

RUNNING HEADER: Disarmament, Citizen Activism, and the 1907 Hague Peace Conference

**“OUR EXPECTATIONS WERE PERHAPS TOO HIGH”: DISARMAMENT, CITIZEN ACTIVISM, AND THE 1907 HAGUE PEACE CONFERENCE**

*by Daniel Hucker*

Historical assessments of the 1907 Hague Peace Conference, like its 1899 predecessor, are usually framed in verdicts of success or failure. Although some specialist accounts rightly portray the Hague meetings as both successful and important, most analyses of the period emphasize their shortcomings, not least the failure to prevent war in 1914. This article interrogates *why* the existing historiography is framed in this simplistic – and ultimately misleading – success/failure dichotomy. Focusing on hopes and aspirations regarding disarmament ahead of the 1907 Hague Conference, it contends that networks of European and American citizen activists, by doing so much to bring the conference about and legitimizing disarmament as a topic for diplomatic discussion, ensured that immediate verdicts of the conference’s work focused on the (practically non-existent) outcomes in this domain. This lack of progress overshadowed all other accomplishments of the second Hague conference and established, well before 1914, a prevailing narrative of failure.

The 1907 Hague Peace Conference was, in many ways, a significant step forward from that which had met eight years earlier. It was certainly bigger and more international: twenty-six countries were represented in 1899, twenty of them European; forty-four countries participated in 1907, including seventeen from Latin America and three from Asia. Yet in spite of its greater size, the 1907 conference is viewed, if anything, less sympathetically than its predecessor. Despite recent attempts to reassess the legacies of both conferences, little has altered in the sixteen years since Nigel Brailey’s observation that the Hague gatherings are generally seen as “little more than a footnote *en route* to the 1914-18 war.”<sup>1</sup> The temptation to understate the significance of the two conferences, and the 1907 conference in particular, is forgivable. Many of the original aims in 1899 went unfulfilled, especially with regard to arms

limitation (although the establishment of a Permanent Court of Arbitration was a tangible accomplishment). The 1907 gathering, though larger and longer-lasting (four months' duration rather than two) than 1899, achieved relatively little. Some progress was made by accepting the principle of obligatory arbitration. Furthermore, that the 1899 gathering was reprised and expanded served to consolidate the conviction that regular conferences thereafter would deliver incremental and substantial progress.<sup>2</sup> Yet despite these positives, the shortcomings of the 1907 conference are all too apparent: simply put, no great power was prepared to jeopardize its national and imperial interests by surrendering sovereignty or reducing its capacity for armed defense.

Clearly, as Margaret MacMillan has noted, there was a sizeable divergence between, on the one hand, a "widespread public sentiment in favor of peace" and, on the other, those in authority who considered war "a necessary part of international relations." The latter, especially those of a conservative persuasion, saw in pacifism a "challenge to the old order," a vehicle through which public opinion could restrain policymakers and undercut their ability to use force.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the perceived wishes of the masses could not be ignored. Politicians and diplomats were compelled to pay lip-service to such lofty aims as arms limitation and obligatory arbitration, to project themselves as enthusiastic members of a fledgling international community committed to outlawing war, and, above all, to avoid culpability when peace initiatives floundered. The situation had been similar in 1899 when, as Mark Mazower notes, most powers had attended "chiefly for fear of criticism if they did not."<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, as Andrew Webster insists, "the weight of public opinion" in 1899 compelled governments to accept discussion of legalistic mechanisms for the limitation of armaments as "a core item of international diplomacy."<sup>5</sup> Public opinion was expressing itself on a global scale, articulating what William Mulligan describes as "international law's growing purchase on the public imagination."<sup>6</sup>

By and large, this demonstration of the public's ability to influence diplomacy is considered a key success of the Hague initiatives.<sup>7</sup> But this success came at a price, as the growing power of public opinion (as articulated by networks of citizen activists) had negative as well as positive ramifications. On the one hand, it helped crystallize global sentiment behind a progressive cause which in turn encouraged previously recalcitrant governments to take such issues more seriously; on the other, it widened the (already substantial) gulf between the demands of peace activists and what politicians and diplomats were prepared to countenance. By 1907, the gap between activists' expectations and diplomats' willingness to meet them had widened, especially when it came to disarmament. This had crucial repercussions not only for the immediate outcomes of this gathering but also for its longer-term historical legacy. It helped set the 1907 conference up to fail, especially in terms of perceptions forged in its immediate aftermath. Had the conference focused on a more limited and realizable set of goals, it *may* have been possible to create the impression of achieved targets rather than unfulfilled hopes, and the historical verdict of the second Hague conference *may* have been more forgiving (the outbreak of the 14-18 war notwithstanding).

This is important as it compels us to approach the 1907 conference from a different angle and advance an alternative analysis of its outcomes. Rather than interrogating whether it succeeded or failed, this article explores instead *why* the historiography has come to be dominated by this simplistic and misleading dichotomy. After all, the conference – like any such initiative – both succeeded *and* failed. Of course, the two Hague Conferences are often overlooked or dismissed as inconsequential because a world war erupted in 1914. It is argued here, however, that the narrative of failure (and, to a lesser extent, a rival analysis of success) emerged well before this war broke out, and first became embedded both during and immediately after the 1907 meeting. Moreover, a perception of failure was exacerbated by the free expressions of disappointment articulated by many peace activists themselves, a

disappointment attributable chiefly to the lack of progress made towards disarmament. Paradoxically, some of the conference's pre-eminent cheerleaders succeeded only in undermining its accomplishments. As will be shown, it was because of the efforts of citizen activists, operating overwhelmingly in Western Europe and North America, that disarmament became almost the alpha and omega of the pre-conference expectations. Although activists worked in multiple directions (and much attention *was* focused on issues including arbitration, codifying the laws of war, establishing an International Prize Court, etc.), it was disarmament that most captured the public imagination. But public opinion now outran the diplomatic possibilities. Andrew Carnegie, the wealthy benefactor of so many peace initiatives in the early twentieth century, provided an apposite post-mortem in the immediate aftermath of the 1907 assembly: "Our expectations were perhaps too high."<sup>8</sup>

Interestingly, these heightened expectations had dissipated considerably in the immediate lead-up to the 1907 conference, and press coverage was certainly less upbeat than it had been in 1899. *The Observer* noted that "there is less public enthusiasm this time," while the *Manchester Guardian* asserted that the second conference lacked the "idealist impulse of the first."<sup>9</sup> But focusing on the gloomy landscape in the weeks just prior to the conference fails to account for the months and years of relative optimism that preceded it. To be sure, much of the initial positivity emanating from the 1899 meeting had faded due to the 1899-1902 South African war, which so cruelly exposed the shortcomings and inertia of The Hague system. As Calvin Davis has remarked, public interest had dropped almost as soon as the 1899 conference closed, the cause of world peace appearing little more than a "casual concern."<sup>10</sup> This negativity, however, was soon eclipsed by demands for another Hague gathering intended to augment the foundations laid in 1899 and remedy its deficiencies. Some even considered the inertia label inaccurate. At the 1903 Universal Peace Congress, the prominent Austrian peace campaigner, the Baroness Bertha von Suttner, equated pacifist

activism with the hands on a clock – though appearing inert, the hands move imperceptibly, slowly and invisibly.<sup>11</sup> And, after a slow start, there *was* a flurry of bilateral arbitration agreements signed by Hague participants between 1903 and 1907.<sup>12</sup> Progress became more perceptible, encouraging activists to step up their demands for a second conference.

