

# UC Irvine

## UC Irvine Previously Published Works

### Title

E.H. Carr, International Relations Theory, and the Societal Origins of International Legal Norms

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0dh9d4bc>

### Journal

Millennium Journal of International Studies, 23(3)

### ISSN

0305-8298

### Author

Lynch, Cecelia

### Publication Date

1994-03-01

### DOI

10.1177/03058298940230030801

### Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

# E.H. Carr, International Relations Theory, and the Societal Origins of International Legal Norms

---

Cecelia Lynch

This article explores an important aspect of peace movements' impact on international relations. It focuses in particular on the articulation and promotion of international legal norms by Anglo-American peace movements in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Social forces, in the form of peace movements, have, since the post-Napoleonic period, attempted with great energy and considerable success to influence norms underpinning international law. Norms promoted by these movements include constraints on states' right to wage war and the requirement that states attempt to resolve conflict peacefully before using force, which over time have been embodied in treaties and agreements such as the Hague Conventions, the Covenant of the League of Nations, the 1928 Pact of Paris and the UN Charter. Additional norms promoted by peace movements include the constitutive principles of universalism (the notion that all political actors should participate in decisions about peace, security, and the improvement of international life<sup>1</sup>) and equality of status (the notion that they should do so on an equal basis, and that rights should be granted to and obligations binding upon all) that provide the foundation for twentieth century global international organisations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations. Social movements have made these attempts as part of a much less successful endeavour to promote law as a means of ensuring international peace.

The term social movements, as used in this article, denotes loose associations of actors who work for their goals (out of necessity or choice) at least in part outside of 'traditional' political channels, and within the arena of 'civil society'. They are thus *relatively autonomous* from traditional political institutions, although individual movement members, being generally middle-class and frequently well-educated, often share direct experience in such institutions (e.g., government, political parties, labour unions).<sup>2</sup> It is almost always inaccurate to

---

I would like to thank Audie Klotz, Friedrich Kratochwil, Michael Loriaux, Thomas Wamke and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful and astute comments.

1. Whether these political entities and actors should be conceptualized as *states*, *individuals*, *'peoples'* or other types of transnational actors remained a matter of contention among movement groups, however.

2. This type of definition, i.e., one that focuses on movements' *relative autonomy* from traditional political institutions and their locus of action in civil society, has been current since at least the mid-1980s with the advent of the 'European' or 'identity' school of social movement research. See, for example, Claus Offe, 'New Social Movements:

portray social movements as purely grass-roots phenomena without any connection to elites; likewise, movements, because they consist of both core and mass aspects, because they target both government and the populace-at-large, and because their goals involve transformations of both specific policies and normative understandings, cannot be collapsed into either elite or interest group categories.<sup>3</sup>

I use the term 'norm' in accordance with the international organisation literature: *i.e.*, norms, in their simplest definition, are 'standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations'.<sup>4</sup> As Friedrich Kratochwil points out, norms are intersubjectively understood and legitimated *guides* to behaviour; they can therefore be either constitutive/enabling of particular forms of behaviour, or restrictive/constraining. They are not necessarily 'causal' in character, but they do provide 'reasons' and justifications for actors in international life to choose to behave in particular ways.<sup>5</sup> 'International legal norms' then, are guides to behaviour that promote rule-following in international life, through the medium

Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics', and Jean L. Cohen, 'Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements', both in *Social Research* (Vol. 52, No. 4, Winter 1985), pp. 817-68 and 663-716, respectively.

3. I have conceptualized the particular social forces I am concerned with in this study as 'social' or 'peace movements' for several reasons: 1) to capture the loose association of groups that press for normative changes in state practice in various historical periods, and 2) as a contrast to notions of mass/public opinion. I choose the term 'social movement' over terms denoting interest groups and policy networks for aesthetic reasons, to connote impact beyond the policy arena, and finally because the term has a sociological history that denotes the coming together of forces that influence the intersection between politics and society during a particular historical period or periods. The literature on social movements is now vast, although much of it addresses the question of movement origins and characteristics (found in the mid-1980s debate between identity politics and resource mobilization theorists) rather than movement effects. See for example, Jean L. Cohen, *et al.*, 'Social Movements', special issue of *Social Research* (Vol. 52, No. 4, Winter 1985); Sidney Tarrow, *Struggle, Politics and Reform* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi and Sidney Tarrow (eds.), *International Social Movement Research, Vol. I* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1988); Bert Klandermans (ed.), *International Social Movement Research, Vol. II* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1989); Thomas Rochon, *Mobilizing for Peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); and, for a more recent treatment of these and other issues, Aldon Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (eds.), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993). Those who deal specifically with the effects of peace movements on foreign policy and international relations more generally, in addition to Rochon, include Charles Chatfield and Peter Van den Dungen (eds.), *Peace Movements and Political Cultures* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee, 1988); and Richard Taylor and Nigel Young (eds.), *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

4. See Stephen Krasner, 'Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables', in Krasner (ed.), *International Regimes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 2.

5. Friedrich V. Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1989), *passim*.

of law and institutions.<sup>6</sup> Depending on the tradition of international law that one adheres to, rule-following may be seen as desirable merely to achieve some type of 'practical association' of actors, or it may be promoted for the purpose of achieving some other perceived good, for example, *status quo* stability, a just distribution of resources, economic prosperity (for the few or for all), or an international peace that may be based on one or a combination of other goods.<sup>7</sup>

The traditional 'sources' of international law are generally said to be custom and treaties, without regard for the agents who push for particular types of behaviour to be encoded within treaties or standardised as customary practice.<sup>8</sup> Yet legal norms do not arise in a vacuum, but are socially contested, promoted and legitimised. Peace movements have consistently promoted a vision of international life based on inculcating particular standards of state behaviour into international practice. These standards have been conceptualised in ethical terms by pacifists and religious activists who believe in the sanctity of human life<sup>9</sup>, and by socialists who give priority to the promotion of justice and equity in international relations. They have been conceptualised in legal terms by internationalists, many of whom have been professionally trained lawyers and who have promoted the 'rule of law' in international, as well as national, affairs. All of these societal elements—religious, pacifist, socialist, internationalist, and liberal—traditionally comprise peace movements in both Britain and the United States and, although they differ in their motives and some of their goals, they have come together over the past two centuries to advocate common programs and minimum international legal norms as a means of achieving international peace.<sup>10</sup>

---

6. On the role of rules in structuring international political society more generally, see Nicholas Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

7. The notion of a 'practical association', i.e., one characterised by a mutual understanding and recognition of rights and practices but not organised to further any type of common vision, is developed in Terry Nardin, *Law, Morality, and the Relations of States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 9. International legal norms fall under the rubric of 'rule-oriented' traditions of international law and ethics in Nardin and Mapel's formulation. See Terry Nardin and David Mapel, 'Convergence and Divergence in International Ethics', in Nardin and Mapel (eds.), *Traditions of International Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 297-317.

8. On the sources of international law, see, for example, the classic text by J. L. Brierly, *The Law of Nations*, Sixth Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 56-67.

9. This type of belief, however, should be distinguished from the contemporary 'pro-life' stance.

10. This type of social activity is becoming increasingly recognised by international legal experts. For example, W. Michael Reisman and Chris T. Antoniou, in introducing a recent compilation of documents on the laws of war, credit the 'Peace Movement' with seeking to 'condemn war, to temper its severity when it occurred and, even more ambitiously, to create international dispute mechanisms that might obviate it entirely', and also with beginning 'to press their governments to conclude agreements with other governments and even to establish permanent international organizations to accomplish their objectives'. Reisman and Antoniou, *The Laws of War* (New York, NY: Random House, 1994), p. xviii.

Nevertheless, although elements of these programs have remained constant through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they have also been moulded and recast in reaction to new social and political circumstances. In order to appreciate the relationship between peace movements, standards of state behaviour, and the evolution of international relations therefore, it is crucial to understand both the continuities and changes in social movements' articulation of international legal norms.

There are a number of ways of conceptualising, and critiquing, the means by which social movements attempt to wield influence in the international realm. One IR 'tradition' that has attempted to explain the effects of 'unofficial' social forces on the central issues of peace and security in international life, and their implications for the role of law and ethics, is the classical realist tradition as articulated by E.H. Carr in his short but seminal tome, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*.<sup>11</sup> Classical realism is distinguished here from neorealism and structural realism, in that the former at least implicitly and often explicitly addresses questions of the possibilities of ethical action in international life, and the role of various levels of actors in achieving order, peace and security.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Carr in particular and classical realism in general have enjoyed a renaissance of interest on the part of many critics of structural realism who see in classical realism both a more holistic analysis and a more sophisticated method of

---

11. E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939*, Second Edition (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1946, reprinted 1964). I focus my critique of Carr on this book in particular because, although the corpus of his work covers topics as diverse as nationalism, the Bolshevik revolution, and British foreign policy, none of his other works have approached the impact made by *The Twenty Years' Crisis* on the field of International Relations, classical realism, and especially on the realist/idealist dichotomy that flows from the latter. The strength of the identification of Carr with this dichotomy is made evident in perusing current international relations texts and readers. See, for example, Richard W. Mansbach, *The Global Puzzle: Issues and Actors in World Politics* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), p. 289; Joshua S. Goldstein, *International Relations* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1994), pp. 47-49; Robert J. Lieber, *No Common Power*, Second Edition (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1991); and John Baylis and N.J. Rengger, 'Introduction: Theories, Methods, and Dilemmas in World Politics', in Baylis and Rengger (eds.), *Dilemmas of World Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 11-13, all of whom identify Carr with the realist/idealist dichotomy. In *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 18-22, Martin Hollis and Steve Smith attribute the notion of the idealist tradition to Carr while pointing out that the term was not used by early realists, John Spanier uses Carr's own dichotomisation of 'utopianism/realism' in *Games Nations Play*, Eighth Edition (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1993), pp. 12-14 and 26-27. The strength of the impact of *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, in particular, on the field of IR is made evident by the fact that it is the only work by Carr cited in any of these texts.

