolution which not only condemned conscription, but also protested "'against the sinister efforts of a section of the reactionary press'" in trying to impose it upon the country. Anti-conscription fervour was high despite the resolution approving the Coalition, and it was decided at the last moment to invite Lloyd George on the pretext of explaining his munitions programme to come and try to neutralise it.[1]

The question of compulsory military service was nearly responsible for Labour's withdrawal from the Asquith Coalition in January 1916. After the T.U.C. Conference in September, an attempt was made by both the Government and Labour to revive the declining enlistment of men into the armed services. Labour launched a recruiting campaign of its own, and the Government came out with the "Derby Scheme". Both attempts failed, however, and early in January Asquith introduced the first Military Service Bill designed to impose conscription on all unmarried men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one.[2]

On January 6th, the day after the Bill was introduced in the Commo

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1. M. Cole (ed.), Beatrice Webb's Diaries, p. 43; McKenzie, British Political Parties, p. 401; Orton, Labour in Transition, p. 77.

2. G.D.H. Cole, A. History of the Labour Party from 1914, p. 26; Frank Owen, Tempestuous Journey: Lloyd George, his Life and Times (London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1954), pp. 300-301.

Labour held a National Conference to discuss conscription. A resolution instructing the P.L.P. to oppose the Bill in all its stages was moved and passed by a vote of 1,998,000 to 783,000. At the N.E.C. meeting shortly afterwards, it was decided by a vote of 16 to 11 that Henderson, Roberts and Brace should resign from the Government.[1] The Labour Party was still very much pro-war, but it was afraid that compulsory military service would be the first step toward compulsory industrial service, and the trade unions felt that they had already sacrificed enough. Labour was so adamant in its opposition to conscription that it was even willing to withdraw from the Coalition to prevent it.

When Henderson, Roberts and Brace met on the 7th to draw up their letter of resignation, Asquith persuaded Henderson to hold it in abeyance until he had talked to a joint meeting of the N.E.C. and the P.L.P. That meeting was held on the 12th, and at it the Prime Minister convinced the majority of the party's leaders that the Bill was not meant as a wedge for industrial conscription. He even promised amendments to it. The party therefore agreed to remain in the Coalition until the annual conference had met later that month and voted on the issue.[2]

The Annual Conference of the Labour Party met in Bristol on January 26th, 1916, and was the first party conference to be held since the beginning of the war. While the party's entry in the Coalition was

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1. Brand, "British Labor and War-Time Coalitions," AHR, XXXV, 527; Hamilton, Arthur Henderson, p. 109.

2. Brand, op. cit., p. 528.

was endorsed by 1,622,000 votes to 495,000, it was the recent passage of the Military Service Bill which was the central topic of debate. The conference declared by a vote of 1,716,000 to 360,000 its opposition to the Bill, and a motion which would have pledged the party to agitate for its repeal was just lost by a vote of 649,000 to 614,000.

Another issue discussed by the party was the P.L.P.'s support for the Government's recruiting campaign. In the debate which preceded the vote on that issue, Snowden spoke on behalf of the I.L.P. defending their reasons for having opposed it. The resolution approving the P.L.P.'s action, however, was endorsed by an overwhelming majority - 1,847,000 to 206,000. Finally, a resolution which expressed the party's opposition "'to all systems of permanent militarism as a danger to human progress'", justified the Government's present action in the war, expressed the party's horror at the atrocities committed by Germany, and pledged "the Conference to assist the Government as far as possible in the successful prosecution of the War'", was moved by James Sexton of the Dockers Labourers. The pros and cons of the resolution were ardently debated, but in the end it was passed by a vote of 1,502,000 for and 602,000 against.[1]

Despite the fact that the B.S.P. executive's attitude toward

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1. Hamilton, Arthur Henderson, pp. 110-111; Snowden, An Autobiography, I, pp. 394-95; Stansky, The Left and War, pp; 160-171.

Zimmerwald had exacerbated the conflict between the two wings in the party, nevertheless the party managed to hold together for a while longer. The annual conference of the B.S.P. at Salford in April 1916, however, saw the rupture completed. The climax to the long and bitter struggle between the pro-war and anti-war factions came when a resolution to close the conference to the press and simply issue statements to it at the end of each session was moved and passed. It was thought by the anti-war group that such a move would ensure freedom of discussi at the conference and also protect the delegates from later prosecution or victimisation. Hyndman and his supporters were strongly opposed to the resolution, and when they failed to defeat it, walked out. Twenty-two delegates left with Hyndman, but a few returned later merely to observe its proceedings.

The majority of those who remained at the conference were in favour of peace by negotiation and an immediate end to hostilities, and they passed a resolution to this effect. It went on to assert that total victory by either side or the exhaustion of both would lead to a peace that would only be temporary and would contain the seeds of futur wars. Permanent peace could only come with the overthrow of capitalis but the only hope for a satisfactory end to the present war lay "'in the united demand of the international working class for the immediate conclusion of a peace which will secure complete freedom and autonomy for all nations, free all occupied territory from the invader, and permit no annexations against the wishes of the peoples concerned'".

The conference therefore "instructed 'the Executive Committee of the Party to work for the immediate reestablishment of the International as a necessary preliminary to a united Socialist campaign in favour of peace'". The B.S.P. furthermore called on the Government to make a clear and definite statement on the objects which the Allies were fighting for. Finally, resolutions endorsing the Zimmerwald manifesto, denouncing the Labour Party's entrance into the Coalition, and expelling several of the party's militantly pro-war members, were passed.[1]

Upon leaving the B.S.P., the Hyndmanites formed the National Socialist Advisory Committee, and on the 3rd of June, 1916, this committee adopted the name National Socialist Party (N.S.P.). The N.S.P. was the only militantly pro-war section of British socialism during the war. The party pledged itself to support the Allied cause until the Central Powers had been completely defeated. A manifesto to the dominions was issued in September 1916, explaining why the party had been formed, and the next year in June the N.S.P. turned down an invitation to Stockholm and began to work actively against the proposed conference.[2]

The Military Service Bill in January 1916 did not achieve its

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1. Kendall, The Revolutionary Movement in Britain, pp. 101-102; Austin Van der Slice, International Labor Diplomacy and Peace (Philadelphia: Oxford University Press, 1941), pp. 130-31.

2. Ibid., p. 135.

anticipated results. On the contrary, A.J.P. Taylor says that it actually kept more men out of the service than it drew in. "Instead of unearthing 650,000 slackers, compulsion produced 748,587 new claims to exemption, most of them valid, on top of the million and a half already 'starred' by the ministry of munitions." Agitation for another bill began in the spring, and on May 3rd the Military Service (No Bill was introduced in the House of Commons. The new Bill was meant to extend conscription to married men despite the Government's earlier pledges not to do so. Labour did not oppose it as it had the previous one, probably because the party was now convinced of the necessity for compulsory military service. MacDonald led the small group of Labourites who opposed the measure, and on the 24th of May he made a vigorous speech against its enactment. At the same time he redefined his views on the war and the peace to be made at its conclusion. The next day the Bill was passed in the Commons.[1]

The summer of 1916 was fairly quiet as far as Labour was concerned. Probably the only incident of any significance as far as the development of party foreign policy was concerned was the meeting of the Allied Economic Conference at Paris, June 14th to 17th. The conference decided in favour of extending economic advantages to the Allied

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1. Taylor, English History, p. 55; H. Nessel Tiltman, J. Ramsay MacDonald: Labor's Man of Destiny (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1929), p. 128.

countries as deemed necessary. These advantages were even to be carried over into the post-war period. To Labour, especially the anti-war section of the party, it appeared the Allies were about to embark on a course of economic warfare which would be aimed particularly at the Central Powers at the end of the war. The U.D.C. was so opposed to the proposal adopted at Paris that it produced a fifth cardinal point which stated that "'the European conflict shall not be continued after the military operations have ceased.'" British policy should be directed "'towards promoting free commercial intercourse between all nations, and the preservation and extension of the principle of the open door'".[1]

After the war the continuation of economic warfare would become one of Labour's chief grievances against the Peace Treaty. Even before the Treaty was signed Arthur Henderson wrote a little pamphlet entitled Labour's After War Economic Policy in which he deprecated the idea of Europe being divided by the peace into two hostile economic camps. The argument that such an event would lead inevitably to a conflict between the two hostile groups in the not too distant future was used by Labour during the post-war period to oppose proposals to cripple Germany financially.

Between September 4th and 9th the T.U.C. Annual Conference was held at Birmingham. The strength of the pro-war section within the

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1. Trevelyan, The Union of Democratic Control, p. 5.

trade union movement was demonstrated by its rejection of a proposal by the American Federation of Labour. That organisation had suggested that an international trade union congress which would include unionists from all the belligerent countries be held at the same time as the peace conference. The Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. had brought forward a resolution backing the A.F.L. proposal, but the vote was 1,486,000 to 723,000 against it and clearly indicated the pro-war attitude of the majority of the unionists against even meeting with the German Social Democrats at the end of the war. Another resolution calling for an end to conscription after the war was moved and passed at the convention.[1]

In May 1916 the I.S.B. had issued a manifesto to its members which stated the problems involved in calling an all-inclusive international conference and asked the individual sections affiliated to the International to state what they thought were the primary principles which should be embodied in the settlement. Vandervelde and Huysmans had come to Britain in April to request a statement from British Labour concerning the peace, and on their visit met separately with the I.L.P., the B.S.P., the Fabian Society, the P.L.P. and the N.E.C. They told the groups that the International was not strong enough to force the peace issue, but that it could mobilize opinion through its affiliates

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1. Van der Slice, International Labor Diplomacy and Peace, p. 137; Brand, "British Labor and the International," JMH, VIII, p. 48.

upon the terms of the treaty. They then urged each section of the Labour Party to study the problems involved and to draft reports for the Bureau. The Fabian Society, the I.L.P. and the B.S.P. responded to the I.S.B.'s request and set up committees to study the question and draw up a report for the Bureau. The N.E.C. and the P.L.P. on the other hand flatly refused to participate since the majority of the party was against any premature statement of peace.[1]

The Fabian report was drawn up and submitted to the I.S.B. in August, and the first thing which it suggested was the establishment of an international organisation based on the proposals made in the Society recently-published book, International Government. While the democrati control of foreign policy, the destruction of national armaments and Government control over such armaments, and "'the adoption of Universal Freedom of Trade, Freedom of Commercial Enterprise, (and) Freedom of the Seas'" were all desirable, still the only way that future wars might be prevented was through "'the deliberate establishment of some way of settling disputes among States, or conflicts among peoples, other than that of resorting to armed force'". The report went on to propose opposition to the territorial mutilation of Germany at the end of the war; compulsory disarmament of Germany and Austria as a prelude to reduction of armaments by the Allies; national determination of

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1. M. Cole (ed.), Beatrice Webb's diaries, pp. 56-57; Brand, "British Labor and the International," JMH, VIII, p. 47.

territorial changes except in the few cases "where 'the geographical and strategic requirements' of other States" should be placed before national aspirations; the freedom of each country to determine its own economic policy; government preparation against a depression at the end of the war; and, finally, the appointment of an International Commission to render financial aid from an Indemnity Fund to those who had suffered the most in the war.

Shortly after the Fabian committee submitted its report to the I.S.B., the I.L.P. committee submitted a report, too. The I.L.P. still demanded that the I.S.B. should call a conference of all the sections of the International. Such a conference should be held even if certain sections refused to participate. The conference which the I.L.P. was demanding should do only two things: take steps promoting an early peace, and declare the principles on which the peace settlement should be based. After this introductory comment, the report suggested the following principles which the party thought the International should try to have incorporated in the peace settlement:-

1. No annexation of territory invaded or seized by force of arms.
2. The restoration and indemnification of Belgium.
3. The questions of the boundaries and independence of Poland and the Balkan States, together with the readjustment of other national boundaries, to be the subject of international adjudication with the assent of the people whose national affiliation it is proposed to change.
4. Dependencies in Africa and elsewhere to be dealt with by agreement—freedom of commerce in those dependencies to be equal for all nations. The economic and political freedom of the native peoples to be fully safeguarded.

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With respect to the establishment of guarantees for future peace we urge:-

1. All Treaties between nations to be public documents, submitted to and endorsed by the Parliaments of the contracting Parties. Secret Treaties to be invalid in International Law.

2. An International Court and Council to be created to administer international law.

3. The manufacture and supply of armaments by private companies to be abolished, with a view to the ultimate abolition of armaments in favour of International arbitration and law.

4. International Free Trade. The policy of the open door, together with International Labour Legislation upon such matters as the eight hours' day, the age limit of child labour, and the abolition of sweated conditions.

5. The abolition of compulsory military service.

In closing the I.L.P. stated that the war had not weakened its faith in internationalism. On the contrary, it had strengthened it. "'Europe must get rid of her autocratic rulers who plunge their people into war. Socialism and Peace could only be achieved if the people would come together and "'unite to build a better future'".[1]

The Fabian Society did not stop with the issue of its proposals for peace to the I.S.B. In November it printed in the New Statesman "An Allied Peace: An unofficial forecast of the terms", which elaborated on its earlier proposals for a successful peace settlement. It listed five points which it suggested could be used as a basis of discussion between the belligerent powers:-

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1. McBriar, Fabian Socialism and English Politics, p. 144; Archibald Fenner Brockway, Socialism for Pacifists (London: The National Labour Press, Ltd., 1916), pp. 52-55.

(1) Successful Invasion should not in itself justify **Annexation.**

(a) Restoration of independence of Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro. Full compensation to Belgium.

(b) Restoration of territories invaded by both sides subject to any readjustment under (2) (a). This to involve the restoration to Germany of her colonial territories or an equivalent.

(2) Reasonable satisfaction of:

(a) Demands for the application of the principle of nationality in Europe, by readjustment of frontiers, autonomy, or other solution.

(b) Demands of the Central Powers and other European States for increased economic opportunity in economically underdeveloped countries.