American President Theodore Roosevelt was subjected to significant pressure. In 1904 both the Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration and a delegation representing the Interparliamentary Union (IPU) lobbied the President. Both organizations, though far from ‘pacifist’ in a doctrinal sense, shared the conviction that an enhanced spirit of internationalism would benefit the cause of peace. The Mohonk group always stressed that their gatherings were not “peace” conferences, but rather means of influencing public opinion by “disseminating information in regard to the progress and possibilities of arbitration.”<sup>13</sup> It had, since 1895, been a growing force in lobbying prominent Americans — politicians and businessmen in particular — in support of international arbitration, but additional momentum was provided in September 1904 when the IPU convened for the first time on American soil (in St. Louis). Delegates demanded another Hague meeting, asserting that the substitution of arbitration for war would embody the wishes of “enlightened public opinion and the spirit of modern civilization alike.”<sup>14</sup> Led by Congressman Richard Bartholdt, an IPU delegation traveled to Washington to lobby the President. On hearing the IPU’s appeal, Roosevelt stated that he would press ahead with stimulating another Hague congress.<sup>15</sup> In October 1904 an official circular called for a second Hague gathering intended to complete what the first conference had left unresolved, notably by making arbitration obligatory and making meaningful progress in the direction of arms limitation.<sup>16</sup>

The reception was initially warm (the more overt hostility, notably from Germany and Austria, was vented only later.) The British government was certainly keen, foreign secretary Lansdowne assuring American ambassador Joseph Choate of London’s willingness to co-

operate with Washington “in so important a matter.”<sup>17</sup> The immediate sticking point was Russia’s unwillingness to countenance another conference whilst their war with Japan was ongoing. Ambassador Sergey Sazonow informed the British foreign office that St. Petersburg was “entirely opposed” to the idea, considering the present moment “very inopportune.”<sup>18</sup> The Russians also wanted to preserve their status as the initiators of the Hague idea. By 1905, with the Japanese war concluded, they revived their interest in a second conference but insisted that the Tsar reprise his 1899 role as instigator-in-chief. Roosevelt, much amused by Russia’s convoluted efforts to persuade him to abdicate the initiative, was happy to do so, unwilling to become “a professional peace advocate.”<sup>19</sup> Even so, Russia’s ability to assume leadership was compromised by internal unrest. As American secretary of state Elihu Root noted, “the poor fellows have their minds full of their own wretched internal troubles.” In this context, Root was pleased to see London take the initiative, Henry Campbell-Bannerman’s new Liberal government having swept to power in January 1906 on a platform of “Peace, retrenchment and reform.” Renewed impetus was necessary given how many peace activists were beginning to question the prudence of holding the meeting at all. The French politician and peace advocate, Paul d’Estournelles de Constant, warned that proceedings would end in “a great failure” given the current international climate. Root, however, was more sanguine. “[F]ailures are necessary steps towards success,” he remarked, alluding specifically to the prospects for disarmament, “and we might as well go ahead and meet them.”<sup>20</sup>

Root’s allusion to disarmament reflected how this topic began to eclipse arbitration as the most prominent within public discourses ahead of the 1907 conference, the new British government’s adherence to the idea suggesting that a reduction of armaments was now a genuine possibility rather than a utopian fantasy.<sup>21</sup> Although the Liberal’s commitment to disarmament was somewhat disingenuous,<sup>22</sup> its public pronouncements had an impact. In December 1905 Campbell-Bannerman bemoaned the pernicious effects of untrammelled

spending on armaments which, he noted, exacerbated tensions overseas while starving the taxpayer of much-needed assistance at home.<sup>23</sup> The Liberals' subsequent electoral success can be explained, at least in part, by their promise to cut military expenditure, exploiting unease in the country at the Anglo-German arms race and tapping into a more latent opposition to war stemming from recent experiences in South Africa.<sup>24</sup> By openly advocating disarmament, the Liberals revived an idea that was brushed under the carpet in 1899 and had latterly been proposed only by a minority of fringe pacifist groups. After the 1906 British election, however, and encouraged by d'Estournelles de Constant, the IPU urged its members to lobby their respective parliaments to embrace arms limitation, the first time the Union had broached this subject seriously for many years.<sup>25</sup> In America too, the topic of disarmament gained traction. Carnegie even urged President Roosevelt to follow Britain's lead by announcing a halt to all U.S. naval shipbuilding.<sup>26</sup>

Genuine hopes were thus entertained that the 1907 conference would go further than its 1899 precursor. In April 1906 the International Arbitration and Peace Association (IAPA) implored the new foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, to prompt a discussion of arms reduction at The Hague. Noting forlornly that the primary aim in 1899 – the arrest of armaments – had not been accomplished, they insisted that any Power proposing disarmament would “win the enthusiastic confidence and support of the labouring masses in all parts of the world.” The Peace Society also urged Grey along the disarmament path, suggesting that such a step would be welcomed by the mass of opinion. For the National Council of Peace Societies, disarmament had to be tabled in order to “fulfil the mandate of the General Election.”<sup>27</sup> The importance of the Liberal's election victory was also noted overseas. The 1906 Lake Mohonk Conference predicted that the “beneficial results” of the 1899 gathering would be “equaled and perhaps surpassed,” noting with approval London's commitment to disarmament and hoping that “this subject will receive careful and favorable

consideration.”<sup>28</sup> The International Peace Bureau (IPB) went further, suggesting that Britain’s enthusiasm for arms reduction was shared “wholeheartedly” by the Italians, and even noted how the Kaiser had recently “recognized the great need for peace in Europe.” Current conditions “fill us with hope,” they continued, demonstrating that governments, “under the pressure of public opinion, are abandoning old mistakes.”<sup>29</sup>

The IPB’s buoyant view of Germany’s intentions was not entirely fabricated; in January 1907, the British foreign office detected an emergent “critical spirit” in official circles in Berlin but doubted its ability to permeate Germany’s “military crust.”<sup>30</sup> Hopes of disarmament also sat uncomfortably alongside the harsh realities of European diplomacy. Franco-German discord was brought into sharper focus by the first Moroccan Crisis, and as soon as preparations began for the 1907 conference it was clear that Paris was wary and Berlin utterly opposed to any discussion of arms limitation. In December 1906 the French embassy official, Léon Geoffroy, informed Grey that the Quai d’Orsay saw little point in raising the armaments question given Germany’s well-documented views on the matter. Grey acknowledged the difficulties but stressed that public opinion would lament any failure to take the matter seriously.<sup>31</sup> For the British government, at least, the need to placate a perceived public demand compelled them to pursue avenues of discussion they knew to be futile. But British goodwill must not be taken for granted, and Campbell-Bannerman’s stance certainly exposed the Liberals to charges of hypocrisy. The need to appease sections of opinion alarmed by Germany’s naval build-up compelled the government to stress that Britain’s maritime supremacy was undiminished, reassurances that were not easily reconciled with the rhetoric of disarmament.<sup>32</sup> Two contradictory demands left the government caught between two stools: on the one hand, Grey considered “public opinion here ... so strong that we were bound to do our best to discuss the question of expenditure at the Hague Conference”; on the other, prominent navalists like Lord Esher insisted that “the public do



not realize the real issues and the true nature of the problem,” and that high expenditure was a necessity rather than a luxury.<sup>33</sup>

Campbell-Bannerman nonetheless stuck to his guns. In a notorious article published in *The Nation* in March 1907 he argued explicitly for a serious discussion of arms limitation, and also sought to soothe Anglo-German tensions by proclaiming that Britain’s naval strength was not intended to intimidate any single other state.<sup>34</sup> The prime minister’s conciliatory tone alarmed the French: *Le Temps* remarked caustically that the *Nation* article caused displeasure in France, irritation in Germany, and made Great Britain appear “ridiculous” before the entire world. The same paper later castigated the “naïve” pacifists who constitute, for France, a “national peril.”<sup>35</sup> Newspapers in Germany relished the opportunity to quote French discontent.<sup>36</sup> Throughout March and April 1907 reports from Germany and Austria indicated consistently that the press in these countries – with few exceptions – opposed any discussion of arms reduction. The *Frankfurt Gazette* noted that Campbell-Bannerman’s arguments “met with much opposition” in both Britain and France, demonstrating that “Germany is not alone responsible if lasting peace is not established.” A similar tone was struck in Austria, where the *Sonn-und-Montags Zeitung* ridiculed the “peace enthusiasts” who reveled in unrealizable dreams of disarmament. More importantly, this journal also reflected a widely-held suspicion of British intent, namely that their advocacy of arms reduction was a ruse intended to maintain their current naval supremacy.<sup>37</sup> In this climate it is unsurprising that chancellor von Bülow’s speech in the Reichstag on April 30, stating categorically that Germany would not indulge in any discussion of arms limitation at The Hague, was received enthusiastically.<sup>38</sup> Germany’s unequivocal stance appeared to crush any hopes of making progress in arms limitation before the 1907 conference had even begun.<sup>39</sup>