12. On the differences between 'classical' realism and other realisms of the 'neo' and 'structural' varieties (the latter two are sometimes equated, but in more recent works are differentiated), see Baylis and Rengger, *op.cit.*, in note 11, pp. 1-28; Hollis and Smith, *op.cit.*, in note 11, pp. 1-44; Robert O. Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1986), *passim*; and Barry Buzan, Charles Jones and Richard Little, *The Logic of Anarchy* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), *passim*.

theorising than those demonstrated by their successors.<sup>13</sup> Almost all theorists of the classical realist tradition (including Carr, Hans Morgenthau and Reinhold Niebuhr) attempted to come to grips with the problem of the place of ethical action in foreign affairs; most also based their understandings of the workings of international politics on a profoundly historical perspective. Nevertheless, despite their critical and historical stance *vis-à-vis* international politics, classical realists should not be exempt from criticism on a number of fronts, including their dichotomisation of international politics into overly simplistic categories such as realism/idealism (or, in the case of Carr, utopianism)<sup>14</sup>, or their possible confusion and misinterpretation of historical categories. Where social forces in particular are concerned, although only Carr treated them with any degree of specificity (as opposed to Niebuhr's concern with the evil present on the level of human nature or Morgenthau's assertions of the impossibility of 'moral' action by the state), much of the work of the classical realists pointed to an indictment of 'utopian' or 'idealist' trends in international politics as inevitably dangerous and nefarious. Carr sought to outline the normative history of utopianism in international politics; he also spelled out in some detail who the 'utopians' were, although his definition was sweeping and often contradictory.<sup>15</sup>

---

13. Favourable comparisons of classical versus neo- or structural realism gained momentum in 1984 with Richard Ashley's article, 'The Poverty of Neorealism', *International Organization* (Vol. 38, No. 2, Spring 1984), especially pp. 263-76. Ashley, however, also criticises classical realism for closing off important questions ('it honors the silences of the tradition it interprets') and for failing as a 'theory of world politics' (p. 274). Robert Cox has long applauded Carr for his 'historical mode of thought', placing him in the same category as other scholars (such as Braudel and Wallerstein) whose work is 'sensitive to the relationship between social forces, the changing nature of the state and global relationships'. See his 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 10, No. 2, 1981), especially, pp. 127-31. More recently, Andrew Linklater and Paul Howe have brought new perspectives to our understanding of the contributions of Carr and classical realism. Linklater, in 'The Question of the Next Stage in International Relations Theory: A Critical-Theoretical Point of View', *Millennium* (Vol. 21, No. 1, 1992), p. 96, argues that, '[p]erhaps ironically, Carr's political realism is a useful point of departure in addressing 'the question of how states and other social actors could create new political communities and identities'. Howe, in 'The Utopian Realism of E.H. Carr', *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 20, No. 3, July 1994), pp. 277-97, reviews the entire body of Carr's work to refute charges of relativism and determinism.

14. On the point of the dichotomisation fostered by realist IR theory, see R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 123-24. Hedley Bull, in a re-evaluation of Carr written twenty-five years ago, also notes 'the artificiality of some of the dichotomies' contained in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, especially 'the breathtaking equation in chapter II. utopia:reality = freewill:determinism = theory:practice = the intellectual:the bureaucrat = left:right = ethics:politics'. See Hedley Bull, 'The Twenty Years' Crisis Thirty Years On', *International Journal* (Vol. 24, No. 4, Autumn 1969), pp. 627-28.

15. For example, at times utopianism comprises intellectuals as opposed to the masses; at others it includes mass public opinion against governments; at still others it consists primarily of the British and French governments (the 'satisfied powers') against Germany and Italy; and yet at still others it seems to be mainly the Left against both governments and the masses. Carr, *op. cit.*, in note 11, pp. 15-18, and *passim*.

Throughout *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, however, social agents are placed in the category of utopianism primarily when they are viewed as supporting the League of Nations, or international law and organisation more generally. Although Carr does not use the term 'peace movement', he does enumerate movement groups (the Union of Democratic Control, the League of Nations Union, the New Commonwealth Society) in his indictment of utopianism, as well as 'campaigns' and 'agitations' that were inevitably led by movements (e.g., campaigns for the popularisation of international politics, the Geneva Protocol, the Permanent Court of International Justice, the World Disarmament Conference; agitations against secret treaties). For this reason and because most elements of pre-World War I and interwar peace movements were strong supporters of global international organisation, it is appropriate to relate his criticisms to what has since become known as the 'peace movement'. The labelling of movement groups and campaigns as 'utopian' as opposed to 'realist', I argue, has created a stigma around attempts by social forces to influence the course of peace and security affairs. This stigma has endured in both popular and theoretical parlance over the past fifty years and should be re-examined.

Carr viewed members of groups that supported these causes as agents who act inappropriately in the international arena by attempting to institutionalise legal and ethical principles designed (and only suitable) for the domestic realm. Movement agents are motivated by 'utopianism', which Carr opposes to the 'realism' he believes necessary to act effectively in international politics. Moreover, Carr implicates peace movements in his trenchant critique of nineteenth and twentieth century liberalism and sees them as principal advocates of what he labels the 'harmony of interests', i.e., the notion that what is good for the individual is good for the collectivity, even when the 'individuals' who define the collective good happen to be those who are most powerful and prosperous. This false belief in 'harmony', for Carr, takes two forms: faith in the liberal economic doctrine of *laissez-faire*, and the belief that global peace can be attained through law and the force of reason. Most nefarious, for him, is the attempt to institutionalise such notions in the form of global international organisation.

In this article, I take issue with both the substance and the implications of Carr's argument. First, if one looks carefully at the character and goals of peace activism *vis-à-vis* international legal standards, one sees that not only has Carr vastly oversimplified complex historical phenomena in creating the realist/idealist dichotomy, but also that his critique of the harmony of interests, and his linkage of that notion to peace activism, in fact applies primarily to the height of Cobdenism in the middle of the nineteenth century, somewhat less to turn of the

century progressivism, and little to other periods covered in his broad historical sweep.<sup>16</sup> Second, if Carr's critique of law and social forces in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* is thus time-bound, then his criticisms of the role of peace movements as well as his dismissal of the applicability of law, ethics and international organisation to international life must also be questioned.<sup>17</sup> Finally, we must recognise that the attempt to paint particular kinds of social activity as inappropriate to international life tends to close down inquiry into the significant ways in which movements can effect change at the international level; it also tends to moot the exploration of what type of purposeful actions by such movements might facilitate the creation and maintenance of international peace.

This article proceeds first by reviewing the 'realist tradition' as articulated by Carr. It then assesses the role of peace movements in articulating and promoting international legal norms during five periods in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, beginning with movement foundations in the post-Napoleonic era and ending with the institutionalisation of some (but not all) movement programmes in the form of the League of Nations. Carr covers much of the same historical ground in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, but my contention is that, in treating this

---

16. In fact, the notion of a false 'harmony' founded upon the interests of the powerful probably applies best to the US-led international order after World War II. Although much of Carr's advice regarding the need to found state relationships on an acknowledgment of power was, arguably, more rigorously followed during this period than in previous ones, the post-World War II period was also the one most marked by the belief that 'realism' concerning power relationships goes hand-in-hand with securing liberal prosperity and international harmony.

17. In other works including *The Moral Foundations for World Order* (Denver, CO: Social Science Foundation, University of Denver, 1948), and *Conditions of Peace* (London: Macmillan, 1942), Carr appears to moderate some of his views regarding the possibilities of morality and law expressed in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. Although I am using Carr's *Twenty Years' Crisis* as a prototype and forerunner of an extremely influential tendency in international relations theory, I must note several points regarding his other work that, I believe, do not negate this stance. First, Carr's conceptions of law, morality and purposeful social agency remain, in my view, underdeveloped in his other works. Moreover, Carr, in *The Moral Foundations for World Order*, articulated a laudable notion of international morality that would eliminate 'discrimination of individuals on grounds of race, colour, or national allegiance' (p. 22) and would be founded upon 'satisfying those primitive human needs of food and clothing and shelter' (through 'an international coordination, if not an international pooling, of resources' rather than by 'an indiscriminate opening of international markets', pp. 25-26). Yet, it is unclear how such an order (which most peace advocates also favoured) can be based on an international consensus that does not emanate from some type of notion of equality of status, a normative principle that Carr continued to excoriate (p. 11). It is also unclear how such a moral order can be founded on the type of 'realistic' assessment of power that does not attempt to transcend given power relationships, since powerful states, as Carr himself emphasises so well, have little interest in promoting the authority or prosperity of those who challenge their position. Finally, Carr chose to restate his criticisms of peace activists, groups and international law and organization in 1946, after many of his other works had appeared, in a second edition to *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. It is interesting that Carr was seen as no friend of international law and organization by at least some of his contemporaries: Philip Noel-Baker, a lifelong advocate of international organization and a fellow Labour party activist, once termed Carr 'utterly pernicious' (Noel-Baker to Lord Robert Cecil, 7 September, 1943, Viscount Cecil of Chelwood papers, #51109, British Library, London).



historical ground in a sweeping manner. Carr glosses over social, economic and political changes that had important implications for peace movements' composition and activities, and that his overly general treatment of peace activism makes his argument vulnerable to critique.<sup>18</sup> Third, it identifies three insights missed by Carr in his analysis of social forces, law and morality, and the harmony of interests, insights that, once recognised, better enable us to understand the significant ways in which social movements might effect change in international life. These insights are 1) 'idealism' is neither an unchanging nor a monolithic strand of belief and activism in international affairs; 2) the notion of a 'harmony of interests' is based on both economic and political foundations and practices which Carr conflates in a manner that confuses the stance of movements *vis-à-vis* each; these must be disentangled if we are to see more clearly what movements represent regarding change in international relations; and 3) the persistence of societal attempts to create legal/ethical standards of behaviour, the fact that standards have been created, and the fact that such standards evolve with changing international circumstances indicates that, at a minimum, they are phenomena worthy of serious analysis. If we dismiss such attempts as irrelevant to political necessities, dangerous or both, we facilitate the dichotomisation of international practices in ways that encourage simplistic understandings of what is possible in international life, and that tend to foreclose a more nuanced analysis of the possibilities provided by both the continuities and changes in such standards in different historical periods. It is interesting that Carr, who prided himself on his abilities to perceive, identify and explain great historical trends and ideological movements, appears to have missed the significance and dynamism of social forces' promotion of international legal norms within the context of global international organisation.

