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Making Internationalism Personal: The Great Depression and America's Advocates for International Cooperation, 1929-1936

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MAKING INTERNATIONALISM PERSONAL: THE GREAT DEPRESSION
AND AMERICA'S ADVOCATES FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION,
1929-1936

By

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ABSTRACT

Between the world wars, Wilsonian activists called for the United States to use its power, money, and influence to help neutralize the volatile atmosphere in Europe and Asia and foster a cooperative global community to prevent war and settle international disputes rationally. These internationalists were mostly intellectuals and publicists associated with universities, prominent foundations, and non-profit organizations such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Institute of Pacific Relations, and the Foreign Policy Association. While a number of historians either downplay the importance of this group in policymaking or label its participants as idealists detached from the mainstream beat of American public opinion in the interwar period, internationalists' activities during the Great Depression indicate that they were more alert to reality than some writers suggest.

This thesis explores a revolution in the internationalist movement in the United States in which Wilsonian activists confronted the economic downturn of the early 1930s as both a challenge and an opportunity. On the one hand, the hardships of the Great Depression turned most Americans toward nationalist solutions for the crisis designed to put "America first," at the expense of the internationalist worldview the Wilsonians were working to cultivate. Moreover, the organizations and individuals who supported this non-governmental movement were not immune from the Depression themselves, and over the course of the 1930s their funding began to wither. Despite these problems, however, internationalists used the Depression as an opportunity to reform their movement to make it more relevant and palatable to a wider public. This revolution took place in three categories. First, Wilsonians dropped their traditional vague arguments favoring international cooperation and substituted an unyielding attack on specific acts of economic nationalism, which they believed had caused the Great Depression and could engulf the world in another general war if left unchecked. They also supplemented their existing tactics for educating public opinion with new initiatives designed to shine a spotlight on the problems of the Depression for the largest possible number of Americans. Whereas their earlier efforts had focused on university students and the elite, 1930s internationalists launched a real campaign to bring Wilsonianism to the everyday American. Finally, in light of the fiscal constraints of the economic downturn during this period, internationalists were forced to

streamline their movement by prioritizing their work and pooling resources to support only the best and most promising avenues of action. What these intellectuals considered the most promising is indicative of the lessons the Depression taught them. Altogether, these changes demonstrate that Wilsonians are deserving of attention in the historiography of American foreign policy in the inter-war period, since they did make a concerted effort to shape popular opinion about America's place in a global community, and their activities confirm that they did far more than bat about ideas that had no connection to the dire realities of the Great Depression.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Some may say that much that is recorded in [this survey of the study of international relations in the United States] is of an order that is passing and, therefore, might better be forgotten. The truth is, however, that the new policies are often inexplicable unless the history here recorded is taken into account; and that new policies are now possible because, in the past decade or more, the pioneer organizations have developed to the point of being able to investigate problems in practical politics. Moreover, such associations have created a public opinion which will be readier to follow the conclusions of research than ever before in our history.¹

These are the hopeful words of a beleaguered idealist. Edith Ware, an associate of the American National Committee on Intellectual Cooperation headquartered in New York, wrote these words in 1934 as part of the preface to her lengthy volume describing the work of countless men and women who were attempting to teach the American people how to accept their nation's guiding role in global affairs and thus do their part to prevent international enmity and war. The leaders of this movement, known broadly as the "internationalist" movement, had been working for decades to change the way Americans understood their place in the world with some success, although all conceded there was much work left to do. Many of them held no official position at any level of government, but they still strove to influence American foreign policy. Where they lacked votes in Congress, they attempted to compensate by informing the opinions of those who did, as well as the citizens who put the members of Congress in power.²

The year 1934 was an especially critical point for Ware and the non-governmental organizations whose programs she explored in the book. The Great Depression was in full swing by this time, and while most of the internationalist leaders were spared the devastation that stalked so many American families in these years, a crisis still remained for them. If it was not

¹ Edith Ware, *The Study of International Relations in the United States: Survey for 1934* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), preface.

² A more detailed description of the internationalist ideal, complete with a discussion of its philosophical background, is provided in Chapter 2.

economic, it was ideological, and it was just as serious for their livelihood. Because of the rapidly changing conditions of the modern world and the deteriorating record of progress that had seemed to be very strong for their movement before the World War, American internationalists who had looked forward to witnessing the culmination of their efforts in an era of unparalleled prosperity found themselves deeply disappointed.

For many of them, this was merely an extension of the disenchantment that still remained from the end of the World War itself, when the prospect of an equitable international settlement had stimulated hope that government and international relations might be placed on some rational footing as they never had before. The Treaty of Versailles was a rude awakening for those who had believed that their flavor of idealism had captured the imaginations of the Allies and would precipitate a just peace. A number of liberal thinkers responded by moving to the left or right or even leaving the country in protest, but the remaining core merely took these events as a sign to work harder.³

The internationalists active in the United States during the 1930s were some of the hopeful liberals who held their ground, and witnessed several important victories for their cause in the 1920s in the form of international accords the United States elected to join.⁴ The Depression, however, made their struggle that much more difficult when the American reaction to it seemed to confirm that the principles for which they were working had little resonance with the public, despite what the government had been willing to do in the previous decade. As this thesis will demonstrate, however, the internationalists responded to this challenge in a dynamic and innovative way. They recast their work in an effort to bridge the gap between their lofty idealism and the realities of the moment, especially the desires of the American people for relief and assurance that tomorrow would be a better day not necessarily for the world, but for the United States.

Because activist internationalists are not typically vested with government power of any kind, they are not always considered important contributors to American national policy, even

³ Stuart Rochester's seminal work on the disillusion of liberals following the World War is particularly helpful for understanding the ideological plight of the Wilsonians. See Rochester, *American Liberal Disillusionment in the Wake of World War I* (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977), especially pp. 105-150.

⁴ Prominent examples include the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922, the Dawes Plan (not an agreement but a blueprint for a more efficient system for German reparations), and the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928. More on these measures follows in Chapter 2.

less often American foreign policy.⁵ More often, they appear in narratives as interest groups, public intellectuals, commentators, and other players of minimal importance in explaining the policymaking process. Some scholars have made strong cases for their inclusion as part of a comprehensive foreign policy narrative in the United States, however. Philip Coombs, a onetime Ford Foundation leader and the first Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Culture, wrote in 1964 that foundations and other philanthropic organizations comprised a “fourth dimension” of foreign policy that played a legitimate role in the policymaking process.⁶ Historian Edward Berman, who examined the influence of several major foundations involved in foreign affairs in the early 1970s, argued that this “fourth dimension” was not only active, but it demanded to be better understood, especially since its component organizations wielded such potential influence over Americans through educational programs and publications. These entities, which Berman called the “silent partners” in American foreign policy, were intent on doing good through philanthropic activities around the world as well as at home, but they wanted to do so on their own terms, hence the need for their further investigation.⁷

Postwar internationalist philanthropy has received the most attention. As Berman indicates, this is the period when members of the internationalist establishment began to widely pursue their goals on a global scale, commensurate with the extension of official American interest in far-flung regions.⁸ Robert Divine’s seminal volume on the internationalist movement during the war and their efforts to revive the Wilsonian vision of a global governing body through their advocacy for the United Nations is the starting point of this literature.⁹ Robert Bremner’s *American Philanthropy*, originally published in 1960, favorably reviewed philanthropic activities throughout American history, with emphasis on the years after 1945. As the 1960s and 1970s came and went, however, other scholars began to chip away at Bremner’s thesis, claiming that foundations sometimes used their influence to exercise social control. Akira

⁵ Authors who take philanthropic or non-governmental organizations as their topics seem to readily acknowledge this. Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie, who in 2003 published a lengthy edited volume of essays on these organizations, say as much in their introduction. See Friedman and McGarvie, eds., *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁶ Coombs was appointed to his post in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy. See Coombs, *The Fourth Dimension of Foreign Policy: Educational and Cultural Affairs* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), passim.

⁷ Edward H. Berman, *The Ideology of Philanthropy: The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 1-16.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹ Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America during World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1971).

Iriye and other historians have recently begun rehabilitating the image of the philanthropies, arguing since the 1990s that regardless of what they have contributed, foundations and philanthropies, examples of what Iriye calls “cultural internationalists,” deserve historical attention. This has been the orientation of a number of recent works, and it informs the research goals of this thesis.¹⁰ Recent writers have explored the role of internationalist foundations and other organizations in fighting the Cold War through cultural and educational programs at home and abroad. John Krige, for example, has argued that philanthropies such as the Rockefeller and Ford foundations informally helped to construct American hegemony in Europe after World War II by providing grants and fellowships for rebuilding the European science community.¹¹

Internationalist organizations go back much farther than the post-1945 era, however, and several studies have sought to bring their history to light as well. Prior to World War I, pacifists and advocates for international cooperation enjoyed limited exposure and success, but their role as an outgrowth of the progressive movement has been well-documented. Charles Chatfield, Sondra Herman, Merle Curti, and especially Warren Kuehl have demonstrated that the internationalist movement became increasingly organized during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Kuehl’s *Seeking World Order* provides the additional service of tracing the history of international organization in American thought all the way from the colonial era through the League of Nations.¹²

In the 1920s, internationalists experienced a bittersweet romance with American postwar prosperity, as historians of that era have revealed. On the one hand, a burgeoning economy and a host of postwar issues allowed the numerous organizations that comprised the movement to increase their activities and attract new members, creating a stronger base from which to

¹⁰ See Robert H. Bremner, *American Philanthropy*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), passim. The book has been through several editions, although the same historians who have noted how much his thesis came under attack in the 1960s and 1970s also remark that his second edition failed to address that opposition. See the introduction to Friedman and McGarvie, eds., *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*. Akira Iriye has written widely on the role of the “cultural internationalists” in American foreign affairs, but see especially his *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), passim.

¹¹ John Krige, *American Hegemony and the Postwar Reconstruction of Science in Europe* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 1-14.

¹² Chatfield and Curti focus especially on the American peace movement, irrespective of whether the participants were internationalist or more accurately pacifist. See Chatfield, *The American Peace Movement: Ideals and Activism* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), and Curti, *Peace or War: The American Struggle, 1636-1936* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1966). Herman goes into great detail about the varieties of “internationalism” embodied in the work of eleven leaders in the movement. See Herman, *Eleven Against War: Studies in American Internationalist Thought, 1898-1921* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1969). See also Kuehl, *Seeking World Order* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969).

expound their message. However, as William Leuchtenburg and many others have indicated in studies of the inter-war period, everyday Americans gave only token interest to deep questions about the future of their government's foreign policy. What they wanted was "normalcy," and domestic issues such as the threat of Communist subversion and the plight of the farmer seemed like more important problems than the puzzling debate over whether or not to participate in the League of Nations or the World Court.¹³

The existing record of American activist internationalism in the 1930s lacks the attention that has been paid both to the post-World War II era and the years preceding World War I. Historians such as Margot Louria, Frank Ninkovich, Robert Dallek, and Patrick Cohrs have explored the policies of the various presidential administrations during this period, as well as the United States' official involvement in specific initiatives, but American public opinion on foreign affairs and the non-state actors who attempted to shape it do not occupy much space in their narratives.¹⁴

A few scholars have touched on the subject by writing about specific players in the internationalist movement. Albert Marrin and Michael Rosenthal, for example, have written insightful biographies of Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University from 1902 to 1945 and a longtime leader of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Butler's position as a trustee for both the Carnegie Endowment and the more amply funded Carnegie Corporation made him a crucial figure in the infrastructure of the movement, in addition to his activities as an outspoken publicist on foreign affairs and education. Accordingly, his biographers reveal a great deal in their books about the relationships between the Carnegie funds

¹³ William Leuchtenburg, *The Perils of Prosperity: 1914-32*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), passim.

¹⁴ Louria and Dallek have written specifically on the foreign policies of the interwar presidents. See Louria, *Triumph and Downfall: America's Pursuit of Peace and Prosperity, 1921-1933* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), and Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*. 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Frank Ninkovich argues that Wilsonianism, a political ideology advocating multilateral institutions, collective security, and other measures of international cooperation, pervaded not only Wilson's era but also American policymaking up to the present day. In one chapter, he marshals evidence to show that even in the depths of the Depression Franklin Roosevelt appealed to a "Wilsonian sense of threat" to prepare the country for war. See Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy since 1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). Patrick Cohrs provides a thick description of cooperative efforts between the United States, Britain, and France to stabilize the tense atmosphere of Europe from the end of World War I through the Republican Ascendancy. See Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace After World War I: America, Europe, and the Stabilisation of Europe, 1919-1932* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

and other internationalist organizations.¹⁵ Harold Josephson has provided a similar service in his helpful biography of James T. Shotwell, another Carnegie leader and Columbia man who wielded considerable influence over the internationalist effort during the 1930s.¹⁶ The leaders of other crucial organizations are represented in the historiography by a number of articles and books written about the organizations themselves, especially the Council on Foreign Relations and the Foreign Policy Association.¹⁷

All of these perspectives are useful for constructing the history of American internationalism during the 1930s, but they lack a concise explanation of how the crucial events of those years fit into the history of the movement, especially the Great Depression. David Steigerwald likely has come closest to enunciating a well-supported statement not only on the effectiveness of internationalist agitation for transnational cooperation during the 1930s, but also on how the events of that decade affected the movement itself. He argues that the Great Depression initiated a period of “philosophical decline” in which internationalists realized that their liberal ideas were grounded much more in the principles of the Enlightenment than they were in the realities of the modern twentieth-century world. They could no longer blame American citizens’ failure to heed their warnings about the dangers of a nationalistic foreign policy on political bungling or a temporary lapse of reason. They were the authors of their own irrelevance to everyday people.¹⁸

This idea is satisfying inasmuch as internationalists did confront a menacing ideational barrier in the 1930s between themselves and the voting public whom they felt they needed most to reach, but something is missing. Activist internationalist organizations such as the Foreign Policy Association, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, and the League of Nations Association did not spend the 1930s doing nothing. Even in a state of “philosophical decline,” they still expended millions of dollars in attempts to turn the public back from the brink of a disaster their facts and figures were actively and accurately predicting. How, then, do we get from an ideologically bankrupt movement suffering from a lamentable case of modernity in the early

¹⁵ Albert Marrin, *Nicholas Murray Butler* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976); Michael Rosenthal, *Nicholas Miraculous: The Amazing Career of the Redoubtable Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2006).

¹⁶ Harold Josephson, *James T. Shotwell and the Rise of Internationalism in America* (London: Associated University Presses, 1975).

¹⁷ Robert D. Schulzinger, *The Wise Men of Foreign Affairs: The History of the Council on Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Frank Winchester Abbott, “From Versailles to Munich: The Foreign Policy Association and American Foreign Policy,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1972.

¹⁸ David Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 131.

1930s to the triumphant and largely intact movement depicted in the works of Robert Divine and the historians of post-World War II internationalism? What did the internationalists do during these years, and what was the relationship of the Great Depression to this effort?

I propose to answer these questions by making the American internationalists agents of their own history in a narrative that concerns itself mainly with their work. I argue that the Great Depression forced the internationalist movement in the United States to retool itself for the modern world. Its leaders could keep their traditional roles as sage-like advisors to American foreign policy, but they could no longer take for granted that the public's capacity for reason, the experience of the First World War, and their efforts of the 1920s would suggest the righteousness and desirability of an interdependent community of nations. If internationalism as a mode of thinking about foreign relations was to have any currency with the voting public, its proponents would have to explain the benefits of a globally-minded worldview not only in terms of American national interest or in the interests of humanity, but also in terms of individual interest. In other words, internationalists would have to demonstrate the importance of their creed in the language of what Americans cared about most in the moment, relief and recovery from a devastating economic crisis. Neither the machinery nor the ideology of 1920s American internationalism was prepared for this task; it had to change.

In this way, the Depression represented both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge would be for intellectuals and activists whose previous activities had been aimed almost exclusively at the governing class and other elites to translate their ideas into something that everyday American could absorb. Moreover, they would have to work within the altered circumstances of a colossal financial slump, meaning fewer donors, smaller gifts, and a greater tendency among the American people to "circle the wagons" and reject solutions that had anything else at their focus than American recovery.

The opportunity, on the other hand, lay in the crisis itself. During the 1920s, there seemed to be little reason to contemplate any far-reaching changes in the foreign policy of the United States. Despite the internationalists' claims to the contrary, the United States' capacity to get along without any official entanglements in the affairs of other countries did not appear to be diminished at all, so far as the leaders of that era were concerned. With the arrival of a crushing depression whose origins could be traced back to nationalistic policies, however, the

internationalists suddenly had a much clearer example of what could happen when a nation chose not to recognize its role as merely one part of a larger global network.

Key leaders in the movement recognized the significance of the Depression for their work. James T. Shotwell, a professor of history at Columbia University and one of the directors of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, noted in 1931 that “the present economic depression has at least contributed one major benefit to the world at large ... for the first time since our present economic system reached maturity, there is a thoroughgoing tendency ... to analyze the very nature of the system under which civilization has reached such a climate of organization and of maladjustment.”¹⁹ Nicholas Murray Butler wrote soon after that the leadership of internationalists had never before been so badly needed.²⁰ Prominent business owner, internationalist, and philanthropist Edward A. Filene remarked that it took American business owners several years following the onset of the Depression to face “the facts of business,” but he added that if Americans seized this critical moment to reform their financial system, “the depression must loom up as the best thing that ever happened to America.”²¹

In accepting this challenge, the various organizations and leaders of the American internationalist movement widely discarded their previously failed policy of strongly advocating for the United States’ entry into the World Court, the League of Nations, and other schemes for collective security simply because it was the right course of action for America and for the world. Instead, they pressed for fundamental changes in American economic policy, not just because they would be good for the global community, or even for the United States as a whole, but because they could be explained both in the context of an internationalist worldview and the personal needs of farmers, laborers, and other everyday America citizens. They hoped to inculcate a sort of “personal internationalism” in which the health of the international community was linked up not only with national interest, but also with individual interests.

This is not to say that America’s advocates for international cooperation met with total success in the 1930s, and that historians have merely ignored it. Indeed, Steigerwald is correct to note that the internationalists did not achieve their most fundamental goals during the decade, but

¹⁹ James T. Shotwell, “The Conditions of Enduring Prosperity,” *International Conciliation* 14, no. 1 (Feb., 1931), 53-63.

²⁰ Butler was referring in this case specifically to the trustees of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, but the sentiment was widespread. See Nicholas Murray Butler, “Report of the Director of the Division of Education and Intercourse,” in the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace’s *Year Book* (1932), 46-47.

²¹ Filene was quoted in a preview of his upcoming article in *The Rotarian* 43, no. 5 (Nov 1933), 2.

to some extent this is a moot point. American leaders of that era based their decisions on real circumstances and real calculations of the requirements of American national interest. Internationalists were only one voice – albeit an influential one – making suggestions about how the United States could end the Depression. The point is that they actively met the challenge with a new, more flexible attitude and a willingness to change in order to continue working toward their ultimate objective – a United States that participated benevolently in a global community of nations. The typical depiction of activist internationalists as idealistic elitists with no sense of the plight of the common citizen simply does not square with their behavior in the 1930s.²²

The significance of this claim is that it helps to illuminate the path between the earlier, pre-World War I and 1920s-era internationalist movement and the think tanks and powerful non-government organizations of the post-World War II world that comprise a majority of the scholarship concerning internationalist philanthropy in the United States. If the reader takes the present historiography at face value, it could easily appear that the process of modernizing the internationalist movement began sometime during or after World War II, after Steigerwald’s “philosophical decline” had been cut short when the prospect of a United Nations delivered the internationalists what Robert Divine calls their “second chance.” Internationalists were trying to clean up their act and sell their worldview to a broad spectrum of Americans long before this point, and these activities are as much a part of the history of non-governmental influences on foreign policy as anything after World War II.²³

In order to explain how American internationalists contemplated and effected these fundamental changes, this thesis begins in Chapter 2 with an overview of the movement up to 1929. This section discusses the philosophies shared by most of its members, as well as the events that shaped their worldview. The significance of World War I and the experience of the

²² David Steigerwald is among those who present the Wilsonians in this light, even during the 1930s. According to his recent treatment of the subject, Wilsonians “ignored how painful the depression was and how badly common Americans needed an aggressive governmental response, something they defined away as dangerous and counterproductive.” The aim of this thesis is to show that while Wilsonians may have failed to produce a publicly acceptable alternative to the New Deal, they were not as immutably doctrinaire as Steigerwald makes them out to be. They made an effort to change the way they presented their arguments so as to make them more appealing to these everyday citizens. See Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism*, 119.

²³ Iriye asserts that to ignore the role of non-governmental organizations in the making of the international community is to “distort history.” See Iriye, “Nongovernmental Organizations and the Making of the International Community,” in David C. Hammack and Steven Heydemann, eds., *Globalization, Philanthropy, and Society: Projecting Institutional Logics Abroad* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 32-43.

battle for the League of Nations receive special emphasis, as will the influence of Woodrow Wilson. This will permit me to merge the labels “internationalist” and “Wilsonian” to some extent, since so many key members of this movement took their cues from President Wilson and his vision. The major internationalist organizations will be introduced, as will the principal issues that made up their agendas. The chapter will culminate with the state of the movement on the eve of the Great Crash in 1929, when many of the American policies that the internationalists would criticize in the 1930s were already coming to the fore.