German intransigence was also conveyed to those who, in early 1907, toured the European capitals in a bid to lay the groundwork for the Hague gathering. In his informal tour, the British peace activist and journalist, W. T. Stead, looking to reprise his 1899 role as chief propagandist for the conference (notably by publishing a dedicated newspaper, the *Courrier de la Conférence*, for its duration), acknowledged Germany's firmly-entrenched opposition.<sup>40</sup> The formal tour undertaken by the Russian international lawyer and diplomat, Feodor de Martens, encountered the same obduracy in Berlin and Vienna.<sup>41</sup> In official circles, the topic of disarmament was, as David Stevenson remarks, "in disarray," most Powers only prepared to enter into a "non-binding discussion in order to humour pacifist opinion."<sup>42</sup> Many peace activists still refused to be disheartened. For Stead, so disappointed by British actions in South Africa, it was appropriate that London should repair the "mischief done by the faults and follies of the last seven years" by ensuring that disarmament "figure conspicuously" at The Hague. Having spoken with Grey, Stead was convinced that the government was "resolved" to pursue disarmament to a satisfactory conclusion; if the immediate result was failure, London "would bring the subject forward again at every future conference."<sup>43</sup>

Potential disarmament discussions were received less warmly elsewhere: the French were happy to allow another country to raise the question but only to satisfy public opinion at home; the Italians were prepared to enter discussions but only if realistic solutions could be found; meanwhile, the Russians were hostile, preoccupied with recovering losses from the Japanese war and fearful that such talks would provoke friction in Russia's relations with both Berlin and Vienna at the very moment they were seeking to build bridges. Only the British, the Americans, and the Spanish reserved the right to raise the subject at The Hague.<sup>44</sup> The prospects for disarmament looked bleak, a realization that began to permeate the ranks of peace enthusiasts. Many organizations continued to urge arms limitation, but few were confident of success. Despite being encouraged by Campbell-Bannerman to press their

respective Parliaments to embrace disarmament, delegates at the IPU's 1906 conference resolved only that the question should feature on the Hague program rather than insisting upon tangible outcomes.<sup>45</sup>

Citizen activists across Europe and North America ensured that the Second Hague Conference would take place and ensured further that disarmament would be discussed (at least in the preparatory stages), but they were powerless to overcome the persistent nationalistic tensions. That disarmament initiatives were unlikely to succeed was becoming increasingly clear by April 1907, when Andrew Carnegie hosted a Peace Congress in New York intended to stimulate public interest in the forthcoming Hague gathering. Many distinguished speakers were present, including statesmen like Grey, d'Estournelles de Constant and Root. All agreed that further developments in arbitration should be pursued, but the disarmament question proved more divisive. Secretary of State Root, speaking on behalf of President Roosevelt, believed that general disarmament would do "more harm than good," leaving the civilized Powers "at the mercy of other peoples less advanced." Consequently, he warned delegates not to expect too much from The Hague gathering.<sup>46</sup> Others were more upbeat, notably Carnegie himself, who endorsed disarmament and ensured that the resolutions adopted by the Congress included a statement thanking Campbell-Bannerman "for the noble stand which he has taken in favor of ... a limitation and reduction of the military and naval burdens now weighing upon the world."<sup>47</sup>

Although waning, a degree of optimism continued to percolate within public discourses regarding disarmament. Much of this stemmed from the apparent determination of the British government to ensure a discussion of the topic at The Hague. *The Washington Post* had been skeptical about disarmament in January 1907, dismissing it as "the airiest and thinnest of theories," but was notably more enthusiastic by the spring, concluding that the forthcoming conference must tackle disarmament "whether it is agreeable to Germany or

not.” The same paper later lambasted the Kaiser for his apparent obstructionism, accusing any recalcitrant Power of seeking to “further the cause of war for its own advantage.”<sup>48</sup> The *New York Times* concurred, and despite considering tangible outcomes in arms limitation unlikely, insisted that there was no reason to dodge the discussion.<sup>49</sup> But not all papers agreed. Writing in the *Daily Mail*, the British journalist and historian H. W. Wilson argued that any disarmament agreement would require “an immense machinery” to ensure compliance, and that this constituted “a constant danger to the world’s peace” on account of it impinging upon national sovereignty.<sup>50</sup>

Greater pessimism, even skepticism, became more commonplace as the conference neared, even amongst peace advocates. Carnegie was certainly more downbeat, comparing the 1907 American delegates unfavorably to those who attended in 1899, chiefly on account of the current crop lacking the same heartfelt commitment to peace.<sup>51</sup> Others were particularly keen to downplay the chances of disarmament. Addressing the 1907 Lake Mohonk Conference, Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University and a prominent peace activist, preferred to avoid any such discussion: “Disarmament,” he remarked, “will follow peace as an effect not precede it as a cause.”<sup>52</sup> Indeed, the Mohonk group’s decision to omit any reference to disarmament from their platform was applauded as realistic by the *Washington Post*.<sup>53</sup> Only a fringe of more committed pacifists continued to believe that disarmament was a genuine possibility, their arguments frequently invoking public opinion’s alleged vexation with the incessant arms race. The French pacifist Léon Bollack penned an open letter to the 1907 Hague delegates asserting that “universal public opinion,” tired of “crazy” levels of arms spending and hostile to obligatory military service, demanded movement towards arms limitation.<sup>54</sup>

As a more widespread belief in disarmament began to fade, the British government seemed hopelessly committed to raising the issue. Britain’s ambassador in Washington,

James Bryce, noted in May that apart from the issue of disarmament, he had “heard nothing” from London concerning other topics for discussion.<sup>55</sup> The American delegation identified two primary motivations for Britain’s apparent fixation with the topic: first, “because public opinion is especially strong in its favor,” and second, because the “pocketbook of the Englishman is touched” and any reduction in naval expenditure would have the beneficial side-effect of reducing taxation. It was noted, however, that London was concerned only with “the limitation of expenditure, not necessarily with the limitation of armament itself.”<sup>56</sup> To be sure, few British officials believed a meaningful reduction of armaments to be possible. The Inter-Departmental Committee appointed to consider questions for discussion at the Conference concluded early that “the only practicable change” lay in establishing an international Tribunal of Appeal, essentially extending the mechanisms for arbitration put in place in 1899. Regarding the limitation of armaments, it was resolved that the only two possibilities involved establishing a cap on military spending or reducing naval construction, neither of which amounted to meaningful disarmament.<sup>57</sup>

Given the clear absence of international support for such schemes, the issue of arms limitation had been watered down substantially by the time formal instructions were issued to the British delegation. As Grey informed the chief delegate, Sir Edward Fry, the British government wanted disarmament to feature on the agenda but harbored few illusions about the likelihood of success. Despite this, “it was better to have a discussion, even if it did not lead to a satisfactory conclusion.”<sup>58</sup> A discussion was necessary to assuage a public demand, and Britain’s commitment to raising the topic meant that the Americans—under similar pressure from their own public—were given an escape. The United States could now be reactive rather than proactive, a position that suited Washington. As their Commission made clear, they were keen to discuss disarmament but deemed it advisable not to “father or mother it.”<sup>59</sup> This was almost certainly motivated by the realization—widespread amongst delegates

from the outset—that little could be done. As Root remarked, “the mutual suspicion” that dominated European politics rendered the prospects rather bleak.<sup>60</sup>

Growing skepticism was even apparent amongst those who had done so much previously to demand a discussion of disarmament. Outlining his hopes for The Hague in a letter to *The Times* on January 1, 1907, W. T. Stead omitted the subject of arms limitation entirely. Although full of high-minded idealism and exalted proclamations of the conference marking “the first Parliament of Man” and “the brotherhood of the peoples,” Stead’s vision of what could be realistically accomplished focused on extending arbitration rather than reducing armaments.<sup>61</sup> Other publications were more forthright; an article in *The Economist* considered it “unwise” to expect progress in disarmament because the difficulties identified by Germany in 1899 were no less operative eight years later. Nevertheless, a later article acknowledged that progress might be made in the direction of arbitration.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, it was arbitration rather than disarmament that dominated the opening stages of the conference when it opened on June 15, 1907; disarmament did not even feature on the agenda.<sup>63</sup> The president of the conference, the Russian diplomat Aleksandr Nelidov, counseled the delegates against over-ambition, a warning that, according to *The Times*, may disappoint enthusiastic “pacifists” but was nonetheless the “language of common sense.”<sup>64</sup> *The Observer* acknowledged the dampened aspirations but retained some optimism given the “comprehensive and collective purpose” of the delegates assembled in the Netherlands. The *Manchester Guardian* also identified reasons to be upbeat. Although Campbell-Bannerman had received “little encouragement” in his quest for arms reduction, the potential remained “to extend arbitration by every means in our power.”<sup>65</sup>