### Carr and the Realist Tradition

Historical analyses of nineteenth and early twentieth-century peace movements generally focus on their gradual broadening from a small Quaker and Non-Conformist base to include a growing cadre of middle-class secular internationalists, picking up adherents of free trade, socialism and domestic reforms such as the abolition of slavery along the way. They also focus on nineteenth century peace groups' emphasis on arbitration and international adjudication of disputes, and the culmination of this work in the decision by governments to take steps towards codifying international law and creating

---

18. Carr actually harks back to the changes in ideas brought about by the Enlightenment (the idea of rational progress), the French revolution (the participation of the masses), and the publication of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (*laissez-faire* liberalism).

rudimentary judicial machinery through establishing first a World Court and second a 'congress of nations'.<sup>19</sup>

International relations theory has challenged this benign interpretation of events by categorising peace reformers through history as 'utopians' or 'idealists'. First developed by Carr who wrote immediately before and after World War II, this view juggled the relative value of 'realism' and 'idealism' in providing useful guides to foreign policy behaviour.<sup>20</sup> Carr carefully constructed a potent argument in favour of realism, based on the reasoning that one cannot legislate, or provide useful principles for, prudent behaviour by states. Moreover, Carr labelled those who advanced principles of international law and attempted to institutionalise their observance by states as members of the 'utopian' tradition. He disparaged, for example, the campaign for 'the popularisation of international politics' in the 1920s and 1930s as an overly emotional reaction to the breakdown of international order during the pre-war years.<sup>21</sup> He painted utopianism with a broad brush, as encompassing virtually all attempts to 'reform' foreign policy so that it conformed to given rules of behaviour and/or moral principles.

This was the basis for Carr's interpretation of the notion of a 'harmony of interests'. Anglo-American political and economic liberalism rested, for Carr, on the false assumption that that which promoted the welfare of the individual also advanced the well-being of the collectivity. Liberals clung unflinchingly to the belief in a natural harmony between individual and collective interests, and in their ability to define the boundaries of both. In practice, however, British (and later American) liberals consistently failed to recognise the irony in the fact that where 'harmony' was said to exist—for example in *Pax Britannica* and *Pax Americana*—it invariably benefited those who promoted it at the expense of those who were subjected to it. Carr's analysis of this notion provided a compelling explanation and critique of neoclassical economic/*laissez-faire* policies during both of these historical periods; it also outlined a potentially trenchant critique of treaty-based international law as promoting the *status quo* interests of the powerful. Carr did provide a useful reminder that what is legal is not necessarily moral, and that legal codes often benefit hegemons. Yet he took the concept of the harmony of interests even further to describe the

---

19. See, for example, A.C.F. Beales, *A History of Peace* (New York, NY: Dial Press, 1931); Peter Brock, *Pacifism in Europe to 1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), and Brock, *Freedom from War: Nonsectarian Pacifism 1814-1914* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Sandi E. Cooper (ed.), *Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe: The Crisis of Ideas and Purpose* (New York, NY: Garland, 1976); Merle Curti, *Peace or War: The American Struggle, 1636-1936* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1936); and Charles F. Howlett and Glenn Zeitzer, *The American Peace Movement: History and Historiography* (Washington, DC: American Historical Association, 1985).

20. When discussing the dichotomy used in international relations theory, I will follow convention and use the terms 'idealism' and 'idealists'; when citing Carr in particular I will follow his usage and employ the terms 'utopianism' and 'utopians'.

21. Carr, *op.cit.*, in note 11, p. 2.

## Millennium

imprudent lack of distinction between principles appropriate as a foundation for law in the domestic realm and those appropriate to statecraft in the international realm. Foreign policy decisions were never made on principle alone; politics and power always intruded. Because of this fact, it became futile, and even dangerous, to pretend that such principles could be applied (without benefiting the powerful) in the domain of international politics.

In formulating this argument, Carr adroitly acknowledged the 'limitations of realism' and the beneficial elements of 'utopianism':

Most of all, consistent realism breaks down because it fails to provide any ground for purposive or meaningful action. If the sequence of cause and effect is sufficiently rigid to permit of the 'scientific prediction' of events, if our thought is irrevocably conditioned by our status and our interests, then both action and thought become devoid of purpose. [...] Such a conclusion is plainly repugnant to the most deep-seated belief of man about himself. That human affairs can be directed and modified by human action and human thought is a postulate so fundamental that its rejection seems scarcely compatible with existence as a human being. Nor is it in fact rejected by those realists who have left their mark on history.<sup>22</sup>

Yet, ultimately, ethical considerations must give way to wise policy based on power considerations rather than principle:

What confronts us in international politics today is, therefore, nothing less than the complete bankruptcy of the conception of morality which has dominated political and economic thought for a century and a half. [...] The inner meaning of the modern international crisis is the collapse of the whole structure of utopianism based on the concept of the harmony of interests.<sup>23</sup>

Because of this conclusion, Carr saw the influence of peace movement actors as, at best, an anachronistic attempt to graft nineteenth century liberal notions of harmony onto twentieth century political reality and, at worst, a trend that promoted dangerous illusions about what was possible in international life. 'Slogans like peace and disarmament', for Carr, encouraged the 'fallacy of the

---

22. *Ibid.*, p. 92. Many students of Carr see more ambivalence in his defense of *realpolitik* than my interpretation of *The Twenty Years' Crisis* grants, including Howe, *op.cit.*, in note 13, and Jack Donnelly, 'Twentieth-Century Realism', in Nardin and Mapel, *loc.cit.*, in note 7, pp. 104-105. My position on Carr's fit with the *realist* tradition is obviously closer to that of Bull, *op.cit.*, in note 14, or Michael Joseph Smith, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), Chapter 4. Although the call for understanding the full body of Carr's work by contemporary theorists has merit, it is difficult, in my view, to interpret Carr's conclusions in his best known and most often used work as other than a defense of the necessity, sorry as it may be, of *realpolitik*. This is because Carr provides criteria for incorporating realism, but not utopianism, into political action.

23. Carr, *op.cit.*, in note 11, p. 62.

power of international opinion';<sup>24</sup> campaigns for arbitral tribunals were examples of an erroneous tendency to 'dissolve politics into law'.<sup>25</sup>

Carr's perspective, then, views idealism largely as incapable of transforming utopian principles into action. He explicitly criticised attempts to found state behaviour on a legal or ethical basis as part and parcel of the belief in a harmony of interests. False notions of harmony cause most principles to be skewed toward the interests of the powerful; the necessity of addressing questions of power makes moral considerations impossible to follow in international politics. Specific ethical principles such as 'equality of status' can thus have little meaning when applied to relations between states.<sup>26</sup> The problem of designing a moral code is compounded when dealing with the anarchic nature of international politics. According to Carr, 'Its defects are due, not to any technical shortcomings, but to the embryonic character of the community in which it functions'.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, law runs into the same obstacles as morality: 'Rules, however general in form, will be constantly found to be aimed at a particular state or group of states; and for this reason...the power element is more predominant and more obvious in international than in municipal law'.<sup>28</sup>

Carr thus categorised attempts to develop an ethical or legal basis for foreign policy, including efforts to codify acceptable reasons and means for the resort to force by states, as inappropriate extensions of principles designed for the domestic arena into the international arena. Moreover, he pigeon-holed those who advocated such views during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—both individuals and social movements—as aiders and abettors of a false, and outmoded, harmony of interests.

Looking at the history of the development of peace movements in the societies on which Carr was focused—Great Britain and the United States—during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one sees that Carr has skillfully pointed out what theorists of social movements who focus on the relationship between movements and *policy* neglect: that social forces may have real political effects through articulating and promoting standards of behaviour, be they legal or ethical norms. Yet a closer look at the history of nineteenth and early twentieth century movements indicates that Carr's broad-brush treatment mischaracterised this strand of social activism in significant ways—ways that hinder, rather than help, our understanding of the impact of such movements on international politics.

---

24. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 203-205.

26. 'The trouble is not that Guatemala's rights and privileges are only proportionately, not absolutely, equal to those of the United States, but that such rights and privileges as Guatemala has are enjoyed only by the good-will of the United States. The constant intrusion, or potential intrusion, of power renders almost meaningless any conception of equality between members of the international community'. *Ibid.*, p. 166.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 178.

28. *Ibid.*

### The History of Anglo-American Peace Movements in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Peace movement activism in nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain and the United States can be categorised into five periods: the foundational period in the post-Napoleonic and War of 1812 era; the period of radical/institutionalist debates in the 1830s and 1840s; the era of mid-century conflicts (during and after the Crimean and Civil wars) that resulted in the temporary decimation of peace movements; late nineteenth and early twentieth-century progressivism; and the post-progressive era of the partial institutionalisation of movement goals in the form of the League of Nations.<sup>29</sup> Despite this periodisation, which is done for heuristic clarity, these phases of peace movement activity should be viewed as only partially discrete. Peace movements grew, reformed and transformed themselves, and declined in response to varying national and international developments. They were affected by sociological developments in each period and by their consequent interaction with other types of domestic issues and movements; their goals and composition were often transformed by wars and international economic rivalries, and they were spurred on by nascent attempts at institutionalised international cooperation.