(3) Widest possible application of the principle of the Open Door.

(4) Acceptance by both sides of effective guarantees against war on land or sea by the establishment of a permanent system for the pacific settlement of international disputes. Such a system should involve limitation of armaments.

(5) Reference to a Conference of belligerents and neutrals, or to permanent Commissions, of the detailed working out of the above on the basis of the principles agreed to by the belligerents.

Following these five points, the Committee which had drawn up the proposal issued a memorandum in which it elaborated them and discussed the kind of settlement which the Society thought might be able to achiev permanent peace. What the Fabians desired was "a settlement dictated by thought for the future, rather than by retribution for the past". While they agreed with responsible British statesmen who had repudiated the intention of conquest, still their repudiation should not be taken

to mean "mere revision to the status quo ante bellum with all its anomalies". The principle of nationality should be satisfied as far as possible in Europe, but undoubtedly in some cases autonomy of a small state within a larger would prove more efficacious than independence. Suggestions that, "Special economic opportunities might be ensured to German enterprise in Asiatic Turkey," and "The Armenian provinces might come under Russian Suzerainty," smacked of the influence of H.N. Brailsford, a prolific U.D.C. writer, on the Society. In July the Union had published his pamphlet entitled Turkey and the Roads of the East which proposed exactly the same compromise which the Fabians were now putting forward.

The new Fabian proposal went on to suggest that the principle of the Open Door "should be applied to all extra-European territories which are subject to the control of the belligerents". Furthermore, the reduction of armaments, the Society said, would come about when every nation was willing to bind itself to submit all disputes to some kind of international court or council. The post-war problems of international organisation would concern the neutrals as well as the belligerents, and separate commissions perhaps should be established to deal with them. U.D.C. influence was also apparent when the committee ended the report by stating: "It is desirable that the thought of the country should be exercised on the proposals of peace, however remote and uncertain peace may be." This was exactly the same proposal that the Union had made in its pamphlet Why We Should

State Terms of Settlement (in the summer of 1915).[1]

Toward the end of 1916, Lloyd George proposed to Asquith that he reorganise the War Cabinet. The recommendation undoubtedly was a good one and might have been acted upon had not the Minister of Munitions suggested that the Prime Minister should exclude himself from the new cabinet. Lloyd George had come to the conclusion that he could win the war himself if given a chance. A.J.P. Taylor has depicted the conflict which ensued: "On the one side, Lloyd George, man of the people supported by almost the entire nation; on the other, Asquith, supported by every Cabinet minister, and mighty, as he believed, in the force of the two party machines."

Many backbench Unionists were longing to dispose of the Prime Minister, and when Bonar Law saw that he was losing his control over this section of his party, he sought to appease them. He threw his support to Lloyd George, and together they managed to dispose of Asquith. Actually, the Prime Minister resigned on December 5th thinking that neither Law nor Lloyd George could form a government on their own. According to Taylor: "Asquith was not manoeuvred out of office. He deliberately resigned office as a manoeuvre to rout his critics." When Law was asked by the King to form a government, he said he would do so

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1. "An Allied Peace: An unofficial forecast of the terms," New Statesman (London: November, 1916); H.N. Brailsford, Turkey and the Roads of the East (London: published by the Union of Democratic Control, July 1916), pp. 14-15.

only if Asquith would join it. Asquith naturally refused. To his dismay, however, Lloyd George now accepted the king's commission and after acquiring Labour's support formed a new coalition government.

The events surrounding the actual formation of the Government are obscure. Carl Brand commenting on Labour's part in it says that "the developments took place so rapidly, that when the Labour executive Parliamentary party met in joint conference [on the 6th], it was alread too late to express any preference for the retention of the late government". Perhaps Labour thought that Asquith would not be able to come back successfully to form a new government. Perhaps it thought that given a chance he might be able to do so, but that for its own part it had more to gain from lending its support to Lloyd George. Whatever Labour's motives, the methods used to oust Asquith were distasteful to the majority of the party.

Lloyd George made his bid for Labour's support on the 7th. On that day the N.E.C. and the P.L.P. met with him at noon at the War Office. After appealing to the representatives for their support, Lloyd George outlined the machinery that he had in mind for the new government. There should be a new War Cabinet of five in which Henderson was to be Labour's representative. The Board of Trade and the Ministry of Munitions were to be consolidated to form a Ministry of Labour, and a Labour man would be put in charge of it. A Ministry of Pensions would be established and Labour would be given the direction of it, too. Various other posts of a lesser nature would also be fill

by members of their party.

After listening to his proposals for the new machinery of the government, the Labour representatives proceeded to cross-examine Lloyd George on a number of points. The first and the last questions which they asked him concerned the part Labour would be allowed to play at the peace negotiations. According to his own memoirs, Lloyd George reply to the first question was "that it seemed inconceivable that any Minister should make terms of Peace without consulting the representatives of Labour." His reply to the second was that he "thought peace was a long way off yet, but [he] sincerely hoped that when the time came there would be a Labour representative at the conference". These were the answers which Lloyd George recorded in his War Memoirs nearly twenty years later, but they were not taken from any official text of the meeting itself. After the war Labour would claim that he had definitely promised that the party should have direct representation at the peace settlement. Perhaps Lloyd George did actually promise this. Perhaps Labour forfeited its claim to his promise when it withdrew from the Coalition before the peace talks ever began. The fact remains, however, that the party did not have direct representation at the peace conference.

Numerous other questions were put to Lloyd George. The question of industrial conscription was raised, and he replied that a scheme for the recruiting of new volunteers for the most vital industries was being considered. If it failed, however, the complete mobilization

of labour might have to follow. As for the continuation of military conscription after the war, he said that it most definitely would be discontinued "if we win the War. If wedid not, we should have to get conscription in order to defend our homes." Lloyd George denied that there was any plan to introduce black labour in Britain, but acknowledged the fact that there was "black labour in battalions for France, because we could not get enough men behind the lines in order to save men in this country." On being asked if the Government would insist on a "decisive victory" or would be willing to listen to peace proposals from either neutrals or the enemy, he said that it would listen provided the proposals were reasonable. First, however, the Government must have a clear idea of just what was being proposed.

The delegation then retired to the House of Commons to consider the situation. The vote was 17 to 12 in favour of joining the Government. Carl Brand has written that in one respect Labour established its independence by going into the Coalition. Before the formation of the Lloyd George Coalition, Labour had been forced to act "something like a left wing of Liberalism" because of its numerically weak position. In the new Coalition, however, "it was associated with the Lloyd George group and the Unionists, while the official Liberals were in opposition. Thenceforth, Labour pursued a more independent career."[1]

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1. Taylor, English History, pp. 66-70; Owen, Tempestuous Journey, pp. 348-349; Brand, "British Labor and War-Time Coalitions," AHR, XXXV, 531-32; David Lloyd George, War Memoirs, Vol. III (London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 1934), pp. 1058-61.

On December 18th, 1916, President Wilson in the United States called on the belligerents to state unequivocally their peace terms so that the world might know and be able to compare them. Wilson's proposal was criticised by the majority of the Labour Party. It was his assertion that the professed war aims of the belligerents were basically the same which was most irritating to the party. Even the Fabian Society was inclined to criticise the President's proposal. The I.L.P. on the other hand saw it as an opportunity for the Allies to state their case to the neutral world, and Snowden and MacDonald both praised the action taken by Wilson.

The next month Wilson presented his "peace without victory" speech to the Senate. This was on the 22nd, the day before the annual conference of the Labour Party met. When the conference convened, Labour warmly greeted this latest proposal by the President. The majority of the party along with the U.D.C., I.L.P. and B.S.P. enthusiastically supported his latest proposition. Only the extreme right-wing criticised it.[1]

After showing its enthusiasm for Wilson's latest proposals, the conference settled down to business. The question of the party's having joined in the formation of a second Coalition was debated ardently. E.C. Fairchild (B.S.P.) and Philip Snowden (I.L.P.) spoke

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1. Brand, "British Labor and President Wilson," AHR, XXXVIII, 272-73.

out against the action. J.H. Thomas and J.R. Clynes were among those who spoke in favour of it. The final vote on the resolution showed a large majority in favour of the party's action in joining - 1,849,000 to 307,000 - which was even more decisive than the vote the previous year at Bristol on the Asquith Coalition. Another resolution was passed at the conference which dealt with the continuation of the war. It stated that the fight should continue until an Allied victory had been achieved. When the peace conference was convened, the Allied socialists and trade unionists should meet at the same time. This was in keeping with the T.U.C.'s refusal in September to endorse the A.F.L.'s request for an international trade union congress which would include representatives of the enemy countries, to meet at the same time as the peace conference. The unionists were willing to meet with the Allies but not the enemy socialists and unionists.

A third resolution stated the party's desire to be adequately represented in the British delegation to the peace conference. It also declared that Labour's representatives at the conference should work for:

> (i) The formation of an International League to enforce the Maintenance of Peace on the plan advocated by the President of the United States and approved by the British Foreign Secretary; each affiliated nation to coöperate to restrain by any means that may be necessary any Government or Nation which acts in violation of the Laws and Judgements of the International Court;
>
> (ii) The adoption by all States of legislation to ensure the maintenance of proper labour conditions on standards approved by the accredited Trade Unions of the respective countries.

According to Austin Van der Slice, "This was the first attempt on the part of the British Labour Party since the February 1915 Inter-Allied Conference to attempt the definition of peace terms of any kind," and it was endorsed unanimously. A further resolution criticised the proposals made at the Paris Economic Conference the previous summer, and declared that the Labour Party was opposed to any post-war economic struggle. The I.L.P. proposed a resolution which called for a conference to discuss peace terms and reconstruct the International, but it was defeated by a vote of 1,498,000 to 696,000. Thus, the majority once again declared its faith in the righteousness of the Allied cause and its distrust of enemy socialists and unionists. Another resolutio which demanded that the Government state its willingness to enter into immediate peace negotiations was likewise defeated.[1]

Shortly after the conference, the French Socialists, alarmed by the activity of the "Zimmerwaldians", proposed an Inter-Allied Conferer for March 10th in Paris. Labour initially agreed, but a few days before the conference was to be convened, the party reversed its decision. On the 15th March the first Russian Revolution occurred and thu initiated British Labour's change in attitude toward that country and the conduct of the war.[2]

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1. Brand, "British Labor and War-Time Coalitions," AHR, XXXV, 532-33; Van der Slice, International Labor Diplomacy and Peace, pp. 99-100; Brand, "British Labor and the International," JMH, VIII, 49.

2. Ibid., 49-50.

CHAPTER III

PRO-WAR AND ANTI-WAR POLICY AND SENTIMENT: FROM THE FIRST RUSSIAN REVOLUTION TO THE "KHAKI" ELECTION

The initial effect of the first Russian revolution on the Labour Party was a general increase in the party's enthusiasm for the prosecution of the war. In the past Labour had found it difficult to reconcile the democratic ideals which Britain was supposedly fighting for with the despotic Ally she was fighting beside. Now, with the abdication of the Czar and the establishment of the Provisional Government in Russia, this conflict of ideals was resolved.

Shortly after the revolution, Bonar Law in the House of Commons moved the Government's statement of congratulations. It congratulated the Russian people "'upon the establishment among them of free institutions'" and expressed confidence that this would "'lead not only to the rapid and happy progress of the Russian nation but to the prosecution with renewed steadfastness and vigour of the war . . . '" To the pro-war section of the P.L.P., the resolution was acceptable and in fact expressed quite aptly their own sentiments on the revolution and the consequences they hoped it would have upon the conduct of the war. When Law went on to express his own personal "'feeling of compassion for the late Tsar'", however, which he believed he shared with the majority

of the members of the Commons, Labour dissented. While the majority of the P.L.P. gladly endorsed the resolution, they did not feel any sympathy for the late Czar and criticised Law for his own expressions of remorse at the time he moved it.[1]

The Russian Revolution was not the only event which stimulated pro-war sentiment within the Labour Party in the spring of 1917. President Wilson's address to Congress on April 2nd and the subsequent entry of America into the war on the side of the Allies four days later also reassured Labour of the righteousness of the cause for which the country was fighting. Labour journals ceased to criticise the United States for its commercialism and pro-Germanism and instead greeted the prospect of American aid and closer ties between the two countries.

Not all of the Labour movement was encouraged by America's entry into the war. The majority of the I.L.P. saw it as a blow to their hopes for a peace-by-negotiation. MacDonald, Snowden and Glasier all criticised the President's action and predicted that the noble ideals he had espoused earlier would die as war fervour rose in the United States.

The Russian revolution not only increased pro-war sentiment in the Labour Party, but it also strengthened the activities of the anti-war

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1. Stephen Richards Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution 1917-1924 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), pp. 18-19.

2. Brand, "British Labor and President Wilson," AHR, XXXVIII, 274-75.

groups both at home and abroad. On May 3rd, 1917, a committee of Dutch and Scandinavian socialists was formed for the purpose of promoting a conference to discuss the war aims of the belligerents. The proposed conference was to be held at Stockholm and would be open to minority as well as majority socialist groups from all countries.

On May 9th the Petrograd Soviet announced that it, too, desired a conference at Stockholm to discuss war aims. The decisions of the conference which the Soviet proposed, however, were to be binding on all participants. After a discussion between the Petrograd Soviet and the Dutch Scandinavian Committee, an agreement was reached to merge their plans. The N.E.C. of the Labour Party had earlier rejected the project of the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee because of the resolution passed in January at Manchester stating that the party should fight on "'until victory was achieved'". Now that the Petrograd Soviet was also proposi a conference, the N.E.C. had to reconsider its earlier decision. Russ was an ally and her continued participation in the war was of the utmost importance.