Arbitration had regained the ascendancy, but even this topic frequently played second fiddle to complex and time-consuming discussions regarding the laws of war. Some progress was certainly made in the direction of arbitration, expanding slightly upon the foundations

established in 1899. As Randall Lesaffer reminds us, “the acceptance of the principle of obligatory arbitration” was a significant outcome of the second conference.<sup>66</sup> Though not insubstantial, and certainly not without a longer-term impact, such advances appeared of little consequence at the time, especially as the pressing problems of international politics—the arms race, escalating international tensions, the lack of obligatory arbitration—remained unresolved.<sup>67</sup> In this context, disappointment was the prevailing and understandable reflex, and this disappointment was amplified by the exaggerated hopes and expectations articulated in advance. This made the limited advances in 1907 appear anti-climactic. Only by positioning them within the broader context of more than a century’s worth of further initiatives and developments in international arbitration and arms control has the event, along with its 1899 precursor, enjoyed a degree of historical rehabilitation. An immediate verdict of failure surfaced in 1907, due in part to the fact that peace workers’ hopes for disarmament had been so easily and decisively crushed.

The orthodox appraisal of failure was certainly consolidated by the outbreak of war in 1914, but even before this the frustration of peace activists had combined with negative press coverage to establish a dominant (if not yet terminal) tone. As Agnes Fry noted in 1921, when compiling the memoirs of her father, Sir Edward, “It cannot be said that the Second Hague Conference had a very good press in England, or excited general interest beyond avowedly pacifist circles.”<sup>68</sup> The conference was afforded considerable coverage in the international press,<sup>69</sup> but the diplomats themselves remained suspicious of allowing newspapermen too much access to their deliberations. At a meeting of the American Commission in mid-June, General Horace Porter opined that delegates should “avoid all interviews . . . and give out no information during the conference,” the press instead being furnished official synopses. Joseph Choate (America’s chief delegate) noted that Grey was similarly “opposed to the presence of reporters,” fearing that the presence of newspapermen

“would check a free expression of opinion.” As Choate himself concluded, “open sessions would mean closed mouths.”<sup>70</sup> Four days later the American Commission formally resolved that their position vis-à-vis publicity would be to exclude the press from official proceedings.<sup>71</sup>

So, although the press *did* provide regular coverage of the proceedings at The Hague, it rarely amounted to anything more substantive than repeating information gleaned officially via communiqués or unofficially via Stead’s *Courrier de la Conférence*. As the negotiations dragged on, this contributed to a general lack of enthusiasm for the conference’s work. Despite his pivotal role in making the conference happen, Theodore Roosevelt appeared uninterested in the proceedings once they began. “I have not really followed things at The Hague” he confessed to Root in early July, suggesting that Carnegie’s peace conference at New York, by setting the bar too high, had proved “a real detriment” to the prospects of accomplishing anything tangible.<sup>72</sup> Peace activists also expressed impatience but tended to blame recalcitrant politicians for failing to reflect the wishes of a global public sentiment. The IPB’s Albert Gobat wrote to the Belgian delegate, Auguste Beernaert, lamenting how the deliberations had thus far focused exclusively on the laws of war when the “the public opinion of all countries ... expected better,” not least a meaningful effort to promote disarmament. The “sterile nature” of The Hague discussions, he continued, dismayed an emergent global public that was “no longer a negligible quantity.”<sup>73</sup>

The sixteenth Universal Congress of Peace, meeting in Munich in mid-September, also celebrated what The Hague gathering represented instead of fixating on uninspiring outcomes. A positive note was struck by many attendees, notably German pacifists perhaps embarrassed by their government’s obstructionist approach at The Hague.<sup>74</sup> Baron Edward de Neufville acclaimed pacifist influence in the Netherlands, praising the “remarkable job” of Stead and his *Courrier de la Conférence* which had “familiarized public opinion with the



pacifist movement.” The official delegates had sought the pacifist voice, and “intimate gatherings” comprising official and unofficial representatives “continued well into the night.” Their influence, he concluded, was substantial, providing a corrective to “incomplete” press accounts and even leading many delegates to demand instructions from their respective governments “more in conformity with pacifist tendencies.”<sup>75</sup> Indeed, as in 1899, the social environment created by the likes of Stead, von Suttner, and others (the self-monikered *Le Cercle Internationale*) provided a fertile forum in which peace workers and official delegates mixed freely.<sup>76</sup> Stead’s coverage, however, often dismayed the British foreign office, not least because of alleged criticisms of the British delegation’s passivity vis-à-vis disarmament. Grey considered these critiques unwarranted as without British efforts “the subject of armaments would probably never have been mentioned at all.”<sup>77</sup>

In this sense, the endeavors of Stead and like-minded colleagues to keep disarmament on the agenda only brought into sharper focus the lack of progress made, contributing in turn to the disparaging coverage in mainstream newspapers. By August 1907, once it became clear that the disarmament question was to be kicked into the long grass, *La Petite République* lamented how only two delegates, Britain’s Sir Edward Fry and France’s Léon Bourgeois, genuinely sought peace, hence their conclusion that “the golden age” of peace remained as distant as ever.<sup>78</sup> Criticisms of the conference were still more vociferous on its conclusion in October. A *Times* editorial, entitled simply “The Hague Fiasco,” considered its only redeeming virtue to be the warning it served “against the moral and intellectual dishonesty of pandering to sentiment merely because it was popular.” Other journals were less vociferous but equally damning. The conference has left “on many minds the impression of failure” noted *The Economist*, while even *The Manchester Guardian* admitted that it “has brought many disappointments.”<sup>79</sup> Henri Maran, in *Le Matin*, was more savage, comparing the peacemakers at The Hague to a drunkard proclaiming sobriety: “Those who drink will

drink; those who play will play, and those who fight will fight. All the conferences in the world will change nothing.”<sup>80</sup> In America, the *Washington Post* resented attempts to ‘foist’ the Hague Conference “upon the world as a triumph of peace,” when the proceedings were noteworthy only for the “shallowness and humbug” of the resolutions made. It also noted the failures in the domain of arbitration, which had been left “on as insecure and unsatisfactory basis” as ever before.<sup>81</sup>

These negative appraisals were exacerbated by the views of some notable participants, particularly the eminently quotable letters of the British delegate, Eyre Crowe. Crowe portrayed the meeting as an unnecessarily long and interminably boring affair, punctuated only occasionally by anything amounting to genuine progress. His correspondence is also notable for Crowe’s often scathing appraisals of his fellow delegates (including his British colleagues, Reay described as “both incompetent and crooked”<sup>82</sup>) and his uncompromising attitude towards Germany, the country of his birth. His verdict as the conference closed was characteristically blunt. It “is drawing near its inglorious end,” he wrote on October 8: “Everyone is heartily sick of it.”<sup>83</sup> Throughout the conference Crowe appeared frustrated, impatient, and frequently indifferent. His letters betray irritation at being subjected to “the most appalling collection of platitudes” regarding arbitration, all the while knowing that the likelihood of meaningful results was remote.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, by late August, when it appeared that the arbitration scheme would run aground, Crowe declared that he only regretted the “waste of time and energy.” He had not always exhibited such cynicism; on September 10 he was “anxious” to secure agreement on the Prize Court so that “our work shall not, at least, have been thrown away.”<sup>85</sup>