Movements broadened in their sociological composition throughout the nineteenth century, gradually expanding from their base in Protestant non-

---

29. A number of very good histories of Anglo-American movements covering some or all of these periods exists. Those I have relied on most extensively include two early surveys of movement activity: A.C.F. Beales, *op.cit.*, in note 19, and Merle Curti, *op.cit.*, in note 19. For the nineteenth century, see Peter Brock's studies of pacifism, including *Pacifism in Europe to 1914*, *op.cit.*, in note 19 and his more recent *Freedom from War, Nonsectarian Pacifism, 1814-1914*, *op.cit.*, in note 19; Sandi E. Cooper's work on internationalism, *op.cit.*, in note 19 and his more recent *Patriotic Pacifism, Waging War on War in Europe, 1815-1914* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Charles F. Howlett and Glenn Zeitzer, *op.cit.*, in note 19. For the progressive era more specifically, major works on peace movements include David S. Patterson, *Toward a Warless World: The Travail of the American Peace Movement, 1887-1914* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1976); Warren F. Kuehl, *Seeking World Order: The United States and International Organization to 1920* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969); C. Roland Marchand, *The American Peace Movement and Social Reform, 1889-1918* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973); and Keith Robbins, *The Abolition of War: The 'Peace Movement' in Britain, 1914-1919* (Cardiff: The University of Wales Press, 1976). Important histories of interwar and twentieth century movements (or their component parts) include Peter Brock, *Twentieth-Century Pacifism* (New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1970); Martin Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain, 1914-1945* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980); Donald Birm, *The League of Nations Union, 1918-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); James Hinton, *Protests and Visions: Peace Politics in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London: Hutchinson Press, 1989); Charles Chatfield, *For Peace and Justice: Pacifism in America, 1914-1941* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1971); Charles Chatfield (ed.), *Peace Movements in America* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1973); Charles DeBenedetti, *The Peace Reform in American History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1980); DeBenedetti, *Origins of the Modern American Peace Movement, 1915-1978* (Millwood, NY: KTO Press, 1978); and Lawrence Wittner, *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1933-1983* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1984).

conformism to include secular, radical and internationalist elements. National and international security concerns also affected the movements in both countries, influencing their growth, decline, ability and desire to promote specific kinds of normative standards and institutional mechanisms for the maintenance of peace. If one situates the development of movements in the midst of domestic and international influences of their times, it is evident that movements should not be typecast solely as static representatives of particular interests or 'pie-in-the-sky' utopians incapable of evolution or reflexivity regarding the political and economic practices of their times. Many movement elements did not ignore power considerations in international politics: although they attempted to formulate norms and mechanisms that might, in their view, enable states to transcend power politics, their evolving programs and goals were an explicit response to their understanding of the nature and effects of states' use of power.<sup>30</sup> This understanding remained nascent in the first, foundational period of movement activity, when newly formed peace groups focused on the renunciation of aggressive war. In the middle of the century, movement groups articulated more forcefully norms of arbitration and adjudication of disputes, while simultaneously promoting the idea that peace and prosperity through free trade went hand-in-hand. During the latter part of the century, movements continued to push arbitration, now promoted through the mechanism of a World Court characterised by universal membership. For late nineteenth century internationalists, this was to be complemented by the codification of international law, which would impose concomitant rights and obligations upon all states and thereby reinforce the boundaries of acceptable state behaviour. The early twentieth century, and particularly the interwar period, was marked by the continuation of attempts to increase the effectiveness of the World Court and international arbitration machinery, efforts to expand the meaning of universalism and equality of status through constructing and maintaining a League of Nations (after World War I in particular, the League was seen by peace movements as the primary means of restraining Great Powers from promoting their interests at the expense of smaller states as well as of 'peoples': this, by extension, was seen as key to the prevention of war), and the move toward attempts to create new types of control of state war-making powers, particularly in the form of disarmament conventions and treaties. The following section delineates these continuities and changes in the norms promoted by movements.

---

30. As Baylis and Rengger point out, those in the interwar period who emphasised the role of 'collective decision-making, the rule of international law and collective security achieved through the League of Nations...were very far from being starry-eyed idealists if by that term is meant a wilful refusal to face unpleasant realities. Rather they asserted that the reality was that certain forms of international behaviour had led to the outbreak of the most horrific war in human history...and therefore they must be changed'. *Op.cit.*, in note 11, pp. 12-13.

*Movement Foundations*

In the United States, three peace societies were founded separately in New York, Massachusetts and Ohio between August and December, 1815. All three fused into the American Peace Society under the leadership of William Ladd in 1827. In Britain, William Allen founded the London Peace Society (technically, the Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace) in June, 1816.<sup>31</sup> Although ostensibly non-sectarian in orientation and membership, they promulgated overtly Christian ethics and were supported primarily by clergy.<sup>32</sup> Their historical importance lies in the fact that they represented the first solid attempt by overtly pacifist (Quaker) or pacifist-leaning churches to organise a political expression of their anti-war beliefs. As Peter Brock points out, this endeavour to engage in the political expression of anti-war beliefs, rather than the former practice of rejecting the political realm altogether, marked a new phase for nonconformists and other Protestant churches in the nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, the origin of organised peace activity was directly related to the occurrence of major international conflict: the original peace societies sprang up almost simultaneously in the United States and Britain as a direct reaction to the war of 1812 and the Napoleonic wars.<sup>34</sup> These first peace societies grew out of what was, before 1815, scattered disaffection in Britain with war policies toward revolutionary and then Napoleonic France, and disapproval in the United States of persistent fearmongering against Britain. They coalesced in response to these conflicts to propagate their opposition in public circles. They also were 'surprised and delighted' to learn of each others' existence and, after a time, began to initiate mutual contacts.<sup>35</sup>

The efforts of the British and American peace societies between 1814 and 1816 represented then, the first organised non-institutional expression of anti-war sentiment.<sup>36</sup> There appears to be no evidence to suggest these societies influenced, or gained much encouragement from, the simultaneous official attempts to control hegemonic war exercised by leaders of the Great Powers in

31. Beales, *op.cit.*, in note 19, p. 45; Brock, *Pacifism in Europe, op.cit.*, in note 19, p. 345.

32. The London Peace Society rejected collaboration with non-believers, and the American Peace Society also made Christian beliefs a prerequisite for membership until 1901, although this provision ceased to be rigidly enforced long before the turn of the century. Brock, *Pacifism in Europe, op.cit.*, in note 19, p. 383.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 355-56.

34. Cooper, 'The British Contribution', in Cooper (ed.), *loc.cit.*, in note 19, p. 21, and Beales, *op.cit.*, in note 19, p. 45.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

36. Continental Europe had no similar societies until 1830, when Jean-Jacques de Sellon founded the *Société de la Paix* in Geneva. This society, however, was short-lived, disintegrating with the passing of its founder in 1839. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism, op.cit.*, in note 29, pp. 16-19.

the form of the Concert of Europe.<sup>37</sup> Peace society activism, modest, mainstream and middle-class, did not yet seek to lobby or influence officialdom directly but rather concentrated on education and the propagation of anti-war ideas in first Christian, and later wider public circles. This in and of itself, nevertheless, still embodied a new type of politicisation of security issues and state policies of war and peace, since the attempt by social forces to influence citizen acquiescence in such policies was heretofore unknown.

The primary questions first debated by early nineteenth century movements included that of whether opposition to all war was required by Christian ethics. The debate over opposition to particular versus all wars brought into the open a fundamental division that would plague all Anglo-American peace movements thereafter. Pacifist opposition to war took the form of ethical opposition to all killing, while many who opposed war on a more selective basis, later to be called 'pacifists' and some to become 'internationalists', promoted a Whiggish-functional belief in international progress and reform.<sup>38</sup>

The London group expended a considerable amount of energy and resources in attempts to spread its ideas on the Continent, while the US society concentrated on proselytising and disseminating tracts to religious congregations. During this period and until the middle of the century, peace activists' methods in both countries did not include direct political pressure on governments.<sup>39</sup> They did not attempt to promote large projects for creating participatory institutions for resolving conflict on the international level, nor did they champion free trade as part and parcel of a peace program. However, despite the fact that movements tended not to target political institutions, they did begin discussing and debating methods of reversing and transcending the 'custom of war'.<sup>40</sup> Both pacifists and other anti-war society members agreed even at this stage on the need to renounce wars of 'aggression'; their joint call of opposition to the 'customary' character of war represented a nascent aspiration and the beginnings of action to influence international legal norms.

During this initial period, movement leaders had little connection to elites, and movement goals were neither representative of, nor strongly opposed to, state interests. Although the movements in both countries had begun to discuss and debate nascent projects of international law and organisation, their ideas were vaguely formed. They also had no developed economic programme or critique. Consequently, it is difficult to categorise the movements of this era as abettors of a harmony based on particularistic political or economic notions.

---

37. Cooper argues that the end of the Napoleonic wars spawned three *unrelated* groups seeking ways of controlling future wars in Europe: 'the international political and diplomatic elites, individual writers and intellectuals...and, finally, citizen activists'. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

38. On these distinctions, see Martin Ceadel, *op.cit.*, in note 29, pp. 1-8.

39. Brock, *Pacifism in Europe, op.cit.*, in note 19, pp. 379 and 384.

40. Noah Worcester, the founder of the Massachusetts peace society, and William Ladd, a young adherent in the 1820s, wrote continually on the need to abolish 'the custom of war'. Brock, *Freedom from War, op.cit.*, in note 19, pp. 37-44.



*The 1830s and 1840s: Radical Justice versus Free Trade Harmony*

This period was characterised initially by radical challenges to the 'respectable' religious domination of peace societies in both countries. These challenges, however, did not succeed as working-class and radical movement elements were eventually coopted by the free-trade liberalism of the 1840s. As a result, it is this period which ended by providing the best evidence for Carr's critique. Nevertheless, the 1840s were also marked by a series of 'international peace congresses' which provided a forum for the articulation and debate of a wide range of normative projects (including the idea of a 'congress of nations'), some of which would endure beyond the era of belief in the unity of free trade and peace.