Chapter 3 will examine the Great Crash itself and the internationalists’ reactions to it. Few organizations took immediate interest in the financial meltdown that followed Black Tuesday, but eventually a number of Wilsonian intellectuals began to realize that the growing economic crisis in America had everything to do with the issues they had been discussing since the end of the World War. As Congress began work on a new tariff bill and controversies regarding intergovernmental debts leftover from the World War came to a head, they pinpointed economic nationalism as the source of the problem, and determined that the United States had to alter its foreign policy if it was to avoid a major breakdown in foreign relations and a return to the distrust and anxiety that had led the world into war only a few years before.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss how internationalists planned to marshal their resources to convince the American public that their government had to confront the Depression as an international phenomenon. Chapter 4 focuses on how Wilsonian intellectuals rallied behind a fairly unified message that depicted the United States’ nationalistic economic policy as the antithesis of proper behavior for a global creditor. In order to make clear connections with the largest possible audience of Americans, they explained the significance of high tariffs and unrelenting war debt collection policies in the context of American prosperity. They also depicted unpleasant consequences for allowing the government to continue its established course. Chapter 5 reveals that the internationalists took this message to the streets with programs designed to expose as many people as possible to their ideas. Whereas the movement had previously focused on preaching to the converted, along with university students and a limited public audience, the 1930s ushered in a variety of new initiatives that would allow Americans at all levels of society access to their ideas.

Both of these chapters benefit strongly from the nature of the internationalist organizations as generators of public opinion, in that a crucial part of their leaders’ mission was

to write down all of their ideas and make them as widely available as possible. Books, speeches, articles, minutes of meetings, and private memoranda from various internationalist leaders and the scholars they trusted to contribute to their journals provide the primary source base for this section of the thesis. Additional material from individuals outside the movement is included, but this is mainly meant to provide a comparison between the internationalist viewpoint and the positions of other kinds of leaders of public opinion. Indeed, in both Chapters 4 and 5 I will show that the internationalists' efforts were reciprocated by opponents who worked just as fervently to inculcate a nationalistic mindset in everyday Americans.

Chapter 6 acknowledges that even with a new plan and a new resolve to make internationalism relevant to the masses, the internationalists could not completely escape the financial crunch felt by virtually everyone during the Depression. Decreased funding, lower membership numbers, and disillusion made it increasingly difficult for the organizations tasked with carrying the movement to the people to do their work. Consequently, several of these major players attempted to reorganize their efforts in order to become more efficient. The changes they anticipated were not only supposed to reduce the cost of the work, but also to confine it to the most effective methods of influencing public opinion. What they considered to be the most effective methods by the mid-1930s comprises a telling illustration of how much the internationalist movement really did change in responding to the Great Depression. Absolutely essential to this section are archival sources from several key internationalist leaders, including Raymond Leslie Buell of the Foreign Policy Association, Hamilton Holt of the League of Nations Association, and Norman H. Davis, a professional diplomat and trustee of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

In a word, these third, fourth, and fifth chapters are intended to illustrate a transformation of the internationalist movement in terms of its message, tactics, and organization. Ultimately, this study must overturn the idea that Wilsonians were unmoved by the catastrophe that seized the United States during the early 1930s. While it is entirely true that America's advocates for global cooperation had a history of speaking in a foreign language of high-minded ideals and vague remedies for international conflict, they actively reformed themselves in order to make their goals more realistic for the voters on whom their ultimate success would depend. Only by doing so were they able to survive long enough to take advantage of their "second chance" in the post-World War II world.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT CAME BEFORE: THE INTERNATIONALIST MOVEMENT TO 1929

While American internationalism underwent extensive changes during the early 1930s in response to the Great Depression, the movement itself was already well-established in the United States, with a lengthy legacy of activism on behalf of international cooperation. Understanding how it functioned in the decades leading up to 1929 will help to place the economic crisis in context. It is also important to emphasize that a variety of different ideas about how nations ought to work together to prevent war and streamline international relations were in play during the early twentieth century. As Sondra Herman pointed out long ago, and as later historians have confirmed in their studies of American internationalism, the individuals who contributed to this movement were never entirely united. While they may have shared some basic assumptions about society and the place of America in the world, they often arrived at their ideological moorings from different angles.

¹ In addition, although transforming public opinion lay at the root of their common purpose for the most part, there was a wide variety of ideas about whose opinion was worth transforming, and whose politics ought to be merely pegged to the guidance of their betters.

Whatever the diversity of their thinking, in terms of their social class, educational background, and status, the most influential activist internationalists were widely homogenous. They were cut from the traditional white Anglo-Saxon Protestant fabric of the northeastern United States, typically middle-to-upper class and often from families with long histories in America.² After receiving their education in some of the best schools in the region, often

¹ Sondra Herman divided the internationalists into “community” and “polity” factions, where the “polity” internationalists focused on subordinating international relations to the rule of law. Woodrow Wilson, Nicholas Murray Butler, and Elihu Root were her examples. Herman’s “community” internationalists, on the other hand, were generally more organic in their theories, espousing a strong belief in the interconnectedness of humankind, independent from state structures. See Herman, *Eleven Against War*, preface. Other historians have divided up the internationalists in other ways. Frank Ninkovich slices up the concept of internationalism in a different way, placing all activists for international cooperation in a category of “crisis” or “Wilsonian” internationalism, a foreign policy ideology that only sometimes replaced “normal” strategic interest-based internationalism in the twentieth century. See Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century*, 12. David C. Hendrickson divides up internationalists between “universalists” who sought a common ideology and governing principles to tame the entire international system and “particularists” who were more interested in merely establishing a forum for working out inevitable national differences. See Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire: The American Debate over International Relations, 1789-1941* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 6-8.

² Josephson, *James T. Shotwell*, 138.

nothing less than Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Yale, or Columbia, they settled in large nearby cities such as Boston or New York. Some of the intellectuals who contributed to the movement left the region and operated from smaller university towns or cosmopolitan trade centers such as San Francisco or New Orleans, but New England never lost its place as the central hub of activity.³

While the most vocal internationalists tended to be publicists for the cause employed by the growing number of non-profit organizations formed to address social issues in the early twentieth century, others held successful careers as businessmen, educators, bureaucrats, lawyers, and other professionals. They participated in the movement by becoming members of those organizations and contributing both to their coffers and their banks of knowledge on world affairs. The wide variety of occupations represented in the ranks of the movement permitted its leaders closer access to persons of authority in both government and business.⁴

To a great extent, these internationalists both participated in or were affected by the progressive movement that swept the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As witnesses to this remarkable transformation, their attitudes toward society and the act of reform took on a recognizable zeal reminiscent of the enthusiasm of settlement house workers, Anti-Saloon Leaguers, and other community activists. They displayed an indomitable faith in reason from their earliest days. They believed the time was fast approaching when modern forms of education and communication would reveal the reasoning behind international cooperation to everyone. Having seen the light, the public would recognize its own interest in the concept and agitate for its proper enshrinement in American foreign policy. Moreover, Americans would no longer tolerate reactionary influences in government that stood in the way.⁵

This reliance on the public's capacity for reason and understanding stemmed also from the experience of witnessing the almost millenarian advance of human ingenuity around this same period. In an age of automobiles and airplanes, radio, and modern industrialization, no conceivable problem seemed beyond the capacity of the human mind to comprehend and address. It logically seemed to follow, then, that it was well within the scope of human ability to isolate and excise the cause of war using the force of enlightened public opinion. The way to

³ Divine, *Second Chance*, 23.

⁴ Norman H. Davis, for example, was both a trustee of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a State Department worker, and his letters to internationalist leaders often conveyed interesting inside information that kept them abreast of trends in American foreign policy. See especially his letters to Hamilton Fish Armstrong of the Council on Foreign Relations and Newton D. Baker of the League of Nations Association in Boxes 2 and 3, Norman H. Davis Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

⁵ Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism*, 11.

harness this power, the internationalists believed, was to uncover and display as many facts as possible about the world and its problems. If Americans could submit their housekeeping problems to electrical appliances, they might also submit their international problems to similarly scientific solutions, once they knew such solutions existed.⁶

What was supposed to issue from this effort was a new kind of international relations supported by rational thinking at the global, national, and personal levels. International institutions established and maintained according to multilateral agreements and mutual interest in peaceful relationships would govern intercourse between nations. Rationalized national policies that respected the generally agreed-upon rights of other nations and the public interest in peace would replace malevolent opportunism and devious power diplomacy. Most importantly, everyday people would be educated to understand that in their modern world, each nation was interrelated with the others, and it was important to recognize this fact and support only those leaders who would uphold the internationalist ideal in the policymaking process. In a sense, the people involved at each of these levels would have to exhibit what Nicholas Murray Butler called the “international mind.”⁷

Mobilizing the forces of both the state and public opinion in order to completely achieve these goals was ambitious, but the internationalists were strongly convinced that they had the wherewithal to make it happen. As Michael McGerr has recently pointed out in his work on the Progressive Era, the middle class Victorians who became agents of social progress during this period felt that the new world they anticipated could only be inaugurated following the transformation of other social classes to accept the same vision. This almost evangelical approach is apparent throughout the history of the internationalist movement.⁸

⁶ Herman, *Eleven Against War*, 10; Josephson, *James T. Shotwell*, 109. Even as late as the 1930s, when the public seemed unmoved by facts even when they pointed to impending disaster, some internationalists continued to believe that the lack of drive among Americans to improve their foreign policy was due to a dearth of available information explaining what was happening. William T. Stone’s 25 Mar 1935 proposal for a “research and educational organization dealing with public affairs,” given in 1935, is a good example. See Box 42, Raymond Leslie Buell Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

⁷ Butler defined the “international mind” as “nothing else than that habit of thinking of foreign relations and business, and that habit of dealing with them, which regard the several nations of the civilized world as friendly and cooperating equals in aiding the progress of civilization, in developing commerce and industry, and in spreading enlightenment and culture throughout the world.” See Butler, *The International Mind: An Argument for the Judicial Settlement of International Disputes* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1912), 102.

⁸ Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America: 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), preface.

These thinkers were also deeply moved by a strong sense of tradition. They believed they were building their movement on a foundation of solid ideas and institutions created by leaders of the Enlightenment and the Founding Fathers. Their optimism was guided by their certainty that humans were endowed with the moral ability to understand and practice self-government.⁹ In calling for innovations in the international order and America's role in leading them, they often referred to the nation's long-standing respect for international law, free trade, and the ingenious design of the federal union.¹⁰ A nation with such a background, they argued, ought to be able to extend those virtues into the international community through its influence.

Party affiliations did not divide the internationalists in any meaningful way. In the earliest days of the movement, the proposals were novel enough that neither of the major American political parties had made any absolute statements of their positions, and the internationalists themselves took measures to ensure that they remained nonpartisan, or at the very least bipartisan. In the 1920s and 1930s, the vast majority of the prominent members of the movement were Wilsonian Democrats, but they were joined by a sizeable number of influential Republicans, including Nicholas Murray Butler, Elihu Root, William Howard Taft, *Independent* editor Hamilton Holt, and Raymond Fosdick, an unrelenting advocate of the League of Nations. Early on, influential internationalists realized that in order to avoid appearing as yet another cog of the political system they would need to demonstrate their nonpartisan character. This led to the formation of organizations such as the League of Nations Nonpartisan Association and the Council on Foreign Relations, both of which took steps to include Democrats and Republicans in their ranks. The LNNPA came about directly as a result of the mutual disgust of internationalists on both sides of the aisle following President Warren G. Harding's election in 1920, and the Council followed suit by nominating representatives of both parties to its original executive board.¹¹

While internationalist sentiment knew no party lines, neither did its antithesis, isolationism or unilateralism. Only some of the people who disagreed with the basic thrust of the internationalist agenda were so opposed as to consider themselves isolationist – more would

⁹ Friedman and McGarvie, eds., *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility*, 6-7.

¹⁰ William A. Mowry, an internationalist by belief and an educator and historical writer by trade, was one of many to suggest that the United States had in fact been a principal shaper of international law. He cited Jay's Treaty of 1794 and Thomas Jefferson's neutrality policy as examples. See Mowry's 3 Jun 1896 address, *Report of the Second Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration*, 9-10. David Hendrickson cites other examples of American traditions dear to the internationalists. See Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire*, 6-12.

¹¹ Divine, *Second Chance*, 11; Schulzinger, *Wise Men of Foreign Affairs*, 6; Kuehl, *Keeping the Covenant*, 39-47.

have called themselves unilateralist – but these few were backed up by powerful figures in both government and private sectors. These individuals were not commonly organized into activist groups as the internationalists were; they merely represented a widely shared opinion that the United States could best serve its needs by focusing on domestic solutions to its problems and avoiding permanent arrangements committing the government to any specific course of action.¹²

This did not mean, however, that unilateralists believed their government needed no foreign policy. The specific point of contention was the character of the United States' engagement with the world. Some of the leading American isolationists – Senator William E. Borah of Idaho, Senator Hiram Johnson of California, and historian Charles Beard – made names for themselves arguing for progressive policies, even internationalist policies at times. What they wanted was freedom of action for the United States, which precluded agreements to submit any part of the decision-making process in foreign affairs to international entities, as bona fide internationalists of the Wilsonian stripe considered necessary.¹³

Despite the internationalists' pronouncements to the contrary, their adversaries seemed to have history on their side. Many of them cited unilateralist traditions dating back to the Founding Fathers in attacking schemes for international cooperation. George Washington's Farewell Address, in which he warned against forming "entangling alliances" with European powers, was a favorite text. Others grounded their opposition to internationalism in the concept of American exceptionalism, claiming that the United States was both physically and morally separate from what unilateralist Senator Borah called the "storm center of European politics," and getting involved would be tantamount to a pact with the devil.¹⁴ While the majority of the internationalists' effort was spent outlining positive approaches to foreign policy issues, they were periodically forced to address their ideological opponents, as later chapters will reveal.

The specific activities of the movement in the decades leading up to the Depression changed over time, as circumstances and new currents of thinking altered the views of its leaders. In the earliest years, from about 1890 into the first decade of the twentieth century,

¹² Some organizations were organized around a mission to keep America isolated. The difference is that internationalists were much more apt to form organizations because their opinions on foreign policy were less intuitive. Isolationism made sense to many Americans in light of tradition and circumstances. See Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire*, 8.

¹³ Manfred Jonas, *Isolationism in America: 1935-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 1-31.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*; Robert H. Ferrell, *American Diplomacy: The Twentieth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988), 149-151; Robert James Maddox, *William E. Borah and American Foreign Policy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1969), 52-53.

arbitration was the most popular theme.¹⁵ Whereas earlier generations had not had the opportunity to witness much in the way of foreign relations owing to the relative calm of the nineteenth century and America's geographical isolation, mindful watchers of international affairs in the 1890s marveled at the increasingly apparent interconnectedness of their world. As the United States became more involved in the international community and contemplated expansion in far-reaching quarters of the globe, early internationalists eagerly anticipated some rational system to manage the increasingly complicated relationships their government established. Their hope was that arbitration, or submitting disputes to a court or tribunal rather than resort to war, would offer nations the opportunity to settle any differences between them calmly. Public opinion would gravitate behind the decisions made by these tribunals.¹⁶

Although the full-time internationalist organizations prominent during later decades did not exist at this time, large groups of citizens often met to discuss arbitration and other current issues in foreign affairs and propose ideas for educating the public about them. The Lake Mohonk Conferences on International Arbitration are perhaps the best example of this. They were held each summer from 1895 to 1916 at a mountain resort in upstate New York, and attended by notable scholars, politicians, and business leaders, mostly from New England but also from other parts of the country. Each year at the conclusion of the meeting, the conferees voted on a platform that they distributed to members of Congress and other leaders who they hoped would take their ideas into consideration.¹⁷ By holding this sort of conference and publishing the results, these early internationalists kept up a lively conversation and began to build a network of personalities and resources that would allow them to tap their way into the public mind.

¹⁵ Prior to this, Americans looking to reform their government's foreign affairs generally held a pacifist outlook. They were internationalist inasmuch as they advocated peace and friendly relations, but they opposed war on a moral basis, whereas the mainstream internationalism that began to flourish in the 1890s was based on logic. The new idea was that nations ought not to have to go to war if they can devise some rational way to govern themselves and their relations with one another. See Kuehl, *Seeking World Order*, ch. 1 and 2.

¹⁶ Herman, *Eleven Against War*, 1-21.

¹⁷ The first such platform, voted by the conferees at Mohonk in 1895, called for "those nations whose peaceful position is strongest, and whose strength is most conspicuous, to take the initiative; and it is time for Great Britain and the United States to act." They were referring to a need for the United States and Britain to begin promoting arbitration by instituting agreements between themselves and their close associates. Over time, the platforms came to include additional suggestions, such as the formation of an international court and American adherence to some form of disarmament. See the various reports of each conference for details. These are published as *Report of the [...] Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration*. When referred to hereafter in this thesis, they will be abbreviated as *Mohonk Report*.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, the work of the movement began to expand into the purview of permanent organizations and academic institutions. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the World Peace Foundation, two crucial internationalist powerhouses of the 1930s whose activities will be described below, were founded in 1910, and many smaller organizations joined them in succeeding years. A number of these were geared toward increasing something along the lines of Butler's "international mind" in the nation's schools, especially the American School Peace League and the Intercollegiate Peace Association. These groups provided materials to teachers and students about current issues in foreign affairs and ways of maintaining peaceful relations, and sponsored essay contests and other schemes to get students engaged in conversation. The Church Peace Union and other Protestant faith-based entities promoted internationalism as consonant with Christian values.¹⁸ Across the movement, leaders agreed that the principles they were hammering out in conferences and treatises needed to find expression in ways that would bring them closer to the average American. "You would improve laws, institutions, inventions, ideals?" asked American Peace Society leader Arthur Deerin Call in 1914. "You must begin with the people."¹⁹

Call made this statement at a prophetic moment, because World War I and the leadership of President Woodrow Wilson were about to fundamentally transform internationalism in the United States. Through his war message to Congress on 2 April 1917, in which he declared that "the world must be made safe for democracy," Wilson awakened American internationalists to the idea that their worldview might not only become important in national policy, but a principal aim of the American war effort in Europe. When the President delivered his "Fourteen Points" speech the following January, he further crystallized the idea that his administration would bend its efforts toward a rationalized system of international relations in the form of a League of Nations. Internationalists, who at this point in the story can also be rightfully called Wilsonians, rejoiced at the prospect of an America that would govern in the "common interest of mankind."²⁰

Supporting Wilson's decision to go to war was a somewhat awkward position for some internationalists at first, since their professed object was to end war, but the President's ideas

¹⁸ Chatfield, *American Peace Movement*, 21-26.

¹⁹ Call made this statement in his address to the 1914 Mohonk Conference on the state of the peace movement. See *Mohonk Report*, 1914 ed., 34-38.

²⁰ For Wilson's 2 Apr 1914 war message to Congress, see the *Congressional Record* 55, pt. 1: 102-104. For the "Fourteen Points" speech, see *Congressional Record* 56, pt. 1: 680-681. See also Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century*, 71.

about what the United States' efforts could achieve led them to believe it was ultimately in their interests to do so. The philosopher John Dewey put it best in an essay he published in *The New Republic* shortly after the United States entered the fighting. He labeled the conflict a "fair adventure," and insisted that it was pregnant with "genuine possibilities" for real social progress on a global scale.²¹ While some internationalist organizations withheld any pronouncements one way or the other for fear of degrading their anti-war credentials or dividing their membership, the majority chose to follow this logic, believing that a war to extinguish the autocratic regime in Germany might reveal the desirability of liberal principles in foreign relations in a way their activism had never been able to do.²²

Some internationalists had the opportunity to participate directly in the war effort as advisors to Wilson's administration. In the fall of 1917, Wilson instructed his confidant, Colonel Edward M. House, to assemble a group of scholars to study postwar problems and prepare materials to aid the American delegation to the impending peace conference at the conclusion of the war. This group, which became known as "The Inquiry," was comprised of about 150 geographers, historians, political scientists, and other professionals who researched and wrote reports that later informed the redrawing of Europe and the Middle East at Versailles. When Wilson sailed for Europe to attend the peace conference, the Inquiry went with him, although it served only a limited role once the conferees turned more toward political bartering.²³ Being a part of the Inquiry strongly influenced those internationalists who remained a part of the movement in the 1920s and 1930s, and in the case of some staff members such as James T. Shotwell, the experience was a deciding factor in bringing them into the movement altogether.²⁴ Shotwell, the outspoken journalist Walter Lippmann, and longtime internationalist and Director

²¹ John Dewey, "What America Will Fight For," *The New Republic*, 18 Aug 1917; quoted in Joseph Ratner, ed., *Characters and Events: Popular Essays in Social and Political History by John Dewey* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929), 561-565.

²² Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism*, 56-59.

²³ George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 419. For a Complete history of the Inquiry, see Lawrence E. Gelfand, *The Inquiry: American Preparations for Peace, 1917-1919* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), passim.

²⁴ Shotwell went on to become a fixture in the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace as the editor of the behemoth *Economic and Social History of the World War*. In 1924, following the resignation of his colleague at Columbia University, John Bates Clark, Shotwell assumed the role of Director of the Endowment's Division of Economics and History. See Josephson, *James T. Shotwell*, 102-103 for a sense of Shotwell's excitement at becoming part of the internationalist effort. See also Shotwell, *The Autobiography of James T. Shotwell* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1961), chapters 8-11.

of the American Geographical Society Isaiah Bowman were all prominent members of the Inquiry group, and each would go on to become leaders in the postwar internationalist effort.