While the N.E.C. was trying to decide just what course it should take, a new coalition government was formed in Russia in which the socialists received six seats in the Ministry instead of the one which they had previously held. Kerensky, formerly the only socialist in the Provisional Government, became the leader of the new Coalition. Shortl after itwas formed, the Government issued a declaration of policy repudi ating any intention to make a separate peace, promising to democratise

the army, and declaring itself in favour of a peace which excluded annexations and indemnities and would allow nations to choose their own destinies. The new government also endorsed the conference at Stockhol which the Petrograd Soviet was promoting, and its new Foreign Minister, Milinkov, telegraphed the British Government to ask that a Labour delegation be allowed to participate in it.

The N.E.C. was still reluctant to go against the Manchester resolution, but it saw a new urgency in the Stockholm proposal now that it had the backing of the Russian Government. Therefore, it decided to send a delegation to Petrograd to find out more about the conference. On May 20th three of its own members were chosen - G.H. Roberts, W. Carter, Ramsay MacDonald - representing the right, centre and left positions of the party. They were to go to Petrograd to discuss Stockholm with the Soviet and then on to Moscow to establish contact with the new Government.[1]

On May 11th the I.L.P. and the B.S.P. formed a committee - the United Socialist Council - to promote a convention at Leeds for the purpose of welcoming the Russian revolution. Before the convention was held, the council received an invitation from the Petrograd Soviet to

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1. Brand, "British Labor and the International," JMH, VIII, 50-51; Postgate, The International during the War, p. 34; Snowden, An Autobiography, I, pp. 448-49; Keith Hutchison, The Decline and Fall of British Capitalism (London: A.W. Bain & Co., Ltd., 1951), p. 152; Hamilton, Arthur Henderson, p. 123.

send a delegation to Petrograd to discuss Stockholm. The I.L.P. and the B.S.P. each appointed their own delegates and the Labour Party agreed that the delegations should travel together.[1]

The Leeds Convention was widely publicised, and when the Labour Leader printed the four resolutions which were to be considered at it, the Government became concerned. On June 1st Milner, one of the five members of the War Cabinet, sent a letter to Lloyd George stating that something must be done about the revolutionaries in Britain, but that it was too late to prevent the United Socialist Council from holding the Leeds Convention and then sending its delegation on to Russia. Enclosed in the letter was a memorandum by Victor Fisher, Milner's private secretary, strongly opposing the delegation's going, and stating that the Labour Leader had shown that the forthcoming convention was designed as a first step to revolution. The confidential memorandum was entitled "Mission of I.L.P. and B.S.P. Leaders to Russia" and sought to persuade Lloyd George to rescind the Government's earlier decision to allow the group to go. That decision had been made largely at the request of Buchanan, the British Ambassador in Russia. The memorandum said that Henderson was to blame for not advising the Government to prevent the Leeds Convention and that the Labour Party should have expelled "the I.L.P. and B.S.P. from its ranks in view of the revolt which this Convention [constituted] by sections affiliated to the Party", and its failur

1. Snowden, An Autobiography, I, pp. 45-51.

to do so was "an act of unpatriotic neglect and shameful inaction on the part of the Labour Party Executive". The memorandum concluded with the following paragraph:-

> To sum up, Mr. MacDonald and his colleagues will now go to Russia not as the delegates of the small factions of the I.L.P. and B.S.P., but as the delegates of a frankly revolutionary gathering nominally representing many tens of thousands of British working men. They will in my judgement do unutterable mischief while they are in Russia. They will return from Russia with an immense prestige in the eyes of their followers here, they will feed the Syndicalist Press in England directly or indirectly with articles purporting to express at first hand the views of our Russian "brothers" and they will form the nucleus of a dangerous revolutionary movement in this country.[1]

The Leeds Conference met as scheduled on June 3rd. The four resolutions printed beforehand in the Labour Leader were moved and passe the first one hailed the Russian revolution; the second one welcomed "'with the greatest satisfaction the declaration of foreign policy and the war aims of the Russian Provisional Government'" and stated the delegates' belief that these would lead to a truly stable peace; the third called upon the British Government "'to place itself in accord with the democracy of Russia by proclaiming its adherence to and determi nation to carry into immediate effect a charter of liberties . . . '"; the fourth called for the establishment "'in every town, urban and rural district Councils of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates for initiating

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1. Letter from Milner to Lloyd George dated June 1st, 1917, concerning the forthcoming Leeds Convention with an enclosed memorandum by Victor Fisher - "Mission of I.L.P. and B.S.P. Leaders to Russia." Lloyd George Papers, Beaverbrook Library, London, folder no. F/6/5/53.

and co-ordinating working-class activity in support of the policy set out the foregoing resolutions . . . '" Oddly enough, the Stockholm Conference was not mentioned in the resolutions.

The immediate result of the Leeds Convention was an increased enthusiasm within the anti-war groups, and on June 7th Beatrice Webb wrote in her diary that she feared the conference was the beginning of a movement which would eliminate Labour as a political force after the war. An attempt to establish Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils was made, but it failed and the enthusiasm for the Leeds resolutions dissipated in the following weeks. Also, the joint Labour delegation which was to have travelled to Russia was stopped at Aberdeen when the Sailors' and Firemen's Union under the instruction of its leader, Havelock Wilson, refused to take them to Petrograd. Stephen Graubard aptly summarised the result of the convention: "The Leeds Convention was a well-staged demonstration and as such left no permanent mark on the Labour movement."[1]

On May 28th the War Cabinet had decided to send Henderson to Russia to try to revive waning relations between that country and Great Britain. Sir George Buchanan was the Ambassador to Russia. According to Lloyd George, "the very fact that he had established excellent relations with the Imperial Government, and with the Provisional Government which

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1. Snowden, An Autobiography, I, pp. 453-55; M. Cole (ed.), Beatrice Webb's Diaries, p.88; Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, p. 40.

replaced it, made him an object of suspicion and distrust to the new Administration which had now been set up under Kerensky, with the support of the Soviet." The Foreign Office had been urging the Government to supplement or replace him with "someone whose known sympathies with Labour and Socialist movements would ensure him the confidence of the Russian Government". Henderson, therefore, was asked to go to Petrograd and after a few weeks send Buchanan back to London "for purpose of consultation". According to Lloyd George, he was told that he would only be a temporary replacement for the Ambassador.[1]

When he left for Petrograd, Henderson was in agreement with the rest of the War Cabinet that the proposed Stockholm Conference should not take place. On his arrival, however, he was shown by Albert Thomas the French socialist representing his country in Russia, a telegram from Lloyd George to himself which stated that the Prime Minister was in fact in favour of the conference. Still, Henderson was opposed to the idea, and soon he joined with Emile Vandervelde and Thomas in trying to persuade the Soviet to drop the project. When their attempt failed, however, he and his colleagues gave in to the Russians. Hamilton in her biography of Henderson says that he was converted to Stockholm for the very reasons which made Lenin oppose it. (Lenin was one of the few in the Petrograd Soviet opposed to it.) "It came to seem to him

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1. David Lloyd George, War Memoirs, IV, pp. 1891-92.

the sole means of holding Russian democracy together against the disruptive tactics of the Bolsheviks; the sole chance of keeping Russia in the war."[1]

Henderson spent six weeks in Russia and while he was there develop a very high respect for Sir George Buchanan and the work he was doing. He wrote to the War Cabinet advising them to retain the Ambassador in his present position. This, he thought, would be "'in the best interests of the Alliance, and . . . [would] give the greatest satisfaction to the Russian Government.'" According to Lloyd George, he simply came to the conclusion "that he could not undertake to relieve [Buchanan] . . . even temporarily."

Whether Henderson was completely convinced of the competence of the Ambassador, or whether he simply felt that he could not undertake the responsibilities of the position himself, he left Russia early in July and landed at Aberdeen late on the evening of July 23rd. He immediately caught a train to London, and on his arrival went to the headquarters of the Labour Party. The next day he called a meeting of the N.E.C. and persuaded a majority of its members to convoke a special conference to discuss Stockholm and recommend it to the delegates provided it was to be only a consultative conference. At the meeting

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1. Brand, "British Labor and the International," JMH, XIII, 52; Hamilton, Arthur Henderson, p. 133.

the executive also agreed to call an inter-Allied socialist conference prior to Stockholm to allow the Allied socialists to come to a preliminary agreement on war aims first. Furthermore, it was decided that Henderson should go to Paris with MacDonald, the treasurer of the party, and G.H. Wardle, the acting chairman of the P.L.P., to attend a meeting called by the French United Socialist Party. The meeting was to discuss the possibility of calling a conference of the inter-Allied socialists. It would now be possible to discuss Stockholm with the French socialists and a Russian delegation which had arrived in Britain on the same day as Henderson.

On the 26th Henderson attended a meeting of the War Cabinet. This was the first time he had met with the Cabinet since his return. The day before he had sent a telegram to Lloyd George in Paris to tell him of his action and his immediate plans. Now, he told the War Cabinet just what he proposed to do. They had not changed in their attitude toward Stockholm and coldly disapproved of his new position on the issue and of his plan to go to Paris.

The next day Henderson left for Paris with MacDonald and Wardle, and there they consulted with the French and the Russians. It was decided that the Stockholm conference should be consultative instead of mandatory, but that each national section present should declare definitely what action it intended to take when it returned home. It was also decided that the Allied socialists would meet in London before going to Stockholm. When the Labour delegation returned from Paris

the N.E.C. endorsed the action it had taken and went ahead with its plan to hold a special conference on August 10th.[1]

The day before the conference was convened, the N.E.C. met and another discussion on Stockholm took place. By a vote of nine to five it was again decided to advise the party to pass a resolution favouring participation. The next day at the special conference Henderson delivered the main address. He spoke for more than an hour attempting to put all the facts before the delegates. In his concluding remarks he said that the time had come to supplement the military weapon of the country with the political one in order to secure an honourable and democratic peace. Later that afternoon a vote on the issue was taken and attendance at Stockholm was approved by a large majority - 1,846,000 to 550,000.

While the conference agreed by a resounding majority that Labour should be represented at Stockholm, it was not able to come to an agreement as to the nature of the delegation which was to attend it. The N.E.C. recommended:-

> That the Party delegation consist of 24 representatives, the Executive to appoint eight, the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress to be invited to appoint eight, and the present Special Conference to appoint eight; this sectional representation to be equally reduced should circumstances necessitate.

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1. Ibid., pp. 127-28, 136; Lloyd George, War Memoirs, IV, p. 1894; Brand, "Labor and the International," JMH, VIII, 52-53.

The Miners' Federation of Great Britain then moved an addition to the executive's resolution stating that "'no further additions thereto shall be permitted from any affiliated body in this country.'" This latter condition was an attempt to prevent separate socialist representation at Stockholm and in fact infringed on the terms of the invitation to that conference. Therefore, it was decided that the present conference should adjourn until August 21st when the question of the nature of the delegation would again be taken up.[1]

The day after the conference, Henderson resigned from the War Cabinet. The vote in favour of Stockholm had come as a great surprise to the Government. Apparently, Henderson had earlier intimated to the Cabinet that he would speak against the project, but at the last minute changed his mind and decided to hold to theposition he had taken since his return from Russia. In his War Memoirs Lloyd George depicts the impression he left on the Cabinet at its meeting on the 8th:-

> . . . . Apart from him and myself, there were also present the other members of the War Cabinet - Lord Curzon, Lord Milner, Bonar Law, Lord Robert Cecil, Lord Derby and Sir William Robertson. I am not speaking alone from my own recollection . . . when I say that the impression we all had was that Mr. Henderson at this discussion recognised the impossibility of pressing the Stockholm Conference, and agreed with us that it must be abandoned. Indeed, he assured us that he expected the Labour Conference would turn it down "by a fair majority".

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1. Hamilton, Arthur Henderson pp. 151-152; Brand, "Labor and the International," JMH, VIII, 54; Stansky (ed.), The Left and War, p. 216.

Henderson denied that he had ever deviated from his intended course to support Stockholm, and Beatrice Webb in her diary seems to confirm this.

The conflict between his positions as a member of the War Cabinet and Secretary of the Labour Party had reached its climax. In his letter of resignation, however, he stated that he continued to share the Government's desire "'that the war should be carried to a successful conclusion'" and he hoped that he might assist the country toward this end in a non-Government capacity.

Henderson's resignation was accepted, but not as graciously as he had thought it might be. Two days later on the 13th a heated debate occurred in the House of Commons between himself and Lloyd George. The debate only served to cloud the issue at hand, namely Henderson's veracity in dealing with the War Cabinet. Undoubtedly the Prime Minister's arguments proved the more tenable to the vast majority in the Commons. According to Beatrice Webb writing in May 1918, Henderson left the Government harbouring "a veritable hatred of Lloyd George . . . determined to create an Independent political party, capable of becoming H.M. Government - and he turned to Sidney to help him."[1]

The special conference of the Labour Party reconvened on August 21st. By this time the Government's decision not to issue passports

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1. Lloyd George, War Memoirs, IV, p. 1911; Hamilton, Arthur Henderson, p. 158; M. Cole (ed.), Beatrice Webb's Diaries, pp. 93-94 (also see n. 1, p. 94); Stansky (ed.), The Left and War, p. 217.

to the delegates was known. It had actually been made at the War Cabinet meeting on the 8th after the Attorney-General had informed its members "that it would be illegal for any British subject to engage in conference with enemy subjects except with the authority of the Crown." The decision had been withheld from the August 10th conference, however, in the hope that Labour would of its own volition reject Stockholm. (Henderson at first had wanted to publish the decision, but according to Lloyd George, "after consulting with his Labour colleagues he found that they were unanimously opposed to this being done before the Labour Party conference . . . " He then told the Prime Minister that he agreed with his colleagues' decision on the matter.) Now, in view of the recent disclosure by the Government the reconvened conference proceeded to discuss the whole issue once more. The final vote on Stockholm this time was 1,234,000 to 1,231,000 in favour of it. The previous majority of more than one million was reduced to a mere 3,000. This extraordinary reversal was due primarily to the decision of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain to vote against the project. The miners were still adamant in their opposition to separate socialist representation at Stockholm.