Membership in peace societies declined in the 1820s after the initial post-war spurt of organisation. But new forms of radicalism in the 1830s and 1840s, arising primarily out of the Garrisonian wing of the abolitionist movement in the United States and labour organising in Britain, began to permeate movements in both countries. Just as the original American and London Peace Societies were aware of each other's work and took steps to communicate with each other, William Lloyd Garrison's New England Non-Resistance Society, founded in 1838, sent emissaries to Britain to recruit working-class Chartists to the methods of non-resistance, although with only limited success.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, labour activism for peace began to spread to the United States: in 1846 Elihu Burritt founded the League of Human Brotherhood, an international organisation that attempted to attract a working class membership.<sup>42</sup> The League enjoyed considerable organising success on both sides of the Atlantic. However, the natural conservatism of the older peace societies' leadership and the difference in methods between their temperate proselytising and the radical rejection of government by the Garrisonians, on the one hand, and the overt political organising of the British workers' movement, on the other, limited cooperation between the older societies and the new movements in both countries.<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, the changing economics of agriculture in Britain increasingly forced working-class radicals to compete with free traders for legitimacy on peace issues. The Quaker John Bright became the first persuasive proponent of the liberal creed within the movement; this liberal perspective was soon adopted by another prominent peace activist, Richard Cobden. This creed rested on three assumptions: that peace and prosperity were indissolubly linked, that both were possible to attain for all levels of the citizenry, and that both could only be attained by eliminating barriers to transnational (and especially commercial)

---

41. Some Chartists did become advocates of the peace cause, including Thomas Cooper and Henry Vincent. Brock, *Freedom from War, op.cit.*, in note 19, pp. 30-31, and *Pacifism in Europe, op.cit.*, in note 19, pp. 396-97.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 398, and Brock, *Freedom from War, op.cit.*, in note 19, pp. 104-13.

43. Howlett and Zeitzer, *op.cit.*, in note 19; Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1978), pp. 115-17; and Brock, *Pacifism in Europe, op.cit.*, in note 19, p. 347.

exchange.<sup>44</sup> After repeal of the corn laws in 1846, which had previously protected domestic agricultural producers against foreign exports, it was clear that 'Cobdenism' had won in Britain. The explicit linkage of free trade and peace provided the peace activism of the 1840s with a new focus, a new lease on life and a secular tone.<sup>45</sup> This linkage, however, also entailed the co-optation of British working-class radicalism by the middle class concern with prosperity through tariff reduction,<sup>46</sup> which in turn affected the course of peace activity by mooting demands for peace based on economic equality in favour of the promise of peace based on a belief in future prosperity. After 1840 the peace and free trade movements in Britain became explicitly linked and Cobden himself began to speak of both issues as one and the same cause, providing grist for the mill of Carr's critique of the 'harmony of interests' notion.

The coalition of mid-century peace forces on both sides of the Atlantic, however, also began to organise 'international' peace congresses in the 1840s. These congresses were designed to spread the faith more widely and, in particular, encourage continental Europeans to engage more actively in the discussion of how to attain a pacific world. In effect, their significance lies in the fact that they debated and articulated, over a six-year period, plans for international institutions that embodied norms of arbitration, adjudication and, to a lesser extent, universalism.

At the first International Peace Congress, held in London in 1843, delegates primarily from England and the United States agreed on resolutions advocating arbitration clauses as a means of settling international disputes and a 'high court of nations' to keep the peace in Europe.<sup>47</sup> The Brussels Congress of 1848 and the Paris Congress of 1849 resulted in continued emphasis on the need for international arbitration mechanisms and the creation of some type of international court. Other proposals, however, such as the argument for a

---

44. For a thoughtful treatment of Cobden within the tradition of International Relations that also reprints a number of his speeches on free trade and peace, see Arnold Wolfers and Laurence W. Martin (eds.), 'Richard Cobden', in *The Anglo-American Tradition in Foreign Affairs* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1956), pp. 196-205.

45. 'By 1846 the Anti-Corn Law League was the most powerful national pressure group England had known'. Cobden, its leader, 'was a free trader because he thought the interlocking of the world economy, as international specialization developed, would prevent war—despite the politicians doing their worst'. Peter Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation: An Economic History of Britain, 1700-1904* (London: Methuen & Co., 1976), pp. 293 and 301.

46. For a discussion of this point, see Gregory Claeys, 'Mazzini, Kossuth, and British Radicalism, 1848-1854', *Journal of British Studies* (Vol. 28, July 1989), pp. 225-61. See also Brock, *Pacifism in Europe*, *op.cit.*, in note 19, p. 396; Asa Briggs, *The Making of Modern England, 1783-1867* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 321; and E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1966), pp. 807-30.

47. The series of Peace Congresses, held from 1843 to 1849, was inspired by the success of the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention held in London. The attendance at the peace congresses was at first almost exclusively Anglo-American, with 292 British delegates, 26 US delegates and six continental delegates attending the London meeting of 1843. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism*, *op.cit.*, in note 29, p. 22, and Beales, *op.cit.*, in note 19, p. 67.

'congress of nations' (a project continually pushed by Burritt, who was originally inspired by William Ladd's writings of the 1820s), were opposed by the Europeans.<sup>48</sup> Likewise, delegates easily agreed upon the need for disarmament and reductions of weapons expenditures at the 1843 Congress, but by 1848 and 1849 'disarmament' held different meanings for Anglo-Americans, revolutionary sympathisers and advocates of the European *status quo*. Although the majority of British and US delegates could not sanction attempts to change oppressive domestic regimes through (violent) revolution, they registered 'ringing denunciations' of British and French foreign policy in Tahiti, China and Afghanistan for engaging in bloody repressions of non-European peoples.<sup>49</sup>

The peace congresses did not receive much, if any, official notice, and their proceedings and plans were ridiculed by those segments of the press who did pay attention.<sup>50</sup> Still, they represented the first public discussions of and agreement by various movement factions (religious pacifists, members of Burritt's League, and centrist peace society members) on incipient institutionalised expressions of the international legal norm of conflict resolution through arbitration. In addition, the discussion (without agreement) of disarmament obligations attendant upon all states and the condemnation of the control and repression of territories and peoples outside of Europe represented a further step toward the recognition of the responsibility of all states in ensuring peace (an aspect of the norm of universalism) and the rights of peoples to determine their own fate in international society (an aspect of the norm of equality of status).

Yet the belief that peace and harmony could be attained through prosperity brought about by liberal economic policies gained the upper hand with those newly called 'internationalists', who convinced many pacifists in both countries of their logic. The second international peace congress in particular was shaped by a liberal political-economic agenda, with Richard Cobden in attendance.<sup>51</sup> Free trade rhetoric increasingly suffused the British movement, particularly after 1846, and Cobden strengthened the explicit link between notions of liberal harmony and peace activism by publicly crediting the nonconformist peace testimony with influencing the broader repudiation of war that he himself did much to popularise.<sup>52</sup>

A major component of the link between liberalism and peace at this time, justifying Carr's critique of the liberal harmony of interests, was peace groups' tendency to support the international *status quo* against revolutionary movements. Cobden and other liberals in the movement, for example, 'had little sympathy...with the contemporary movements for national liberation on the

---

48. Protestant/secular versus Catholic, and West versus East European divisions prevented delegates from 'republican' states such as France from agreeing to a congress where all states, including those where revolutionary forces were suppressed, would sit as equals. Cooper, *op.cit.*, in note 29, pp. 23-25.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24, and Beales, *op.cit.*, in note 19, p. 68.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

52. Brock, *Pacifism in Europe, op.cit.*, in note 19, p. 406.

continent', because they feared that the break-up of states into smaller political units would worsen nationalism and hamper free trade.<sup>53</sup> However, neither strict pacifism nor Cobden's brand of free trade liberalism were able to survive the mid-century wars fought by Britain and the United States intact. These tendencies would be supplemented by yet new sociological-intellectual currents in the latter part of the century, currents which nonetheless continued to engage in discussion and debate of international legal/institutional mechanisms to ensure peace. These new currents would demonstrate that agreement on norms of arbitration and the observance of legally-sanctioned rules of state conduct did not automatically go hand-in-hand with free trade notions of harmony.

### *The Crimean and Civil Wars*

The effect of mid-century wars was to shatter the fragile unity between the original religious peace groups, the small radical components and the then-dominant free trade leadership. For Britons, the Crimean War, which broke out in 1854 and involved Britain in a major European war for the first time in 40 years, roused patriotic fervour, while some peace activists' attempts to stop the war once it had begun discredited the movement.<sup>54</sup> After 1857, with nationalism and imperialism on the rise, both Cobden and the Quaker liberal John Bright, the leaders of the then more or less fused free trade and peace movements, lost their seats in Parliament.<sup>55</sup>

In the United States, the war with Mexico seemed to improve the peace movement's status during the 1840s, but the Civil War fifteen years later, like the Crimean War for the British, had the effect of seriously curtailing peace activism and decimating the membership of peace societies. The American Peace Society, fearful of losing its *raison d'être*, refused to take a position for or against slavery, while the conflict itself made many who had previously believed war to be an unmitigated evil conclude that force provided the best means of eliminating slavery and the danger of breaking apart the Union. Moreover, in addition to the negative effects that involvement in war produced for the individual movements in each country, the Civil War caused a breach of the heretofore amicable communications between the British and American peace societies: the British could not approve of the majority of US peace workers' endorsement of the war.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, peace activity remained meagre for at least two decades.

---

53. *Ibid.*, p. 389.

54. Beales, *op.cit.*, in note 19, p. 132.

55. The 1857 elections became to a large extent a referendum on Palmerston, including his activist foreign policy in both the Crimea and China. Cobden and Bright were some of Palmerston's most vocal critics, and their loss resulted in 'the almost complete annihilation of the Manchester School' and its liberal ethic in Parliament. Briggs, *op.cit.*, in note 46, pp. 420-22.