The League of Nations embodied in the Treaty of Versailles was itself a major boost to the internationalist cause. “The dreams of the seers of past centuries can shortly be realized,” wrote Nicholas Murray Butler hopefully in 1918.²⁵ The League, with its permanent consultative Assembly, arbitration court, and sanction powers was nearly everything that internationalists had ever asked for writ large. Although the United States Senate elected not to join the new organization, its existence gratified Wilsonians who viewed its birth as the culmination of their efforts. Hamilton Holt, editor of *The Independent* and a dogged supporter of the League, merrily reported on his return from Europe in 1920 that the new entity was already achieving more than anyone had thought possible and was well on its way to organizing the postwar world for peace. The United States could not help but become involved with such a beneficial endeavor, the thinking went, and it would be the job of the internationalist movement in the 1920s to help the public see past the fog of politics that had buried the League in the Senate and welcome the new cooperative spirit into American foreign relations.²⁶

The task would be difficult. Meager evidence of the League’s effectiveness gave internationalists something to work with, but they faced a host of challenges at home in getting the American people to understand why their isolation from the new institution was worth overturning. Throughout the decade, Wilsonians continued to propound the necessity of American adherence to the League and other forms of international cooperation, aided by the professionalization of existing organizations and the introduction of new ones, but their success was limited.²⁷

One important source of inertia that inhibited the popularity of American participation in global cooperative schemes was the degree of disillusion felt by many citizens following the World War. This disenchantment revealed itself in a variety of ways, especially literature and the arts. Memoirs and fictional accounts from the front such as Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* evoked images of blood and agony that strengthened Americans’ resolve never to become involved in a “foreign” conflict again. In such books as Arthur

²⁵ Quoted in Butler, *Is America Worth Saving?: Addresses on National Problems and Party Policies* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1920), 125.

²⁶ Hamilton Holt, “The Successful League of Nations,” *The Independent*, 23 Oct 1920; see also “Education for Internationalism,” *ibid.*, 5 Jul 1919.

²⁷ Chatfield, *American Peace Movement*, 51-56.

Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime*, Philip Gibbs' *Now It Can Be Told*, and Harold Lasswell's *Propaganda Technique During the World War*, writers expressed their frustrations about the gaps between what they believed the war was all about and what had actually taken place.²⁸

In a way, the war seemed almost futile to many Americans. Woodrow Wilson had proclaimed that the United States was entering the European conflict to make the world safe for democracy, but even his own actions at the Versailles peace conference did not seem to measure up to this high-minded ideal. The treaty that went before the Senate for ratification lacked complete adherence to some of the pristine qualities the Fourteen Points had promised. Self-determination had given way to political bargaining, the subjugation of colonies was only partially addressed by the mandate system, and almost none of the agreements had been openly arrived at as Wilson had envisioned. Internationalists themselves felt especially cheated. They had looked to Wilson to vindicate their ideas and demonstrate how the United States might lead the world in a rational cooperative system, but he had let them down by caving in to the pressures of the old European diplomacy. He further failed by refusing to work with the Senate to get the Treaty passed at home. It was almost as though nothing had changed.²⁹

Equally distressing, many typical Americans seemed not to be confused at all by what they saw happening, especially the unilateralists. World War I merely confirmed what they already knew about Europe and, by extension, the broader world in general and America's interaction with it. The war and the ensuing Versailles debacle was the situation Washington had warned about in his Farewell Address – the United States had meddled in the affairs of the Old World and had been cheated. To become involved with the League of Nations or any part of its burgeoning superstructure would only perpetuate this entanglement, and it seemed to make more sense to curtail American political involvement abroad where possible and focus on domestic recovery.³⁰

The early 1920s seemed to bear this out as the national consensus. In the 1920 presidential election the Democrats ran on a platform advocating entry into the League of

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Walter Lippmann, for example, a member of the Inquiry, ended up opposed to the treaty and believed the Senate ought to repudiate it. This was just the beginning of a very cynical turn for Lippmann that would last for decades. See David Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 359-360; Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century*, 72-74; Curti, *Peace or War*, 270; Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism*, 84.

³⁰ Jeffrey W. Legro, "Whence American Internationalism," *International Organization* 54, no. 2 (Spring, 2000), 253-289.

Nations and lost. Although a number of domestic issues had also factored into the victory of Republican Warren G. Harding, his supporters declared that the election had been a referendum on the League issue and now the will of the people was revealed.³¹ The Republicans held the White House for the remainder of the decade, and none of the three presidents who occupied it seriously contemplated asking the Senate to reverse its decision to exclude the United States from the League. Riding the wave of patriotism and “100 percent Americanism” that started during the war, government officials and old-stock “natives” adopted a critical attitude toward all things foreign. Following the “Red Scare” of 1920, radicals and foreigners of all stripes remained under suspicion, and the federal government tightened its control over their activities. Acts severely limiting the number of immigrants who could gain entry into the United States went into effect in 1921 and 1924.³²

This policy of letting the chips fall where they might abroad was reinforced in the American mind by a sense that there was nothing for Americans to worry about in adopting it. The World War had had its consequences, but none of them seemed earth-shattering enough to disturb the country’s record of historical progress. President Calvin Coolidge, for example, insisted in 1926 that the outlook for peace had never looked better. “We fear no one, and no one fears us,” he said in his State of the Union address.³³ Other than the farmers, who were having some serious trouble adjusting to the decreased demand for their goods in the postwar world, Americans seemed to be enjoying a period of relative prosperity. Automobiles, a wide range of new consumer goods, movies, and the Charleston were taking the nation by storm. In a world that seemed to run so smoothly, the Wilsonian program of foreign policy reform was a hard sell among a public that seemed to be content with the status quo.

Nonetheless, internationalist organizations stepped up to try to educate the public into understanding that the peace they were enjoying depended not on isolation or disengagement from world politics, but on active cooperation with the international community, especially through the new consultative venues taking shape in Geneva.³⁴ Furthermore, they tried to clarify the principal issues that faced both the United States and the countries of Europe in order to

³¹ “Senators Commend New Foreign Policy,” *New York Times*, 5 Mar 1921.

³² Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 440; Paul Johnson, *A History of the American People* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 666-671.

³³ Quoted in Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire*, 348.

³⁴ Geneva, Switzerland was the site of the League of Nations Assembly and its administrative complex. A number of internationalist organizations developed offices there also to keep in close contact with League officials.

make them easier for the average American to understand. The object of this educational effort was to induce the public to make decisions at the polls based on reason instead of emotionalism, which the internationalists believed had been at least partly responsible for the defeat of the League and other isolationist tendencies in recent years.³⁵

Each of the various organizations approached this task in a different way, depending on how its leaders defined the “public” that was most likely to produce a change in foreign policy. The vast majority of internationalists at this time focused on influencing members of their own class – leaders in business, industry, government, and education – who they felt would be in the best position to argue for international cooperation.³⁶ The citizens of the lesser classes were a lower priority for the internationalists, in part because many leaders doubted whether they could be expected to absorb the amount of information necessary to make informed decisions about foreign policy. Moreover, they seemed susceptible to the influence of “vulgar demagogues” who preached nationalistic policies and thwarted progress.³⁷ Nicholas Murray Butler explained that “it is very, very difficult to get men and women to think. They think they think, but they do not think. But the world has always belonged to those who do think.”³⁸ Butler and those who thought as he did accordingly tried to pinpoint those people and make them the object of the internationalist effort. Some organizations still chose to make contacts with the greater public, but this was the exception rather than the rule.³⁹

Regardless of who was going to make the decisions about foreign policy in the United States, Wilsonians were determined that they would be the right ones. With this goal in mind, several new research organizations formed to gather and disseminate facts about international matters. Some of the entities that had been around since before the war also stepped up their efforts to keep the League and other internationalist agenda items before the public. A brief

³⁵ Curti, *Peace or War*, 272-273; Alan Raucher, “The First Foreign Affairs Think Tanks,” *American Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (Autumn, 1978), 493-513.

³⁶ Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism*, 60-61; Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century*, 44.

³⁷ Herman, *Eleven Against War*, 26-27.

³⁸ Butler believed that the government was directly responsible to the people, even those who did not “think,” but he also believed that democracy worked best when those people acted under the guidance of their natural leaders. The speech in which he made this statement is quoted in Butler, *Looking Forward, What Will the American People Do About It?: Essays and Addresses on Matters National and International* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1932), 54-55.

³⁹ Despite Butler’s beliefs about the unruly public, the Carnegie Endowment sponsored a number of programs designed to reach everyday Americans even in the most provincial settings. The International Mind Alcoves program and the International Relations clubs are the best example of these; they will be discussed in Chapter 5.

overview of the most important of these will provide some sense of the movement's activities and structure during the period leading up to the Depression.

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was a giant among these older organizations, and remained an indispensable player in the movement throughout the inter-war period. The Endowment was founded in 1910 by steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, who signed over ten million dollars of his massive fortune to a set of trustees for the purpose of fulfilling his desire to "hasten the abolition of international war, the foulest blot upon our civilization."⁴⁰ The Endowment featured three main divisions during the period under review, Intercourse and Education, Economics and History, and International Law. The Division of Intercourse and Education, under the direction of Nicholas Murray Butler who also served as president of the organization, was in charge of disseminating information to the public and maintaining contacts with academic institutions and other organizations involved in the internationalist movement.⁴¹

While the Endowment spent a great deal of its resources during the first few years after World War I working in Europe to restore libraries and other institutions, it also began to throw itself into the task of educating college students, teachers, and community leaders on the latest trends in international affairs and the outlines of a responsible internationalist foreign policy.⁴² Its efforts were mainly centered in the universities, where it brought in distinguished speakers from around the world, and partnered with local interested professors to promote international exchange programs and International Affairs clubs.⁴³

The Foreign Policy Association was another internationalist heavyweight, although it pursued a different sort of work than the Carnegie Endowment. It began in 1918 as an informal group of intellectuals interested in foreign affairs who called themselves "the Committee on Nothing At All." Such a name was at least a little modest, as the historians Charles Beard and Herbert Croly, *Survey* editor Paul Kellogg, and writer Norman Angell were all members. The

⁴⁰ Carnegie to the Trustees of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 14 Dec 1910, reprinted in the *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Year Book* (hereafter *CEIP Year Book*), 1934 ed., 1-3.

⁴¹ Larry L. Fabian, *Andrew Carnegie's Peace Endowment: The Tycoon, The President, and Their Bargain of 1910* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1985), passim.

⁴² After the war, the Carnegie Endowment voted a large sum of money toward relief and reconstruction. Specific projects included rebuilding the libraries at the University of Louvain, the city of Rheims, and the University at Belgrade, and \$50,000 worth of emergency relief funds for Russian refugees. See "Annual Report of the Division of Intercourse and Education" in *CEIP Year Book*, 1922 ed., 48.

⁴³ In 1922 the Endowment reported 85 active International Affairs clubs. See *ibid.*, 64-77.

original conferees formed an organization they called the League of Free Nations Association, which became the Foreign Policy Association in 1921.⁴⁴

Unlike the Carnegie Endowment and a number of the smaller internationalist organizations, the Foreign Policy Association dedicated its resources almost solely to research. It strove to remain politically neutral, although its leaders strongly supported international cooperation. To keep an even keel, the Association structured its meetings so that multiple viewpoints were generally expressed on each issue. The organization had as many as seventeen branches during the inter-war period, and each held a regular program of meetings, sometimes in the form of luncheons and sometimes as evening lecture series. Members would come and listen to the various speakers and debate the issues they discussed. The national headquarters in New York City guided the program by providing suggested schedules and maintaining a Speaker's Bureau to help connect the branches with experts who could visit and discuss pertinent topics.⁴⁵ In addition to these activities, the Foreign Policy Association also published regular reports on contemporary problems in world affairs, especially those concerning the United States. Periodically, it also published larger pamphlets dealing with specific issues, such as disarmament and economic nationalism.⁴⁶

The Council on Foreign Relations was another research-based organization formed during the 1920s to further the cause of international cooperation. It started with a group of American scholars who were serving at the Versailles conference in 1919 as members of the Inquiry. Because they had prepared so many materials before the conference while still in New York, and because the leaders so often became enmeshed in political debates, the Inquiry staff often had a great deal of free time to talk amongst themselves and their foreign counterparts about the topics they had been exploring in their work. They enjoyed this frank, informal exchanging of views enough that they decided to try to arrange a forum for continuing it on a more permanent basis.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Frank W. Abbott, "From Versailles to Munich: The Foreign Policy Association and American Foreign Policy," unpublished PhD dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1972, 1-8.

⁴⁵ Memorandum for Prospective Branches, 1933, Box 42, Buell Papers.

⁴⁶ While the Foreign Policy Association published several pamphlets irregularly in the 1920s, the practice picked up especially in the 1930s when the Research Division of the organization introduced the Foreign Affairs Pamphlet series. Example titles include *The Population and World Depression* (1936), *The Dangerous Year* (1935), and *Church and State* (1937). The Association also sometimes republished particularly salient works from outside contributors. Henry A. Wallace's pamphlet on Depression-era national policy, *America Must Choose*, is one example.

⁴⁷ Schulzinger, *Wise Men of Foreign Affairs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 1-11.

The organization that resulted, the Council on Foreign Relations, was originally supposed to be a trans-Atlantic affair, but that plan did not materialize, owing perhaps to the deep disillusion that dampened the enthusiasm of so many members of the Inquiry and other academics who had put a great deal of effort into devising the means for an equitable settlement at Versailles. In the United States, however, an organization did form around a combination of the former Inquiry staffers and several lawyers, bankers, and other professionals who began meeting at the Harvard Club in New York City to discuss foreign affairs. The new clique was by invitation only, but its high-ranking membership made it significant. Former Secretary of State Elihu Root, Senator George Wickersham, and former ambassador to Great Britain and future presidential nominee John W. Davis were just a few of the eminent personalities who joined the elite new club for its regular discussions on foreign affairs.

The main mode of business for the Council was to select contemporary issues in foreign affairs and create study groups to discuss and report on them. As the organization expanded and made additional contacts with academics and competent leaders in business and government, it was able to digest a large number of topics and generate literature for public consumption. The study groups' findings inspired both book-length works and what eventually became *Foreign Affairs* magazine. In addition, the Council often arranged to have prominent statesmen from the United States and abroad as guest speakers at meetings or in open forums, which afforded the organization some community exposure. Perhaps one of its finest accomplishments in this vein was to secure former French premier Georges Clemenceau to speak at the New York Metropolitan Opera House to a crowd of over a thousand in 1922.⁴⁸

The World Peace Foundation was a smaller but able contributor to the movement, founded in 1910 almost in competition with the Carnegie Endowment. Its benefactor was the prominent publisher Edwin Ginn, who had for some time been looking to establish some kind of method of educating people about foreign affairs. Accordingly, the organization became a clearing-house for "the actual facts concerning international relations and official international cooperation," whose public acceptance was held by the Foundation's leaders to be a key part of maintaining a new worldwide order. Its activities were mainly limited to publishing and

⁴⁸ Ibid.; Michael Wala, *The Council on Foreign Relations and American Foreign Policy in the Early Cold War* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1994), 23-24.

distributing internationalist literature. In the 1930s, for instance, it co-sponsored a number of pamphlets with the Foreign Policy Association.⁴⁹

A number of smaller organizations supported limited items on the internationalist agenda. The Institute for Pacific Relations, for example, began as the outgrowth of a conference in Hawaii to promote cross-cultural activity between nations along the Pacific rim. The entity that resulted was comprised of national councils from each of the participating countries, and bankrolled mostly by Americans, including the Carnegie Endowment. Its members researched and discussed foreign policy problems peculiar to the Pacific region and offered their findings to the public in an effort to curb uninformed opinion.⁵⁰

The League of Nations Non-Partisan Association acted as the primary champion of League advocacy in America during the 1920s, bringing together both Democrats and Republicans who believed that the United States and the new organization in Geneva needed one another very badly in a radically changed world. With the assistance of a \$10,000 gift from industrialist Cleveland Dodge and the personal endorsement of Woodrow Wilson, the Association began a quest to overturn the Senate's rejection of the League from the bottom up. Its leaders attempted to inject firm positive League planks into both major parties platforms in 1924, although without success. As it grew, the Association founded a journal, the *League of Nations Chronicle*, to keep Americans informed about events in Geneva, and regularly circulated "clip sheets" to newspapers around the country. In schools and colleges, its staff organized Model League of Nations Assemblies and essay contests to keep the subject before a large number of young and potential voters.⁵¹

All of these organizations, large and small, broad and specific, simultaneously advocated a variety of different approaches to a more cooperative world, in hopes that one or more of them would capture the imagination and approval of the voting public. For most of the 1920s, joining the League of Nations was regarded by most internationalists as the most effective course of

⁴⁹ Robert I. Rotberg, *A Leadership for Peace: How Edwin Ginn Tried to Change the World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), passim.

⁵⁰ Raucher, "First Foreign Policy Think Tanks," 495-497.

⁵¹ Kuehl, *Keeping the Covenant*, 39-48.

action the United States could follow.⁵² Nonetheless, they knew what they were up against, and they hedged their bets by advocating other promising avenues of progress as well.

The possibility of submitting international disputes to a court of law was a particularly attractive idea. Holdovers from the arbitration fad of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century formed the elder core of the group who moved in this direction, but they were joined after World War I by younger converts who envisioned a codified international law and a permanent court to reconcile intergovernmental disputes with it. John Bassett Moore, an international lawyer and avid internationalist, insisted that confidence in the international goodwill that would have to underpin the success of an organization such as the League was “as unfounded as it is common.” Only a readily available forum for settling international disputes such as the World Court could succeed.⁵³ Lawyers and judges associated with the internationalist movement tended to follow this line, such as former Secretary of State Elihu Root, associate Supreme Court justice John H. Clarke, Senator and former Attorney General George Wickersham, and Columbia University law professor James Brown Scott.⁵⁴

Other Wilsonians, generally the more radical members of the group, favored systems that marshaled forces beyond the traditional rule of law to govern international relations, namely economic or even military sanctions. The League enthusiasts were part of this group to some extent, but it also included those internationalists who had given up on the League but still believed in some method of “collective security” for bringing order to the world. James T. Shotwell was one particularly strong proponent of this idea, especially its flexibility. Sanction-based collective security could be as entangling as a mutual agreement to go to war against a future aggressor in the event of its misbehavior, or as simple as choosing to merely impose trade restrictions or other economic impediments. This seemed to be a formula that American leaders might go for.⁵⁵ The catch, however, always seemed to lie in how the collective nations would identify the so-called “aggressor.” Any nation that declared war on another nation would be blamed for the resulting conflict in Shotwell’s thinking, since that nation had failed to resort to

⁵² Some organizations such as the League of Nations Non-Partisan Association were locked in by their charters and could not expend much of their resources on anything else. Other organizations were fortunate enough to have a greater degree of latitude.

⁵³ These quotes are taken from an interview Moore gave to the *Review of Reviews* in 1930. See John Bassett Moore, *The Collected Papers of John Bassett Moore* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), vol. 6, 335-338.

⁵⁴ Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism*, 40; for examples of the legalists’ defense of the World Court, see “Nation’s leaders Back World Court at Senate Hearing,” *New York Times*, 1 May 1924.

⁵⁵ Josephson, *James T. Shotwell*, 123-125.

other methods of resolving the culpable dispute. However, critics and especially other internationalists argued that some nations that start wars do so for defensive purposes, and therefore would be undeserving of sanctions, even if they broke the peace. This debate over the proper use of sanctions and how to identify an aggressor was never solved by official policymakers in the interwar period, let alone the internationalists.⁵⁶

Naturally, however, they tried, and their efforts led in part toward popularizing another approach to anti-war internationalism that found great resonance with the American public. This was the “outlawry” movement, or the attempt to end war by simply prohibiting it as an instrument of national policy. While in principle the idea was an old one, it found popularity among contemporaries thanks to Salmon O. Levinson, an American lawyer who formed the American Committee for the Outlawry of War in 1921. Levinson argued that war remained possible in world affairs because it was still recognized almost universally as a legal solution, albeit a last resort. If it were made illegal, war could no longer be publicly considered an option in national policymaking.⁵⁷

The possibilities associated with this idea were widely appealing. Internationalists who favored sanctions dreamed of a world where war was both illegal and punishable by economic or military consequences. Legalists praised the idea for its reliance on international law as the fount of peace, and even unilateralists favored the concept as an alternative to membership in the League. Senator Borah, for example, was among the main advocates for ratifying the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, which embodied the outlawry principle in a treaty that sixty-five nations would ultimately sign.⁵⁸

When the outlawry campaign did precipitate the Kellogg-Briand Pact, not everyone was completely satisfied. The treaty itself was very short, and the contracting parties merely asserted that they renounced war as an instrument of national policy, and that settlement of their mutual problems would “never be sought except by pacific means.” There was no “what-if” section to explain how states ought to behave if the pact was not followed, either by a signatory or a non-signatory. Statesmen such as Senator James Reed of Missouri and New York governor Franklin

⁵⁶ Ibid., Kuehl, *Keeping the Covenant*, 178-180.

⁵⁷ Chatfield, *The American Peace Movement*, 59.

⁵⁸ Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism in America*, 107-108; Josephson, *James T. Shotwell*, 141; for the text of the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, see “General Pact for the Renunciation of War,” *American Journal of International Law* 22, no. 4 (Oct 1928), 1-13.

D. Roosevelt dismissed the treaty as little more than a platitude, what Reed famously called an “international kiss.”⁵⁹

Wilsonians also had their qualms about the outlawry concept and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. The research staff of the Foreign Policy Association complained as early as 1925 that too many people believed renouncing war and adhering to the World Court could be wrapped up into one package, and in doing so World Court membership might falter needlessly over the shortcomings of a vague ideal.⁶⁰ James T. Shotwell and other backers of the pro-sanction camp tried even after the treaty was passed to induce the Senate to give it some sort of “teeth,” believing that this was absolutely necessary if it were really to reduce the risk of war. Some statesmen agreed, including Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas, who introduced a resolution granting the President the ability to impose an arms embargo against any signatory of the Kellogg-Briand Pact who became an aggressor. The measure, Capper hoped, “would underwrite [the pact] without compelling us to attempt to police the world.”⁶¹ The Capper Resolution foundered over questions of how the aggressor would be defined and whether the United States might be drawn into a future war on account of the stand it would be obliged to take, but internationalists continued to hope that something might be done to shore up the treaty.