Indeed, the chances of augmenting arbitration provided a rare opportunity for optimism, and much of the impetus here came from the Americans. In early August, Choate recalled President Roosevelt’s words at Carnegie’s New York Congress back in April, which

described “a general arbitration treaty . . . increased in power and permanency” as the “most important” step that might be accomplished. “It is now six weeks since we first assembled,” Choate told the conference on 1 August, hence there “is certainly no time to lose.”<sup>86</sup> The Americans would thereafter press insistently for progress in this direction, and Choate showed little restraint when criticizing the lack of goodwill. “If we have not confidence one with another,” he asked, “why are we here? [It was time] to substitute arbitration for war, as the world demands.”<sup>87</sup> But even this less ambitious scheme struggled to gain traction, to the dismay of those delegates less prone to negativity than Eyre Crowe. His colleague, Ernest Satow, noted how the Prize Court scheme was received favorably by the First Committee on 12 August, but thereafter got bogged down in endless discussion and debate. Satow even exhibited some Crowe-like skepticism on 26 August when bemoaning how “one hour was wasted making no progress.”<sup>88</sup> Fry also regretted the lethargy. “I wish that I could tell you that things are going well here,” he told Grey on 20 September, “but they are not,” chiefly because Germany and Austria were determined to “reduce the results of the Conference to a minimum.”<sup>89</sup> Choate too succumbed to pessimism by late September. “Everybody begins to hope for our release,” he wrote to his wife, “and I now prophesy that we shall not be detained here after October 10th – but who can be sure?”<sup>90</sup>

But Choate’s pessimism stemmed more from fatigue – and he was well into his seventies by now – than genuine disillusionment. Indeed, as the denouement of the conference neared he lamented the negative press coverage, especially in Britain. The London papers, he noted, which had “always been in an ill humor about the Conference, are doing their best to decry its work.”<sup>91</sup> In Choate’s opinion, the vitriol of the British press stemmed from bitterness. They were so irritated by their failure to maintain British naval supremacy “that they can find no good in anything done.”<sup>92</sup> The conference closed with no progress made in disarmament and no substantial augmentation of the system of arbitration

(although the acceptance of the principle of obligatory arbitration was an advance of sorts). Even the limited scheme for a maritime Prize Court – which the Conference recommended pursuing as an obtainable goal – never came to fruition.<sup>93</sup> Regarding disarmament, the Conference achieved nothing more than a reaffirmation of the 1899 *vœu* declaring it desirable that governments “undertake again the serious examination of this question.”<sup>94</sup>

This is not to say, however, that the conference was without merit. At the very least, perceived public pressure ensured that disarmament featured prominently in discourses surrounding the conference, even if it was immediately jettisoned once official proceedings commenced. In this sense, as Andrew Webster insists, the 1907 conference consolidated discussions that had taken place in 1899 to shape “the international politics of disarmament for the following half century.” Given that success in disarmament requires “enormous effort, good timing and no small degree of luck,” Webster suggests that activists’ expectations at the time of the Hague Peace Conferences were premature. After the “cataclysm” of the Great War, the landscape had changed sufficiently that policymakers and peace advocates alike now shared “a common belief that disarmament was a critical condition of ensuring peace.”<sup>95</sup> But these longer-term legacies were simply unknown at the time, and much of the Conference itself, and certainly its immediate aftermath, was spent apportioning blame for its deficiencies. For the British, the villain of the piece was clearly Germany, who, along with Austria, had stymied all discussion of disarmament and gravely diluted the arbitration schemes. As Crowe put it, “Only Germany and her allies who have won the easy triumph of preventing anything from being done are heartily pleased.”<sup>96</sup> Lord Reay concurred, lamenting Germany’s negative attitude and predicting confidently that “when the minutes of the conference are published [Britain] shall obtain the approval of liberals in all countries.”<sup>97</sup>

Much of the subsequent historiography has reached the same verdict. David Betetz, for example, blames German opposition and “the personal antipathy of Kaiser Wilhelm II”

for the failure to make any substantial progress.<sup>98</sup> More recently, however, Steven Harris has contended persuasively that rushing to blame Germany “is to wander down our own version of the *Sonderweg*.” Opposition to arbitration and disarmament was shared by all the great Powers – the Germans simply vented it more brazenly.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, unlike other powers, the Germans can hardly be accused of hypocrisy. The British government, by contrast, can be taken to task for proclaiming publicly that advances in disarmament were possible while doing little in private to make them a reality. Ultimately, the conference accomplished little and disappointed many. As Reay commented, it “has not given any new guarantees for the maintenance of peace and has confirmed the fact that the great Powers are constantly preparing for war.”<sup>100</sup> With this it seemed that the historical legacy of the 1907 conference was secured. As Arthur Eyffinger has remarked, the world now “helplessly spiralled down towards the abyss.” Nonetheless, Eyffinger has defended the frequently “ignored and ridiculed” second conference for providing a “unique exchange of views at a moment of paramount interest for the history of Europe.”<sup>101</sup>

There is much to be said for this defense, as the 1907 assembly *was* important despite its obvious shortcomings. In size alone it far exceeded its 1899 antecedent. It also increased hopes that more regular gatherings would ensue, each augmenting the work of its predecessors.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, vindications of the 1907 Conference were articulated at the time. Elihu Root felt that the Conference “accomplished a great deal” given the unfavorable diplomatic climate.<sup>103</sup> Despite acknowledging the absence of disarmament, the *New York Times* warned against concluding that the conference failed. “Small as its specific performance has been,” it was noted, “that performance has been full of promise.” Above all, it provided a forum in which the “opinions of mankind” could be conveyed, marking a further progression away from the “darkness and secrecy of the old-fashioned dynastic and diplomatic intrigue.” Further conferences would surely follow, and where the current

gathering had failed, a third or fourth would inevitably succeed.<sup>104</sup> In France, where enthusiasm for disarmament had only ever been lukewarm, post-conference verdicts tended to fuse disappointment with a dash of optimism. Léon Bourgeois admitted that the conference had not eliminated war, accepted too that no progress was made in disarmament, and even acknowledged the limited successes with regard to arbitration; nonetheless, he was convinced that it had “extended the rule of law in the world.” For Bourgeois, peace “par le droit” was paramount; disarmament must follow, not precede, the implementation of a workable framework of international law. Furthermore, he insisted that the French delegation had represented the pacifist impulse at The Hague, speaking on behalf of the “universal conscience.”<sup>105</sup>

Jean Jaurès, writing in the *Humanité*, also argued that the French delegates were at the vanguard of efforts for peace, and asked whether Clemenceau would continue to mock Bourgeois and foreign minister Stéphane Pichot as “sheep bleating peace.”<sup>106</sup> *Le Matin* was more downcast, commenting on the disconsolate atmosphere as the conference closed. Asking what had been accomplished after more than four month’s work, and what changes had been ushered in since its first sitting, it concluded that such questions were answered “with a smile, a shrug, often even with disdain and sarcasm,” the reality being that conference “did not accomplish anything at all.” Nevertheless, Jules Hedeman, who had been sent by *Le Matin* to both the opening and closing sessions at The Hague, refused to be entirely disheartened, insisting that the conference had been a “moral” victory despite the absence of “immediate practical results.” There had been no limitation of armaments, that was undeniable, but Hedeman reminded his readers that the process was ongoing and that future Hague gatherings would incrementally deliver the desired outcomes.<sup>107</sup> An editorial in *L’Aurore* also evoked hope and despair in equal measure. Acknowledging that the outcomes would disappoint the “very optimistic peace propagandists,” it considered it an

“exaggeration” to conclude that nothing useful had been done at The Hague. The failures in disarmament were considered entirely unsurprising, such initiatives having been exposed as over-ambitious even before the conference began.<sup>108</sup>

It cannot be denied that the outcomes of the 1907 conference were enormously disappointing. As *Le Figaro* concluded, despite the best intentions of the assembled diplomats, “the dream was too beautiful” to be realized.<sup>109</sup> The *Los Angeles Times* concurred, asserting that human nature, animated by “selfishness and greed,” rendered peace conferences “a dream, not a reality.”<sup>110</sup> Choate was thus keen to respond to what he considered unjustified criticism. Given the “general disposition in the press of this country [the U.S.] and of England to belittle and depreciate the work that was done,” he argued, such a corrective was necessary. Falling short of inflated expectations did not mean that nothing was achieved. “We cannot expect to succeed all at once,” he continued, “or to avoid war altogether, but great progress is being made.”<sup>111</sup> Another of America’s delegates, James Brown Scott, was keen that various speeches delivered by the American delegation be collated and published. Choate agreed, writing to Porter that such dissemination would “go far to enlightening the public here on the subject of the work at the Conference in respect to which there still seems to be considerable ignorance.”<sup>112</sup> A pamphlet of speeches delivered at The Hague by Choate, Scott and Porter was subsequently published.<sup>113</sup>