56. Brock, *Pacifism in Europe, op.cit.*, in note 19, p. 390, and Patterson, *op.cit.*, in note 29, p. 2.

## Millennium

This period 'cleansed' the movements of their early faith in the power of Christian values and public opinion to achieve national and international peace. It forced many, in the United States especially, to rethink the boundaries of what they previously considered to be absolute pacifism, a dilemma that would arise anew during the 1930s. The experience of devastating wars also compelled movement activists who began to reorganise peace efforts in the latter part of the century either to replace or augment their faith in the power of public opinion and free trade with more insistent demands for legal and institutional supports for peace.

### *The Progressive Era*

Peace activity was again infused in the 1890s by new domestic reform movements, who began once again to broaden the issue-base as well as the social base of the peace movement. The last decade of the 1800s and the first two decades of the 1900s are often referred to as the 'progressive' era, one characterised by a 'search for order',<sup>57</sup> when 'the gospel of expertise and efficiency merged with economic regulation, social control, and humanitarian reform to become a conspicuous part of the public life of both countries'.<sup>58</sup> Many progressive reformers joined forces with older, bourgeois peace groups to work for arbitration, and increasingly added disarmament and the development of international organisation to their peace programs.<sup>59</sup> The most significant new push during the late nineteenth century, however, was the move by international legal specialists in favour of the codification of international law. During this period, movements began to have a more direct impact on the state policies regarding accepting and institutionalising two legal norms: conflict resolution through arbitration, as demonstrated with the creation of the World Court; and universal participation in and responsibility for decisions about peace and security, as demonstrated by debates over plans for a league of nations.

In the last decades of the century, peace activism first appeared to take up where it had left off in the 1850s: the decline of the quasi-pacifist and radical

---

57. Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1967).

58. Although some view progressivism as a distinctly US phenomenon, with liberalism as its British counterpart and both opposed to Toryism and socialism, others point to its amorphous transatlantic nature, pointing out that 'British Fabians, Social Imperialists, Liberal Imperialists, and some Socialists, as well as American progressives of various ideological stripes, were attracted to this new creed of social instrumentalism'. Morton Keller, 'Anglo-American Politics, 1900-1930, in *Anglo-American Perspective: A Case Study in Comparative History*', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (Vol. 22, No. 3, July 1980), p. 463. See also Daniel T. Rodgers, 'In Search of Progressivism', *Reviews in American History* (Vol. 10, December 1982), p. 127, fn. 1.

59. Neil A. Wynn, *From Progressivism to Prosperity: World War I and American Society* (New York, NY: Holmes & Meier, 1986), p. 26; Nigel Young, 'Tradition and Innovation in the British Peace Movement: Towards an Analytical Framework', in Taylor and Young (eds.), *op.cit.*, in note 3, pp. 8, 12, and 14; Robbins, *op.cit.*, in note 29, pp. 10-13; and Marchand, *op.cit.*, in note 29, *passim*.

wings of the two movements (begun in the 1840s with their cooptation into free-trade liberalism), combined with the fact that both Britain and the United States were major players on the world stage, gave a greater voice to the growing number of Establishment business internationalists who emerged as leaders of the movement, especially in the United States.<sup>60</sup> This revival of peace activism also appears at first glance to confirm the hold that liberal economic norms, including free trade, held over peace activism. Yet the fact that both Britain and the United States were also caught up in a new competition that affected security relations—the imperialist rivalries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, attested to by Britain's participation in the scramble for Africa and the Boer War, and the Spanish-American War waged by the United States—again split peace activists. Peace groups coexisted uneasily with nationalist claims, although a number of internationalists in both countries resolved the dilemma by justifying their own country's imperialism in the name of a 'civilising mission' of spreading liberalism and democracy to 'backward' peoples.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, renewed imperialist policies during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century split Progressives, and caused components of the Left in both countries to cultivate an increasingly anti-war stance.<sup>62</sup>

Progressivism and its impact on politics, including foreign affairs, is open to a wide variety of assessments and interpretations.<sup>63</sup> In one interpretation, the focus on reform by virtually all types of US activists—Eastern liberals, Republican legalists, other assorted internationalists, and those who tied domestic reform issues to international peace—demonstrated a strong belief in internationalising domestic economic practices in a way that still very often fit with the notion of a harmony of interests.<sup>64</sup> Patterson, for example, points out that for elite leaders of the movements in this era, the equation of peace with

60. Cooper, *op.cit.*, in note 19, pp. 13-14.

61. In the United States in particular, advocating internationalist solutions to conflict provided, for some, a way to plan for increasing the American presence in world affairs, engineering the growth of US power and influence in what they believed to be a benevolent manner. See Robert E. Osgood, *Ideals and Interests in America's Foreign Relations* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 86-87, and Patterson, *op.cit.*, in note 29, pp. 126-31.

62. Marvin Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics During the First World War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 5-7; Martin Shaw, 'War, Peace and British Marxism, 1895-1945', in Taylor and Young, *loc.cit.*, in note 3, pp. 54-57; and Brock, *Freedom from War, op.cit.*, in note 19, p. 303.

63. An excellent review of these is offered by Daniel T. Rodgers who ultimately argues against any single interpretation. *Op.cit.*, in note 58, pp. 113-32. See also Morton Keller, *op.cit.*, in note 58, pp. 458-77, and Wiebe, *op.cit.*, in note 57, Chapter 9.

64. Although they do not use the term, 'harmony of interests', many students of the era see the ultimate outcome of Progressivism in essentially the same light. See, for example, the discussions by Patterson, *op.cit.*, in note 29; Charles Chatfield, *The American Peace Movement: Ideals and Activism* (New York, NY: Twayne Publishers, 1992), pp. 18 and 25; Warren F. Kuehl, *Seeking World Order: The United States and International Organization to 1920* (Vanderbilt, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969); and, for a more introspective view of the inherent difficulty of combining a progressive moral posture with notions of self-interest, see Osgood, *op.cit.*, in note 61, especially pp. 15-16.

free trade was at its apex.<sup>65</sup> The trends toward professionalisation of many occupations (e.g., teaching, medicine, law, and social work) did little at first to negate the growing elite Establishment influence on the movements—indeed, well-connected spokespersons were most often seen as a boon to the cause. In Britain, Establishment activists who felt that the traditional peace societies were 'too closely identified with Nonconformist pressure groups' joined the American-led International Law Association to further projects for international arbitration among elite classes of lawyers and public officials.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, many progressive reformers made new connections between peace and economic and social needs, both at home and abroad, connections which engendered a distinct unease with liberal notions of harmony. Indeed, a number of progressives came to peace activity *because of* their efforts to reform domestic economic and political practices, and their concerns about the exclusionary aspects of turn-of-the-century liberal society (the concern with the unemployed and marginalised by the settlement house movement imported into the United States from Britain by Jane Addams; suffragists' efforts to end the exclusion of women from political participation in both countries). Addams advocated state controls on *laissez-faire* capitalism and the Woman's Peace Party worked for the democratisation of security decisions and foreign policy.<sup>67</sup>

Moreover, a left-wing critique of war was also slowly developing during the Progressive era. Although socialists were not consistently concerned with foreign policy issues during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the birth of the Labour Party in Britain and the activism of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) engendered debates over the form that a socialist critique of war should take. At the same time, some union members and radical pacifists developed a less nationalist anti-militarism across the Atlantic.<sup>68</sup> Despite the differences in the analysis of economic practices on the part of Establishment liberals, progressive reformers, and the socialist Left, all movement components, however different their analyses of the causes of war, worked to legitimise norms that constrained states' right to wage war and to institutionalise mechanisms for engendering interstate cooperation.<sup>69</sup>

Through the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries then, peace groups gained adherents in fits and starts, broadening their sociological base as

65. Patterson, *op.cit.*, in note 29, pp. 12-13 and 126-29.

66. Robbins, *op.cit.*, in note 29, p. 8.

67. Chatfield, *op.cit.*, in note 64, pp. 25-26; DeBenedetti, *Peace Reform, op.cit.*, in note 29, pp. 87-88; 'Address Given at the Organisation Conference of the Woman's Peace Party', in John Whitely Chambers II (ed.), *The Eagle and the Dove: the American Peace Movement and United States Foreign Policy, 1900-1922* (New York, NY: Garland, 1976), pp. 260-61.

68. Swartz, *op.cit.*, in note 62; Shaw, *op.cit.*, in note 62; and Brock, *Freedom From War, op.cit.*, in note 19, pp. 303-305.

69. In Britain, for example, the cause of arbitration was advocated not only by the elitist International Law Association, but also by the International Arbitration League, first known as the Workmen's Peace Association and drawing its base from 'extensive trade union contacts'. Robbins, *op.cit.*, in note 29, p. 8.

other domestic social movements grew and found common ground in the goal of promoting peace through arbitration. In the 1840s-50s, the dominant theme in peace group activism encouraged the notion of a harmony of interest between the promotion of individual prosperity and international peace, and the concomitant promotion of both 'civic rights' among states and rights to private property, with trade on the international level occurring among property owners according to a free-market regulation of supply and demand. The linkage between free trade and peace also encouraged a *status quo* conception of international order, with movement leaders arguing against intervention in support of revolutionary movements on the continent. The decimation of the mid-century movements, however, made the notion of 'harmony' a moot point for effective peace activism; the turn-of-the-century infusion of Progressive reformers and the marriage of peace with social concerns ultimately made the reconstitution of the idea of a harmony of interests problematic.