As these examples of items on the Wilsonian agenda demonstrate, the movement had plenty of positive avenues for action. Organizations looking to sway public opinion did, however, address their isolationist and unilateralist critics on occasion. The internationalists hoped that by comparing the two viewpoints the fallacy of their opponents’ thinking would reveal itself to their audiences. Hamilton Fish Armstrong, editor of *Foreign Affairs* and a leading member of the Council on Foreign Relations, favored this method. He horrified his colleagues on the Council in 1923 by inviting Senator Smith Brookhart to attend one of their meetings and share his views on the relationship between the United States and Europe and various problems they shared. Senator Brookhart was staunchly opposed to most forms of American involvement in Europe, and other Council leaders questioned whether anything constructive toward their purposes could come of giving him a forum. Armstrong invited bankers and other experts present at the meeting to debate the Senator, and a lively discussion

⁵⁹ Howard Jones, *Crucible of Power: A History of U.S. Foreign Relations since 1897* (Wilmington: SR Books, 2001), 123.

⁶⁰ “The Court and Outlawry of War,” [*Foreign Policy Association*] *News Bulletin*, 31 Jul 1925.

⁶¹ Arthur Capper, “Making the Peace Pact Effective,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 144 (Jul 1929), 40-50.

followed. Armstrong also presented conflicting views in *Foreign Affairs*, allowing isolationist Senators and other thinkers to voice their opposition to the internationalist agenda. Again, this approach drew ire from Wilsonians, but a number of thoughtful members of the movement recognized its value and supported Armstrong, especially fellow Council member Isaiah Bowman.⁶²

In the final analysis, pursuing different pathways to a more cooperative American foreign policy did not hamstring the internationalist movement in any meaningful way. While leaders often debated the values of the various means at their disposal to engage the United States government with the rest of the global community, their collective aim continued to be engagement itself.⁶³ Moreover, they generally agreed, even cynics like John Bassett Moore, that engendering the proper collaborative spirit in the voting public could not hurt. “In foreign affairs,” Elihu Root wrote in 1926, “it is peculiarly true that the spirit in which work is done is everything.”⁶⁴ Whether the goal was League membership, World Court adherence, sanctions, or outlawry, each organization respected this “spirit” as the least common denominator between them that they all shared a responsibility to cultivate. This was reflected in the way they took their message to the public.

Before closing this brief survey of the pre-Depression years of the movement before the Great Crash that loomed ahead, it is important to restate that while America’s advocates for international cooperation had a message to preach and an audience to preach it to, the distance between the movement’s leaders and the Americans who comprised that audience was still a long and somewhat cold one. Moreover, the tactics they employed ensured that the public they reached the most would mostly consist of other people like them, educated or in the process of becoming educated, middle to upper class, and genuinely interested in world affairs. A farmer anxiously worried about the prices his crops would earn at market could learn little from a

⁶² Schulzinger, *Wise Men of Foreign Affairs*, 18-19. Ironically, one of the isolationists whose writing appeared in *Foreign Affairs* during this period was Senator Arthur Capper, the author of the resolution to strengthen the Kellogg-Briand Pact with an optional arms embargo, clearly not an isolationist suggestion. Capper’s article argued that the United States’ tariff policy was meant to benefit domestic producers such as farmers, and that revising the tariff downward as many internationalists were suggesting would be detrimental to American farmers who were already suffering. Capper’s article demonstrates both how statesmen could be both isolationist and internationalist depending on the specific policy at hand and how the Great Depression changed the outlook of so many people who just a few years before were willing to accept American commitments in world affairs. See Arthur Capper, “The Farmer and Foreign Trade,” *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 4 (Jul 1931), 638-645.

⁶³ Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism*, 41.

⁶⁴ Elihu Root, “America and Europe,” *Foreign Affairs* 5, no. 2 (Jan 1927), special supplement, pp. iii-vi.

bulletin that was not even circulated in the small town where he lived. An urban-dwelling factory family had little time to attend public lectures about foreign affairs when they felt challenged just in putting food on their table and keeping their jobs. Not every high school in America had the gifted staff able and willing to cooperate in holding a mock session of the League of Nations Assembly or develop a new curriculum on international relations.

Yet internationalists still had not found a way to cater to this kind of public. John W. Davis could call *Foreign Affairs* the premier journal of its kind, but that did not stop its critics from labeling it “one of the dullest magazines in the world” with some credibility. With articles on such riveting topics as “Icelandic Independence,” “New Zealand’s Troubles in Western Samoa,” and “Political Rights in the Arctic,” it is little wonder that the publication enjoyed a limited readership in these years.⁶⁵ The Council on Foreign Relations was still doing most of its work in closed study groups, the Carnegie Endowment only passively reached people outside the highest halls of education through a limited number of programs, and the research organizations merely put their facts out on the ideological market, in hopes that the American people would become hooked.

Moreover, although the internationalists frequently explained how joining the League, the World Court, or some scheme to outlaw war would benefit the United States, they always seemed to assume that what was good for America was good for all Americans. This zero-sum conception of good and bad in foreign policy could never succeed so long as everyday citizens could not see the connection between international cooperation and their own livelihood. Nicholas Murray Butler wrote in 1929 that “the part being played by the people of the United States and their public opinion in the development of instrumentalities of international association and . . . cooperation is largely lost sight of because so little of it is official or governmental.”⁶⁶ He failed to mention that this was largely because a vast majority of American public opinion remained both silent and unmoved by abstract ideals or distant institutions that in all their righteousness held no tangible promise of a better America. It would take a cataclysmic reduction of 1920s prosperity and a deliberate public repudiation of

⁶⁵ Schulzinger, *Wise Men of Foreign Relations*, 11; John W. Davis did consider *Foreign Affairs* the premier journal of its kind, at least publicly. See his statement upon the opening of the new headquarters of the Council on Foreign Relations in *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 2 (Jan 1931), special supplement.

⁶⁶ Nicholas Murray Butler, “Report of the Division of Intercourse and Education,” 10 Apr 1929 in *CEIP Year Book*, 1929 ed., 39-124.

internationalism in the coming years before internationalists could fully appreciate how little they were really doing.

CHAPTER 3

THE GREAT CRASH: IDENTIFYING A PROBLEM AND AN OPPORTUNITY

On 29 October 1929, during the event known as “the Great Crash” or “Black Tuesday,” a number of financiers elected to withdraw their money from the stock market, inciting a panic that sent shock waves through the global economy. Billions of dollars’ worth of value evaporated in the course of a few hours as investors struggled to get out while the getting was good.¹ The *New York Times* reported that an accurate estimate of the damage was impossible because of the number of out-of-town and over-the-counter transactions that had contributed to the disastrous fall.²

The crisis did not immediately affect the nation as a whole; at first it was only decisive for a relatively small number of people whose financial resources were deeply invested in the stock market. Most Americans only had a limited number of shares in the system or none at all. Nonetheless, over time other major components of the American economy began to suffer, as investors shied away from taking any chances on the volatile stock exchange, and consumers cut back on their purchases. Simultaneous unemployment and production surpluses were the ironic result.³

The Crash itself was a dark event, seared into the memory of those directly affected by it, but it was more of a symptom of the crisis than a cause. The stock market had to have a *reason* for crashing.⁴ The causes of the Depression remain under debate now as much as they were for contemporaries, but several factors that internationalists called particular attention to were certainly major contributors. They were, for the most part, circumstances unique to the experience of the World War and the United States’ position as the world’s creditor in the interwar period. Internationalists would focus on how American policy took the worst possible

¹ J. Joseph Huthmacher, *Trial by War and Depression: 1917-1941* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1973), 96.

² “Stocks Collapse in 16,410,030-share Day, but Rally at Close Cheers Brokers,” *New York Times*, 30 Oct 1929.

³ Huthmacher, *War and Depression*, 94-97.

⁴ Historian Robert McElvaine used a disease metaphor to illustrate the relationship of the Great Crash to the Depression. “When someone becomes ill after “catching a chill,” he wrote, it is not the cold itself that causes the sickness. Rather the cold reduces the body’s resistance to microorganisms already present in it, which then are able to cause the illness. Some such role is the proper one to assign to the Crash.” In this way, McElvaine masterfully shows that the Crash merely served as the weakening agent that allowed existing malefactors in the American and global economy to take hold. McElvaine’s analogy is quoted with further explanation in T.H. Watkins, *The Great Depression: American in the 1930s* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 40-41.

turn in dealing with these circumstances, and this would form the basis of their new ideas about international cooperation and America's responsibilities.

One of the principal problems that became acute following the Crash was the status of intergovernmental debts leftover from the World War. During and after that conflict, the United States loaned a little over 10.3 billion dollars to European countries for military equipment, supplies, and relief efforts. Just over four billion of this amount went to Great Britain, about three and a half billion to France, one and a half billion to Italy, and the rest to smaller countries who chiefly needed the money after the war ended in order to rebuild.⁵ The loans were mostly subscribed by American taxpayers in the form of "Liberty Bonds" and "Victory Bonds," advertised by patriotically themed posters, movie stars, George Creel's "Four Minute Men," and even the Boy Scouts.⁶ When the war was over, the American government expected the loans to be repaid. A World War Foreign Debt Commission established in 1922 negotiated interest rates with the nation's various debtors at an average rate of 2.135 percent, and made the debts payable over a period of 62 years.⁷

Over the course of the 1920s, as postwar conditions kept European reconstruction at a slow pace, America's debtors found it increasingly difficult to pay back the money. This was compounded as the German economy sank during the early part of the decade, and the Allies struggled to extract reparations from their defeated foe. In 1923, the French government reached the end of its patience with the Germans and invoked a provision of the Versailles peace treaty that permitted them to occupy the productive Ruhr region in western Germany. The Ruhr was rich in coal deposits, and the French seized the mines in an effort to make up for what they were losing in reparations revenue. The situation created a dangerous security crisis in western Europe and brought the future of reparations and war debts into question.⁸

The Allies insisted that they were only able to pay back the United States as much as they could obtain from Germany in the form of reparations. Since this was the case, they believed the United States ought to adjust either the payment schedule or the overall amount due based on how much Germany was able to pay. The idea made sense in principle to many people, but the

⁵ Charles Merz, "To Revise or Not to Revise: The Debts Issue," *International Conciliation* 15 (1933), 93-102.

⁶ George Creel was the head of the Committee on Public Information, and the "Four Minute Men" were speechmakers who would give short plugs for the Liberty Loan program and other bits of information the administration wanted to keep before the public. See Kennedy, *Over Here*, 99-105; and Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 413-414.

⁷ Ferrell, *American Diplomacy*, 160.

⁸ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 457-459.

American government was adamantly opposed to this suggestion. Starting with Woodrow Wilson, American presidents recognized that linking the reparations question with the intergovernmental war debts was dangerous, since it could arguably prevent the European nations from paying at all.⁹ If the United States proceeded on the legalistic notion that the Allied debts were completely separate from the context of European conditions, however, there was nothing in either law or the fundamentals of credit that would suggest the need to cancel or scale back the debts.

While each of the Republican administrations in the 1920s held to this logic they inherited from Wilson, they also recognized at times that action of some sort was necessary to keep the European financial system from collapsing. Shortly before the French invaded the Ruhr in January 1923, Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes gave a much-celebrated speech on foreign policy at New Haven, Connecticut, in which he explained that the United States could not help but become involved in European financial problems. However, he stipulated that the issue had to be removed from politics. “The fundamental condition is that in this critical moment the merits of the question, as an economic one, must alone be regarded,” he said. If statesmen could not do it, experts might have more success.¹⁰

This was the reasoning behind the Dawes Plan, which financiers and economists forged in 1924 as a solution to the stressful reparations bottleneck that was vexing Europe. Secretary Hughes appointed several American experts, including Chicago banker Charles G. Dawes, to take part in the commission. The assembled group devised a plan to scale back Germany’s reparations obligations and tie the size of the payments to its “capacity to pay.”¹¹ The plan, which bore Dawes’ name owing to his leadership in devising it, was widely celebrated as an equitable method of settling the reparations problem, but it did not necessarily address the capacity of the Allies to pay back their debts to the United States. Part of the Dawes Plan

⁹ David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Great Britain at the close of the war, wrote to Woodrow Wilson in 1920 that the American government would have a better chance of collecting its debts if it were to recognize their relationship with the German reparations. Wilson wrote back that “the United States fails to perceive the logic in a suggestion in effect either that the United States shall pay part of Germany’s reparation obligation or that it shall make a gratuity to the Allied Governments to induce them to fix such obligations at an amount within Germany’s capacity to pay. This government has endeavored therefore in a most friendly spirit to make it clear that it cannot consent to connect the reparation question with that of intergovernmental indebtedness.” This quote appears in Walter Lippmann and William O. Scroggs, *The United States in World Affairs: An Account of American Foreign Relations, 1931* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), 159-160.

¹⁰ The full text of this remarkable speech can be found in Charles Evans Hughes, “Foreign Policy of the United States,” *Current History*, 29 Dec 1932.

¹¹ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 459-460.

involved a large American loan to the German government to reinvigorate its reparations payments, but when that money dried up later on, the Allies still found themselves without the necessary funds to repay their American obligations.¹²

As a result of these circumstances, the Allies began to ask for some sort of debt revision toward the end of the 1920s. The American government attempted to solve the problem using the Dawes method that had worked before in the form of the Young Plan, which further adjusted the payment schedule for German reparations but still hinged on continued American loans to Germany and economic growth in Europe. These arrangements proved insufficient as the world entered the Depression at the end of the decade.¹³

Furthermore, anxious observers in the United States suspected that the European governments were attempting to circumvent their indebtedness altogether. Most Americans treated the debts in their minds as typical financial obligations similar to their own. Calvin Coolidge captured the sentiment well in his rhetorical query, “They hired the money, didn’t they?” Some leaders believed that if the United States were to reduce the amount of the intergovernmental debts, the European nations would simply invest the savings into armaments in preparation for a future war.¹⁴ Whether for reasons of principle or otherwise, by the end of the 1920s American opinion was solidly intent on having the full amount of their investment returned with interest due. As experts assembled the Young Plan in Europe in 1929, Congressional leaders demanded that any debt reduction be submitted to them for approval.¹⁵

Internationalists suggested canceling these debts at several points throughout the decade. Newton D. Baker, who had been Woodrow Wilson’s Secretary of War and subsequently became involved in the internationalist movement, came out in favor of canceling the debts in 1926. He believed that by doing this the United States could demonstrate that its “interest is not in dollars but in a reconstructed international order with as much as possible of the grief of the World War swept into oblivion.”¹⁶

His statement earned him the condemnation of a number of newspaper editors and letters suggesting that he ought to be deported, but it fired other internationalists into calling for the

¹² Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire*, 349.

¹³ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 480-481; Ferrell, *American Diplomacy*, 161-162.

¹⁴ Ronald E. Powaski, *Toward an Entangling Alliance: American Isolationism, Internationalism, and Europe* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 38-39.

¹⁵ “Congress May Curb War Debt Reduction,” *The Washington Post*, 16 Apr 1929.

¹⁶ “Baker Urges Allies and United States to Erase War Debts,” *New York Times*, 30 Aug 1926.

same policy.¹⁷ Shortly after Baker declared his position, James T. Shotwell organized a group of faculty members at Columbia University that published a “manifesto on war debts.” The professors criticized the American debt policy as “unsound in principle” and called for an international conference to discuss their downward revision.¹⁸ Other internationalists would pick up the banner of debt revision throughout the rest of the 1920s, but the issue never managed to take precedence over the World Court, League membership or cooperation, or outlawry as major planks of the movement’s platform. Furthermore, no one seemed to have an answer for the argument that the debts had resulted from honest loans that deserved honest repayment. Not yet, at least.

Another facet of American economic policy that played a role in the Depression and spurred internationalists to action was the high tariff barriers that Congress erected against foreign imports. After the World War ended in 1918, with no apparent security threat on the horizon, economic matters resumed their high priority in business and government. The Republicans, whose history included a long-standing tradition of tariff advocacy, sought to institute better protection for American industry once they regained the White House in 1921. President Harding insisted that “it is our purpose to prosper America first,” and Congress reciprocated his vision in the Fordney-McCumber Tarriff Act of 1922. This legislation nullified the downward revision of the tariff enacted by Wilson and the Democrats during the previous decade and built in new powers that would allow the executive not only to enforce the tariff, but also to retaliate against specific foreign countries attempting to “dump” cheap goods on the American market.¹⁹

Harding’s Republican successors in the White House varied in terms of their sense of economic internationalism, but Congress remained staunchly protectionist and held the line against any downward revisions, despite growing concerns about the world economy.²⁰ Over time, as intermittent outbreaks of squabbling among the European countries deepened Americans’ distrust and desire to avoid entanglement with their trans-Atlantic counterparts, this

¹⁷ Because Baker was the first major politician to come out publicly for canceling the debt, his statement was both an international curiosity and a lightning rod for criticism. President Coolidge himself reacted to Baker’s suggestion, scoffing that it was much easier for a private citizen like Baker to give away the taxpayers’ money than for the President to do so. See C.H. Cramer, *Newton D. Baker: A Biography* (New York: World Publishing Company, 1961), 230-231.

¹⁸ Josephson, *James T. Shotwell*, 153.

¹⁹ Alfred E. Eckes, Jr., *Opening America’s Market: U.S. Foreign Trade Policy since 1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 88-89.

²⁰ Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century*, 97.

attitude became merged with an acute sense of nationalism often expressed as putting “America first.”²¹

As the world’s creditor, however, the United States was playing a dangerous game by cavalierly dismissing the needs of its debtors to export their goods to the widest possible array of markets. Because the United States maintained such a high tariff barrier, European countries who owed it money were forced to pay either in gold or financing, the latter often coming from Wall Street. This created a vicious cycle that not only failed to make international trade any freer in the interwar period, but also closely tied the health of the American economy to the health of the European economy, where all was clearly not well.²²

The Europeans did not bear this state of affairs quietly, and internationalists agreed with their complaints and used them to demonstrate the dangers of maintaining a hostile tariff policy. Some foreign writers suggested that Europe might find it both necessary and profitable to form some sort of economic union to counteract American protectionism. In the fall of 1929, ominously just before the Great Crash, the Council on Foreign Relations published the opinions of Andre Siegfried, a French academic who observed that the present American attitude toward foreign trade was driving European nations in this direction. He insisted that the United States had enjoyed its ability to have such high tariffs because in earlier years its primary exports had been foodstuffs and other agricultural products, but in modern times this had changed. Now that manufactured goods were the bread and butter of American international commerce, European countries were in a better position to compete effectively.²³

Other internationalists picked up the theme. Senator Cordell Hull of Tennessee argued that high tariffs were “arousing jealousy and hate,” and that by strangling foreign imports Americans were “daily inviting other nations to form economic unions against us.”²⁴ The editorial staff of the *New York Times* warned in 1927 that starting a tariff war would be “little short of a crime,” and the issue might come to a head not because free trade advocates pushed it into the upcoming presidential campaign, but because European countries would demand a change.²⁵ As with the debt issue, however, internationalists had trouble overcoming the logic put

²¹ Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire*, 349-350.

²² Huthmacher, *War and Depression*, 92-97.

²³ Andre Siegfried, “European Reactions to American Tariff Proposals,” *Foreign Affairs* 8, no. 1 (Oct 1929), 13-19.

²⁴ Quoted in Michael A. Butler, *Cautious Visionary: Cordell Hull and Trade Reform, 1933-1937* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1998).

²⁵ “The Irrepressible Tariff,” *New York Times*, 18 Sept 1927.

forward by friends of the tariff to defend American protectionism. As late as the closing months of the 1920s, the policy appeared to be benefiting the United States as intended, and if prices for foreign imports were higher, it was merely seen as a reason to buy American.

American economic policy immediately following the Great Crash was no improvement. As European buyers were able to purchase less and less of the burgeoning American industrial output, Congress felt compelled to restrict foreign imports so that the domestic market could absorb as much of the surplus as possible. The result was the Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930, which raised import duties to the highest rates in United States history, effectively cutting off American markets to other countries that sorely needed them for trade.²⁶

Moreover, the Great Crash collapsed the great credit machine that had breathed life into an already precarious European economy for much of the preceding decade. For years, American bankers had been making loans to foreign countries for almost anything, without much regard for how their debtors would repay the money. Their choices were to pay in gold, goods, or to finance their debt through someone who had the money to lend. The gold option worked at first, but during the 1920s the gold supply in Europe ran dangerously short, since so much of it was being used to pay debts to the United States. Goods would have been a viable currency, except the Fordney-McCumber and Smoot-Hawley tariffs conspired to make exporting to the United States increasingly difficult. By the end of the decade, the only way European countries could service their debts was to borrow additional money, often from Wall Street banks. The United States did well enough to meet this demand for credit so long as there was money to be transferred into the machine, but when the extra money for lending ran out at the end of the decade, the entire system came to a screeching halt.²⁷

To add insult to injury, the financial industry was dealt a sinister blow when the Creditanstalt Bank in Austria collapsed in June 1931. The bank's failure set off a panic in Europe, prompting Germany to suspend reparations payments as well as installments to service their debts to the United States. The Allies, who based their own ability to pay on how much they were receiving from Germany, had little choice but to follow suit and default on their obligations to the Americans.²⁸ All this happened as the United States was believed to be holding enough gold in its vaults to make good on the value of every single dollar in circulation,

²⁶ Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire*, 349.