Efforts to provide a corrective to the dominant, pejorative perception of the Hague’s work were replicated across the Atlantic. At the 1908 Universal Peace Congress in London numerous orators reflected more sympathetically on the conference. Lord Courtney of Penwith considered it “unjust” to conclude that nothing had been done. “It did much,” he insisted, even if progress was lacking in the domain of arms limitation. The American pacifist, Edwin Mead, also refused to consider the conference a failure, considering the commitment made to hold periodic meetings thereafter to be a significant and meaningful

achievement. Others were unwilling to await another Hague conference; G. H. Perris led calls for an interim naval conference, and the realization of such a meeting (the 1909/10 London Naval Conference) shows that not all momentum was lost in 1907.<sup>114</sup> But there is little doubt that the overwhelming reaction was, as Mazower has noted, “one of enormous disappointment.”<sup>115</sup> This was readily acknowledged in pacifist circles. Carnegie concluded bluntly that “The Hague has disappointed chiefly because we expected too much – there never was a hope of disarmament.”<sup>116</sup>

Yet the disappointment transcended the issue of disarmament alone; on arbitration too, and internationalism more generally, the conference failed to live up to its hype. The internationalists had been, according to Kuehl, “overoptimistic” from the start, their aspirations never afforded “serious consideration” at The Hague.<sup>117</sup> For Stead, the failure of 1907 was partly due to the British government’s inability to press its case with sufficient force. He insisted to Bryce that Britain should have “forced Germany’s hand” by demonstrating clearly their commitment to disarmament. “All of this,” lamented Stead, “was thrown away by the miserably absurd fashion in which Grey ran away from his guns.”<sup>118</sup> Stead also defended the record of his *Courrier de la Conférence*, asserting that it had been established “to serve the cause of peace,” and that every one of its 109 issues had successfully fulfilled this mandate. As a result, a journal that had initially been treated with suspicion at The Hague had gradually evolved into an “indispensable” source of information.<sup>119</sup> Carnegie also refused to be entirely disheartened, despite acknowledging that “expectations were perhaps too high.” “Arbitration has gained,” he wrote to von Suttner, “and will continue to gain until it triumphs. Nothing can prevent this.”<sup>120</sup>

Carnegie’s optimism was not exceptional. To be sure, the post-1907 disenchantment must not be equated with hopelessness or despair – a descent into global conflict was by no means inevitable. The networks of transnational peace activists, notably the IPB, the IPU, the



Lake Mohonk group, and other organizations that would be formed in coming years (not least the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the World Peace Foundation, both established in 1910) became ever more vocal and organized in their efforts to promote peace over war. More publicity, propaganda and education, coupled with more transnational cohesiveness and a dash of political will, and even the more utopian aspirations might still be realized. If 1899 and 1907 had flattered to deceive, the next gathering at The Hague would witness more significant advances. In 1913, Murray Butler encouraged civil society activists to take the initiative, noting that practically nothing had been done in this direction by “governments who should have acted long ago.”<sup>121</sup> Impetus was needed because governmental inaction was becoming the norm, heightened by a lingering disenchantment at the limited outcomes of the last Hague gathering. As Choate lamented later that year, “the nations generally are not inclined to welcome the holding of another conference at present.”<sup>122</sup> This disinclination owed much to the prevailing sense of disappointment that dominated the post-1907 landscape, a disappointment that emanated significantly from the exaggerated hopes that had been entertained vis-à-vis disarmament.

Ultimately, the First World War prevented a third Hague conference from taking place (although a group of 1200 women did convene at The Hague in spring 1915 to promote a pacifist cause).<sup>123</sup> More significantly (from the point of view of establishing historiographical norms) the outbreak of war provided a brutal confirmation of the failures of the pre-1914 peace initiatives. But the Hague assemblies, along with the numerous meetings and congresses held by the IPB, the IPU, the Lake Mohonk group, and others, had given global peace activists a platform that was not without influence even as the Great War raged. Indeed, as Thomas Munro insists, their efforts ensured that the “language of the Hague peace conferences of 1899 and 1907 was widely used to make sense of the war” that now engulfed the world. Furthermore, that the two Hague Conferences even met owed much to the efforts

of well-connected and energetic networks of citizen activists who could legitimately claim to represent a substantial corpus of popular opinion. The problem was, as David Stevenson has noted, that public opinion was rarely unanimous, and strong navalist and militarist currents in all countries appeared more attuned to the diplomatic and political realities than the idealist impulses of pacifists.<sup>124</sup> Peace advocacy *was* vital in getting topics like arbitration and disarmament discussed at the highest tables, but there was always a risk of overplaying their hand.

This is exactly what happened ahead of the 1907 Hague Conference. Aspirations of what might be accomplished there spiraled — especially regarding disarmament — cultivating expectations that could never be met. To varying extents each government went along for the ride, but none was prepared to offer what the peace activists wanted, expected, and demanded. These crushed aspirations, and the disappointment that permeated the networks of peace advocates, did much to solidify an immediate post-conference perception of failure. This view was confirmed when war came in 1914, before another Hague conference could assemble to rectify the deficiencies of its antecedents. This perception of failure no longer holds water, and historians now rightly acknowledge the success that citizen activists enjoyed in this period. That this reappraisal took so long to emerge can be attributed, at least in part and somewhat paradoxically, to the fact that the activists themselves tabled unrealizable demands ahead of the 1907 conference. Ultimately, a chasm existed between the bar they had set themselves and the outcomes that were diplomatically possible; by rendering failure inevitable, the dominant narrative of the conference was established before it even began.

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<sup>1</sup> Nigel J. Brailey, "Sir Ernest Satow and the 1907 Second Hague Peace Conference." *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 13 (2002): 201. Brailey's article provided a more favorable appraisal of the 1907 conference, and a recent symposium in Auckland has generated an edited collection that also provides a more balanced and reasoned assessment of the two conferences (Maartje Abbenhuis, Christopher Ernest Barber and Annalise R. Higgins, eds., *War, Peace and International Order? The Legacies of the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017)). The 1899 conference has received more positive coverage, including *Centennial of the First International Peace Conference: Reports and Conclusions*, ed. Frits Kalshoven (The Hague: Brill, 2000), and Daniel Hucker, "British Peace Activism and 'New' Diplomacy: Revisiting the 1899 Hague Peace Conference." *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 26 (2015): 405-423.

<sup>2</sup> See Randall Lesaffer, "Peace through law: The Hague Peace Conferences and the rise of the *ius contra bellum*," in *War, Peace and International Order? The Legacies of the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907*, ed. Maartje Abbenhuis, Christopher Ernest Barber and Annalise R. Higgins, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017): 31-51.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace: How Europe Abandoned Peace for the First World War* (London: Profile Books, 2013): 282.

<sup>4</sup> Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin, 2012): 76.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Webster, "Reconsidering disarmament at the Hague Peace Conference of 1899, and after," in *War, Peace and International Order? The Legacies of the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907*, ed. Maartje Abbenhuis, Christopher Ernest Barber and Annalise R. Higgins, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017): 69-70.

<sup>6</sup> William Mulligan, "Justifying international action: International law, The Hague and diplomacy before 1914," in *War, Peace and International Order? The Legacies of the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907*, ed. Maartje Abbenhuis, Christopher Ernest Barber and Annalise R. Higgins, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017): 27.

<sup>7</sup> See for example, Webster, "Reconsidering disarmament at the Hague Peace Conference," and Hucker, "British Peace Activism."

<sup>8</sup> Carnegie to Bertha von Suttner, October 1, 1907, Bertha von Suttner Papers [hereafter Von Suttner Papers], International Peace Movement, League of Nations Archive, United Nations Office, Geneva, BvS/15/167-2/1-2.

<sup>9</sup> "The Second Peace Conference," *The Observer*, June 16, 1907; *The Manchester Guardian*, editorial, 28 June 1907.

<sup>10</sup> Calvin DeArmond Davis, *The United States and the Second Hague Peace Conference: American Diplomacy and International Organization, 1899-1914* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1975): 35.