Thus, as a result of both the changing sociological composition of groups interested in 'peace' and the new competition between states for colonies and prestige, the mix of norms and institutions that peace activists attempted to internationalise evolved away from the notion of a harmony of interests. As new actors struggling for additional rights on the domestic level became interested in the peace issue (abolitionists, labour unions, settlement house workers, and suffragists), peace groups increasingly reflected a concern with 'humanising' international relations and with ensuring the participation of all peoples and political entities in decisions affecting their welfare.<sup>70</sup> Rather than equating the promotion of 'harmony' with the promotion of universal participation in international institutions, peace activity should be seen as an evolutionary process that moved from an emphasis on the former in the middle of the century to an emphasis on the latter at the century's end. This evolution was related to both the change in the balance of social groups composing peace movements over time, and the domestic and international political crises with which they had to contend. At the turn of the century, the Darwinian struggle among the Powers for colonies and influence left a great number of these new peace activists uneasy with, and many openly critical of, founding international harmony on rights to ownership and control of resources, people and territory. As a result, some began to question the 'civilising effects' of Empire, and most concentrated their 'peace' efforts on the promotion of international order through universalist civic rights and the creation of an international judiciary and 'legislature' for

---

70. It is important to note that, although peace activism broadened from a small reformist religious base to include abolitionists, suffragists, business interests and socialists, it remained very much a type of activism rooted primarily in the middle-classes, and its rank-and-file membership was drawn largely from the service professions: teaching, the clergy, medicine, law and social work. This sociological profile fits with those observed by a great number of social movement theorists. See especially Frank Parkin, *Middle-Class Radicalism: The Social Bases of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968).



## Millennium

discussing and resolving disputes.<sup>71</sup> Many saw the two international congresses at the Hague of 1899 and 1907, which resulted in the creation of the World Court, as the first tangible institutional fruits of their efforts; some new critics of old notions of harmony also saw in these mechanisms the means by which imperialism might be delegitimised, 'subject peoples' granted rights as participants in international society, and peaceful change made possible.

### *Connections Between Pre-World War I and Interwar Movements*

Until recently, peace movements have not been given much direct credit for influencing states to create international institutions to facilitate arbitration and help ensure peace. Now, however, historians are revising their analyses of Wilsonianism and the foundation of the League of Nations to grant peace movements a greater and potentially determinative role.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, it appears to be the case that important components of early twentieth century movements—including the Fabians in Britain and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in the United States—did wield more influence on the development of schemes for global international organisation than previously thought.<sup>73</sup> Even more significant, perhaps, is the role that peace movements during and after World War I played in ensuring that the normative foundations of their projects would provide new 'standards' of diplomacy and 'guides' for state foreign policy practice, standards that would be debated throughout the twentieth century.

Interwar movements differed from their nineteenth and early twentieth century predecessors in their direct experience of world-wide, cataclysmic war, conducted with enormously destructive weapons such as submarines, poison gas, and airplanes that for the first time directly targeted civilians. Consequently, interwar movements no longer expressed qualms about disarmament: arms reduction, either unilateral or multilateral, became the primary focus of many in the movements on both sides of the Atlantic for more than a decade. Disarmament supplanted even the progressive-era push for codification of international law in the eyes of many activists, because mere codification of existing practices in international law—particularly the foundational respect for states' sovereign

---

71. Movement influence on governments in the pre-World War I period probably peaked with the Second Hague Conference of 1907, 'a meeting that the powers would not have spontaneously convoked without considerable pressure exerted on them'. Cooper, *op.cit.*, in note 19, pp. 17-18. See also Kuehl, *op.cit.*, in note 64.

72. See, for example, Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992).

73. See Martin David Dubin, 'Toward the Concept of Collective Security: The Bryce Group's "Proposals for the Avoidance of War", 1914-1917', *International Organization* (Vol. 24, No. 2, Spring 1970), p. 299, and Peter Yearwood, "'On the Safe and Right Lines": The Lloyd George Government and the Origins of the League of Nations, 1916-1918', *Historical Journal* (Vol. 32, No. 1, 1989), pp. 131-55. Other works in the same vein include George W. Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation of the League of Nations, Strategy, Politics and International Organization, 1914-1919* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), and Kuehl, *op.cit.*, in note 64.

rights and the concomitant disregard for the 'self-determination of peoples'—was seen by the end of World War I to assist in perpetuating an unjust *status quo*. Movement groups' willingness to challenge the international *status quo*, including their own governments' policies toward the League, mandatory arbitration, and disarmament, renders inaccurate Carr's attempt to conflate the interests of League supporters with those of Britain and France. After World War I, faith in state security practices and traditional forms of diplomacy was at a low never before seen, resulting in a widespread willingness to criticise government policies and put forth detailed alternatives that were based on principles of international law and organisation. The League, international law, and principles of universal participation and equality of status were advanced by movements not to further the particularistic state interests of Britain, France or even the United States, but rather to restrain them and 'enable' the discussion of how collective interests might be determined that were not based on false notions of harmony. Peace movements made an impact during the period because many groups could legitimately claim to represent thousands (and in the case of the British League of Nations Union or the US National Council for the Prevention of War, tens or even hundreds of thousands) of adherents which served to increase their chances of being heard in the Press, Parliament, Congress, and Cabinets in both countries.<sup>74</sup> Their activity constitutes what Carr labelled the 'popularisation of international politics' in the interwar period. But far from a continuation of mid-nineteenth century notions of 'harmony', or even the continuation of ideas favouring the internationalisation of liberal standards on the part of Progressive-era elites, interwar peace movements and their supporters by-and-large believed that international legal norms and institutions had to possess the capacity to control, in addition to reform, states' war-prone tendencies. Both the experience of imperialism and that of the pre-World War I alliance system had convinced many peace activists that Great Power concordats needed to be replaced by universal participation in decisions regarding international security, universal responsibility for maintaining peace, and equality of treatment at the international level.

Peace movements emphasised these norms in a number of ways. First, peace activists expected the newly created League of Nations to represent all states, and if possible all peoples, and toward this end worked for self-determination and in some cases independence of colonies as well as the inclusion of both the Soviet Union and Germany in the League. Secondly, they differed from pre-World War I activists in their concentrated and relatively unified stance in favour of the principles that all states should disarm and that trade in arms should not be

---

74. Birn, *op.cit.*, in note 29; Martin Ceadel, 'The Peace Movement between the Wars: Problems of Definition', in Taylor and Young (eds.), *loc.cit.*, in note 3, pp. 80-81; Wittner, *op.cit.*, in note 29, pp. 13-15; and Chatfield, *op.cit.*, in note 29, pp. 95-101.

allowed to continue unfettered.<sup>75</sup> Arbitrating conflict had been the *leitmotif* of the nineteenth century peace movements, and although peace groups in the immediate pre-World War I era agitated against the Anglo-German arms race, disarmament as a movement goal finally gained an equal footing with arbitration in the aftermath of the Great War. The continuing development of weapons of mass destruction during the interwar period, particularly the bomber and various chemical weapons, encouraged the perception that civilisation could not survive another war and fuelled the fire for disarmament. Finally, post-World War I movements put international social issues such as the 'traffic in women and children', the opium trade, the effects of reparations and the blockade of formerly enemy countries, at the forefront of international concerns.<sup>76</sup>

Historians have recognised the implications of these developments on movement activism. Peter Brock, for example, asserts that 'the new pacifism' of the post-1914 era 'came to possess a social concern' not present earlier, in that both pacifists and other sections of the wider post-World War I peace movement became 'acutely aware of the need for social change in effecting the elimination of war and violence from the world'.<sup>77</sup> Although still vaguely defined, the new willingness to challenge the 'institutions of war' (including secret diplomacy among the Great Powers, rearmament and the arms trade), for both pacifists and internationalists, would entail a wider change in consciousness and the beginnings of a deeper critique of state and international practices than that provided by either the idea of a 'harmony of interests' which dominated the mid-nineteenth century or the reformist spirit prevalent in the Progressive era. For Charles DeBenedetti, 'the modern American peace movement that arose during 1914-20 was radically different from its prewar counterparts in its methods of understanding and analysis, its transnational humanism, its left-wing political orientation, and its explicit lines of alternative action'.<sup>78</sup> As James Hinton succinctly describes this transformation in his study of British movements, 'Nineteenth-century peace movements set out to improve the world: twentieth-century ones struggle to save it'.<sup>79</sup> Mid-nineteenth century 'idealism' and one component of its late nineteenth century successor were products of liberal political institutions, a belief in a British and/or American *mission civilisatrice*, and faith in the unity of the free trade ethic and peace. The fundamental

---

75. Peace groups differed, however, in whether they advocated unilateral or multilateral disarmament, and in whether they believed the arms trade should be completely banned or put under the exclusive control of governments.

76. This was especially true of the League of Nations societies and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in both countries, demonstrated by a review of the minutes of their meetings over the period. The League of Nations Union (LNU) and the British Women's International League papers are held in the Manuscript Room of the British Library of Political and Economic Science and the US-WILPF papers are held in the Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

77. Brock, *op.cit.*, in note 29, p. 12.

78. Charles DeBenedetti (ed.), *Peace Heroes in Twentieth Century America* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 9.

79. Hinton, *op.cit.*, in note 29, p. 1.

difference between the pre and post-1914 eras was the final disintegration of precisely these assumptions about how 'peace' could be attained and maintained.

### The Peace Movement, Agency and Change

This historical overview of Anglo-American peace activity during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries suggests three insights either missed or glossed over by Carr: 1) the notion of a 'harmony of interests' and its relation to peace movement activity must be unpacked to reveal both its economic and its political foundations if we are to see more clearly what movements represent regarding change in international relations; 2) doing so demonstrates that 'idealism' is neither an unchanging nor monolithic strand of belief and activism in international affairs; and 3) the attempt to dismiss ethical/legal standards of state behaviour as irrelevant to political necessities, dangerous or both misses important questions resulting from persistence of societal attempts to create such standards, the fact that standards have been created, and the fact that such standards evolve with changing international circumstances.

The above brief history of the attempts by social movements to influence international legal norms in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries indicates that, for peace movements, Carr's construction and critique of the 'harmony of interests' is too sweeping and too tied to liberalism's economic foundations, *i.e.*, the ethic of free trade determined by market notions of supply and demand, to aid our understanding of *how* and *why* movements attempted to internationalise principles embedded in domestic beliefs and practices.