²⁷ Schulzinger, *American Diplomacy*, 146-148.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

while European nations were basing the values of their respective currencies more and more on faith rather than the ability to back them up.²⁹

It fell to President Herbert Hoover to consider these circumstances and steer the nation's policy in the face of a growing disaster. He attempted to deal with the crisis as best he knew how, but he moved very slowly in doing so, and he was detrimentally hamstrung by the machinations of Congress and the nationalists in his party.³⁰ This is not to say, of course, that there were not members of the Hoover administration who wanted to see a more forceful, interventionist approach to the world's growing economic problems, or that Hoover himself was an economic nationalist. Henry Stimson, Hoover's Secretary of State, was very interested in taking a stronger stand on the worldwide economic slump. Hoover remained concerned about the domestic political ramifications of such action, however, and prohibited Stimson from taking any meaningful steps toward an internationalist solution of the crisis.³¹

At the same time, on the other hand, he also worried that a complete default by the British and the French might agitate Congress into retaliating by erecting even higher trade barriers. Furthermore, the United States was heavily invested in the German economy, where the Depression was hitting particularly hard. If the German economy collapsed entirely, much of the money Americans had in the German system might be unrecoverable. He decided to stall by declaring a one-year moratorium on all intergovernmental war debts, hoping that international trade would pick up by the time it expired, and the Allies would be able – and willing – to continue making payments.³² Congress grudgingly approved the measure, but added a telling caveat that starkly revealed its stubbornness on the subject. The joint resolution affirming the moratorium contained a provision expressly declaring cancellation of any foreign debts to be against the policy of Congress. Furthermore, nothing in the resolution was intended to imply “that favorable consideration will be given at any time to a change in the policy hereby declared.”³³

The rate of reaction to all of this was uneven throughout the internationalist movement in the United States. The idea that Black Tuesday and the ensuing financial downturn were part of

²⁹ An example of the recognition of this awkward position can be found in Phelps Haviland Adams, “Strictly Business,” *North American Review* 232, no. 3 (Sept 1931), 196-209.

³⁰ Schulzinger, *American Diplomacy*, 146-151.

³¹ Louria, *Triumph and Downfall*, 167-173.

³² Powaski, *Toward an Entangling Alliance*, 51-52; Schulzinger, *American Diplomacy*, 148.

³³ To see the text of the resolution authorizing Hoover to invoke the moratorium, see the *Congressional Record* 75: 794.

a natural business cycle was popular, and most publicists seemed to accept this for awhile. Some experts in the various organizations began arguing for stronger American action immediately after the severity of the crash became apparent, while some organizations remained focused on other issues, hoping that by advocating greater goals the United States would become a part of something that could solve all of the growing problems stemming from the financial collapse. In early 1931, Edwin Gay of the Council on Foreign Relations proposed a study group on the causes of the Depression, but most of the bankers and academics he asked dismissed the idea, either saying that the subject was too obvious or too difficult to undertake using the apparatus of the Council. Interestingly, the organization largely kept up this attitude throughout the Depression, focusing mainly on its effects rather than its causes.³⁴

Although the Foreign Policy Association had published literature that touched on economic subjects before, and although its experts had stated their opinions on the matter, the organization itself does not appear to have taken particular interest until late 1931, when the situation became acute. Raymond Leslie Buell, Research Director of the organization and former Harvard professor, opened up on the subject in 1930, generally denouncing American economic policy as nationalistic and detrimental to the global economy. He waited until the very end of 1931, however, to suggest that the Foreign Policy Association employ its main news bulletin to take the same stand.³⁵

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace also took awhile to officially respond to the economic crisis. The annual *Year Book*, which typically ran into the hundreds of pages with descriptions of both the work and the opinions of the organization's leaders, remained mostly silent on the Depression in the issues dealing with fiscal years 1929 and 1930. Instead, Nicholas Murray Butler, whose section was always the longest, contained the most pontification on world affairs, and was recognized as the surest barometer of the Endowment's policy, expounded the virtues of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. He remained ecstatically convinced that the treaty signified the millenarian turn from war as an instrument of national policy. "Security," he wrote in 1930, "is no longer a matter of fortifications, of long-range guns, of submarines, of

³⁴ Schulzinger, *Wise Men of Foreign Relations*, 32-34.

³⁵ Buell to Maxwell Stewart, 31 Dec 1931, Box 41, Buell Papers.

battleships, of poison gas, or of bombing airplanes. It is a matter of keeping the pledged word, and that alone.”³⁶

Butler personally opposed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930, but when it passed he did not appear to find anything cataclysmic in it, only a tendency to seek advancement for certain industries at the expense of a more helpful policy of international cooperation on trade. “It is so much easier to be prosperous than to be civilized,” he said.³⁷ In the first part of 1931, however, the Carnegie Endowment stepped up its coverage of the mounting economic trouble with a series of articles in *International Conciliation* implicating the United States as a major contributor to the worldwide slump. By the middle of the year, Butler was fully converted to the idea that the United States was in the midst of an extraordinary financial crunch caused largely by its own policies. “To bring forward any theory of cycles to explain the phenomena which now confront us,” he wrote, “is merely to trifle with the gravest interests of mankind.”³⁸ In his 1932 report as Director of Intercourse and Education within the Carnegie Endowment, which he often used as a soapbox for his personal opinions on world affairs, he condemned the “combination of forces which since the close of the Great War have been making for the undermining and overthrow of the world’s economic and financial systems.”³⁹

Virtually all of these individuals and organizations had expressed opinions regarding the economic policy of the United States before 1929. The difference was that in those days the subject had hardly held priority on the internationalist agenda, and it was difficult to critique a system that seemed to be producing so much wealth. In fact, some Wilsonians recalled that they had avoided criticizing American financial policy too often because to do so might undermine the confidence that underpinned worldwide credit, a crucial component of European recovery.⁴⁰ Now, in the wake of the Crash and the subsequent downturn, questions about the mechanics of international finance and policies surrounding war debts and repayment schedules came to the fore. Internationalists began to associate the global crisis with the shortcomings they had previously only occasionally had reason to complain strongly about.

³⁶ Nicholas Murray Butler, “Annual Report of the Division of Intercourse and Education” in *CEIP Year Book*, 1930 ed., 42.

³⁷ “Butler Fears Harm to Us in New Tariff; Calls it Uneconomic,” *New York Times*, 8 May 1930.

³⁸ Nicholas Murray Butler, “What Will the American People Do About It?,” in *Looking Forward – What Will the American People Do About It?: Essays and Addresses on Matters National and International* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1932), 3-14.

³⁹ Nicholas Murray Butler, “Annual Report of the Director of the Division of Intercourse and Education” in *CEIP Year Book*, 1932 ed., 45.

⁴⁰ James T. Shotwell, “The Conditions of Enduring Prosperity,” *International Conciliation* 53 (1931), 53.

Most publicists who wrote or spoke about the problem, however they defined it, usually categorized it broadly as “economic nationalism” or “economic imperialism.” These terms had different meanings depending on the person using them, but generally they were intended to convey the idea of a dangerous line of financial policy designed to fulfill a very narrowly defined national interest, without regard as to what effects it might have on the rest of the world.⁴¹ Raymond Leslie Buell of the Foreign Policy Association illustrated the concept by pointing out examples of America’s reckless financial activities during the 1920s, especially irresponsible foreign lending and speculation. Rather than curb these developments, Buell accused the government of becoming the “servant of business and finance,” and allowing them to continue unabated until the crisis brought down the entire system.⁴² Russell C. Leffingwell of J.P. Morgan and Company traced the country’s nationalistic policy to the financial boon it received as a result of the war. He said that Americans had become spoiled by their “quickly got, war-got wealth,” and the Depression was merely the burst of the bubble they created in exploiting their newfound resources.⁴³

James T. Shotwell drew a close comparison between the nationalistic financial policy that he believed produced the Depression and the principal ideas that had caused the World War. He often referred to the slump as the “last great battle of the World War itself,” explaining that although the guns had long since ceased firing, the will to fire guns had merely found another way to manifest itself, at the moment through economic systems.⁴⁴ The idea of economic measures as weapons became a common theme, one picked up by Franklin Roosevelt’s Secretary of Commerce, Henry A. Wallace. In his influential pamphlet, *America Must Choose*, he identified tariffs, import quotas, and international debts as weapons more dangerous than artillery. Their most perilous characteristic, he continued, was that they had a way of coming back to haunt those who used them even though they believed they were punishing an enemy.⁴⁵

⁴¹ James Goodwin Hodgson of the University of Chicago compiled a series of articles and speeches from both proponents and enemies of the concept and developed a general definition for his own use in discussing it. He defined economic nationalism as “that government policy which aims to develop the nation as a closed unit, and to foster its ability to exist independently of other countries.” See Hodgson, ed., *Economic Nationalism* (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1933), 3-4.

⁴² Buell, *The World Adrift*, 25-27.

⁴³ Leffingwell made these remarks in his opening statements to a panel he was chairing for the Academy of Political Science. See Leffingwell, “Causes of Depression,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 14, no. 3 (Jun 1931), 3-4.

⁴⁴ Josephson, *James T. Shotwell*, 179.

⁴⁵ Henry A. Wallace, *America Must Choose: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Nationalism, of World Trade, and of a Planned Middle Course* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1934), 7.

As Wilsonians began to associate the crisis with this nationalist behavior, however they defined it, some insisted that the United States was merely getting what it deserved. Wallace observed that although both government and the business community had proceeded through the first postwar decade as though there was some plan for international finance, there really was none.⁴⁶ John Fahey, once president of the United States Chamber of Commerce, remarked before the Academy of Political Science that business men and bankers in the International Chamber had been complaining about American trade restrictions for years.⁴⁷ “Do you remember how we boasted,” asked Raymond Fosdick of the League of Nations Non-Partisan Association and a Rockefeller Foundation trustee, “of a new economic era in which the old rules did not apply – an era of uninterrupted prosperity, born of American genius and efficiency?” Fosdick went on to say that it was wonderful what the United States could produce, except its machines failed to also produce buyers.⁴⁸ Nicholas Murray Butler agreed, reporting smugly in 1932 that the American financial policy of the 1920s had reached its “natural and necessary result.”⁴⁹

As the situation grew worse during the first years of the 1930s, however, other writers began to detect something dangerous in the new mood. During the 1920s, economic nationalism had been a misguided policy that ought to be changed, but it seemed fair enough to chalk it up to ignorance or political expediency on the part of the nation’s leaders, or the unwillingness of the public to deal with it while it seemed to be providing so well for the home market. The hostility toward revising the tariff downward and considering either canceling or reducing the intergovernmental war debts that were crushing the international financial system suggested that something larger was at work. It became increasingly clear that Americans were not simply avoiding these reforms because they still associated the nationalist system with the success of the 1920s. The onset of the Depression ought to have dispelled that connection. Rather, it appeared that the public and their representatives in Washington were reacting to the crisis by “circling the

⁴⁶ Wallace, *America Must Choose*, 8.

⁴⁷ John H. Fahey, “Tariff Barriers and Business Depression,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 14, no. 3 (Jun 1931), 41-47.

⁴⁸ Raymond Fosdick, “The International Implications of the Business Depression,” *International Conciliation* 14, no. 1 (Jan 1931), 64-79.

⁴⁹ Nicholas Murray Butler, “Annual Report of the Director of the Division of Intercourse and Education,” *CEIP Year Book*, 1932 ed., 45.

wagons” and avoiding cooperation with foreign powers in order to protect what was left of the domestic economy.⁵⁰

From the Wilsonian view, even if the Depression required that Americans do some soul-searching and reorganize its financial policy to correct its mistakes from the past decade, simultaneously shunning relationships with foreign producers and their products was a giant step in the wrong direction. Raymond Leslie Buell illustrated the difference between what he saw happening in America in the early 1930s and the more productive form of nationalism that had given birth to the most successful powers in Europe. The latter form had been a positive force for accelerating the development of nation-states and nurturing national identities, languages, and cultures. The economic nationalism represented in prohibitive tariffs, the “Buy American” movement, and Congress’ immutable rejection of debt revision was nothing like this. It revolved around mistrust and a quest for economic self-sufficiency at the expense of other powers, which could lead nowhere good.⁵¹

This realization prompted the change in the American internationalist movement that would characterize their activities through about 1935. Over time, most of the organizations and prominent individuals began to redefine their mission in terms of solving the crisis, much in the way everyday Americans were beginning to envision the work of their government. Butler’s entry in the 1932 edition of the Carnegie Endowment’s annual report is one of the most emphatic examples of this rededication. The Depression would represent a “new challenge and a new stimulus to multiply and strengthen” the efforts of the Endowment, requiring all of its energies. Indeed, as Butler put it, the responsibilities placed on Andrew Carnegie’s trustees were “far heavier and more severe than has ever been the case at any previous time.”⁵² Such was the attitude of most internationalists, who saw in the gathering gloom of the Depression both a lamentable disaster and an opportunity to help.

⁵⁰ In retrospect, the internationalists who felt this way do not seem to have been far from the mark. See Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century*, 105-107 and Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire*, 350.

⁵¹ Buell, *The World Adrift*, 3-4.

⁵² Butler, “Report,” *CEIP Year Book*, 1932 ed., 46-47.

CHAPTER 4

THE NEW IDEA: ALTERNATIVES TO ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

In the 1920s, Wilsonians in the United States were occupied with trying to direct American foreign policy toward a more cooperative relationship with the Versailles system in Europe, especially through adherence to the League of Nations and the World Court. Their goal had been to show that prosperity at home was laudable, but it could only be perpetuated in a peaceful world. The Kellogg-Briand Pact, although it lacked the enforcement powers that many internationalists believed it needed, was a clear expression of peaceful intent between nations that appeared to justify their efforts. The primary job of the movement seemed to be to keep the American people informed and continue to gently encourage them to embrace the measures necessary to maintain the comparative calm the world was experiencing.

The 1930s were a different story, at least as far as the main thrust of the internationalist effort was concerned.¹ In the changed circumstances of this new decade, Americans did not need to be won over to collective security or compulsory arbitration as preventive measures, especially since the entities already in place at this time seemed too weak to function properly.² Rather, they needed to be diverted away from an attitude of economic nationalism in order to disarm a growing predicament that was already taking tangible shape in the form of the Great Depression. Consequently, internationalists began refocusing their attention on American economic policy and the damage it appeared to be inflicting on the international community. Their hope was that if the public could see the connection between the difficulties they were experiencing at home and the vital financial relationships linking the United States and other countries, they would support leaders who promised to seek international solutions to the Depression instead of perpetuating a nationalistic attitude. Because the internationalists already started from an assumption that the public knew too little about the complex workings of international affairs, their newsletters, meetings, speeches, and other instruments of information

¹ Kuehl, *Keeping the Covenant*, 170-176. Some organizations did not experience a revolution in ideas and tactics, for a variety of reasons. Some entities simply could not change their direction because it would violate their charters. The League of Nations Association is an example of this – more on their situation and how they became more involved with the new theme in the movement follows in Chapter 6.

² After the League of Nations failed to effectively sanction Japan for its invasion of Manchuria in 1931, many of its supporters in the United States became disillusioned and directed their energies in other direction. See Chatfield, *American Peace Movement*, 63-64.

attempted to break down the principal issues concerning trade and debt policy and make their arguments easier to comprehend. They spoke much less of America's moral duty or its gift of democracy that it might offer to its neighbors abroad, themes that had been more common in the 1920s. Now they focused particularly on concrete concepts and paths to recovery, so that everyday Americans could understand how their welfare was tied to their government's behavior in the global market by the "remorseless logic of international bookkeeping."³

The most immediate task was to dispel the idea that the United States could solve its problems by limiting foreign trade in favor of "buying American." By restricting their purchases as much as possible to American goods, some "Buy American" proponents believed, everyday Americans and government buyers would increase economic activity at home by supporting local industry. This concept was prevalent, both in popular campaigns and legislative measures. In January 1932, President Hoover suggested to Congressional leaders that department heads in the government require the vendors who supplied them to certify the national origins of their goods, and then only purchase American products, even if foreign prices were better. Legislators were already considering a "Buy American" policy in a number of bills, one of which became the Buy American Act, signed by Hoover on the day he left office in 1933.⁴ Powerful publicists such as the newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst were also leading this charge. Hearst directed the power of his massive media empire toward promoting the idea that boycotting foreign goods would end the Depression. In all twenty-seven Hearst newspapers, lists of "Prosperity Points for American Patriots" directed consumers to "Buy American and spend American. See America first. Keep American money in America and provide employment for American citizens."⁵

Internationalists countered this message by emphasizing the economic ties that bound states together in a normally functioning market economy. Responding directly to the idea that increasing domestic consumption through a more American "buying psychology" would revive the economy, Raymond Fosdick flatly rejected such "magical incantations," insisting that the Depression stretched much farther than the buying patterns of individuals and families could

³ Henry A. Wallace, *New Frontiers* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1934), 85-86.

⁴ The best treatment of the history of "Buy American" movements throughout American history is provided by historian Dana Frank in *Buy American: The Untold Story of Economic Nationalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999). See especially chapter 3 for information about "Buy American" campaigns during the Great Depression. See also "Hoover Presses for Buying at Home," *New York Times*, 28 Jan 1932.

⁵ Frank, *Buy American*, 60-61.

reach.⁶ Other writers added that non-consumption of imports also hindered foreign countries' abilities to pay their debts to the United States or buy American products. This was especially important in an industrialized world where technology made production so rapid and manufacturers could create surpluses so quickly. As Raymond Leslie Buell warned in a lengthy article in 1930, the United States would have to cultivate and maintain global markets for its products if it was to avoid a decreased standard of living and loss of jobs at home.⁷ Henry Wallace, Roosevelt's Secretary of Agriculture and a staunch advocate of lower tariffs, estimated that to break the Depression by internationalist means would require the United States to import nearly one billion dollars' worth of foreign goods over the amount imported in 1929.⁸

Advocates of the "Buy American" strategy often remarked that foreign trade absorbed only about ten percent of the nation's output, and therefore making it up through increased domestic consumption would be an easy task. Statistics backed up the relatively low volume of international commerce, as internationalists themselves sometimes revealed. They admitted that the domestic market was large, but they continually leaned on the enormous productive capacity of American industry to demonstrate that the United States could not dispense with foreign markets.⁹

Fosdick further assailed the "Buy American" logic by explaining that the economic isolationists were only talking about the easy part of international financial relations without considering the larger issue of credit. Because the United States was now a titanic player in the world of credit, thanks to its accumulated gold reserves and capital, it was inextricably wrapped up in the means of importing and exporting for many countries, not just itself.¹⁰ Norman H. Davis discussed this circumstance in a 1932 address, observing that a key challenge to resolving the Depression would be to convince bankers who had been burned by the volatile market that

⁶ Fosdick, "Implications," 66-67.

⁷ Frank, *Buy American*, 90-91; Raymond L. Buell, "Economic Imperialism," *Forum and Century*, Oct 1930.

⁸ Henry A. Wallace, *America Must Choose: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Nationalism, of World Trade, and of a Planned Middle Course* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1934), 1. I say "internationalist" means because Wallace also calculated what the United States would have to sacrifice if it were to continue seeking a solution to the Depression by nationalist means.

⁹ Harry T. Collings of the University of Pennsylvania discussed these points in an article entitled "The Basis of International Trade" in January 1929. His data showed that the United States ranked fairly low in terms of foreign trade volume. In 1913, for example, the country only executed \$42.60 worth of foreign trade per capita. See Collings' article in James Goodwin Hodgson, *Economic Nationalism* (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1933), 68-83.

¹⁰ Fosdick, "Implications," 71.

their salvation lie in restoring the lines of credit they had at their disposal. “It is well to learn from the past,” he wrote, “but a mistake to get too much out of it.”¹¹

Although the “Buy American” campaign might seem a drastic measure, it dwarfed in comparison to the suggestions of other leaders and experts that the United States ought to seek complete economic independence and stop foreign commercial intercourse entirely. This was the subject of books such as *America Self-Contained* by Samuel Crowther, who argued that the United States was scientifically advanced enough to support itself completely. “Fortunately we need no friends; fortunately we fear no enemies,” he wrote in his first chapter.¹² Some Congressional leaders seemed to only pay the idea lip service, since they generally agreed that the United States needed foreign markets for its surplus productivity, but much of the rhetoric on Capitol Hill clearly showed that the ultimate object of trade policy was to benefit the United States alone. Defending the tariff bill that would bear his name, for example, Senator Willis Hawley declared that “it is the purpose of our protective tariff policy to make our country self-sufficient and self-sustaining.”¹³

Internationalists and a variety of economists and business leaders railed against this idea. Cordell Hull, Representative and later Senator from Tennessee and avid internationalist and free trade supporter, accused all three Republican administrations of the 1920s of practicing this “insane economic nationalism,” and attempted to make it an issue in the 1932 presidential campaign.¹⁴ Maxwell Stewart of the Foreign Policy Association dismissed it as an “armchair theory” that completely disregarded the realities of America’s need for foreign commerce.¹⁵ Henry Wallace ventured to say that such a nationalistic policy was possible, but it would require the American people to make drastic and unpleasant changes in its production activities. By his calculations, American farmers would have to retire between forty and one hundred million acres of crop land, and accept strict regulations for certain export crops, such as cotton, corn, and wheat.¹⁶ Autarky along the lines proposed by the economic isolationists would vaporize scores

¹¹ Norman H. Davis, “International Financial Problems,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 14, no. 4 (Jan 1932), 126-133.

¹² Samuel Crowther, *America Self-Contained* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1933), 1.

¹³ “The New Tariff: Meaning to the Consumer,” *New York Times*, 1 Jun 1930.

¹⁴ “Hull Lays Slump to Isolation Policy,” *New York Times*, 27 Sept 1931.

¹⁵ Maxwell S. Stewart, “America Must Choose,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 174 (Jul 1934), 60-64.