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- <sup>11</sup> Von Suttner (22 September): *Bulletin Officiel du XIIIe Congrès de la Paix*, Rouen et Le Havre (1903): Swarthmore College Peace Collection [hereafter SCPC], Swarthmore, PA.: International Peace Bureau Papers, box 4.
- <sup>12</sup> Steven M. Harris, “Between Law and Diplomacy: International Dispute Resolution in the Long Nineteenth Century,” (PhD Diss., University of California, Davis, 2015): 326.
- <sup>13</sup> H. C. Phillips (secretary) to Mr Catherwood of the International Arbitration Society (Chicago), May 6, 1904: SCPC, Lake Mohonk, Conference on International Arbitration Records, 1895-1937, box A3, no. 504.
- <sup>14</sup> Hayne Davis, “The Historic Resolution of St. Louis,” SCPC, Interparliamentary Union Papers, box 1.
- <sup>15</sup> Cited in James Douglas, *Parliaments Across Frontiers: A short history of the Inter-Parliamentary Union* (London: HMSO, 1975): 18.
- <sup>16</sup> John Hay (secretary of state) circular to Representatives of the United States accredited to the Governments Signatories to the Acts of The Hague Conference, 1899, 21 October 1904, contained within Foreign Office [hereafter FO] Archives, The National Archives, Kew, 412/79.
- <sup>17</sup> Lansdowne to Joseph Choate, November 7, 1904, FO 412/79. See also Hay’s communication to American representatives dated December 16, 1904 noting that the proposal had “been received with general favour” in all quarters bar Russia and Japan, although both governments had pledged to participate once the Russo-Japanese War was over (Inclosure in no. 17, FO 412/79).
- <sup>18</sup> Lansdowne to Hardinge, November 7, 1904: FO 412/79.
- <sup>19</sup> Roosevelt to Elihu Root, September 14, 1905: Elihu Root Papers [hereafter Root Papers], Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Washington, D.C., box 163.
- <sup>20</sup> Root to Whitelaw Reid, October 24, 1906: Root Papers, box 187 (vol. 1). D’Estournelles’ comments were cited by Root, having learnt of them from Nicholas Murray Butler.
- <sup>21</sup> Paul Laity, *The British Peace Movement, 1870-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 171.
- <sup>22</sup> Matthew Johnson, “Peace and retrenchment? The Edwardian Liberal Party, the limits of pacifism, and the politics of National Defence,” in *Bid for World Power? New Research on the First World War*, ed. Andreas Gestrich and Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017).
- <sup>23</sup> This speech is quoted at length in Andre T. Sidorowicz, “The British Government, the Hague Peace Conference of 1907, and the Armaments Question,” in *Arms Limitation and Disarmament: Restraints on War, 1899-1939*, ed. B.J.C. McKercher, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992), 2-3.
- <sup>24</sup> David Singeisen, “Liberals and Armaments, 1900-1918,” *Les Cahiers du MIMMOC* 7 (2011), 2.

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- <sup>25</sup> Sandi Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 1815-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 129.
- <sup>26</sup> Carnegie to Roosevelt, May 17, 1906: Root Papers, box 44.
- <sup>27</sup> IAPA to Grey, April 12, 1906; Peace Society to Grey, May 28, 1906; The National Council of Peace Societies to Grey, June 15, 1906, Sir Ernest Mason Satow Papers, The National Archives, Kew [hereafter Satow Papers], PRO 30/33/10/17.
- <sup>28</sup> Platform and Resolutions Unanimously Adopted at the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration, May 30 – June 1, 1906: SCPC, Lake Mohonk Papers, series II, box 2.
- <sup>29</sup> Correspondence bi-mensuelle, no. 13, 10 juillet 1906: Papers of the International Peace Bureau [hereafter IPB], League of Nations Archive, United Nations Office, Geneva, First Period, 100/8. The Berne Bureau had earlier sent congratulatory telegrams to Grey commending his commitment to disarmament (see Correspondence bi-mensuelle, no. 10 (25 mai 1906): IPB, First Period, 238/17).
- <sup>30</sup> Grey to Lascelles, January 21, 1907: FO 800/61.
- <sup>31</sup> Grey to Bertie, December 5, 1906: Satow Papers, PRO 30/33/10/17.
- <sup>32</sup> For more on this see Sidorowicz, “The British Government,” 12-13.
- <sup>33</sup> Grey to Lascelles, March 27, 1907: FO 800/61; Esher to Lord Knollys, May 27, 1906, cited in Maurice V. Brett ed., *Journals and Letters of Reginald Viscount Esher, vol. 2: 1903-1910* (London: I. Nicolson & Watson, 1935): 164-6.
- <sup>34</sup> Henry Campbell-Bannerman, “The Hague Conference and the Limitation of Armaments,” *Nation*, March 2, 1907, reprinted in *The Advocate of Peace*, 69 (April 1907): 83-84.
- <sup>35</sup> “La folie pacifiste,” *Le Temps*, March 15, 1907; “La marine anglaise et le désarmement,” *Le Temps*, March 7, 1907.
- <sup>36</sup> Sir Frank Lascelles (Berlin) to Grey, March 7, 1907: Satow Papers, PRO 30/33/10/17.
- <sup>37</sup> *Frankfurt Gazette*, March 8, 1907 and the *Sonn-und-Montags Zeitung*, April 8, 1907, cited in Lascelles to Grey, March 13, 1907, and Goschen (Vienna) to Grey, April 10, 1907 respectively: Satow Papers, PRO 30/33/10/17.
- <sup>38</sup> Cartwright to Grey, May 18, 1907: FO 881/9102, no. 278.
- <sup>39</sup> Davis, *The United States and the Second Hague Peace Conference*, 160.
- <sup>40</sup> W. T. Stead to Bryce, February 15, 1907, James Bryce MSS [hereafter Bryce Papers], Special Collections, Bodleian Library, Oxford, 140.

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- <sup>41</sup> See Scott Keefer, "Building the Palace of Peace: The Hague Conference of 1907 and Arms Control before the World War," *Journal of the History of International Law* 9 (2007): 54-7.
- <sup>42</sup> David Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War: Europe, 1904-1915* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996): 110.
- <sup>43</sup> Stead, "The Coming Parliament of Man: As Seen from the Capitals of Europe," *Review of Reviews* (February 1907).
- <sup>44</sup> Keefer, "Building the Palace of Peace," 56-7.
- <sup>45</sup> IPU to Grey, 4 December 1906 – Inclosure: Resolutions adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Conference, 23-July 25, 1906: Satow Papers, PRO 30/33/10/17.
- <sup>46</sup> Address by Root, April 15, 1907, cited in Bryce to Grey, May 2, 1907: Satow Papers. PRO 30/33/10/17.
- <sup>47</sup> The proceedings of this Congress were described in depth in a dispatch from Ambassador Bryce in Washington to Grey, 2 May 2, 1907: Satow Papers. PRO 30/33/10/17.
- <sup>48</sup> *The Washington Post*, editorial, "Theory vs. Practice," January 28, 1907; editorial, "The Building of Big Ships," March 7, 1907; editorial: "Disarmament," April 1, 1907.
- <sup>49</sup> *New York Times*, editorial: 'The Hague Programme', April 8, 1907.
- <sup>50</sup> H. W. Wilson, "Disarmament," *The Daily Mail*, April 9, 1907.
- <sup>51</sup> Carnegie to Root, April 19, 1907: Root Papers, Box 49 (original emphasis).
- <sup>52</sup> Murray Butler's opening address at the Thirteenth Lake Mohonk Conference, May 22, 1907: SCPC, Lake Mohonk Papers. Series II, Box 2.
- <sup>53</sup> Editorial, "Looking Toward Peace," *The Washington Post*, May 25, 1907.
- <sup>54</sup> Léon Bollack, "Lettre ouverte à Messieurs les Délégués à la Conférence de la Haye (juillet 1907)," IPB, First Period, 195/12.
- <sup>55</sup> Bryce to Choate, 21 May 21, 1907: Joseph Hodges Choate Papers [hereafter Choate Papers], Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Washington, D.C., Box 21.
- <sup>56</sup> Meeting of the American Commission to the Second Hague Conference, April 20, 1907, Choate Papers, Box 21.
- <sup>57</sup> Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee, March 21, 1907: FO 881/9041X.
- <sup>58</sup> Grey to Fry, June 12, 1907, in Gooch and Temperley (eds), *British Documents on the Origins of the War*, vol. III, no. 206.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