While the actual vote was interpreted by the public as a reversal of the previous party decision, the real issue involved was not the principle of the conference at all, but rather the condition upon which it was to be attended. When a resolution on the composition of the delegation incorporating the miners' amendment was later offered, it w

overwhelmingly endorsed by 2,124,000 to 175,000.[1]

On August 28th the Inter-Allied Socialist Conference met in London. According to Brand, "It was foredoomed to failure, however, by a condition imposed by the former French 'majority' that no resolution should be binding unless passed unanimously." For the most part the delegates agreed on the basic war aims which were proposed, but it was impossible to reach unanimity on them. The executive of the Labour Party submitted a Memorandum on the Issues of the War, but it was rejected. By this time it was evident that another conference would have to be held by the Allied socialists before Stockholm could take place. "The official record of the Conference [stated] that 'it could not be disguised that the outcome of the conference was wholly disappointing.'"

The month of December 1917 marks the acknowledgement by Labour of major change in its attitude toward the war. In the spring the Russian Government had come out in favour of a peace with no annexation and no indemnities, and since then there had been a gradual shift in pro-war opinion within Labour circles toward this idea. Now, after the failure of Stockholm and Henderson's humiliation, and the publication of the Lansdowne letter in November and the revelation of the secret treaties

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1. Lloyd George, War Memoirs, IV, pp. 1901-10; Brand "British Labor and the International," JMH, VIII, 55-56; Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, pp. 33-34.

2. Brand, "British Labor and the International," JMH, VIII, 56-57; Snowden, An Autobiography, I, p. 479.

by the Bolsheviks the same month, even the trade union movement was anxious to issue a declaration of war aims. By doing so Labour hoped to inform the rest of the country just what it thought the major issues of the war were and what the primary provisions of the peace should be. It was also hoped that such a statement by the party would encourage the Government to state its own position. A conference of the Labour Party and T.U.C. was proposed for the 28th of the month for the specific purpose of issuing a declaration on war aims.

Before it met, however, Henderson published a pamphlet entitled The Aims of Labour. Undoubtedly, he was one of the most respected persons in the Labour movement at this time, and if anyone was in a position to speak for Labour it was he. The pamphlet clearly depicts the synthesis which had taken place since the spring of Labour's pro-war attitude with that of the position adopted by the U.D.C. from the beginning of the war.

Henderson began by stating that internationalism would undoubtedly grow stronger the longer the war continued. After the war a "People's International" should be founded which would "give concrete and practica expression to the spiritual aspirations, social ideals, and moral passio of Humanity". Such an organisation must be based on the spirit of democracy. The German people if they believed in democracy "must begin to establish in their own country a constitutional system of democratic government". Until this was done "it [would] be impossible to build a completely successful and effectual People's International".

The pamphlet went on to state that the people of Britain and not the Government must make the peace. This of course was what the U.D.C. was demanding. Henderson, however, saw "the ambitious schemes of aggressive German militarism" as being primarily responsible for the war, and they had to be defeated before peace could come. Next he criticised the concept of the balance of power and said that the proposed League of Nations was the only way to obtain peace and security in the future. He even went so far as to propose that the League be backed by military as well as moral and economic forces.

The British people were not fighting for territorial conquest, but Henderson did say that there would "have to be certain restorations and restitutions". The right of self-determination should be ensured by the peace treaty, but territories which were "not capable of exercising their right of self determination . . . should be placed in the hands of an international commission acting under the direction and control of the proposed League of Nations". Labour also favoured a reduction in armaments as one means of destroying aggressive militarism.

Next, he dealt with Labour's attitude toward the possibility of Allied post-war economic aggression. Labour did not seek the political and economic destruction of Germany. It was definitely opposed to the Paris Resolutions in so far as they advocated commercial and economic boycotting to impede the economic recovery of any country after the war.

Henderson ended the pamphlet with the now familiar demand of the

U.D.C. "to bring the Foreign Office more directly under the control of Parliament and to give the people's representatives larger powers of criticism in regard to foreign policy". Finally, in the present situation, more use should be made of the moral, political and diplomatic weapons of the country and less of the military ones.[1]

The Aims of Labour never received the attention which The Memorandum on War Aims issued later that month did. Nevertheless, from a historical point of view it is probably just as important. The new attitude of the Labour Party toward the war and its outcome is clearly defined in it. War weariness, the Russian revolution, disappointment over the Government's failure to declare its war aims, all had contribut to this change. This is not to say that Labour suddenly stopped supporting the war. But by December 1917 its attutude toward it had undergone a distinctive change. No longer was the pro-war section of the movement unequivocally in favour of a fight to the finish. The ide of peace-by-negotiation came more and more to be accepted in Labour circles. Even more important, Labour began to assert its independence the Coalition.

On Friday, December 28th, the Labour Party and the T.U.C. met at Central Hall, Westminster, to discuss the war aims for which they thoug Britain should be fighting. A Memorandum on War Aims was presented to

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1. Arthur Henderson, The Aims of Labour (London: Headley Bros., Ltd., December 1917), pp. 11. 29-30, 36, 39, 44-45, 49-50, 63-64.

the conference and the delegates discussed its merits and defects. It was basically the same one which had been presented first to the special conference on Stockholm on August 10th and then to the Inter-Allied Socialist Conference on August 28th. It had been drafted by a sub-committee of the N.E.C. made up of Henderson, Wardle, Roberts, MacDonald, Jowett and Webb. Now, after amending the memorandum, the conference proceeded to accept it as the basis on which the Labour Party hoped the peace settlement would be made. Graubard has aptly summarised it:-

> . . . The declaration called for the establishment of a League of Nations, an International High Court, and an International Legislature. Imperialist motives were denounced; it was proposed, that new nation-states be created in the Balkans, based on the "independent sovereignty of the several nationalities," and united in a customs union. Poland and Luxembourg were guaranteed the right to decide their own futures, as were the citizens of Alsace-Lorraine. Italia Irredentia was to be restored to Italy. Jews were to be protected in their citizenship rights everywhere, and the creation of a free Jewish state in Palestine was promised. The dependencies of Turkey and Germany were to be placed under an International Commission of the League of Nations, to be administered by that body until they were ready for full independence. Constantinople was to be declared a free port, to be supervised by an International Commission which would regulate traffic through the Dardanelles.[1]

The memorandum resembled numerous other declarations made by the U.D.C., I.L.P. and pacifist groups previously. As Graubard has pointed out, however, its "uniqueness . . . lay not in its content but in its support". For the first time, the trade unions came out in support of

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1. Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, pp. 46-48; Van der Slice, International Labor Diplomacy and Peace, p. 102.

such aims. The Government could not afford to offend such a powerfully organised body, and shortly after Labour made its declaration, Lloyd George responded by issuing on January 5th, 1918, a memorandum on British War Aims. The Prime Minister's memorandum was largely Labour's declaration reconstructed.

The annual conference of the Labour Party in 1918 was held at Nottingham on January 23rd. At the conference an attack on the Coalition was made by the B.S.P. and other left-wing groups. Henderson put forward his and the N.E.C.'s position on the matter. He personally was finished with coalitions and came out emphatically against Labour's ever entering into such a government again unless the party was in control of it. The present Coalition, however, had to be maintained because its collapse would mean a general election and that would interfere with the international movement for a people's peace which was just beginning to show promise. To avoid embarrassment, therefore, the party should not pass a new resolution supporting the Coalition, but simply carry "the previous question". A motion to that effect was then made, and the executive's position endorsed by a vote of 1,885,000 to 722,000. The conference also passed a resolution welcoming Wilson's recently declared "Fourteen Points" and Lloyd George's statement on behalf of the Government of Britain's war aims.[1]

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1. Brand, "British Labor and War-Time Coalitions," AHR, XXXV, 535-36; "British Labor and President Wilson," AHR, XXXVIII, 278-79.

On February 20th, another inter-Allied socialist conference met in London to discuss again Allied war aims. All of the Allied countries were represented except Russia and the United States. The conference had been convened by the N.E.C. and the T.U.C. instead of the British section of the I.S.B., and therefore was able to exclude certain bodies affiliated to the International and include certain others which were not Thus, the obstruction tactics of the two extremes were avoided.

The Memorandum on War Aims which had been adopted by the Labour Party in December was presented to the conference, and after a few changes and additions it became the statement of aims which the Allied socialists sent to the socialist parties in the Central Power countries. The Inter-Allied Labour and Socialist Memorandum on War Aims, in Graubard's words, "satisfied every requirement for peace without annexation, indemnity, or vindictiveness." Unfortunately, it had little influence upon the war, possibly because it was the end of May before the German Social Democrats received a copy of it.[1]

On November 7th, 1917, the second Russian revolution had taken place, bringing to power the minority socialists, the Bolsheviks. Lenin assumed control, withdrew Russia from the war, and shortly thereafter sued for peace with Germany. After the first negotiations at Brest-Litovsk broke down in February 1918, Germany launched a vigorous attack against Russia and soon she was forced to sue for peace again.

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1. Brand, "British Labor and the International," JMH, VIII, 58-9.

On March 2nd, 1918, the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, often viewed by historians as the most vindictive treaty in modern times, was signed. Russia officially withdrew from the war and ceded a hugh area of her western territory to Germany.

Reaction within the Labour Party to Russia's withdrawal from the war was generally restrained. Very few within the movement even thought to criticise it, and these for the most part were led by Hyndman.

While Russia's withdrawal was not generally criticised by the party, there was some criticism of the methods being used by the Bolsheviks in carrying out the revolution itself. William Stephen Sanders, a former member of the N.E.C. and Secretary of the Fabian Society, wrote in 1918 a pamphlet entitled The Tragedy of Russia in which he accused the Bolsheviks of being directly responsible for the ruin of that country. According to Fenner Brockway, even some of the members of the I.L.P. "who were wedded to the idea of change through Parliamentary institutions" were critical of the Bolsheviks. While the majority of the party approved of their socialist aims, they disapproved of the means through which they were trying to achieve them. The B.S.P. was the only Labour group which endorsed the Bolsheviks' methods as well as their aims.[1]

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1. Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, pp. 53-57; William Stephen Sanders, The Tragedy of Russia (London: W.H. Smith & Son, 1918), p. 3; Brockway, Socialism over Sixty Years, p. 158.

In June a Labour conference was held for the purpose of discussing the party's attitude toward the electoral truce which it had pledged itself to support early in the war. The conference met on the 26th and was the first to meet under the new party constitution adopted back in February. On the 21st of June the eight Labour ministers in the Government had issued a manifesto protesting against the constant barrage of criticism they had recently been exposed to from the left, and they defended their own record in the Coalition. The N.E.C. was in sympathy with the ministers, and it favoured the maintenance of the truce. But the movement within the party for independence had grown exceedingly strong during the spring.

At the conference Henderson surprised the delegates by telling them that the truce had not in fact been in effect since the end of December, 1916. When the Lloyd George Coalition was formed, the other parties had desired to change the existing agreement in a way that was unacceptable to Labour. Since then it had simply rested on a mutual understanding between the parties. Henderson told the delegates that the N.E.C. was still in favour of the truce, but that it was important to find out just where the rest of the party stood. He explained that the resolution about to be voted on would affect by-elections only, and that it in no way was connected with the withdrawal of Labour from the Coalition. A heated debate followed his explanation. When the vote was finally taken, the result was 1,704,000 to 951,000 in favour o:

suspension of the electoral truce.[1]

The events at the close of the war occurred almost as rapidly as the ones which had opened it. The Austrian revolution occurred on November 1st, and five days later the German navy revolted at Kiel. On November 7th a Republic was proclaimed in Bavaria, and two days later the Kaiser abdicated and a German Republic was proclaimed with Ebert, the majority socialist, as its first Chancellor. The new Republic was formally proclaimed on the 11th, the day the Armistice was signed.

The question of Labour's remaining in the Coalition inevitably arose. Should the party remain in it until after the actual peace treaty was signed, or should it officially proclaim its independence now. For the most part the P.L.P. favoured staying in until after the treaty had been signed. The majority of the N.E.C. on the other hand favoured severance of the party's ties with the Government.

On November 14th a special conference was convened at Central Hall in London to decide the issue. J.R. Clynes, one of the eight Labour ministers in the Government, argued in favour of the party's continued support of the Coalition. Labour was the only moderating influence in Britain, he said, and it was the party's duty to use its influence to "restrain . . . the more vengeful elements when the Peace terms came to be drafted." He was convinced that "unless [the] Briti

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1. Brand, "British Labor and War-Time Coalitions," AHR, XXXV, 538

workers had official representation, ferocious terms would be made that would set the stage for another world war within the lifetime of some of those present that day."[1] After he had finished, Bernard Shaw made a fiery speech in favour of independence. The final vote was overwhelmingly in favour of withdrawal - 2,117,000 to 810,000, a majority of 1,307,000.

Soon after the Armistice and Labour's withdrawal from the Coalitic The "Khaki" Election was held. In its election manifesto, the party called for "'a Peace of International Conciliation'". Labour declared "'absolutely against secret diplomacy and any form of economic war, and [demanded] as an essential part of the Peace Treaty an International Labour Charter incorporated in the very structure of the League of Free Peoples.'" While the number of Labour representatives in the Commons increased as a result of the election from 42 to 59 (A.J.P. Taylor's computation), still the party suffered the loss of its most dynamic leaders. Henderson, MacDonald, Snowden and Jowett were among its casualties. The party's opposition to the "vindictive" Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations which it established would come primarily from outside Parliament.[2]

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1. Clynes, Memoirs, I, pp. 273-74.

2. G.D.H. Cole, A History of the Labour Party from 1914, p. 43; Bran "British Labor and War-Time Coalitions," AHR, XXXV, 539-40; Hamilton Arthur Henderson, pp. 189-90.