¹⁶ Wallace, *America Must Choose*, 10-11.

of jobs in the major export industries. As Raymond Buell explained, the nation had outgrown its domestic market and needed buyers from all over the globe to absorb its products.¹⁷

Maxwell Stewart ventured into the hypothetical to question the wisdom of economic isolationism still further. What would happen, he wondered in print, if a nation avowed against foreign trade were to need raw materials it could not obtain domestically? He suggested that if the world were to become populated by nations unwilling to trade with one another, they might revert to the older method of obtaining raw materials by territorial expansion.¹⁸

Some internationalists also felt compelled to speak out against suggestions that the United States could recover from the Depression through a robust new system of national economic planning. This was not as much of an issue under the Hoover administration when the government relied more on voluntarism to repair the national financial system, but under the strain of continual depression and the prospect of new political leadership in Washington, national planning became a hot topic. Moreover, when Franklin Roosevelt submitted the National Industrial Recovery Act to Congress in 1933, it appeared as though such a nationally planned economy could become a reality. Under the terms of the act, the executive would establish a National Recovery Administration with powers to manually control price and wage levels in consultation with leaders from the various industries. The legislation also carried with it the prospect of higher tariffs to control the amount of foreign goods entering the American market and shore up the efforts of the National Recovery Administration.¹⁹

Leaders of the internationalist movement found this strategy problematic for several reasons. Conservatives among them saw great danger in the amount of power that a system of national economic planning would cede to the federal government. Nicholas Roosevelt, a cousin of Theodore Roosevelt and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and correspondent for several New York newspapers, evoked the image of “enforcement agents” from Prohibition days, suggesting that for a planned economy to work it would require much the same sort of paternalism.²⁰ Henry Wallace, who as a member of Roosevelt’s cabinet had close access to the plans that were under consideration, laid out a more specific list of would-be controls regarding

¹⁷ Ibid., Buell, “Economic Imperialism”; Buell, *American Patriotism and a World Attitude* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1933), 8-9.

¹⁸ Stewart, “America Must Choose,” 60-64.

¹⁹ Dallek, *Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 44-45; Watkins, *The Great Depression*, 142-144.

²⁰ Roosevelt was also minister to Hungary and an avid commentator on United States policy in the Pacific. For his thoughts on a planned economy, see Roosevelt, “Economic Nationalism as it Affects the United States,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 174 (Jul 1934), 54-59.

licenses for crop land and machinery, surplus quotas for every product produced, perhaps for every month, and other such restrictions.²¹

One revealing way of explaining the potential hazards of nationally planned finances was to point out examples of such a system in other countries. James P. Warburg, an internationalist economist who would later serve as the monetary adviser to the American delegation to a crucial economic conference, drew on several instances in his book *It's Up to Us*. Citing letters and reports from Americans who had traveled around in Italy, Austria, and Russia, countries that had adopted nationally planned economies, Warburg called attention to the widespread loss of individual freedoms that accompanied the systems.²²

Francis Sayre, an Assistant Secretary of State at the time, likened the international competition that would result from having such “autarkic” states to the trusts of the previous century. Rather than suffering from the tyranny of a few powerful monopolistic corporations with a “public be damned attitude,” America could potentially face entire government-controlled foreign economies with a “world be damned” attitude whose coexistence could only end in conflict.²³ Wallace conceded that a new economics would have to be planned to some extent, just not in the way nationalists tended to suggest.²⁴ As Benjamin Anderson, Jr. of the Chase National Bank in New York put it, economic life as it was known before the Depression succeeded because businessmen calculated their actions after their own goals and interests.²⁵

Nicholas Roosevelt took a similar view, although he doubted national economic planning would inevitably lead to autarkic states. In such an interdependent world, where raw materials traveled back and forth across the globe to fuel manufacturing processes, it was more likely that governments would realize that national planning could only work if they cooperated with one another to ensure the availability of key commodities. This, however, was not much of a comfort to Roosevelt. He observed that it was difficult enough just to secure agreement between a handful of nations on basic terms of trade – no authority in existence would be able to coordinate nationally planned economies on a global scale.²⁶

²¹ Wallace, *America Must Choose*, 11.

²² James P. Warburg, *It's Up to Us* (New York: Knopf, 1934), 60-81.

²³ Francis B. Sayre, “The Menace of Economic Nationalism,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 16, no. 2 (Jan 1935), 82-90.

²⁴ Wallace, *America Must Choose*, 26-33.

²⁵ Benjamin M. Anderson, Jr., *A Planned Economy and a Planned Price Level* (New York: Chase National Bank, 1933), 7.

²⁶ Roosevelt, “Economic Nationalism,” 56-57.

By speaking out against these general schemes for a more nationalist attitude in American economic policy, internationalists revealed the shortcomings of isolating America from the world in ways that cut into the isolationists' own territory – national interest. Rather than ask for economic cooperation because it was the righteous course of action or a mandatory milestone on the road to a brighter millennium, Wilsonians insisted that it was necessary for American prosperity, plain and simple. They went farther than merely assailing nationalist attitudes, however.

In addition to attacking the idea of economic nationalism generally, Wilsonian thinkers increasingly demanded that the government do something about the intergovernmental war debts that remained in effect despite the global financial malaise. Most publicists favored canceling the debts entirely, although some accepted the attitude of Congress and the public that the debts were honorable and needed to be paid. In these cases, they generally suggested that the American government adjust the terms of the debts so that the Allied governments could make their payments on time without putting their own domestic concerns in jeopardy.

Internationalists had long pointed out the unfairness of separating the subject of the war debts from German reparations, and circumstances during the Depression allowed them to make a much clearer argument for why the two were so closely connected. Ever since the World War, the Allied countries had been servicing their debts to the United States using money they obtained from Germany in the form of reparations. The German government's trouble meeting its obligations was alleviated in the 1920s by the Dawes and Young plans, but when credit became tight at the end of the decade, Germany had no money with which to pay the Allies, and the Allies could no longer pay the United States. Publicists who had lambasted the absurdity of the debt-reparations cycle in the 1920s now connected the failure of the system directly with the United States' failure to lend more money.²⁷

A number of the most liberal-minded Wilsonians believed the most productive policy would be to erase the debts completely. Nicholas Murray Butler was perhaps the most vocal of these publicists. He argued that the World War destroyed a great deal of value that no nation could replace, since much of the money was spent on military supplies, food, and other goods that were fully consumed by the war. Moreover, the European nations suffered extreme damage

²⁷ For an example of this logic, see Nicholas Murray Butler, "War Debts," *International Conciliation* 15 (1932-33), 103-106.

that required enormous sums of money to repair. Despite these circumstances, however, the United States was attempting to get back value that had essentially evaporated, and Butler linked this effort up directly with the Depression. European countries were crippled over the course of the 1920s by the burden of reparations and debt, and now the United States was itself hamstrung by its inability to sell anything to its debtors or squeeze any additional money out of them. “We reserved for ourselves the poor consolation of being ruined last,” he lamented.²⁸

Others who were more in tune with the stubbornness of the enemies of debt cancellation in Congress and in the public suggested that the debts might be scaled down or postponed. James T. Shotwell, who was fervently for cancellation in principle, admitted that the American people were virtually united in demanding that there be no cancellation, and a different sort of solution would have to be reached.²⁹ The Social Science Research Council, with which Shotwell and a number of other internationalists were affiliated, convened a commission in 1934 to study the various problems of the Depression, and on the subject of war debts it too admitted that cancellation would be optimum, but in light of the circumstances the best solution would be to revise the debts downward on a case-by-case basis.³⁰ Raymond Buell cited nominal support given to debt revision by Senator Borah, President Hoover, and other politicians, and suggested that if nothing else the debts ought to be dismissed because they perpetuated the ill feelings associated with the World War.³¹

In making these propositions, internationalists tried to demonstrate to government officials and the public that Washington leaders were in the driver’s seat, not only of the national economy but also that of the entire globe. They were in a position, for example, to curtail the instability that would result if Germany or one of the Allies were to default on their intergovernmental obligations, as well as the deflation that followed the transfer of gold from European reserves to service the debts. Walter Lippmann wrote that if he could think of a way for the United States to continue demanding the debts without doing injury to itself, he would support that line of action. However, because they had a deflationary effect on the British pound

²⁸ Nicholas Murray Butler, Address delivered at the Annual Convention of the League of Nations Association in Chicago, 23 Jan 1931 in Butler, *Looking Forward*, 3-14.

²⁹ James T. Shotwell, “The Bargain for peace,” *International Conciliation* 15 (1932-33), 106-114.

³⁰ Commission of Inquiry into National Policy in International Economic Relations, *International Economic Relations: Report of the Commission of Inquiry into National Policy in International Economic Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1934), 6.

³¹ Raymond L. Buell, *A New Commercial Policy for the United States* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1932), 8-9.

sterling and all of the currencies pegged to it, collecting them reduced the buying power of an enormous swath of people worldwide. These were often the same people the United States depended on to purchase its exports. In this way, he wrote, the American taxpayer received no benefit from the debt payments.³² This is much more than a simple suggestion that the United States had an abstract obligation to the Germans – Lippmann’s point underscores the connection between a friendly cooperative attitude toward Germany and American recovery from the Depression.

Anytime evidence suggested that the government was heading in the right direction regarding the debts, the internationalists marked it as a laudable step. Raymond Buell, for example, hailed President Hoover’s debt moratorium in 1931 as one of the most “dramatic and important” events since the Armistice.³³ Anticipating that critics would label the measure as a ploy by internationalists to saddle the American public with the cost of the World War, writers such as Phelps Haviland Adams of the *New York Sun* explained that the same logic that had justified the nation’s former debt policy also demanded this moratorium. If the United States’ debtors needed a breather to be in a better position to make their payments as they had done during the 1920s, it was entirely in the taxpayers’ interests for Hoover to make it happen.³⁴

Wilsonians also stepped up their criticism of the strict American tariff policy, joining a large number of economists and other experts who worried about the potential ramifications such a strategy might provoke. Following the 1930 passage of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff, 1,028 economists published a formal protest in the *New York Times*, asking President Hoover to veto the bill. They argued that the tariff was not merely a domestic concern, but that it also had important international ramifications. A higher tariff such as what was proposed in the Smoot-Hawley bill would bring hardship on consumers and producers at home and abroad.³⁵

Most prominent among the internationalists’ points concerning tariffs was the idea that the United States had no choice but to import foreign products in order to maintain viable export markets. Because of the high concentration of the world’s gold supply in America and the sluggishness of the credit market, debtor countries needed to be able to pay their debts in goods

³² Walter Lippmann, “Shall We Deflate Some More?,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 23 Nov 1932.

³³ Raymond L. Buell, “The President Proposes a Debt Moratorium,” *News Bulletin of the Foreign Policy Association*, 26 Jun 1931.

³⁴ Phelps Haviland Adams, “Strictly Business,” *North American Review* 232, no. 3 (Sept 1931), 196.

³⁵ “1,028 Economists Ask Hoover to Veto Pending Tariff Bill,” *New York Times*, 5 May 1930.

wherever possible.³⁶ Experts who took this view had to accept the burden of explaining it, since the prevailing wisdom was that one ought to sell more than one bought in order to make a profit. Tariffs appealed to many people as a way to stack the deck so that buying from abroad would be prohibitively expensive and this favorable balance of trade would be protected. Consequently, publicists like John Fahey understood that anyone arguing against them would have to confront fierce opposition from people who benefited from protectionism.³⁷

Part of this strategy meant conceding that tariffs had their proper role in a national economy, although a more circumscribed one than the Smoot-Hawley measure appeared to create. Internationalists admitted that before the World War the United States had been a creditor nation, and in its position export markets had meant everything. In those days, it had debts to pay and products to sell. In the post-war world, however, the tables were turned. As a responsible creditor nation, the argument went, the United States was obligated to sell more than it exported in order to ensure that its debtors could repay what they owed. This creditor-debtor relationship was most easily explained in terms of monolithic obligations, but in reality internationalists were talking about the livelihood of individual sources of credit throughout the United States. All investors had a stake in making sure their debtors had something to pay back.³⁸ In the face of what internationalists considered compelling logic, certain Americans' preoccupation with protection to them almost seemed superstitious.³⁹

Publicists also took issue with what appeared to be the reasons behind industry and government's ignorance of their duty in the international market. Some pointed out that the American government was using the tariff to protect inefficient industries at home instead of properly limiting assistance to those manufacturers that were working themselves up to being competitive. The consequences at the very least might involve a certain laxity among producers in a market their government artificially maintained. Francis Sayre complained, for example, that industrial progress was held in check by the tariff because the usual, market-based rewards for efficiency could not operate when government protection ensured that no competing products

³⁶ University of Pennsylvania economics professor Harry T. Collings estimated in 1929 that the world's gold supply was limited to about ten billion dollars. See Collings, "Basis of International Trade" in Hodgson, *Economic Nationalism*, 68-83.

³⁷ John Fahey, "Tariff Barriers and Business Depression," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 14, no. 3 (Jun 1931), 41-47.

³⁸ Wallace, *New Frontiers*, 75.

³⁹ Anderson, *Planned Economy*, 5-6.

were available to the consumer.⁴⁰ In the worst cases, producers might decide to take their business elsewhere, where foreign retaliation against the American tariff policy would not cut into their export markets. Fahey illustrated this by pointing to the number of automobile manufacturers who had relocated plants to Canada in order to take advantage of its policy of extending favorable tariffs to countries that reciprocated.⁴¹ Herbert C. Pell, New York Congressman and later a diplomat, argued that the only people who actively sought protection in the United States were afraid of losing business to superior foreign producers. In achieving their ends, Pell wrote, these people were not really “protecting” anyone but themselves – certainly American consumers did not benefit. Instead, the protectionist was merely “foisting on his countrymen an inferior or more costly article.”⁴²

Raymond Buell, in a slightly more moderate tone, conceded that the United States had an obligation to protect its own industries, but not to the extent that doing so became so competitive that it took on the character of a war. The American method of relentlessly pursuing overseas markets while walling off American markets to those same trading partners was dangerous to future peace, since the competition was not a genuine contest between producers for efficiency or quality. Tariffs changed the rules so that governments were the competitors. This attitude, Buell wrote, had been instrumental in causing the World War.⁴³ James T. Shotwell wrote in general support of this concern, observing that “we never quite get away from the old fallacy that another nation’s gain is our loss.”⁴⁴

Alongside these critiques, internationalists utilized the expertise and resources at their disposal to formulate constructive suggestions on how to solve the tariff question. The Commission of Inquiry on International Economic Relations created by the Social Science Research Council in 1933 is an excellent example of this. After drawing together a reputable team of researchers, the Commission published a massive report, which called for reciprocal trade agreements and removing tariffs whose cancellation would not greatly affect

⁴⁰ Sayre, “Menace of Economic Nationalism,” 208.

⁴¹ Fahey reported that 130 companies established factories in Canada when its government created this policy, and “scores” followed. See Fahey, “Barriers and Business Depression,” 41-47; “Urge Tariff Pacts,” *New York Times*, 25 Apr 1931.

⁴² “Inefficient, Incompetent, or Dishonest,” *North American Review* 233, no. 1 (Jan 1932), 16-24.

⁴³ Buell, “Economic Imperialism,” *passim*.

⁴⁴ Shotwell, “Enduring Prosperity,” 62.

employment.⁴⁵ Others advocated arbitrary cuts in duty rates; Raymond Buell called on the government to reduce them ten percent across the board.⁴⁶

While internationalists thinking along the lines of simple reductions generally agreed that the United States could make great headway with unilateral action, many also emphasized that the work had to be geared toward making the *global* market more conducive to normal trade. A good impetus for this transformation, they thought, would be for the major industrial nations of the world to come together for some form of conference to discuss their options and plan out a strategy for dealing with the Depression. After all, as Raymond Fosdick pointed out, it would be futile for the United States to lower its own tariffs and make generous concessions if other countries were not willing to do the same. What was needed was an *international* push toward sanity in economic policy.⁴⁷

Nicholas Murray Butler began pushing for a multilateral conference on the causes and potential remedies of the Depression as early as 1931. While visiting Europe in the summer of that year, he proposed a meeting of prominent economists, business leaders, and other experts from the major exporting countries, rather than “slow-moving” governments. In this way, he believed the conference might craft a solution in the same spirit as the Dawes and Young plans from the previous decade. Butler seems to have adopted this approach at least partly because he doubted that governments were inclined to make any profound moves in the near future, at least not without provocation from their citizens. “Even if the plan produced could never be applied,” he said, “the psychological effect would be phenomenal.” Probably no other statement better revealed his Wilsonian credentials.⁴⁸

Other publicists weighed in throughout the early 1930s. Raymond Buell, writing just before the World Economic Conference of 1933, suggested that the United States take that opportunity to initiate a multilateral tariff truce among the participants. He also suggested that the United States ought to work with international banking authorities to restore the gold standard in countries that had abandoned it owing to the gold situation in the United States and France.⁴⁹ Shotwell expressed hope that since nations were rapidly starting to employ the World Court and other instruments of arbitration as an alternative to force, the same flavor of justice

⁴⁵ Commission of Inquiry into National Policy in International Economic Relations, “Report,” 11-100.

⁴⁶ Buell, “New Economic Policy,” 10-11.

⁴⁷ Fosdick, “Implications,” 72-73.

⁴⁸ “Butler Holds Cure for Crisis is Parley,” *New York Times*, 4 Jul 1931.

⁴⁹ Buell, “New Commercial Policy,” 10-11.

might be sought by those countries regarding economic questions.⁵⁰ Most of the solutions that came up involved the United States ceding some of its freedom of action to some international scheme, but the internationalists argued that both reality and pressing circumstances made undue focus on retaining this freedom outmoded. As Raymond Fosdick observed, “A country whose excess wheat and cotton are rotting in fields and storehouses because its foreign market has gone to pieces is not in a position to talk in terms of Washington’s Farewell Address.”⁵¹

Although there were as many viewpoints as there were commentators in this discourse on what America’s next moves ought to be in controlling the worldwide depression, one of the major consensus points was that the United States ought to take the initiative in proposing a plan. As the world’s creditor, the argument went, the United States was in the best position to make something happen quickly in the international community.⁵² The key was to convince both leaders and voters that this was the case, and then educate them on how they might contribute to an active, cooperative policy. It was important, however, to stress that such a strategy meant taking real tangible action, something that some internationalists worried had been missing from recent foreign policy initiatives. Raymond Buell, for instance, feared that the American government might delude itself into believing that it could command economic peace with some instrument similar to the Kellogg-Briand Pact or a series of benevolent pronouncements. “Peace cannot be secured without a price,” he wrote, “and that price is a revision of the commercial policy of the United States and of other nations so as to cut the Gordian knot in which the economic life of the world is now tied.”⁵³

In order to demonstrate the necessity of swift action, internationalists often brought up a myriad of potential consequences that they feared might stem from the Depression, both in the United States and worldwide. Henry Wallace and Cordell Hull wielded this strategy particularly well with the tariff. They warned that steep tariff increases would provoke retaliation from countries that purchased goods from the United States if it continued to act as an internationalist seller and a nationalistic buyer.⁵⁴ Indeed, after the Smoot-Hawley Tariff was passed in 1930,

⁵⁰ Shotwell, “Conditions of Enduring Prosperity,” 63.

⁵¹ Fosdick, “Implications,” 70.

⁵² John Fahey said that as the nation with the largest export business in the world, America bore “a particular responsibility to contribute at least our share, and indeed a little more than our share, in the leadership of a general movement for a better international adjustment of this very annoying and disturbing tariff problem.” See Fahey, “Barriers and Business Depression,” 47.

⁵³ Buell, “Economic Imperialism.”

⁵⁴ This was Wallace’s phrase. See his *America Must Choose*, 19.

Mexico, Canada, Cuba, and France immediately responded by raising their own tariff walls against American products, and other countries soon followed suit.⁵⁵ Publicists began to worry that the situation might drive America's competitors into combinations for the purpose of fighting American tariff fire with fire.

The Council on Foreign Relations introduced articles from both European and American authors to this effect in *Foreign Affairs*. As early as 1929, when Smoot-Hawley was still an amorphous idea, contributors and editors were already warning that French Premier Aristide Briand's long-standing dream of unifying Europe would become much more enticing in a hostile trade environment.⁵⁶ While many writers agreed that the United States would not be greatly affected by anything less than a well-organized retaliatory tariff, they argued that its producers were much more vulnerable to just such a strategy since American exports to Europe increasingly consisted of manufactured goods that Europeans could also make.⁵⁷ Apprehension about a possible anti-American trade arrangement only increased in 1930 when several Balkan states organized a conference to discuss the possibility of combining against Russian and American competition in the agricultural produce market. Nicholas Murray Butler believed the economic cooperation inherent in such a plan was both commendable and a telling example of what havoc American protectionism was wreaking abroad. The *New York Times*, on the other hand, worried in print about the potential consequences of the meeting in "the world's most dangerous corner."⁵⁸ Both observations stressed the need for a more cooperative economic policy by tying the question to concrete interests at home.

Some writers envisioned the Europeans going even farther than mere tariff retribution and using embargoes or quotas to express their displeasure at American actions. Percy Bidwell of the United States Tariff Commission listed a variety of tactics that nations might use to sabotage the United States' export process. Even if embargoes or retaliatory duties were outlawed by some international agreement, he wrote, a nation might refuse shipments of goods

⁵⁵ Fearon, *War, Prosperity, and Depression*, 129.

⁵⁶ Andre Siegfried's piece that was published ironically just before the crash is a particularly good example of this sentiment. See his article, "European Reactions to American Tariff Proposals," *Foreign Affairs* 8, no. 1 (Oct 1929), 13-19.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, See also a piece from Percy Bidwell, a former economist of the United States Tariff Commission, "The New American Tariff: Europe's Answer," *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 1 (Oct 1930), 13-26.