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- <sup>60</sup> Root to Edwin Mead, June 19, 1907: Root Papers, Box 188 (volume 1).
- <sup>61</sup> W. T. Stead, letter to the Editor, "The Next Hague Conference and its Programme," *The Times*, January 1, 1907.
- <sup>62</sup> "The Coming Hague Conference," *The Economist*, January 26, 1907; "The Prime Minister and the Hague Conference," *The Economist*, March 9, 1907.
- <sup>63</sup> As noted by Maartje Abbenhuis, *An Age of Neutrals: Great Power Politics, 1815-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 210, and Geoffrey Best, "Peace Conferences and the Century of Total War: The 1899 Hague Conference and What Came After," *International Affairs* 75 (1999): 632.
- <sup>64</sup> *The Times*, editorial, June 17, 1907.
- <sup>65</sup> "The Second Peace Conference," *The Observer*, June 16, 1907; *The Manchester Guardian*, editorial, June 28, 1907.
- <sup>66</sup> Lessafer, "Peace through law," 47.
- <sup>67</sup> See, for example, Keefer, "Building the Palace of Peace," 58-60 and Sidorowicz, "The British Government," 15.
- <sup>68</sup> Agnes Fry, *A Memoir of the Right Honourable Sir Edward Fry, G.C.B., 1827-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), 213.
- <sup>69</sup> Abbenhuis, *An Age of Neutrals*, 212.
- <sup>70</sup> Meeting of the American Commission at The Hague, June 14, 1907: James Brown Scott Papers [hereafter Brown Scott Papers], Georgetown University Library, Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Washington, D.C., Box 44, Folder 4.
- <sup>71</sup> Meeting of the American Commission at The Hague, June 18, 1907: Brown Scott Papers, Box 44, Folder 4.
- <sup>72</sup> Roosevelt to Root, July 2, 1907: Root Papers, Box 163.
- <sup>73</sup> Gobat to Beernaerts, July 14, 1907: IPB, First Period, 239/12.
- <sup>74</sup> As suggested by Sandi Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism*, 109.
- <sup>75</sup> Edward de Neufville at the First Session, September 10, Bulletin Officiel du XVI<sup>e</sup> Congrès Universel de la Paix, Munich, du 9 au 14 septembre 1907: SCPC, International Peace Bureau Papers, Box 4.
- <sup>76</sup> Davis, *The United States and the Second Hague Peace Conference*, 195. For more on the interaction between official delegates and peace workers in the 1899 conference, see Hucker, "British Peace Activism."
- <sup>77</sup> Grey to Fry, July 30, 1907: FO 800/69.
- <sup>78</sup> Editorial in *La Petite République*, as cited in the press review of *Le Matin*, August 18, 1907.

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- <sup>79</sup> “The Hague Fiasco,” *The Times*, 19 October 19, 1907; “The Work of The Hague Conference,” *The Economist*, October 26, 1907; *The Manchester Guardian*, editorial, October 21, 1907.
- <sup>80</sup> Henri Maran, “Carnet d’un Sauvage,” *Le Matin*, October 29, 1907.
- <sup>81</sup> Editorial, “The Hague Humbug,” *The Washington Post*, October 18, 1907; editorial, “Real Weakness of Arbitration,” October 22, 1907.
- <sup>82</sup> Eyre Crowe to Tyrrell, August 6, 1907: FO 800/69.
- <sup>83</sup> Crowe to Clema, October 8, 1907: Eyre Crowe Papers [hereafter Crowe Papers], Special Collections, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Eng. D. 2902.
- <sup>84</sup> Crowe to Clema, July 16, 1907: Crowe Papers, MS. Eng. D. 2901.
- <sup>85</sup> Eyre Crowe to Clema, 3 September and 10 September 1907: Crowe Papers, MS. Eng. D. 2902.
- <sup>86</sup> Choate’s remarks relative to a Permanent Court of Arbitration, August 1, 1907: Choate Papers, Box 28.
- <sup>87</sup> Choate speech, cinquième séance, October 5, 1907: Choate Papers, Box 28.
- <sup>88</sup> Satow diary, entries for August 12, 1907 and August 26, 1907: Satow Papers, PRO 30/33/11/15.
- <sup>89</sup> Fry to Grey, September 20, 1907: FO 800/69.
- <sup>90</sup> Choate to Carrie, September 24, 1907: Choate Papers, Box 4.
- <sup>91</sup> Choate to Carrie, October 20, 1907: Choate Papers, Box 4.
- <sup>92</sup> Choate to Root, November 5, 1907: Root Papers, Box 49.
- <sup>93</sup> See Warren F. Kuehl, *Seeking World Order: The United States and International Organization to 1920* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 106.
- <sup>94</sup> Cited in Keefer, “Building the Palace of Peace,” 60.
- <sup>95</sup> Webster, “Reconsidering disarmament at the Hague Peace Conference,” 80-82. Similar arguments regarding the longer-term legacy of the 1907 conference had been made by Davis in *The United States and the Second Hague Peace Conference*, 339.
- <sup>96</sup> Crowe to Clema, 8 October 8, 1907: Crowe Papers, MS. Eng. D. 2902.
- <sup>97</sup> Lord Reay to Bryce, November 27, 1907: Bryce Papers, 98.
- <sup>98</sup> David Bettez, “Unfulfilled Initiative: Disarmament Negotiations and the Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907,” *The RUSI Journal* 133 (1988): 60.
- <sup>99</sup> Harris, “Between Law and Diplomacy,” 346.
- <sup>100</sup> Memorandum by Lord Reay (undated, but with a covering letter dated October 22, 1907), in Gooch and Temperley (eds), *British Documents*, vol. III, no. 258.



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- <sup>101</sup> Arthur Eyffinger, “A Highly Critical Moment: Role and Record of the 1907 Hague Peace Conference,” *Netherlands International Law Review* LIV (2007): 228.
- <sup>102</sup> Kuehl, *Seeking World Order*, 104.
- <sup>103</sup> Root to Elbert F. Baldwin [of The Outlook Company, New York], November 1, 1907: Root Papers, Box 188 (volume 2).
- <sup>104</sup> *New York Times*, editorial: “The Hague Conference,” October 19, 1907.
- <sup>105</sup> Léon Bourgeois, cited in *Le Temps*, November 16, 1907: “Pour la Paix”.
- <sup>106</sup> Jean Jaurès, “Pour la Paix,” *l’Humanité*, November 15, 1907.
- <sup>107</sup> Jules Hedeman, “Le testament de La Haye,” *Le Matin*, October 21, 1907.
- <sup>108</sup> François Albert, “La Paix Obligatoire,” *L’Aurore*, October 24, 1907.
- <sup>109</sup> Editorial: “À l’Étranger: Fin de la conférence et d’un rêve,” *Le Figaro*, October 13, 1907.
- <sup>110</sup> Editorial: “The Hague and Future Wars,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 1907.
- <sup>111</sup> “Progress at the Second Hague Conference,” an address delivered by Choate at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the New York State Bar Association, January 24-25, 1908: Choate Papers, Box 28.
- <sup>112</sup> Choate to Porter, 11 April 1908: Choate Papers, Box 15.
- <sup>113</sup> James Brown Scott, (ed.). *American Addresses at the Second Hague Peace Conference* (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1910).
- <sup>114</sup> Speeches by Courtney and Mead (both 28 July), and Perris (30 July): Report of the Proceedings of the 17<sup>th</sup> Universal Congress of Peace, London, July 2 –August 1, 1908: IPB, First Period, 106/8.
- <sup>115</sup> Mazower, *Governing the World*, 82.
- <sup>116</sup> Carnegie to Bryce, October 11, 1907, Bryce Papers, 4.
- <sup>117</sup> Kuehl, *Seeking World Order*, 106.
- <sup>118</sup> Stead to Bryce, February 11, 1908, Bryce Papers, 140.
- <sup>119</sup> Stead, “The Second Conference at The Hague: The Observations of a Disillusioned Crusader,” *Review of Reviews* (August 1907).
- <sup>120</sup> Carnegie to von Suttner, October 1, 1907: Von Suttner Papers, BvS/15/167-2/1-2.
- <sup>121</sup> Murray Butler to H.C. Phillips, December 11, 1913: [Papers of the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, N.Y., Series III, Box 492, volume 164, folder 1.
- <sup>122</sup> Choate to Scott, November 26, 1913: Choate Papers, Box 21.

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<sup>123</sup> Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism*, 200.

<sup>124</sup> Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War*, 110-11.