Students of liberal 'harmony' generally recognise both its economic and political components. Carr equated liberalism with utopianism, and refused to see how the latter might include categories that could be differentiated from the former. If liberalism is founded on 'a shared commitment to four essential institutions',<sup>80</sup> two economic and two political, Carr's error in conflating the liberal economic doctrine of harmony with moves toward international problem-solving mechanisms becomes clearer. Peace groups gradually developed a program founded on agreement to internationalise two of the four liberal institutions: 1) juridical equality of members, and 2) representative legislatures 'deriving their authority from the consent of the electorate' (in the international realm, the gradual move toward global international organisation).<sup>81</sup> The first provided the foundation for peace groups' primary focus during the 1900s: the

---

80. Virtually all students of liberalism analyse and debate the relative weight and worth of its political and economic components. The breakdown used here, relating liberalism's legacy to international politics, is taken from Michael Doyle, 'Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* (Vol. 12, No. 3, Summer 1983), pp. 207-208.

81. Again, many peace groups would have preferred that a method be found to construct global international organisation in such a way as to represent 'peoples' rather than 'states', but most agreed to support the League's state-centred structure anyway, although some did so as a temporary measure.

institutionalisation of arbitration procedures to prevent conflict and proposals for the codification of international law.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, throughout the century peace activism focused on arbitration, through promoting bilateral arbitration treaties and clauses in treaties. Over time, nineteenth century peace activists also demonstrated an increasing interest in the second type of institution by drawing up plans for an International Tribunal or Congress of some type.

The third and fourth 'liberal institutions'—an economy resting on a recognition of the rights of private property and agreement that economic decisions be regulated by the forces of supply and demand—were matters of some contention for the various groups working for 'peace'. During the middle of the century, peace and free trade became tightly linked, and many prominent peace workers and groups adhered to the 'harmony of interests', in this case the belief that free trade and the right to ownership of private property increased both the prosperity of the individual and the prospects for peace in the international polity. However, although belief in this tenet remained strong amongst many upper middle-class activists throughout the century, accord on issues of economic organisation and distribution within peace movements *as a whole* often proved problematic. Crises and wars (the US Civil War, the Crimean War, and the second wave of imperialism) as well as overlapping membership with other movements (labour, abolitionism, feminism), also tended to disrupt peace movement accord on a 'harmony of interests' in the latter half of the century. Consequently, by the outbreak of the First World War, peace group agreement was limited to internationalising norms and methods of political conflict resolution.

Nineteenth century peace activism can be seen as a struggle between those who would prioritise universalist legal norms and their institutionalisation, and those who would stress founding peace on rights to private property and free trade. By the end of World War I, peace groups' focus had coalesced around plans to internationalise participatory institutions (and their concomitant rights) in the belief that 'peace' required universal participation and equality of status—norms that, it was believed, would allow for peaceful change rather than legitimate an unjust *status quo*. Peace movements believed that these norms, when institutionalised through a league of nations, would also replace the management of conflict by either unstable alliances or Great Power machinations. By the interwar period, agreement on the use of liberal economic institutions to foster peace had disintegrated, but accord on what might be called the 'republican compromise', *i.e.*, institutionalising norms of universalism, both in terms of rights to participation and in terms of obligations, was quite strong. Thus, in addition to working for recognition of the rights of Germany and the Soviet Union to full membership in the League and the principle of equality of status in armaments, interwar peace movements promoted the recognition of parity in the naval arms race between the US and Britain, and obligatory arbitration of conflict on a basis of juridical equality.

---

82. Brock, *Twentieth-Century Pacifism*, *op.cit.*, in note 29, p. 7.

Peace movement activism and goals, therefore, have evolved over time. In assessing movements' influence on the promotion and legitimisation of international legal norms—from arbitration to free trade liberalism to disarmament and universal participation and equality in a congress of nations—Carr begins with the interwar period and, criticising the failure of legal and moral standards and their institutionalisation in League mechanisms to keep peace, works backward to assert that efforts to ensure peace through institutionalising principles of conduct are misleading, often dangerous, and inevitably are conducive to furthering the interests of the powerful. However, if we begin with early nineteenth century peace movement activity and work forward, we see that dismissing such activism as irrelevant to political necessities misses the fact of its persistence and the facets of its evolving character. When we see the ways in which movements have reacted to and interacted with the structures and events of their times—the Napoleonic wars, protectionism, imperialist competition, the social dislocations brought about by both *laissez-faire* policies and neo-mercantilism, World War I, arms races—their goals and actions become understandable, sometimes logical, and even perhaps 'realistic'. Such a perspective should encourage a re-evaluation of the dichotomisation of international politics begun by Carr. It also opens up the possibility of a more thorough, contextualised assessment of movements' attempts to transcend the chaos and destruction wrought by these structures and events through creating new 'rules' of conduct and means of control, one that might find more promise or 'emancipatory potential' in some eras than others. Such an assessment, then, must pose the question of whether some international orders based on legal/ethical considerations might not be better than others, at least for a given historical time. More importantly, perhaps, Carr's dichotomisation and his indictment of the institutionalisation of norms through the League masks the fact that the Great Powers have very often *not* been able to use global international organisation to further their own interests. Neither the French, British or US governments were enthusiastic about the World Disarmament Conference of 1932, held under League auspices, precisely because they did not wish to be held to standards of parity in armaments, and it took the British movement ten years to convince its government to sign the Optional Clause, which committed Britain to 'obligatory arbitration' in the event of conflict.<sup>83</sup> Norms such as universal participation and equality of status, despite the fact that they have been only partially institutionalised in twentieth century global international organisations, can do more than mask the interests of the powerful in maintaining the *status*

---

83. This was because Britain refused to be put in the position of having claims brought against it by its current or former colonies; the United States likewise opposed mandatory arbitration—and refused to join the World Court—in order to maintain its 'freedom of action' *vis-à-vis* Latin American states. On the role of interwar peace movements in promoting disarmament and arbitration over and against governments' conceptions of their interests, see Cecelia Lynch, *Beyond Appeasement: The Role of Interwar Peace Movements in Peace, Security and the Evolution of International Organization*, forthcoming.

quo; they may also provide a mechanism for furthering and legitimising change in the international system.<sup>84</sup> often (although admittedly not always) *in opposition* to the interests of the powerful, as would later be the case during and after the era of decolonisation.

'Realist' international relations theory has taken from Carr the rhetorical device of dichotomisation, and has used it to set itself up as the standard of prudent statecraft against the utopianism of 'idealists'. In order to overcome this erroneous dichotomisation of action in international relations theory, an explicit recognition of the importance of the interaction between peace movements as social agents and the forms taken by domestic and international political and economic practices is necessary.<sup>85</sup> Disentangling, for example, nineteenth and early twentieth century forces put under the rubric of 'utopianism' by Carr demonstrates that peace movements, over time, increasingly formulated agendas critical of (British and US) state policies and practices, although Carr places both movement groups and liberal states in the same category. The reasons for this growing divergence between movement and state agents over time can only be understood by looking at the interplay of social activism with political and economic practice in a manner which does not characterise social forces in a monolithic fashion.

As mentioned earlier, Carr has been lauded for his historical perspicacity and his ability to identify and explain great socio-political trends and ideological movements. Yet, given his approach, it is not surprising that he failed to understand the importance or persistence of peace movement agency or the great historical move toward institutionalising international legal norms that restrain states' rights to engage in war and promote universalism and equality of status. This failure was the product not only of his opposition of realism and utopianism, but also of his inaccurate attempt to marginalise all such moves as the product of 'bankrupt' nineteenth century ideas.

Recognising both the persistence and the evolutionary nature of peace movement activity is critical, therefore, for transcending the misleading dichotomisation of social activity into realist or idealist camps. Recognising the relationship between this evolutionary activity and the articulation, legitimisation

---

84. These include, ironically, the very types of changes that Carr deems necessary in his other work (*i.e.*, consensus on the principle of non-discrimination according to race or nationality; and consensus on notions of equitable economic development).

85. Elements of this 'recognition' are currently referred to in the international relations literature as the 'agent-structure debate'. However, much of this literature primarily addresses itself to the role of *states* as agents, thereby neglecting the part played in international politics by domestic and transnational actors. See Alexander Wendt, 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory', *International Organization* (Vol. 41, No. 3, Summer 1987), pp. 335-70; David Dessler, 'What's At Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?', *International Organization* (Vol. 43, No. 3, Summer 1989), pp. 441-73; and, for critical discussion of this debate, Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, 'Beware of Gurus: Structure and Action in International Relations', *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 17, No. 4, October 1991), pp. 393-410, and 'Structure and Action: Further Comment', *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 18, No. 2, April 1992), pp. 187-88.

## Origins of International Legal Norms

and institutionalisation of international legal norms is important for developing our understanding of whether or not the actions of social movements are capable of introducing standards and practices that change the boundaries of what is possible in international life.

*Cecelia Lynch is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, USA*

---



Announcing a new journal from LRP

## GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

### *A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*

*edited by Roger Coate  
and Craig Murphy*

"A rich mine of evolution, controversy, ideas and research on the active, rather neglected world of organized international relations."  
—Leon Gordenker,  
Princeton University

**Global Governance** will provide a much-needed forum for practitioners and academics to discuss the impact of international institutions and multilateral processes on:

- economic development
- peace and security
- human rights
- the preservation of the environment.

In particular, **Global Governance** welcomes articles challenging the conventional wisdom, whether written by scholars or by practitioners who work with and within international institutions.

Cosponsored by the Academic Council on the United Nations Systems (ACUNS) and the United Nations University (UNU).

- Volume 1, 1995 (3 issues)
- Institutions: \$65.00
- Individuals: \$32.00
- ISSN 1075-2846

For subscriptions outside the U.S. and Canada, please add:  
US\$8 for surface mail or US\$16 for air mail

  
LYNNE  
RIENNER  
PUBLISHERS

1800 30TH STREET  
SUITE 314  
BOULDER, CO 80301

3 HENRIETTA STREET  
COWLEY GARDENS  
LONDON WC2E 8LU