⁵⁸ Nicholas Murray Butler, Address delivered at the Annual Convention of the League of Nations Association in Chicago, 23 Jan 1931 in Butler, *Looking Forward*, 3-14.

from the United States for sanitary reasons or some other excuse.⁵⁹ Herbert Feis, who was at that time economic advisor to the State Department, criticized his employer's hamhanded actions in international finance and suggested that the increasing state interference with trade was essentially a form of price-fixing that threatened to undermine democratic institutions at home and elsewhere, creating a situation where credit "dare not move."⁶⁰

When the United States' policies did produce bad results, internationalists made sure to point out that Washington was reaping what it had sowed. In December 1932, when several European debtor governments announced that they could no longer afford to make payments on their intergovernmental obligations, Walter Lippmann mockingly congratulated the government for having successfully collected a hundred million dollars on the debts before the system broke down. "There is aligned against us the public sentiment of the world," he wrote. "We have weakened the position of the principal currency used in international trade; the most liberal government on the continent of Europe [Weimar Germany] has been overthrown; the nations on whose collaboration depended the peace and order of the Western World have been disunited. But we have collected a hundred million dollars."⁶¹

Internationalists also found it helpful to place the Depression in the context of other crises going on around the world that people might know about. The Council on Foreign Relations, for example, linked up the economic slump to Japan's 1931 actions in Manchuria by claiming that the Smoot-Hawley Tariff had strangled Japanese export industries until the country's leaders were forced to turn their eyes abroad in search of raw materials.⁶² Some writers attempted to blame the Depression on the worldwide quest for bigger and better armaments, suggesting that the United States might be in a better position to spend its way out of the crisis if it were to slash military expenditures. William Stone of the Foreign Policy Association was a strong proponent of this idea, and he regularly published related facts and figures. In 1931 he pointed out that the United States was spending \$842,000,000 on defense, which was one sixth of the world's total expenditure on defense and more than twice what America had spent on defense in 1913.⁶³ This idea that disarmament and depression recovery could be closely linked held great currency for

⁵⁹ Bidwell, "The New Tariff," 13-26.

⁶⁰ Herbert Feis, "After Tariffs, Embargoes," *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 3 (Apr 1931), 398-408.

⁶¹ Walter Lippmann, "A Famous Victory," *New York Herald Tribune*, 16 Dec 1932.

⁶² Schulzinger, *Wise Men*, 39-43.

⁶³ William T. Stone, "Armaments and Economic Recovery," *Foreign Policy Association News Bulletin* 10, no. 28 (15 May 1931).

both internationalists and pacifists, who saw the dollars and cents involved as well as an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone.

Other publicists blamed the Depression for the rise of far-left or far-right regimes, claiming that the crisis was a test not only for the national economy of the United States, but also its way of government. Raymond Buell used this theory to explain how Germany had come under the control of Adolph Hitler and the Fascists. Germany's problems as of 1930 had been primarily economic, he argued, and the population was consequently more receptive to any leader who could promise something better for the country. He illustrated this situation with an ominous quote from Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, then Minister of Economics in the German government: "Whether nations get enough to eat with democracy or fascism is not decisive. What is decisive is that they get enough to eat."⁶⁴

Fearing the same fate for the United States, Benjamin Anderson, Jr. of the Chase National Bank warned that in times of crisis there were "revolutionaries who like to fish in troubled waters," and therefore it was important to get a handle on solving the Depression on rational terms to avoid popular radicalism. "This sick economic world of ours is a patient in a hospital," he wrote, "not a subject for experimentation in a laboratory."⁶⁵ Wilsonians like Anderson recognized that democracy was decidedly vulnerable in the short term during an economic crisis because its method of ruling could not always deliver a fast solution to every problem, nor could it even promise one, since the fate of any legislation was tied up in the opinions of hundreds of lawmakers. Henry Wallace recognized that Hitler and Italian dictator Benito Mussolini had a crucial advantage in this respect. "They make the path to the land of tomorrow seem straight and short," he wrote.⁶⁶

Nicholas Murray Butler was a particularly strong proponent of this reasoning. Early on, he sharply rebuked the American government's sluggishness in responding to the Depression with bold policies: "The universal answer of the office holding class is 'Wait.' Gentlemen, if we wait too long somebody may come forward with a solution that we may not like."⁶⁷ In this sense, Dr. Butler was referring less to the threat of Fascism than he was to Communism, whose legacy in America leftover from the Red Scare of the 1920s was still no sweeter.

⁶⁴ Buell memorandum, 18 Dec 1936 in Box 41, Buell Papers.

⁶⁵ Anderson, *Planned Economy*, 3-4.

⁶⁶ Wallace, *New Frontiers*, 19.

⁶⁷ "Dr. Butler Demands World Plan to Meet Soviet Competition," *New York Times*, 12 Jun 1931.

Foreigners in especially volatile regions of Europe perceived the same danger for America, much as they worried about unrest in their own countries. Gustav Stolper, a German correspondent for *Foreign Affairs*, noted that the United States probably did not need to worry about a United States of Europe, since the nationalism of the European states was intense and unlikely to allow for a customs union in the near future. However, it did perhaps have cause for concern about a worldwide economy that made clear divisions between “classes” of nations. This state of affairs, which Stolper described as an effect of the World War, was sending the European democracies into a dangerous situation where unhappy lower classes could seize some opportunity to overturn existing governments in favor of socialism or worse. The United States simply could not ignore this trend. “The question America must ask herself before all other questions,” he wrote, “is whether a single people, a single country, however great and powerful it may be, can isolate itself from, immunize itself against, the radiations of such a crisis.”⁶⁸

This became a compelling theme in the argument for a more internationalist foreign policy, as well as more attention to public opinion education. Organizations seeking assistance from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 1933 for this purpose warned of “a brutal radicalism” that could spread away from Europe to other countries, even the United States.⁶⁹ As Shotwell put it, it was important for the problem of solving the Depression to be taken up by other people than those who began their investigations from the presupposition that the system itself was wrong.⁷⁰

Perhaps even more important than drawing connections between the Depression and other worldwide problems or foretelling grave consequences for America’s actions was the act of discussing the individual everyday American’s home in a global context to make the connection *real*. This was a different way of thinking about what was supposed to motivate a typical American citizen to take up the “international mind.” In the 1920s, many internationalists still expected people to follow their guidance because of a shared sense of responsibility and moral purpose. Now those same intellectuals recognized the powerful force of self-interest, and their Depression-era ideas often intentionally appealed to it. Even Butler recognized that the popular mind had to be captured by straightforward practical language and a stark frankness about how

⁶⁸ Gustav Stolper, “Lessons of the World Depression,” *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 2 (Jan 1931), 243-253.

⁶⁹ Memorandum to the Trustees of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 6 Dec 1933, Box 7, Davis Papers.

⁷⁰ Shotwell, “Enduring Prosperity,” 55.

the internationalist program directly affected the individual worker. “It need not be sympathy for the European debtor and his state which moves American opinion,” he said, “but sheer selfishness.”⁷¹

Many internationalists tried to connect the American home with global trade by explaining how everyday items made it into the household, since so many Americans seemed able to only trace the origins of their goods back to a store shelf. Raymond Buell used a cup of coffee as an example in one of his articles. If a cup of coffee could talk, he wrote, it would tell its listeners that it grew up in Brazil, while the sugar that flavored it came from Cuba, and so on.⁷² Buell also enjoyed poking fun at the “Buy American” leaders now and then, remarking that even they could not avoid availing themselves of the fruits of foreign trade. One newspaper associated with the movement, he noted, was actually printed using newsprint imported from Canada.⁷³ Raymond Fosdick demonstrated that even products typically thought of as peculiarly “American” were often at least partly the result of international commerce. He used steel for an example. Entire American cities were organized around the steel industry, and many people seemed to believe that everything necessary to produce the nation’s supply of it could be found domestically. In reality, Fosdick wrote, only early, more primitive steel could be made entirely without foreign components. The much-improved modern steel of the contemporary era required a variety of additives that came from such far-flung regions as the Caucasus Mountains, the southern Pacific, Peru, and elsewhere. Only through such an interdependent global network of trade could such a high quality “American” material be made available for building modern skyscrapers and other symbols of American might. It was a powerful lesson, when heeded.⁷⁴

While the majority of the movement drifted toward this new agenda dominated by combating economic nationalism, this is not to say that some League advocates and World Court enthusiasts did not continue to give their favorite issues their full attention. The League of Nations Association, for example, had little choice but to continue fighting for immediate United States entry into the League, since that line of action was stipulated by its charter. “Our charter and money were given to us for that purpose,” said Charles H. Strong of New York, vice-

⁷¹ Nicholas Murray Butler, Address delivered at the Annual Convention of the League of Nations Association in Chicago, 23 Jan 1931 in Butler, *Looking Forward*, 3-14.

⁷² Buell, “Economic Imperialism.”

⁷³ Raymond L. Buell, *American Patriotism and a World Attitude* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1933), 9.

⁷⁴ Fosdick, “Implications,” passim.

president of the Association who was then speaking to its annual convention in January 1931. “We have not the right to use them for other things.”⁷⁵

The strong 1920s emphasis on approaching diplomacy in the correct ‘spirit’ also remained for many Wilsonians. Newton D. Baker took up this topic in an address to the Institute of Pacific Relations in 1933, arguing that modern warfare was sustained by “passions” whipped up by the state and directed against the enemy. The Depression presented a particularly fertile opportunity for this, and educating public opinion about foreign cultures and encouraging Americans not to distrust their fellow world citizens would go a long way toward neutralizing its effectiveness.⁷⁶

Regardless of whether the internationalists were fighting for old dreams or new necessities, they faced serious criticism from both learned and unlearned sources, who either carried the banner of economic nationalism with total faith or were simply tired of listening to publicists insisting that America ought to save the world. Adopting Hearst’s “America First” mantra as their slogan, a variety of organizations pushed back against internationalist ideas for curing the Depression in the 1930s. They reviled the idea of giving the European debtor countries any quarter in terms of war debt concessions or tariff relief if it came at the expense of the American taxpayer.

The American Federation of Labor, for example, accused the Foreign Policy Association of distributing pro-Soviet propaganda and intending to lower tariff barriers so as to permit goods produced by “slave labor” to flood American markets.⁷⁷ The Daughters of the American Revolution was likely the largest women’s group associated with the nationalist cause. True to their methods, members associated the America First attitude with a much-needed return to the patriotic spirit of 1776 and complete rejection of foreign entanglements. They decried the Dawes and Young plans as hooks with which European leaders would drag the United States into the League of Nations and World Court, and declared American adherence to any such deal as legally void.⁷⁸

Newspaper editors, especially of the Hearst papers, ran editorials criticizing the cavalier approach some internationalist leaders took toward attempting to solve the problems of the

⁷⁵ “Says League Friends are ‘Pussy-footing’,” *New York Times*, 23 Jan 1931.

⁷⁶ Newton D. Baker, “On the Institute’s Educational Value,” *Pacific Affairs* 6 (Oct 1933), 496-500.

⁷⁷ Abbott, “From Versailles to Munich,” 77.

⁷⁸ See an example of DAR attitudes in “Attacks Morgan and World Bank,” *New York Times*, 28 Mar 1930. Raymond Buell also sums up their stance in Buell, “Economic Imperialism.”

Depression. One contributor to the *Washington Post*, a paper that was fairly cool to internationalist overtures, wrote that American internationalists were worse than Communists. They thought they knew everything about what America really needed and where her heart should be, but it was really anybody's guess.⁷⁹ Another letter complained that internationalists were "foreigners first and Americans last."⁸⁰ One contributor suggested that internationalists and pacifists actually increased the danger of war by keeping the subject in front of the public as a live issue. In this sense the anti-war crowd as like the "man at the Kilkenny fair," always ready to "fight like hell for peace."⁸¹

Nicholas Murray Butler, a decidedly pompous individual even on his mellowest days, was a lightning rod for this sort of criticism. The *Washington Post* ran a scathing editorial lambasting him for his ideas about war debt cancellation in 1930. The author quipped that the reason he had to go to Europe every year was to get an appreciative audience for his schemes, since the American people were not really interested in what he had to say. The article colored Butler's activities as distinctly unpatriotic. "No one is quite so adept at selling out his own country as Dr. Butler," it said.⁸²

Other writers were highly critical of the relationship they perceived between international businessmen and their "internationalist mouthpieces." The *National Republic*, for example, ran an article claiming that it should come as no surprise that internationalists and their banker friends and business leaders should want to adopt a conciliatory approach to freer world trade, since they were the "toll-takers in commerce," and stood to benefit from such a policy. Talking about duty to the world made perfect sense to these people. Domestic farmers and industrialists would do well to wonder, however, whether these idealists meant to do them any good at all.⁸³

Many Congressmen also blasted the internationalists' proposals, as they were unwilling to consider anything that would restrict the United States' freedom of action in foreign affairs. This exasperation was at least partly due to the strong lobbying that Wilsonians had done in favor of getting the United States into the World Court in the 1920s. Although that effort was beginning to taper off in the 1930s, lawmakers still remained short-fused on the issue because of

⁷⁹ "Internationalist Americans Worse Than Communists – Ramsay MacDonald's Dream," *The Washington Post*, 24 Jul 1930.

⁸⁰ "Tariff Shelters All," *The Washington Post*, 12 Dec 1930.

⁸¹ "Pacifists Provoke War," *The Washington Post*, 24 May 1930.

⁸² "Misinterpreting America," *The Washington Post*, 11 May 1930.

⁸³ "Our Duty to the World," *The National Republic* 18 (1930).

the controversy it had stirred up.⁸⁴ Some members even considered the activities of the internationalist movement treasonous. Congressman George Tinkham of Massachusetts called in 1933 for an investigation of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and other organizations engaged in what he called the “denationalization” of the United States. He specifically referred to Nicholas Murray Butler as “disloyal and seditious,” although he used these adjectives frequently in his speech to discredit almost everything associated with internationalists, whose ideals he labeled as “the poisoned cup from which the American Republic will perish.”⁸⁵

For Tinkham, who received generous applause after his remarks, the internationalists had no object but to entangle the United States in the affairs of Europe. He did not express full understanding of why they sought this goal, but he made clear that at least the Carnegie group seemed to be following the dictates of its founder, Andrew Carnegie, who had been strongly in favor of an Anglo-American rapprochement. Tinkham considered this a union designed to undermine American sovereignty, and insisted that the Carnegie group and its associates must not become the directors of American foreign policy. He asked, “Shall the Congress of the United States and the American people allow its foreign policy to be dictated by \$300,000,000 of Carnegie and Rockefeller money?”⁸⁶

By 1936, one Congressman was so fed up with agitation for international cooperation that he suggested that Washington’s Farewell Address be read in the House of Representatives every day after the Chaplain’s prayer.⁸⁷ The Nye Committee, named for its sponsor and chairman, convened in 1934 under pressure to ascertain the relationship between the munitions industry and the American decision to enter the World War. When the Nye Committee released its findings in 1935 and 1936, it blasted munitions manufacturers as “merchants of death” that had joined international bankers in dragging the United States into the war for pecuniary gain, but internationalists also became caught up in the critique.⁸⁸ Because the committee’s report made

⁸⁴ “World Court Fight in Senate to Wait,” *The Washington Post*, 11 Apr 1930.

⁸⁵ Tinkham’s address in the *Congressional Record* 76, 72nd Congress, 3 Feb 1933, 3336-3339.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ This was Rep. Martin Sweeney, a Democrat from Ohio. See *Congressional Record* 80, 74th Cong., 29 Jan 1936, 1145-1146.

⁸⁸ Jonas, *Isolationism in America*, 142-150.

America's participation in the war seem more unnecessary than ever, the effect was to dampen the already feeble support for international engagement still further.⁸⁹

In many cases, Wilsonians had to accept criticism from their intellectual equals outside the government. The notable historian Charles Beard was one of their most influential and intelligent critics in this category. He believed and taught that the course Americans chose for their country was not based entirely on interests but more on interpretations of history. As an isolationist, Beard suggested that the growing globalism that had characterized American foreign policy thus far in the twentieth century could be discarded in favor of a new vision that placed the United States apart from the world, where with only a small amount of planning the government could employ the nation's vast resources to satisfy the needs of all citizens. To give up isolation "for a mess of pottage in the form of profits on cotton goods, tobacco, petroleum, and automobiles, is to make grand policy subservient to special interests [and] to betray the security of the American nation," he wrote.⁹⁰ The Council on Foreign Relations rebutted his views with an article from Herbert Feis explaining the impracticality of a completely isolationist course of action, but Beard continued throughout the 1930s to be a firm advocate of national autarky.⁹¹

Wallace B. Donham, the dean of the Graduate School of Business Administration at Harvard, was also a tough but intellectually cautious critic of internationalists. He sympathized with their zeal and idealism, but he believed their plan was doomed to failure because it sought to connect American foreign policy too closely with systems of global government that could not be sustained. "A host of intelligent and idealistic men and women, in spite of the disillusionment of the past fifteen years, still believe the only way to prevent another world war is the road of international cooperation leading to gradual creation of a superstate," he said in one address. "I think this is the one sure road to another world war."⁹²

Perhaps the most shocking and damaging criticism, or at least disagreement, came from other internationalists, who for one reason or another denied that the United States was wrong to seek a nationally-based solution to the problems of the Great Depression. An outstanding

⁸⁹ Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century*, 114.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 117. The quote comes from Charles A. Beard, *The Open Door at Home: A Trial Philosophy of National Interest* (New York: Macmillan, 1935).

⁹¹ Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire*, 351-352.

⁹² Wallace B. Donham, Address delivered at the Wharton Alumni Institute, 23 March 1933, in Hodgson, *Economic Nationalism*, 119-148.

example of this defection is Bainbridge Colby, Woodrow Wilson's final Secretary of State and a dyed-in-the-wool Wilsonian on most matters, who objected to the idea that war debts had anything to do with the worldwide economic crisis. He insisted that the sums paid to the United States by the Allies were tiny fractions of their national budgets. He implied that what the Europeans were spending much more of their money on – armaments – was a more likely culprit for the distress. He bitterly accused the Germans of trying to sabotage the reparations system, and the Allies of seeking ever since the Armistice to weasel their way out of repaying their debts.⁹³

Even with this adversity, internationalists could hardly give up their work. Following their expansion and growth in the 1920s into an organized, well-endowed, vibrant intellectual movement, they could not easily abandon the cause they were pursuing. To do so certainly would not have been true to their feelings about the realities of the Great Depression and the way out. If international cooperation had seemed important in the relatively peaceful decade preceding the Crash of 1929, it could only appear even more essential in a distressed world they shared with the likes of Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin. “It is when political or economic conditions become intolerable that most men fight,” said Francis Sayre before the American Academy of Political Science. “War or peace in our time may hang in the balance upon the choice which nations are now making of the economic policy which is to rule the world.”⁹⁴

But there was plenty of reason for internationalists to believe that their efforts thus far were not enough. Nothing they saw suggested that the public was fully on board with their campaign against economic nationalism in foreign policy. Governing officials did not even seem to understand what they were doing by raising tariffs, demanding the prompt payment of hopeless war debts, and openly advocating an America that sought to go it alone in a modern interconnected world. “I have no patented remedy for our economic ills,” Raymond Fosdick wrote frankly in 1931, “but in trying to think our way through the difficulty I should like to call

⁹³ Colby became an outspoken critic of both Democrats and Republicans in the decades after the war. His principal ideas about war debts may be found in an address he made in 1932 to the Academy of Political Science. See Colby, “Should War Debts Be Cancelled?,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 15, no. 1 (May 1932), 65-72. For examples of his other critiques, see “Democratic Policy Ridiculed by Colby,” *New York Times*, 12 Nov 1930, and “Colby Not Helpful on Debt Suspension,” *New York Times*, 9 Jul 1931.

⁹⁴ Sayre, “Menace of Economic Nationalism,” 206.

attention to the obvious fact that we are living in a twentieth century, and not an eighteenth century, industrial world.”⁹⁵

Fosdick represented the movement well in considering the changed circumstances of the 1930s obvious. But as time wore on and Americans chose not to bite the carrot the internationalists were dangling before them, many leaders of the various Wilsonian organizations began to wonder just how obvious what they were saying really was. Their methodology had long rested on a celebration of the public’s capacity for reason once they were given the correct facts. The ideological revolution in the internationalist movement in the 1930s here described was believed to be the change from the more abstract idealism of the 1920s that was chiefly needed, but it appeared that the public required something more in order to see the light. Wilsonian publicists had gone to great lengths to connect their ideas with the realities of everyday life in America and come down from the lofty ideals of their earlier days in order to craft a more pragmatic doctrine, but they still needed to sell it to enough Americans to bring about the change they felt was necessary. Adopting new methods to reach a wider and previously untapped reserve of public interest would therefore become the second dimension of the internationalists’ fundamental transformation during the Depression years, to which we now turn.

⁹⁵ Fosdick, “Implications,” 67.