CHAPTER IV

POST-WAR REACTION TO THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES, THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, AND THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA, 1919-1920

A. The League of Nations and the Treaty of Versailles

During the war, the idea of a League of Nations caught the imaginations of thousands of British subjects. Numerous societies were founded for the promotion of the idea - the Bryce Group and the League of Nations Society being two of the better-known ones. A great many individuals took it upon themselves to write and speak on behalf of a League. Labour, too, became very involved in this movement to establish an international organisation at the end of the war to ensure peace. This was particularly true after the party's publication of its Memorandum on War Aims in December, 1917. From then until the actual establishment of the League in 1919, Labour's interest was such that at least one authority has written that it "was easily the most important political force behind the drive for a league of nations" in Great Britain.[1] The

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1. Henry R. Winkler, "The Development of the League of Nations Idea in Great Britain, 1914-1919," The Journal of Modern History, XX (June, 1948), 107-108.

development of the League of Nations idea both during and after the war undoubtedly played a major role in the formation of the party's foreign policy.

In the autumn of 1914 the I.L.P. outlined in the Labour Leader a plan for the re-establishment of peace in Europe. The plan called not only for the cessation of hostilities, but it also "looked toward a 'United States of Europe, ultimately of the world, in which national armies and navies are replaced, until absolute disarmament is possible, by an International Police Force.'" At its annual conference in 1915 at Norwich, the I.L.P. formally adopted the proposal, and during the next two years the Labour Leader and the Socialist Review filled in many of the details omitted in the original plan.[1] Thus, the I.L.P. was the first organisation within the Labour Party, and perhaps the first organisation in the country, to advocate the establishment of an international organisation at the end of the war for the maintenance of peace and the abolition of national armaments.

As noted earlier the Union of Democratic Control had a tremendous influence on the formation of Labour's foreign policy. Until the latter part of 1917, the Union served primarily as a link between the radical Liberals, who were disillusioned with their leaders' policies, and the I.L.P., which was staunchly opposed to the war. The ideas which it propounded, however, gradually came to permeate the Labour Party itself

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1. Ibid.

and among them was the idea of a League of Nations. Numerous members of the U.D.C. were strong advocates of the League, and they wrote and spoke prolifically on its behalf. Norman Angell, H.N. Brailsford and J.A. Hobson were three of the more prominent ones.

While many of the members of the U.D.C. were among the most outspoken advocates of the League, the actual support given to the idea by the Union itself is sometimes overstated. A.J.P. Taylor in The Trouble Makers points out that in the peace terms which the Union put forward in July 1917, out of the thirteen points in the programme "the League got one half-sentence". The two primary ideas which the U.D.C. sought to promote during the war were open diplomacy and parliamentary control of foreign policy. If these two objectives could be achieved, then they would form a strong foundation upon which a world league might be established. Without them, however, any international organisation would be foredoomed to repeat the mistakes made in international relations in the past.[1]

The Fabian Society also played an important part in the development of the League of Nations idea. Leonard S. Woolf was the chief spokesman for the Society on international affairs during the war, and 1916 he produced in conjunction with several members of the Fabian Research Department one of the major treatises written in Britain on

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1. Taylor, The Trouble Makers, p. 129; Winkler, "The Development of the League of Nations Idea," JMH, XX, 99.

the League - International Government. (It is interesting to note that Woolf was also a member of the U.D.C., as were J.A. Hobson and G. Lowes Dickinson, two of the members of the research department who helped him with it.) The work was more than just a study of the League of Nations idea. It also attempted "to throw important light on the whole field of international relations" by studying in depth the causes of the Great War and of war in general. The actual draft treaty for the League was written by Woolf and Sidney Webb after the former had completed his study of the causes of war. According to Woolf, "It was the first detailed study of a League of Nations to be published . . ."[1]

The Labour Party as a whole was slow to react to the idea of the creation of a post-war supernational authority. Any proposal made by the I.L.P. or the U.D.C. during the first two and a half years of the war was usually ignored by the majority of the party. At its annual conference in January 1917, Labour finally passed a resolution "approvin the formation of an international league to enforce peace 'on the plan advocated by the President of the United States and approved by the British Foreign Secretary.'" From then until the end of the war and th actual establishment of the League of Nations in 1919, the party worked to promote the idea in Great Britain. The League came to be one of the primary objectives to be secured at the peace settlement, and both the

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1. Leonard S. Woolf, Beginning Again: An Autobiography of the Years 1911-1918 (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), pp. 183-184; Taylor, The Trouble Makers, p. 129.

Memorandum on War Aims and the Inter-Allied Labour and Socialist Memorandum on War Aims heartily endorsed the development of a supernational organisation. Furthermore, the new Labour Constitution adopted in February 1918, supported the League idea by pledging the party:-

> To co-operate with the Labour and Socialist organisations in other countries, and to assist in organising a Federation of Nations for the maintenance of Freedom and Peace, for the establishment of suitable machinery for the adjustment and settlement of International Disputes by Conciliation or Judicial Arbitration, and for such International Legislation as may be practicable.[1]

In 1918 Arthur Henderson wrote a pamphlet entitled The League of Nations and Labour in which he gave the two primary reasons why the party had come to support the League. The first was that Labour hoped that the creating of such an organisation would enable the nations of the world to reduce their expenditure on armaments so as to permit social reconstruction on a great scale at the end of the war:-

> This is the first and most compelling reason why the organised working-class movement supports the proposal of a League of Nations. Labour recognises that in this proposal lies the hope of deliverance for all the peoples from the severest economic pressure and the most terrible risks of suffering and loss, from heavy burdens of taxation to maintain large armies and navies.

Secondly, the party supported the League because it would help to promot "the Unity of peoples". The final safeguard of peace as Labour saw it lay not in the establishment of machinery for judicial arbitration and conciliation of disputes, "but in the spirit of international goodwill

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1. Winkler, "The Development of the League of Nations Idea," JMH, XX, 108; G.D.H. Cole, A History of the Labour Party from 1914, p. 73.

and the understanding between nations based upon the essential identity of their interests". These, then, were the two primary reasons why the Labour Party had come to support the League of Nations.[1]

Toward the end of the war, enthusiasm for the League came to be linked with the idea of "a Wilson Peace". Shortly after the President's speech on January 8th, 1918, enumerating his "Fourteen Points", the Labour Party, the T.U.C., and the Co-operatives issued a manifesto welcoming his "'authoritative declaration of Allied war aims'". It particularly praised his demand for open peace negotiations at the end of the war. The manifesto expressed Labour's approval of Wilson's attitude toward revolutionary Russia, and it accepted his definition of freedom of the seas. It also endorsed his proposals for equality of trade conditions at the end of the war, the evacuation and restoration of Belgium, and the evacuation of Russian territory. Finally, the manifesto stated that the programme put forward by Wilson was so similar to that adopted by Labour, "'that we need not discuss any point of difference in detail.'" The party wholeheartedly endorsed the idea of peace by negotiations.[2]

The proposals made in Wilson's Fourteen Points were also approved of by the U.D.C., and on October 31st, 1918, the Union passed a resolution in support of the President's programme. This was done shortly

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1. .. Arthur Henderson, The League of Nations and Labour (London: Oxford University Press, 1918), pp. 4-7.

2. Van der Slice, International Labor Diplomacy and Peace, pp. 219-20.

after the President's reply to the German Government's request on October 8th for negotiations for peace to be carried out along the lines of his stated programme. Not only did the U.D.C. endorse Wilson's Fourteen Points, but it also called upon the British Government "'to take steps in conjunction with its Allies to abrogate all Treaties and Agreements and reject all proposals which conflict with these conditions . . . '" The month before, the Inter-Allied Socialist and Labour Conference had also endorsed the Fourteen Points.[1]

On November 3rd, 1918, the Labour Party held a great demonstration at the Albert Hall which called for a moderate peace along the lines of Wilson's peace programme. The Times in its coverage of the meeting printed a copy of the resolution passed there:-

> That this mass meeting of workers welcomes the fact that an opportunity to make a lasting and just peace now appears at hand, and demands for organised labour an effective voice in the peace negotiations. We support as a basis for the settlement the 14 points laid down by President Wilson and endorsed by Mr. Lloyd George in his speech to the American troops on July 15. We also demand that those responsible for crimes committed against humanity and international law shall be brought to the bar of justice, that full reparation and compensation shall be paid for injury to life and property on sea and land. We further demand the repeal of conscription and the restoration of civil liberties.[2]

The resolution is interesting for several reasons. It shows that Labour was eager to have a part in the actual negotiations of the peace

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1. Swanwich, Builders of Peace, p. 113; Brand, "British Labor and President Wilson," AHR, XXXVIII, 281.

2. "Labour and Peace," The Times, Monday, November 4, 1918; Lloyd George Papers, Beaverbrook Library, London, folder no. F/160/1/12.

and that it hoped that peace would be based on Wilson's Fourteen Points. (Labour of course was not represented directly at the peace conference, because it had withdrawn from the Coalition by that time; and the actual treaty itself ignored many of Wilson's Fourteen Points.) It also shows, however, that the majority of the party still believed that Germany was primarily to blame for the war, and they were eager to make her pay for it. After the Treaty of Versailles was signed, Labour's attitude toward Germany became one of sympathy, and the party worked actively to try to get the reparations payments reduced.

In its election campaign after the war, Labour again affirmed its faith in the peace terms Wilson was proposing. With the failure of its more outstanding leaders to secure election to Parliament, however, Labour was forced to turn toward extra-parliamentary action to gain support for the peace it wanted to see signed and the League it hoped to see established. A letter from Lord Robert Cecil to Lloyd George on December 19th indicates not only Labour's enthusiasm for Wilson and the League of Nations, but also the Government's growing scepticism about Wilsonian idealism:-

> J.H. Thomas whom I met casually today told me that he & his friends are starting a great agitation in favour of the League of Nations - Albert Hall Meeting - League of Nations Sunday - & all that kind of thing. I hope he will not turn it into a glorification of President Wilson & regret a little that we have let that eloquent pedagogue "patent" this question as he has done . . . .

The Albert Hall meeting on January 3rd, 1919, was the first of a series of demonstrations by Labour in the larger cities in England and

Scotland endorsing a Wilsonian peace and the League of Nations. At this meeting Labour also declared itself in favour of an end to economic warfare, the right of self-determination for all nationalities, open diplomacy, and disarmament. These resolutions and others passed at later meetings were adopted in behalf of "'a Wilson peace'", and numerous messages of assurance and support were sent to the President. The U.D.C. the month before had reiterated its support for Wilson and his programme, and its executive committee on December 21st, 1918, sent an open letter to him outlining what the Union saw as fatal hindrances to a just and honourable peace settlement. Even the socialist press for the most part was solidly behind him and his programme. Enthusiasm for the President was high in labour and socialist circles when the negotiations at Paris opened.[1]

When the peace talks began, the first of Wilson's Fourteen Points, open diplomacy, was discarded. Labour, however, did not blame the President for it but, rather, attributed it to the demands of the French and Italians to exclude the Central Powers from the negotiations. When the preliminary draft of the Covenant of the League of Nations was published in February, however, it was received with mixed feelings. Some saw it as being better than they had hoped for from the statesmen at Paris, and for that they thanked Wilson. Nevertheless, vehement

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1. Letter from Lord Robert Cecil to Lloyd George sent on December 19, 1918: Lloyd George Papers, Beaverbrook Library, London, folder no. F/6/5/53; Van der Slice, International Labor Diplomacy and Peace, pp. 225-28; Carl F. Brand, "The Attitude of British Labor Toward President Wilson during the Peace Conference," American Historical Review, XLII (January 1937), 245.

criticism soon arose in every section of the Labour movement not only of minor details of the Covenant but even of some of its major features. One of the major objections raised was that the League was to be based on governments instead of parliaments, thus making it an alliance of executives instead of a league of the peoples. Once Labour's faith in Wilson's ability to deal effectively with the rest of the Allies in the negotiations had been shaken, the party never regained its earlier enthusiasm for him.[1]

On April 3rd, a special conference of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. met in London. It was believed that Wilson was fighting single-handedly against French, Italian and even British reactionaries who were trying to prevent the Covenant from being included in the treaty at all. The conference was an attempt to strengthen his hand in the negotiations by showing that Labour was solidly behind him. Henderson expressed the party's attitude toward the League when he said that support for it was a step in the right direction, but that the party could give it only nominally because the covenant fell so far short of the expectations aroused by the statesmen. Twenty-three amendments were then adopted by the conference which were intended to bring the League more in line with Labour's ideals.[2]

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1. Ibid., 245-46; Van der Slice, International Labor Diplomacy and Peace, p. 228.

2. Brand, "Attitude of British Labor toward President Wilson," AHR, XLII, 247.

The draft treaty was presented to Germany on May 7th, and the next day the Labour Party issued a manifesto on it. While the treaty was only partially acceptable to the party, the League of Nations which it established might be used to make the necessary corrections to bring it in line with Labour's ideals. The I.L.P. on the other hand was unanimously against the treaty, and on the same day it issued a manifest denouncing it as "'a capitalist, militarist, and imperialist imposition' that violated every public statement of Allied war aims'. While Wilson prestige was not completely shattered within the Labour Party, it was within the I.L.P. In the Bradford Pioneer Jowett wrote of "the 'ghastl failure' of Wilson", and Snowden in the Labour Leader went so far as to say that "if he had not brought America into the War a decent peace would probably have been secured". [1]

On June 1st the N.E.C. and the P.L.P. issued a joint statement, this time strongly condemning the treaty not because it was defective in certain particulars, but because it was a basic denial of the principles for which the party had fought. The treaty had been constructed on the very principles which had caused the war. It violated the pledges given by Wilson and the Allied statesmen and stood in sharp contrast to the war aims Labour itself had outlined.

Later the same month, the party's annual conference was held at

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1. Ibid., 250, 252-53; Clynes, Memoirs, I, pp. 283-84; Henry R. Winkler, "The Emergence of a Labor Foreign Policy in Great Britain, 1918-1929," The Journal of Modern History, XXVIII (March, 1956), 248.

Southport. At it a resolution was passed which called for the speedy admission of Germany to the League of Nations, "'and the immediate revision by the League of the harsh provisions of the Treaty'" which violated the statements made by the Allied Governments at the time the Armistice was signed. The resolution further called "'on the Labour movement, in conjunction with the International, to undertake a vigorous campaign for the winning of popular support for this policy . . .'" According to Winkler, official party statements at this time on the treaty "were phrased in terms hardly less damning than those used by the extreme wings of the Labour movement."[1]

The Labour Party and the I.L.P. were not the only organisations in Britain to criticise the treaty. The U.D.C. also attacked it. On March 10th the executive committee of the Union had sent a resolution to Versailles welcoming the adoption of the League of Nations by the Paris Conference, but recommending a number of changes in the Draft Covenant. It urged the British Government

> to endeavour to get the Articles so amended as to secure (1) popular representation and control in the Body of Delegates and the Council; (2) the right of entrance to the League on equal terms for all civilised States; (3) the general abolition of conscription; (4) an equal standard for the reduction of armaments, together with the abolition of private manufacture and trade in them; (5) the extension of the mandatory principle, with the 'Open Door' policy, to all non-self-governing colonies and protectorates, and (6) unanimity in the legislature and administrative decisions of the League shall not be necessary.

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1. Ibid.

On May 9th the executive committee issued a statement protesting against the Treaty of Versailles which it claimed "'viclates the terms and principles on the faith of which the German nation laid down its arms'". The resolution went on to disparage the territorial arrangements of the treaty "'particularly as regards the eastern portions of the German state, the Saar Valley and Alsace-Lorraine . . . '" It also criticised the severance of East Prussia from the rest of Germany and the inclusion of a large number of German people in the newly-created Polish state. According to the Union, the purpose of the treaty was "'to reduce the new democratic Germany to the position of a vassal State; to render her commercial recovery impossible; to drive her out of international life; to crush the spirit of her people . . . '"[1]

In addition to the criticism from the Union itself, a number of its members also wrote and made speeches deprecating the treaty and the League which it established. Norman Angell in 1919 wrote an interesting book entitled The Peace Treaty and the Economic Chaos of Europe which dealt solely with the economic effects which the treaty would have on Germany. He acknowledged that the case for punishing the German people was a very strong one, but argued against "the indiscriminate starvation of a whole nation" which would often allow the guilty to escape while the innocent suffered. The punitive conditions of the treaty might be justified, but the fact remained that they contributed to the problems

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1. Swanwich, Builders of Peace, pp. 119-21.

facing Germany and aggravated the already serious economic conditions there. The Allied peoples would be affected by those conditions, too, even if only to a lesser degree than the Germans themselves. Famine in Continental Europe would be detrimental to the Allied economic recovery: Germany and Austria could not pay the indemnity or reparations intended to help with the restoration of Belgium and France: Britain's credit would be increasingly disorganised, "particularly by the continual depreciation of the sovereign in terms of the dollar . . . "both the material and moral cause of social and political disorder" would increase, thereby allowing the spread of Bolshevism; famine would prove that the war had "failed to secure either a lasting or a just peace . . ."; difficulties in the newly and already insecure states established by the treaty would be increased. Angell went on to discuss the dependence of Britain on the stability of Central Europe and then to point out just what the treaty actually did to Germany. One part of the book dealt with "The Indispensible Treaty Revisions" which ranged from the rapid fixing of a maximum sum for reparations payments by Germany to the admission of that country to the League of Nations. In conclusion, he stated that "the Treaty [was] purely repressive, punitive, negative". It deprived Germany of the main sources of raw materials for her industry and made no provision to assist her in the future regardless of her conduct. Angell's final words of warning were these: "It is the 'just anger that makes men unjust'."[1]

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1. Norman Angell, The Peace Treaty and the Economic Chaos of Europe (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1919), pp. 9-11, 13-17, 136, 14

One of the chief tenets of the U.D.C.'s programme during the war had dealt with the idea of disarmament. The Union had hoped that the treaty would call for a general reduction of armaments by all the belligerent powers. Therefore, when it was published and revealed that Germany alone would be required to disarm, the spokesmen for the U.D.C. protested. The unilateral disarmament of Germany became one of the chief targets of critics of the peace. Writing in 1921, Charles Trevelyan said that the abandonment of the idea of disarmament had been one of the greatest disillusionments of the peace for the ordinary man and woman.[1]

While this was undoubtedly an exaggeration of the general attitude in Britain toward disarmament, still the U.D.C., as well as the Labour Party and the I.L.P., severely criticised the treaty for failing to deal with it.

Two of the most severe U.D.C. critics of the treaty and the League of Nations were E.D. Morel and Ramsay MacDonald. Throughout the war Morel had argued against Germany's sole responsibility for bringing in the conflict while saying that the Allied Powers were equally to blame. He had also said that the expropriation of German colonies at the end of the war would only sow the seeds of future conflict and that the best way for the war to end would be inconclusively. In Truth and the

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1. Charles Trevelyan, From Liberalism to Labour (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1921), p. 89.

War, written in 1916, he had said that "A conclusive war, i.e., a war which enables one side to impose its unfettered will upon the other, means an inconclusive peace." Now, in his sequel to that book, Pre-War Diplomacy - Fresh Revelations, he renewed his attack on French and Russian responsibility for the war and argued that the peace treaty had to be revised and Germany's sole guilt denied. Before the treaty was ever signed, he had protested against the Allies' intentions of making Germany pay for the war and said that the preliminary draft of the Leagu of Nations should be revised to include both Germany and Russia. After it had been signed and presented to the House of Commons for ratificatio on July 3rd, he wrote that the treaty clearly indicated that the motives of theAllied Powers had all along "been predatory and sordid". Before the treaty could be revised, however, the people had to first "secure the democratic control over the management of their Affairs . . ."[1]

MacDonald, shortly after the war ended, predicted in TheSocialist Review that the terms of the treaty for Germany would be even worse than those which she had imposed on Russia at Brest-Litovsk. The war had ended as a purely military conflict and consequently was destroying the political objectives for which the people had fought. Speaking to a gathering of the I.L.P. in Leeds in October 1919, he said that the

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1. E.D. Morel, Truth and the War (London: National Labour Press, 1916), pp. 270, 312; and Pre-War Diplomacy - Fresh Revelations (London: Independent Labour Party, 1919), pp; 12-14; "Making Germany Pay: Mr. E.D. Morel Protests," Morning Post (March 24, 1919); E.D. Morel, "Labour and Foreign Affairs," Daily Herald (July 4, 1919).

creation of the composite states of Poland and Czechoslovakia was a mistake, and he protested against the punishment inflicted on Germany.[1]

B. Labour's Reaction to the Government's Intervention in Soviet Russia

The benevolent attitude which British Labour adopted toward Soviet Russia during the early days of that republic's existence has sometimes been seen as being diametrically opposed to the party's previous declarations in favour of parliamentary action to achieve its acknowledged goals. It is impossible to determine whether Labour's support for the Soviet Union during the last year of the war was largely a by-product of its own growing independence, or whether its independence was simply increased by the party's enthusiasm for the new socialist State. After the war, however, the Labour Party became more and more concerned with the Government's interventionist policy in Russia, not so much because that policy was aimed at destroying Bolshevism, but because it was also an attempt to destroy socialism in that country which the Bolsheviks claimed to be establishing. Labour had just acknowledged its own socialist aims in its new constitution in 1918, and if the British Government was determined to crush it abroad, it would certainly

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1. J. Ramsay MacDonald, "The 'Socialist Review' Outlook," The Socialist Review (January-March, 1919); "Mr. MacDonald in Leeds. 'Bankrupt Statesmanship,'" Yorkshire Herald (October 20, 1919).

do everything in its power to prevent its spread at home.

The invasion of Soviet Russia by British and French troops on April 2nd, 1918, had a profound effect on Labour. According to at least one Labour historian, it further alienated the party from the Government on the one hand and caused the consolidation of all the revolutionary forces in Britain on the other. The British Government justified the invasion by saying that the stock-piles of Allied war materials in Russia must not be allowed to fall into the hands of the Germans. Indeed, this was probably the original concern of the Allies when they invaded. The trade unions did not approve of the action, but seeing the necessity for it, they remained silent on the issue. At the end of the war, however, the unions came more and more under the influence of the minority sections in the party which had been agitating against intervention from the beginning.[1]

When the war ended, the British Government continued its policy of intervention in Russia. The Labour Party was not alone in objecting to this. Even before the Armistice had been signed, the U.D.C. had called for the withdrawal of all Allied troops from Russia. The Union now protested against the continuation of the blockade of that country and the supply of war materials, money, and troops to help the anti-Bolshevik forces. Many of the U.D.C.'s members at this time shifted their allegiance from the Liberal Party to the Labour Party because they

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1. Orton, Labour in Transition, pp. 138-140 Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, p. 63.

viewed the Government's policy as being anti-democratic and in violation of the ideals for which Liberalism had stood in the past.[1]

During the spring of 1919, the Triple Alliance - an association of the miners, railwaymen and transport workers unions formed shortly before the war - became concerned with British intervention in Russia. The more radical union leaders denounced the Government's policy not because they felt any sympathy for the Bolsheviks, but because they were opposed to seeing the revolution in Russia suppressed by capitalist governments. "Soviet Russia had become for both Left and Right a symbolic issue, the right of any working-class movement to work out its own destiny free from outside intervention."[2] In April the Triple Alliance demanded that the P.L.P. call a special conference to discuss what action should be taken to force the Government to withdraw British troops from Russia. At this time, however, the P.L.P. was dominated by right-wing M.P.s, and refused to call a conference.

At the Labour Party's annual conference at Southport in June, a resolution was put forward demanding "direct action" against further Government intervention. A few of Labour's M.P.s hastened to defend the constitution and refused to give countenance to a general strike to achieve political ends. Several of the delegates said that such action

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1. Swanwich, Builders of Peace, pp. 124-25; Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, p. 63.

2. Alan Bullock, The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin, I (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1960), p. 103.

was defensible on the grounds that the party after the election in December 1918 had said that the Government had deceived and lied to the electorate. Therefore, they contended, Labour had the right to take any action necessary to get rid of such a Government which had come to power through fraud and deceit. The conference finally decided, however, that only the unions could resolve the question of direct action.

After the Southport Conference, therefore, the Triple Alliance held a meeting at Caxton Hall on July 23rd and decided by a vote of 217 to 11 to take the matter into its own hands. It was agreed that a paper ballot should be sent to each member of the unions to determine if a general strike should take place. Before this was done, however, Churchill, the Secretary for War, announced in the House of Commons that all British troops would be withdrawn from Russia by the end of the autumn. Consequently the ballot was called off. By autumn most of the troops had been withdrawn and the supplies which the Government had been shipping to the anti-Bolshevik forces gradually stopped.[1]

On January 29th, 1920, a manifesto - "Complete and Immediate Peace with the Soviets" - was issued by twenty-one trade union officials to the general public. The officials represented both the political and industrial arms of the working-class movement. After denying any

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1. Taylor, The Trouble Makers, p. 147; Bullock, Ernest Bevin, I, pp. 105-06; Taylor, English History, p. 138.

sympathy with the political theories of the Soviet Government, they proceeded to discuss the reasons why they favoured complete and immediate peace with Russia. First of all, it could not be denied that the Soviet military had been successful in the past in defeating the anti-Bolshevik forces. It was now openly acknowledged by the Government that a large number of Russian officers who had served under the old régime were directing the Soviet armies. If the accusations that they were being forced by terrorism to lead these armies was true, then why did they continue to win campaigns? "If men and officers alike ardently desire, as we are told, the overthrow of the Soviet power, why do they so consistently defeat the 'deliverers' who would accomplish it?"

Secondly, the trade union officials were opposed to war with Russia because it would be a war against the Russian people themselves, not merely against a tyrannical Government. It would be the Russian peasants, the Russian women and children who would suffer the most. Furthermore, even though it might be argued that Bolshevik propaganda in Asia was a justification for intervention, still "the expenditure of British resources in enabling a bankrupt Poland . . . to carry on a long and costly Russian campaign would not increase our economic capacity for facing trouble in our own Asiatic Empire. Nor would the military success of the campaigns so subsidised necessarily stop the propaganda and agitation." Even if the Poles should capture Moscow, the Bolshevik leaders would simply flee into the Near or Far East and there continue to spread communism.

The union officials went on to suggest a policy of complete peace with Russia as the most expedient course to follow:-

> If it be true that the Soviet Government has really failed to reconcile its people, and still imposes its power over a territory and population as great as the United States merely by tyranny, it must be because the peoples are cowed and spiritless by privation and hunger. A state of war will perpetuate that condition, and will do so even though the blockade be raised. A state of war, moreover, increases the autocratic powers of the Government, even as it does in the Western democracies. Peace would mean a greater chance of food and normal resistance to tyranny. And that revival would mean the confronting of the Soviet Government, always supposing that its power rests upon force and terror, with problems nearer at home than propaganda in India and Asia Minor.

The manifesto ended by stating that the results of the war just ended and the victory just gained would be endangered if Britain intervened in the Russian-Polish dispute. Therefore, the union officials pledged themselves to oppose Britain's entry into a war between the two countries should one begin. Among the twenty-one delegates signing the manifesto were J.R. Clynes, John Hodge and J.H. Thomas.[1]

In April Poland invaded Russia, launching an attack in the Ukraine Shortly after the invasion, the Labour Party issued a statement of its own policy toward Russia - Labour's Russian Policy. It discussed what the party thought were the three major aspects of the Russian situation: Poland and the Eastern Border States; the Middle East; the Blockade.

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1. Labour's Russian Policy: Peace with Soviet Russia: see the Appendi "Complete and Immediate Peace with the Soviets!" The Manifesto was addressed to the public by the trade union officials on January 29th, 1920.

In view of these aspects of the situation, the party proposed a four-point policy. First, there should be a "Complete raising of the Blockade and a complete peace with Russia." Formal recognition of the Soviet Government "would no more imply moral approval of it than did our formal recognition of the Tsar's Government". In raising the blockade, no restrictions or controls should be applied to Russia which did not apply to other countries trading with Britain.

Secondly, Poland and the Border States "should be encouraged to make peace with Russia on the basis of mutual disarmament". Britain should immediately make it clear to Poland that all assistance and suppor to her would be cut off if she continued her attack on Russia. Further more, financial and economic assistance to the eastern European states "should be made conditional on guarantees that such assistance is not used for the purposes of armaments and military adventures".

Next, attempts to attack Russia in the Middle East should be immediately abandoned. This would include a reversal of the Government's attempt to set small States in that area against Russia. An attempt should be made to reach a settlement and agreement with Soviet Russia; Britain should "attempt to encourage a peaceful settlement of all questions between the States of the Middle East"; the Government should abandon its imperialist policy in the Middle East, revise the treaty with Persia, and reconsider its policy in Mesopotamia. The fourth proposal made stated that the Labour Party should "resist and oppose, by every means in its power, war, or an attempt to create a war,

between this country and Russia."[1]

The Polish invasion had again raised the question of British intervention in Russia. On May 8th, the Poles captured Kiev, and two days later the London dockers protested against British intervention by refusing to coal the Jolly George until the munitions stored on board it and destined for Poland were removed. Later than month MacDonald, writing in Forward, justified the action arbitrarily taken on behalf of the nation because it represented a protest against the Government's policy of war with Russia. The League of Nations, he said, should invoke Article 10 of the Covenant and demand an immediate cessation of the Polish offensive:-

> If the League were worth its salt it would go further. It would take cognisance of the repeated offers of peace made by the Russian Government, and if it could do no more it could record them with approval and thus help the common people into sanity and hamper the vindictive politicians and militarists ...[2]

The initial success of the Polish invasion was reversed early in June, and on the 13th the Russians recaptured Kiev. When it became clear that they might actually defeat Poland, the British Government stepped in and proposed an armistice. Russia initially rejected the proposal, but later she reversed her decision and entered into negotiations at Minsk. The talks broke down on August 1st, however, and when Russia refused to stop her attack on Poland, the British Government

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1. Labour's Russian Policy, p. 4.

2. G.D.H. Cole, A History of the Labour Party from 1914, p. 104; J. Ramsay MacDonald, "The Jolly, Jolly George," Forward (May 22, 192

threatened to intervene directly. This threat was sufficient to persuade the Soviets to reopen the negotiations.

Labour was afraid that the Government would involve the country in a war with Russia, and August 9th a joint meeting of the N.E.C., the T.U.C. Parliamentary Committee, and the P.L.P. passed a resolution warning the Government "'that the whole industrial power of the organise workers [would] be used to defeat this war'". It went on to propose an immediate National Conference in London which would have the authority to advise the workers to "down tools" if war should threaten. To see that these steps were carried out a Council of Action was then appointed by the meeting.

The National Conference which the joint meeting had proposed met on the 13th at Central Hall. Three resolutions were presented and each was passed unanimously. The first approved the earlier action taken at the joint meeting, and it recognised the appointment of a Council of Action to work against the Government's policy toward the Russo-Polish war. The second resolution welcomed the Russian Government's offer earlier in the month of complete independence for Poland as set forth in its Peace Terms to that country, and it instructed the Council of Action to stay in being until it had secured:-

> (1) an absolute guarantee that the armed forces of Great Britain shall not be used in support of Poland, Baron Wrangel, or any other military or naval effort against the Soviet Government.
>
> (2) the withdrawal of all British naval forces operating directly or indirectly as a blockading influence against Russia.

(3) the recognition of the Russian Soviet Government and the establishment of unrestricted trading and commercial relationships between Great Britain and Russia.

It went on to state that the conference refused to be associated with any Alliance which committed Britain to support "Wrangel, Poland, or the supply of munitions or other war material for any form of attack upon Soviet Russia." Finally, it authorised the Council of Action to do anything it thought necessary to achieve the foregoing policy and called upon the rest of the Labour movement to be prepared to assist the Council in preventing the country from becoming involved in war. The third and final resolution recommended that the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. raise a special fund to meet the requirements of the Council of Action.[1]

After the National Conference had adjourned, local Councils of Action sprang up throughout the country. The Labour Party was determined to prevent the country from going to war, and consequently it never stopped to question the constitutionality of its action. Earlier doubts about the legitimacy of using industrial threats to secure political objectives were ignored or overlooked. The reluctance it had shown the year before to organise the workers against the Government's Russia policy dissipated in the wake of what Labour saw as an

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1. G.D.H. Cole, A History of the Labour Party from 1914, pp. 104-06; Report of the Special Conference on Labour and the Russian-Polish War, found in the B.M.: Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, pp. 105-06.

even more serious threat to peace.[1]

The desire for peace in Britain was by no means limited to the Labour Party. Had the public at large believed in war with Russia, undoubtedly it would have occurred. The only reason that Labour stood out amidst the general discontent with the Government's policy was because it was the largest, and perhaps the strongest and best organised, body in Britain which was in a position to do so. "Labour, for one moment, represented the nation in its desire to keep the peace."[2]

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1. Ibid., p. 112.
2. Ibid., p. 113.

CONCLUSION

The formation of British Labour's foreign policy between 1914 and 1920 was largely due to external events beyond the party's control. Had the Great War never occurred, Labour would have been much slower to work out an official position on foreign affairs. Even at the end of the war, the Labour Party had no coherent, definitive policy. It was however, moving in the general direction of one. The war had shaken the party from its general disinterest in foreign affairs, and at its conclusion an effort was begun to construct a foreign policy.

Before the war, the Labour movement had been concerned primarily with the representation and protection of the economic interests of the working class. The foreign policy which it had followed, however, was closely akin to Gladstonian Liberalism (<u>v. supra</u>, p. 1). Labour favoured a concert of Europe rather than a balance of power built up on alliances between the countries. Furthermore, the arbitration of disputes was held in preference to their settlement through armed conflict.

When the L.R.C. was founded in 1900, the Liberal Party had just split over its attitude toward the Boer War. The majority of Labour followed the lead of the I.L.P. and joined with the "pro-Boer" Liberals in denouncing the Government's policy in South Africa. The Fabian

Society on the other hand generally supported the position taken up by the Conservatives and 'Liberal Imperialists'. But at the end of the war, Labour was still not sufficiently interested in foreign affairs to work out a policy of its own (pp. 2-4).

Though akin to Gladstonian foreign policy, Labour's own pre-war foreign policy was more than just an extension of it. In place of non-intervention in European affairs, a policy of internationalism was adopted. When the party applied for membership of the Second International, in 1904, it pledged itself to follow the policies advocated by that organisation. In 1910 this pledge came to include the Copenhagen Resolution (pp. 5-7). Thus, the party's pre-war foreign policy can best be described as a blend of Gladstonian Liberalism and internationalism.

During the days immediately preceding and following the actual start of the Great War, the Labour Party's attitude toward the Government and the war itself was quite fluid. On July 30th the P.L.P. passed a resolution commending Grey on his attempt to get Austria and Serbia to settle their dispute peacefully. Two days later, Hardie and Henderson issued a manifesto on behalf of the British section of the International urging the people to hold vast demonstrations in Britain against war. On August 3rd Grey revealed in the House of Commons that the country was morally bound to come to the aid of France and Russia if war should break out. After the other parties had endorsed the Government's position, MacDonald rose and expressed Labour's disapproval of the

Government's foreign policy in the past and the position which it was now adopting in the present situation. The actual invasion of Belgium was not known at the time and the P.L.P. gave tacit approval to its Chairman's speech (pp. 7-9).

When the invasion of Belgium became public, the majority of the Labour Party gradually came round to approving the Government's position. Initially, however, the party gave only qualified support to the war effort. On August 5th, the P.L.P. issued a statement condemning the Government's former policy of secret diplomacy which had involved the country in war, but stating that it would do nothing to hinder the war effort. This negative support given by the P.L.P. was followed two days later by a party circular which condemned the foreign policy of Grey and the Government and pledged the party to seek to procure peace at the earliest possible moment (pp. 11-12).

The initial reluctance of the Labour Party to support the Government in the prosecution of the war can perhaps be explained by its allegiance to the Second International. During the early days of the war, the party probably hoped that the International would do something to bring the conflict to a fast conclusion. Labour's faith in the International soon died, however, and its death was followed by the unions' agreement on August 24th to an "industrial truce" and the party's pledge on August 29th to support the Parliamentary Recruiting Campaign and to abide by an electoral truce during the war. Early in September, the Joint Board of the Labour Party issued a pamphlet

entitled The British Labour Movement and the War which set forth the official position of the Joint Board and that adopted by the T.U.C. and the G.F.T.U. toward the war. Finally, on October 15th, the I.L.P., the T.U.C. and the G.F.T.U. issued a manifesto which stated the party's position toward the conflict and placed the entire blame for the war on the German Government (pp. 13-19).

While the Fabian Society made no early pronouncement on the war, the I.L.P. did. On August 13th it issued a manifesto stating its opposition to the war. The I.L.P.'s attitude toward the conflict was comprised of many nuances of opinion. Some of its members were purely pacifist while others were in favour of national defence. While they were not agreed as to just why the war should be opposed, they were unanimous in their opposition to it (pp. 20-23).

The B.S.P. - at first adopting a pro-war stance and then shifting to an anti-war one in the spring of 1916 - had very little influence on the actual formation of Labour's foreign policy during the war. It was loosely associated with the party, however, when the war began, and in 1917 its application for membership was accepted at the party's annual conference at Manchester. The fact that its application was approved by the party early in 1917 despite its hostile attitude toward the war indicates the degree of tolerance, perhaps, which themajority section of the Labour Party had for the minority position.

It was the U.D.C. which had the greatest influence on the development of the Labour Party's foreign policy during the war. While the

I.L.P. was unequivocally anti-war, the Union was not. The attitudes of its members varied considerably, but they were united in their opposition to secret diplomacy and the concept of the balance of power. Furthermore, they were convinced that a lasting peace could be achieved only through negotiations by the belligerents, not by total victory on one side or the other.

The U.D.C. stood somewhere between the fervid pro-war position which the Labour Party exhibited during the first two years of the war and the ardent anti-war position which the I.L.P. adopted early on in the conflict. On the one hand, the Union offered an alternative to the party's staunch support for the Government's war policy and, on the other, it prevented in the I.L.P. the development of what might have become a purely negative, nihilistic anti-war policy. In a real sense the U.D.C. served as a link between the two diametrical positions adopted by the Labour movement during the early years of the war. It is significant that as the war progressed a number of Fabians joined the Union. Had the U.D.C. not existed, the formation of the Labour Party's foreign policy would undoubtedly have followed a different course. It seems unlikely that the party would have taken it upon itself to work out an alternative policy to the one pursued by the Government, and in all likelihood Labour would have stuck closer to it original fight-to-the-finish position. Furthermore, the rupture betwe the Labour Party and the I.L.P. might well have been reached during the war years.

The fact that the Labour Party did not split but maintained a fair degree of unity during the first two years of the war can be attributed also to the early formation of the W.E.W.M.C. While the organisation was concerned primarily with the domestic problems created by the war, nevertheless it served as a common meeting-ground on which the pro-war Labourites could meet (pp. 12-13). Furthermore, there was never really a concerted effort on the part of the pro-war majority to oust the minority from affiliation with the party. After the war began, W.C. Anderson was allowed to remain as chairman of the N.E.C., and other members of the I.L.P. who were members of that Labour organ also retained their positions. When Keir Hardie died in 1916, Jowett immediately took his place on the N.E.C. Ramsay MacDonald was even allowed to continue as the party's Treasurer during the war.

It was the willingness of the majority to ignore the anti-war policy of the I.L.P. and later on the B.S.P. which was largely responsible for Labour's unity during the war. The loose federal structure of the party's constitution before 1918 also played a part. While the pro-war majority and the anti-war minority were constantly at odds over such questions as the recruiting campaign and the constitutionality of the party's joining with Liberals and Conservatives to form coalition governments, still each section seemed to know just how far it could antagonise the other and always stopped just before a complete rupture could manifest itself.

During the first two and a half years of the war, the Labour Party

adhered very closely to the policy outlined by the Government in its conduct of the war. While the party did temporarily sever its connection with the Asquith Coalition early in 1916 when the first Military Service Bill was introduced in the House of Commons (pp. 43-4), for the most part it was content to follow the lead of the Government. After the formation of the Lloyd George Coalition in December 1916, however, Labour slowly began to assert its independence. It was no longer a kind of left wing of the Liberal Party as it had been in the Asquith Coalition. The party assumed in the Government something approaching parity with the Lloyd George and Conservative groups largely because the official Liberal Party was now in "passive" opposition to the Government (p. 56).

The Russian Revolution had the initial effect of increasing the party's enthusiasm for the war. The conflict which Labour had felt over fighting for democratic ideals alongside a despotic Ally was resolved. Furthermore, America's entry into the war in April also reassured the party of the righteousness of the cause for which the Allies were fighting.

Not only was pro-war sentiment stimulated in Britain by the Russian Revolution, but anti-war feeling both at home and abroad was too. In May the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee was formed to promote an all-inclusive socialist conference at Stockholm to discuss war aims. About this time, the Petrograd Soviet also issued an invitation to the belligerents and neutrals to gather at Stockholm to prepare a statement

of war aims. The conference which the Soviets were proposing was to be binding on all participants. Soon, the two groups merged their plans and began to work together to promote the conference (pp. 60-62).

The anti-war groups in Britain had also been encouraged by the Russian Revolution. Early in May the I.L.P. and the B.S.P. formed the United Socialist Council for the purpose of promoting a conference in June at Leeds to welcome the revolution. Before the convention was held, the council received an invitation from the Petrograd Soviet to send a delegation to Russia to discuss the Stockholm proposal. The I.L.P. and the B.S.P. each appointed delegates, and the Labour Party, which had earlier appointed a delegation of its own, agreed that the groups should travel together.

The Leeds Convention on June 3rd, 1917, was undoubtedly the zenith of the anti-war movement in Britain. It momentarily shook the Government, and at least one member of the Labour Party (Beatrice Webb) though that it might mark the beginning of the end for that party in Britain. After the convention ended, however, the failure to establish Soldiers' and Workmen's Councils in the country and the failure of the delegation to leave Aberdeen for Petrograd led to the quick dissipation of the revolutionary fervour which had momentarily gripped the anti-war groups (pp. 63-66).

It was the Stockholm proposal which really began the move by the Labour Party toward independence and the acceptance of the idea of a negotiated peace. While the formation of the Lloyd George Coalition

had achieved for Labour something like equal status in the Government, still the party continued to follow the policy set forth by the Government. The thought of opposing the Government's fight-to-the-finish policy never occurred to Labour's leaders. After the Provisional Government in Russia issued its statement in favour of a negotiated peace with indemnities or annexation, the leaders of the party began seriously to consider this approach to ending the war. With Henderson's "conversion" to the Stockholm proposal, the idea of a negotiated peace really gained impetus; and when he was disgraced by the Government and forced to resign from the War Cabinet, Labour's move toward independence was accelerated (pp. 67-72).

Henderson perhaps more than any other person was responsible for Labour's growing independence and gradual acceptance of most of the U.D.C.'s principles. He had been a member of the Union almost from its inception in the autumn of 1914. Only after he joined the Asquith Coalition did he relinquish his ties with the Union. While he may not have re-established himself in the U.D.C. after his resignation from the Government, he did begin to encourage the Labour Party in the direction of its principles. The result was a compromise of Labour's early pro-war position with the policy of the U.D.C. The Aims of Labour is perhaps the best analysis of the gradual blend of the two policies to form a new base for the Labour Party's foreign policy toward the end of 1917. It was the Memorandum on War Aims, however, which had the greatest influence on the actual transformation of that policy. I

revealed that the trade unions themselves had at last come to accept the idea of a negotiated peace along the lines of the one which the Union was advocating in its progamme (pp. 75-79).

At the Labour Party annual conference at Nottingham in January 1918, the B.S.P. and other left-wing groups attacked the Coalition and urged the party to withdraw from it. Henderson and the N.E.C. agreed that in the future the party should not join in a coalition government unless it was in control; but they urged the conference not to demand Labour's withdrawal from the present Government because that would automatically precipitate a general election which would interfere with the international movement for a people's peace which was just getting under way. Instead of a new resolution supporting the Coalition, the resolution passed the previous year was simply voted on again and, by a sizeably majority, the party decided to remain in the Coalition. The refusal to vote on a new resolution supporting the Government, however, revealed the widening gap between Labour and the Coalition. At the conference, President Wilson's newly-acclaimed Fourteen Points were heartily endorsed by the delegates (p. 79).

The next major step by the party toward independence was taken at its conference in June 1918. There, the delegates decided to end the electoral truce and to contest any seats which might become vacant. This did not mean, however, that Labour was withdrawing from the Coalition, but it did mean that the party was becoming even less restrained in its actions outside of it (pp. 82-83).

Three days after the signing of the Armistice on November 11th, the Labour Party at a special conference at Central Hall voted to withdraw from the Government and to oppose it in the General Election which would undoubtedly soon follow. The overwhelming majority of the party was in favour of ending the party's ties with the Coalition. In the "Khaki" Election in December, Labour increased its representation in the Commons from 42 to 62, but unfortunately its more articulate leaders were defeated. Therefore, Labour's opposition to the peace treaty and the League of Nations which it was to establish had to come primarily from outside Parliament (pp. 83-84).

The development of the League of Nations idea in Great Britain during the war had a deep influence on the formation of Labour's foreign policy. While the Fabian Society, the I.L.P. and members of the U.D.C had been early supporters of the idea, the Labour Party refused to endorse the League until its annual conference in January 1917. Even then, Labour approved of the League only if it was established along the lines of the plan advocated by President Wilson and approved by the British Foreign Secretary (pp. 85-88). The party was still reluctant to show much sympathy for the ideas being promoted by the U.D.C. and the I.L.P. After the Russian Revolution, however, and Labour's conversion to a peace by negotiation, the League came to be one of the primary objectives which the party hoped to see achieved at the end of the war. In both the Memorandum on War Aims and the Inter-Allied Labour and Socialist Memorandum on War Aims the League of Nations idea

received enthusiastic support.

During the war, the Labour Party let it be known that it expected to receive direct representation at the peace talks. When the party joined the second Coalition, apparently some kind of assurance was given by Lloyd George that its representatives would be included in any British delegation which attended a peace conference at the end of the war (p. 55). When the peace delegation went to Paris in 1919, however, a Labour representative did not accompany it. True, the Labour representative who had succeeded Henderson in the War Cabinet, George N. Barnes, went with the British delegation. But by this time Barnes had left the Labour Party. In fact, in his autobiography, he says that he had left the party before it ever withdrew from the Coalition and that a Labour candidate was even run against him at Glasgow in the General Election.[1] The Labour Party did not have direct representation at the Paris peace conference. Perhaps it had forfeited this right when it withdrew from the Coalition. At any rate, it seems highly probable that had Labour been given a part in making the peace, it would not have attacked the Treaty and the League of Nations as vehemently as it did. Perhaps, too, the party's foreign policy would have matured at an earlier date, thus enabling Labour to make a more effective contribution in the area of foreign affairs in the early 1920s.

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1. George N. Barnes, From Workshop to War Cabinet (London: Herbert Jenkins, Ltd., 1924), pp. 200-201.

The draft treaty was presented to Germany on May 7th, and on the next day Labour issued a manifesto stating that it was only partially acceptable to the party. It was, however, recognised that the League of Nations might be used to make the necessary corrections in the Treaty. Labour's reluctance to condemn the treaty in its entirety soon passed, and on June 1st the N.E.C. and the P.L.P. issued a joint statement saying that it was a basic denial of the principles for which the party had fought. Later that month at the party's annual conference at Southport, a resolution was passed calling for the speedy admission of Germany to the League and the immediate revision of the harsh provisions of the Treaty which violated Allied statements made at the time of the Armistice. The resolution also called for the party to undertake in conjunction with the International a campaign to win popular support for this policy. (pp. 95-96). Official party statements on the Treaty at this time were almost as vituperative as were those issued by the extreme wings of the Labour movement. Furthermore, the party's attitude toward the League of Nations became increasingly hostile. In criticising the League, Labour in its pamphlets and speeches portrayed it "as a new alliance, designed to keep the ex-enemy countries subjugated and the Allied Powers - especially France and Great Britain - firmly in control of the future of Europe."[1]

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1. Henry A. Winkler, "The Emergence of a Labor Foreign Policy in Great Britain, 1918-1929," American Historical Review, XXVIII (March 1957), 248.

The U.D.C. severely criticised the treaty, too. Norman Angell, Charles Trevelyan, E.D. Morel and Ramsay MacDonald all wrote and spoke against the terms of the treaty, saying that it must be revised if a lasting peace was to be achieved. They were among the more outspoken U.D.C. critics of the treaty (pp. 96-101).

Another aspect of Labour's foreign policy during the post-war period was its attitude toward Soviet Russia. While the party had heartily welcomed the deposition of the Czar in Russia in the spring of 1917, it had been slower to greet the Bolshevik revolution later that year. The acknowledged socialist aims of the Bolsheviks were commended by the majority of the party, but the means which the new rulers in Russia were employing to establish them were generally deplored in Labour circles. It was the Allied invasion of Russia which gradually brought Labour round to enthusiastic support for the Soviets.

At first the majority of the Labour Party accepted the British Government's reason for the invasion. The stock-piles of Allied war materials could not be allowed to fall into German hands. After the war, however, the continuation of the Government's intervention in Russia soon drew severe criticism from the party.

The P.L.P. at this time was composed primarily of right-wing M.P.s who were reluctant to take action against the Government's policy in Russia. Indeed, many of them were apparently in agreement with that policy. On June 14th, 1919, J.A. Seddon, one-time President of the T.U.C., signed a circular letter to Churchill on the need for the captu

of Petrograd. Three months later, on September 4th, James Sexton and two other Labour M.P.s, John Joseph Jones and J.H. Thorne, spoke in a debate in the Commons against negotiations with the Bolsheviks.[1]

Most of the Labour movement, however, was against intervention and wanted peace with Russia. When the party conference at Southport in June 1919 failed to take any action against the Government's policy in Russia, the Triple Alliance decided to act on its own to try to get the Government to withdraw British troops from that country. A meeting was held at Caxton Hall on July 23rd, and it was decided that a postal ballot of all the miners, railwaymen and transport workers should be taken to determine if a general strike should take place in protest at the Government's policy. Before the ballot was taken, however, Churchill announced that all British troops would be withdrawn from Russia by the end of the year. Thus, a clash between the Triple Alliance and the Government was avoided (pp. 103-104).

On January 29th, 1920, a manifesto - "Complete and Immediate Peace with the Soviets" - was issued to the general public by twenty-or trade union officials. This presented the arguments asthey saw them against intervention in Russia if a war should break out between that country on the one hand and Poland or other Balkan or Near East countri on the other. The manifesto suggested that complete peace with Russia

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1. Letter to Churchill on the need for the capture of Petrograd, dated June 14, 1919, with J.A. Seddon among the signatories (Lloyd George Papers, Beaverbrook Library, London, folder no. F/9/1/7); telegram from /.....

was the most expedient course to follow. It ended with the union officials pledging themselves to oppose Britain's entry in a war between Russia and Poland if one should break out (pp. 104-106).

In the spring of 1920 war did break out between those two countries. Shortly after the Polish invasion of the Ukraine, the Labour Party issued a statement of its own policy toward Russia - Labour's Russian Policy. It analysed the three major aspects of the Russian situation: Poland and the Eastern Border States, the Middle East, the Blockade - and went on to propose a four-point policy to achieve peace with Russia (pp. 106-108).

The initial success of the Polish invasion was reversed early in June, and it soon became clear that the Russians might actually defeat Poland. The British Government stepped in and proposed negotiations between the two countries to achieve an armistice. Talks were begun at Minsk early in August, but when they failed, Russia refused to stop her attack against Poland. The British Government then threatened direct intervention, and this was sufficient to persuade the Soviets to reopen the negotiations.

Labour was afraid that the Government would actually involve Britain in a war with Russia. The party, reluctant the year before to

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... from unknown source to Lloyd George dated September 4, 1919, saying that James Sexton, John Joseph Jones and J.H. Thorn spoke in the House of Commons against negotiations with the Bolsheviks (Lloyd George Papers, Beaverbrook Library, london, folder no. F/12/1/14).

take industrial action to secure a political objective, now reacted to this new threat. A National Conference was held on August 13th and it approved the earlier action of the N.E.C., the T.U.C. Parliamentary Committee and the P.L.P. on the 9th establishing a Council of Action to work actively against British intervention. This threat by Labour along with the public support which it commanded was sufficient to encourage the Government to back down. A.J.P. Taylor has said that Labour's campaign against intervention won support in England "probably more from war-weariness than from any feeling of solidarity with the supposedly working-class government in Russia".[1]

It is important to recognise the link between Labour's attitude toward the League of Nations and its Russian policy. The Government's refusal to refer the question of Poland's invasion of Russia to the League of Nations cast further doubts in Labour circles as to the value of that organisation. The League came to be seen as "the tool of those whose hearts and minds can conceive nothing but war".[2] Had the League taken some action to restrain the Polish invasion, Labour might have come to support it much earlier in the 1920s than it actually did.

Labour's foreign policy at the end of the war was in a state of flux. Indeed, it might well be argued that the policy which the party

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1. Taylor, English History, p. 138.

2. Ramsay MacDonald, Forward. "The Farce of a League", June 26th, 1920 (Lloyd George Papers, Beaverbrook Library, London, folio number F/263)

pursued in foreign affairs at this time was indeed an irresponsible one. The threatened strike by the Triple Alliance in 1919 and the formation of a Council of Action in 1920 to dissuade the Government from direct action in the Russo-Polish War tend to substantiate this accusation.

But Labour had just recently become a national party. Before 1918 it had been merely a loose federation of trade unions and socialist organisations. After the war, as new and varied elements - notably radical Liberals from the U.D.C. - came into the party, its policies could not help but be in a state of turmoil. Labour had not had a clear-cut, coherent foreign policy before the war, and until these new ideas were absorbed by the party it could hardly be expected to construct one in the immediate post-war period. While it cannot be argued that Labour had a coherent foreign policy at the end of the war, still it can be said that by the end of 1920 the party was more fully aware of its need for one.

APPENDIX

Carl Brand in footnote 12, page 270 of his article "The Reaction of British Labor to the Policies of President Wilson during the World War," found in Volume XLII of the American Historical Review, gives the first peace programme formulated by the I.L.P. at its annual conference atNorwich, April 5-6, 1915:-

"The first peace program of the I.L.P. was formulated at the annual conference of April 5-6, 1915. Its four points given below will be recognized as essentially the same as some later advanced by President Wilson. 'In order that the peace may be just and lasting the conference demands:

(a) That the people concerned shall give consent before there is transfer of territory;

(b) No further treaty, agreement, or understanding be entered into without the knowledge of the people and the consent of Parliament, and machinery to be created for the democratic control of foreign policy;

(c) Drastic all-round reduction of armaments by international agreement, together with the nationalization of the manufacture of armaments, and the national control of the export of armaments by one country to another;

(d) British foreign policy to be directed in future toward establishing a federation of nations, and the setting up of an International Council, whose decisions shall be public, together with the establishment of courts for the interpretation and enforcement of treaties and international law." Report of the Twenty-third Annual Conference of the Independent Labour Party (1915), p. 88.

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