CHAPTER 5

TAKING ACTION: OLD AND NEW STRATEGIES FOR INFLUENCING AMERICANS

Taking stock of both their achievements and failures in the preceding decade, America's advocates for international cooperation recognized that their campaign against economic nationalism needed to be broadened to reach more Americans than they ever had before. Their problem was perhaps best phrased in a *Washington Post* editorial written just a few days before the Great Crash of 1929. The author criticized the Council on Foreign Relations for being a "thought factory," but took heart in the fact that "once its efforts reach across the Hudson River they strike a stone wall of national inertia."¹ Nicholas Murray Butler partly described the same problem, although in his rhetoric it came across as a positive characteristic of the movement. He celebrated the work of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace as a process of building "invisible institutions of international association, comity, and friendship."²

The only hitch to Butler's elation was that Wilsonians were beginning to believe that their mission no longer permitted their influence to be invisible. Certainly in the years leading up to this point they had been publicists, but they had had a different set of expectations regarding who would take up their ideas and use them. As Butler had put it, the target audience for their work was the business, academic, and government classes, people who liked to *think*. With increasing concern about the economic crisis and much debate over where American public opinion might lead the country in upcoming elections, however, movement leaders began to seek new ways to influence people at all levels of society and in all parts of the country. Henry Wallace underscored the importance of this trend, both as a government official and a Wilsonian: "This time our course must not be decided behind closed doors, either in Washington or on Wall Street. The people must be let in on the problem."³

Opponents of the internationalist agenda were influential in provoking this change. Leaders of the major organizations were not blind to the fact that a number of nationalist groups throughout the country were already focusing their attention on everyday Americans, guiding them toward taking up the banner of isolationism. As one group of officials noted in a funding

¹ "Ready-made Public Opinion," *The Washington Post*, 27 Oct 1929.

² Nicholas Murray Butler, Report of the Director of the Division of Intercourse and Education, *CEIP Year Book*, 1930 ed., 42.

³ Wallace, *America Must Choose*, 3.

request to the Carnegie Endowment, they faced such titanic shapers of public opinion as the radio priest Father Charles Coughlin, the Chemical Foundation, the Hearst newspapers, and a variety of popular magazines, all constantly barraging every level of society with arguments against engaging the international community for any meaningful purposes. “Unlike the past efforts of many organizations interested in international affairs,” they wrote, “the American chauvinists launch their appeal to the man in the street, and the effect is visible in the editorials of the country newspapers.”⁴

World events were not working to the internationalists’ favor either. When the League of Nations failed to stir up any resistance to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, its credibility as an organization plummeted in the reckoning of many Americans. The developments of the 1920s, with the capstone of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, had appeared to make war incredibly unlikely, but the Japanese attack brought these hopes crashing down. There was some hope that the Manchurian problem had created a useful precedent in the Hoover-Stimson Doctrine, the policy applied by President Hoover and his Secretary of State Henry Stimson in which they chose not to recognize any territorial gains acquired through means adverse to the Kellogg-Briand Pact. This was, however, a weak consolation prize.⁵

Despite challenges at home and abroad, there was some hope that Americans were still pliable in their opinions on war debts and the tariff. Alanson B. Houghton, former ambassador to Germany and Great Britain and President of the Academy of Political Science, said as much at a meeting of the Academy in 1932 as he described a trip around the country during which he determined that public opinion had “not yet focused or reached a final decision” on the subject of the war debts.⁶ Newton Baker remarked before the same body in 1935 that even then he still received daily letters and even bound volumes in the mail from citizens who wanted to suggest ideas about how the peace of the world could be maintained.⁷ A poll of American newspaper editors in 1930 revealed that a large number of them found the Smoot-Hawley Tariff injurious to

⁴ Memorandum of the Temporary General Committee on Cooperation to the Trustees of the Carnegie Endowment, 6 Dec 1933, Box 7, Buell Papers.

⁵ Buell, *The World Adrift*, 7-9.

⁶ Alanson B. Houghton, “Reparations and War Debts,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 15, no. 1 (May 1932), 51-52.

⁷ Newton D. Baker, “The Outlook for World Peace,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 16, no. 2 (Jan 1935), 137-147.

America's foreign trade and incongruent with the interests of the population.⁸ These signs kept internationalists hopeful that they could still capture the attention of the public and educate them on the virtues of an internationalist economic policy.

Early Depression-era efforts were mostly comprised of old tactics reconfigured for a broader audience and a new emphasis on economic nationalism as the primary obstacle to worldwide cooperation. The book, pamphlet, study guide, and syllabus had long been tools of the various Wilsonian associations for guiding interested scholars and discussion groups toward a better understanding of world affairs. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace led the way in providing these materials, especially to educational institutions. Since the 1920s the Endowment had operated a program known as the "International Mind Alcoves" in public libraries in small towns across the country. Practically a captive audience owing to their often tiny budgets, librarians in these institutions would receive shipments of books from the Endowment free of charge several times each year. The Endowment stipulated that the books had to be kept in their own special section identified by a placard of some sort. Divided into adult and junior sections, the materials dealt mainly with foreign cultures and contemporary world problems, in hopes that readers would become more aware of the world outside America and sympathize with internationalist policies.

While most of the books the Endowment sent during the Depression continued to follow the theme of introducing readers to the ways of distant peoples, a few Depression-inspired titles began to appear in the adult sections as the financial crisis worsened. Whereas in 1929 the major political books the Alcoves received were John Spencer Bassett's *The League of Nations* and James T. Shotwell's *War as an Instrument of National Policy*, by 1933 the Endowment was passing along copies of *Dollars and Sense* and *Will They Pay?*, both centered on the economic crisis. The next year brought Butler's own *Between Two Worlds* and Wildon Lloyd's *European War Debts and their Settlement*, both even more directed at internationalist solutions to crucial economic problems.⁹

⁸ William O. Scroggs, "Revolt Against the Tariff," *North American Review* 230, no. 1 (Jul 1930), 18-24. Surveys in this era were largely unscientific by today's standards, but this one at least made an attempt at a good representative sample. The article does not list all of the newspapers used in the survey, but in describing the responses of the several regions of the United States it becomes clear that the sample included both large and small population centers in all parts of the country.

⁹ Nicholas Murray Butler, "Annual Report of the Director of the Division of Intercourse and Education," 1 May 1934 in *CEIP Year Book*, 1934 ed., 57-59. A similar report appears in the 1935 edition under the same title; see pp. 53-55.

The books seem to have been selected for their straightforward approach to the complexities of the debt, gold, and tariff issues. In the foreword to *Will They Pay?*, author Dorsey Richardson wrote that he had taken care to “discuss the problem in a way that will make it palatable to the layman.”¹⁰ By putting them in the hands of small-town Americans, the Carnegie Endowment hoped to get its message out to areas where it was otherwise unable to reach. If librarians’ letters to the Endowment can be relied on as a guide, the program was incredibly successful, as many of them reported that the books in both the juvenile and adult sections were frequently used.¹¹

The Carnegie Endowment had another existing program that was widely useful in disseminating information about the Depression in the nation’s universities. It had long been a tradition of the organization to reach college-age students by providing educational materials, and in the late 1920s and early 1930s the Endowment stepped up its efforts to foster the study of international affairs among young scholars.¹² Butler reiterated his commitment to forging this relationship in 1931 in a speech before an academic audience, in which he insisted that it was the duty of the university to instill and cultivate the international mind in students.¹³ The Carnegie Endowment assisted this process by sponsoring International Relations clubs at high schools and colleges around the country. The students met periodically to discuss world affairs using information from the news, as well as reading materials and study guides provided by the Endowment. As the program progressed, the organization added regional and national conferences to accommodate the amount of interest in carrying it farther, and by 1935 the Endowment was even sponsoring clubs in several foreign countries.

As had been the case with the International Mind Alcoves, these clubs also began to receive materials with a strong internationalist bent on global financial issues as the Depression deepened. While books and pamphlets released to the clubs before the Crash of 1929 had focused mainly on the League of Nations, World Court, and inter-American relations, starting in the fall of 1930 the Endowment passed along such books as *The World’s Economic Dilemma* by

¹⁰ Dorsey Richardson, *Will They Pay?: A Primer of the War Debts* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1933), foreword.

¹¹ Each of Nicholas Murray Butler’s reports as Director of the Division of Intercourse and Education includes a report of which books were sent out to the Alcoves, as well as some sample letters from the libraries that received them.

¹² Divine, *Second Chance*, 21.

¹³ Address delivered at Charles University, Prague, Czechoslovakia, 25 Jun 1931 in Butler, *Looking Forward*, 287-290.

Ernest Minor Patterson and Herman Arendtz's *The Way Out of Depression*.¹⁴ In distributing these materials, the Carnegie leaders hoped to keep the issue fresh in the minds of university men and women, who would presumably take up leadership positions in society upon graduating.

These efforts by the Carnegie Endowment were important, as were the similar measures employed by other internationalist organizations during the same period, but the problem with the existing programs was that these venues largely allowed the organization to preach to the converted. It was not university-educated professionals, academics, or businessmen whom they needed to reach most. They needed to convince farmers, laborers, people living in small towns, people who perhaps had never seen the inside of a lecture hall or never even finished high school. In short, they needed voters, of which there was a variety.

Consequently, some organizations prepared to adopt entirely new strategies for getting their message out to a larger cohort of Americans. The Foreign Policy Association, for example, set out to expand its program into a nation-wide network of public education. In February 1932, Raymond Buell, at that time Research Director of the organization, had a meeting with Stanley High, who was a well-connected associate of the *Christian Herald*. Knowing that High was familiar with several wealthy philanthropists, Buell talked over the possibility of developing a national education campaign to further the internationalist cause. Buell suggested to High that he make a survey of a "typical state" like Kansas or Iowa, and then figure out the financial and methodological details for implementing the plan. Buell believed that the combination of High's "great imagination, flare [sic] for publicity and driving power," as well as his contacts with "popular groups," would give the Foreign Policy Association a leg up in roping in everyday Americans, something their luncheon meeting system and limited number of branches did not permit.¹⁵

Buell also engaged William H. Baldwin, the head of a publicity firm, about employing "organized methods of publicity" to make the country more internationally minded. Specifically, Buell asked him if the Foreign Policy Association could effectively use \$10,000 per annum for the purpose, and if it would be better for the organization to hire someone to do the work or use a

¹⁴ Information on the International Relations clubs can be found in Butler's annual report as Director of the Division of Intercourse and Education in each edition of the *CEIP Year Book* for the years under consideration.

¹⁵ As of 1934 the Foreign Policy Association only had seventeen full branches, all in fairly large cities such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Buffalo, and Providence. Their smallest branches were likely in Utica and St. Paul, but even these are in larger cities. The membership was still limited almost exclusively to middle- and upper-class educated whites. See Ware, *Study of International Relations*, 347-350. Buell's meeting with High is explained in detail in a memorandum dated 29 Feb 1932 in Box 41, Buell Papers.

contractor. Baldwin, perhaps looking out for his own fortunes, suggested the latter course, although to be fair he made an excellent point that the contacts of a publicity firm would likely be more extensive than those of the Foreign Policy Association.¹⁶

Several internationalist organizations attempted to increase their influence by either funding or cooperating with other groups interested in similar problems of international affairs. In some cases, this was a survival technique rather than an effort to expand, something that will be discussed in the next chapter. Some partnerships came about, however, because internationalists realized that where they lacked a clear line of communication with the voting public other organizations did much better. Pacifist groups, then, became convenient partners. While Wilsonians commanded a great deal of money and contacts within the foreign policy establishment in Washington, pacifists remained closer to the people because of their message's universal appeal and simplicity. Each group had something to offer the other, and as a result the leaders of both would stay in close contact throughout the Depression.¹⁷ The same connection existed between the larger internationalist organizations and smaller bodies interested in specific or regional topics.

The Carnegie Endowment was the master of utilizing these opportunities, simply because it was sufficiently funded for the task. In fiscal year 1933 alone, the Endowment granted \$2,000 to the National World Court Committee, \$5,000 toward an "Institute on Public Affairs" at the University of Georgia, \$2,500 each to the Indiana Council on International Relations and the Pacific Institute of International Relations, and a number of other grants for other groups. The Endowment did not hand out this money freely – the organizations it chose to bankroll usually were either already using its literature in some way or were at least following its lead in terms of policy on international cooperation.¹⁸

The Foreign Policy Association, while not as well-funded, also found ways to maintain a close relationship with popular groups. In December 1933 it received a request from the National Committee on the Cause and Cure of War for reading material it could distribute to their members, since the Depression had sapped its ability to provide it themselves. Raymond

¹⁶ Buell memorandum, 29 Feb 1932 in Box 41, Buell Papers.

¹⁷ An additional illustration of the closer connection between pacifist organizations and the public may be seen in the activities of the National Council for the Prevention of War, which in 1932 was sending literature to 125,000 individuals and 2,500 newspaper editors. See Chatfield, *American Peace Movement*, 58 and Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism*, 112-113.

¹⁸ See *CEIP Year Book*, 1933 ed., passim.

Buell took this golden opportunity to select several pamphlets that would not only serve the needs of the Committee, but also promote economic cooperation among a crowd he could not normally reach.¹⁹ The Committee represented several women's organizations, each of which sent delegates annually to a central meeting where leaders would share information and resources that the delegates could take back to their communities. Associated with this group were the National Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Women's Christian Temperance Union, the National League of Women Voters, the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association, and several others. This was an enormous boost to the readership of the Foreign Policy Association's publications, and the women's groups who accepted them gained something in the process.²⁰

The Foreign Policy Association also allowed smaller organizations to join its network of information, speakers, and literature through the Foreign Policy Association Affiliates program. Starting in 1934, small local groups not populated well enough to become a branch but interested enough to pay a ten dollar fee could become an affiliated association. Such entities would receive series of publications from the Foreign Policy Association, study materials, and suggestions for speakers and topics to discuss. The goal of this program was to expand the influence of the central organization without overextending its resources.²¹

Because the internationalist movement was still firmly entrenched in the northeast, part of the expansion effort had to be geographical. The Carnegie Endowment's bankrolling of smaller groups in the Pacific Northwest, the Midwest, and the South were a big part of this. The Foreign Policy Association did its part by hosting study groups in the South that attempted to point up connections between the success of uniquely southern economic enterprises and a general reduction of economic nationalism in American foreign policy.²² The World Peace Foundation, whose work was more literature-oriented, contributed a pamphlet entitled "What Economic Nationalism Means to the South," which it distributed among various organizations.²³ The increasing popularity of radio also played a pivotal role in getting the internationalist message into everyday homes, as leaders of both organizations often addressed the public over

¹⁹ One of the pamphlets was Henry A. Wallace's *America Must Choose*. See Raymond Buell to William T. Stone, 29 Dec 1933 in Box 42, Buell Papers.

²⁰ A more complete description of the Committee's activities and a full list of the organizations represented on it as of 1934 can be found in Ware, *Study of International Relations*, 354-355.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 349.

²² Abbott, "From Versailles to Munich," 95.

²³ Ernest Bryan to Adolph Berle, 8 Sept 1934 in Box 2, Buell Papers.

national networks.²⁴ Although these channels did not permit the movement's leaders to have as close a relationship with their patrons outside the Northeast as they already had with those within, at least there was a structure in place for disseminating ideas and reacting to events in Washington.

In a few cases, entirely new organizations sprung up to address the peculiarly economic problems of 1930s international relations. The most prominent example of this was the "National Economic League," a collection of economists and business leaders and other heavyweights who wanted to create "an informed and disinterested leadership for public opinion ... representing the best thought of this country," specifically on economic questions. Charles G. Dawes of Dawes Plan fame, was on the executive council of the new entity, along with Nicholas Murray Butler, prominent businessman and national Chamber of Commerce leader Silas Strawn, former Illinois governor Frank Lowden, long-time president of Harvard University A. Lawrence Lowell, and others.²⁵

This League developed a series of special committees that studied economic questions and then polled the expert members of the organization to get their thoughts. The results went into a publication along with commentary. In terms of its effectiveness in influencing opinion, the League was hamstrung by the unfamiliarity of the public with many of the "experts" it consulted, as well as the ambiguity of the results. In January 1932, for instance, the group polled its members on whether to cancel, cut, delay, or maintain the existing intergovernmental war debts. Fourteen percent of the members polled voted for cancellation, 32% for cutting the amount to be repaid, and 41% for delay. This was hardly the clear voice for sanity that the internationalists were looking for, but it helped to show the public that publicists were not the only people asking for a more cooperative policy. The organization's polls on the tariff in the same month were more decisive – 75% favored lowering the duties imposed on imports.²⁶

Designing programs to educate a public that was largely unfamiliar with the workings of foreign policy was difficult, but knowing the limits of what they could do and when to stop pushing was also a difficult task for the organizations that attempted to bring more and more

²⁴ The Foreign Policy Association often broadcast its luncheon meetings, and its chairman, James G. McDonald, gave weekly radio talks on prescient international topics. Nicholas Murray Butler made annual Armistice Day speeches, usually in conjunction with several leaders from around the world. See Ware, *Study of International Relations*, 348 and "War Menace Seen by World Leaders," *New York Times*, 12 Nov 1935.

²⁵ J.W. Beatson to William E. Dodd, 10 Jun 1932, Box 3, Dodd Papers.

²⁶ "Leaders Ask Action on Debts and Tariff," *New York Times*, 4 Jan 1932.

Americans into the internationalist movement. Although part of the methodological revolution the movement experienced in the 1930s involved turning away from the blind faith that the public could employ reason to properly interpret good facts, Wilsonian leaders recognized that they would be no more successful in ramming their agenda down the public's throat. Henry Wallace put it best when he admitted that although internationalism was "an inborn attitude" for him, he insisted that people had to recognize that the world was "ablaze with nationalist feeling," and the public could not be expected to move toward a more cooperative course very quickly.²⁷ Edward Filene, a Boston businessman and generous philanthropist, put it best in a speech before the National Student Federation of America in 1934. "Nobody," he said, "not even your professors, can be wise enough to tell you *what* to think, and [you must understand] that what we need now for human progress is to learn *how* to think."²⁸ Smaller local organizations also began to show signs that the general population had a limited tolerance for constant internationalist agitation. In the late summer of 1933, for example, Foreign Policy Association officials who were in charge of keeping in touch with the branches began to note that members were asking for more domestically-oriented topics, and that the meetings needed to be "vitalized" somehow.²⁹

Walking the line between adhering to their mission and doing what was necessary to hold onto their valuable everyday American members was a tough task for the internationalists. On the one hand, they did not want to lend much credence to the idea that the Depression was a domestic issue and could be discussed without reference to global forces, but they also had to consider that many of their newest followers were dealing with economic distress that affected their lives on a daily basis – they would want to pursue whatever courses of action seemed likely to achieve results fast. The solution was compromise. In the case of the Foreign Policy Association, this meant allowing for meeting topics that would appeal to members who were interested in exploring domestic dimensions of the Depression, yet would still point toward the international character of the crisis also. Examples suggested by Esther Ogden, the organization's secretary, included "The Plight of the Farmer," "Sugar's Acid Reaction on Foreign Relations," and the National Recovery Act. Ogden considered these topics to be

²⁷ Wallace, *America Must Choose*, 2.

²⁸ Address before the Tenth Annual Congress of the National Student Federation of America, 29 Dec 1934 in Edward A. Filene, *Speaking of Change: A Selection of Speeches and Articles* (New York: Former Associates of Edward A. Filene, 1939), 75.

²⁹ Esther Ogden to Raymond Buell, 17 Aug 1933 in Box 42, Buell Papers.

“frivolous,” but given what she was learning from the various branches, the choice was to be flexible or lose the interest of the members.³⁰

This became particularly important for small fledgling groups the Foreign Policy Association was establishing in the South during this time. Staff members on the scene reported that discussion groups they set up were tilting too far toward only discussing domestic aspects of the Depression. Raymond Buell sympathized, but explained that “to enlist the support of the type of people we wanted” it would be necessary to make the issues under discussion “as vital and realistic as possible.” His hope was that as the Foreign Policy Association staff presented information before the southern groups they would come to understand the relationship between the southern economy and the availability of foreign markets. They would then, for reasons of enlightened self-interest, seek representatives who supported a more internationally-minded economic policy for the United States.³¹

Local interest in strictly domestic issues continued, even in these study groups acting under the auspices of an internationalist organization. By the fall of 1934, Raymond Buell began to wonder whether it might be more productive to change the character of the Foreign Policy Association itself to make it more relevant for the public. In October, he distributed a memorandum proposing an expansion of the organization that would transform it into a “public” policy association instead of one solely interested in foreign affairs. That such a prominent leader in such a strong bastion of the internationalist movement would even consider such a move necessary is very telling of the challenges Wilsonians faced in the Great Depression. He wrote that “perhaps the outstanding reason why so little progress has been made during the past fifteen years toward international cooperation has been the failure of governments and public opinion to see the intimate relationship between international and domestic policies.”³²

As unusual and drastic as this might seem in light of the confident fervor of the movement seen thus far in this study, Buell was being entirely practical in making this suggestion. In his calculations, the Foreign Policy Association could easily take on the task of researching domestic questions, which would meet a supposedly unfulfilled need, offer the opportunity for the research staff to weave international affairs into discussions on “domestic”

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Raymond Buell letter, 4 Dec 1934 in Box 5, Buell Papers.

³² Raymond L. Buell, “Proposal to Expand the Scope of the Foreign Policy Association,” 23 Oct 1934 in Box 42, Buell Papers.

matters, and widen the base of donors from which the organization could benefit. “So long as the Foreign Policy Association restricts its activities to its present basis,” he wrote, “it may be admired by a few devoted internationalists and cultured people, but it will in my judgment remain little more than a side-show . . . on the American stage.”³³

Although Buell’s words indicate that internationalists at the highest and best-endowed levels were afraid for the survival of their movement, this feeling cannot be understood as disillusion alone. It also drove these same organizations to reorient their efforts in a direction the public was willing to go. By periodically considering what had to be done to cultivate a wider public audience for their ideas, Wilsonian leaders avoided both a backslide into abstract idealism and a decline into complete irrelevance in the face of the national crisis.

This was also apparent in their relations with government leaders. At the same time that they were trying to corral more of the public into the internationalist camp, they worked on strengthening the connections they had with members of Congress and leaders in the executive branch. While Congress and the Depression-era administrations failed to consistently act on the advice they received from members of the movement, Wilsonians continued to believe that the United States government had the power to alleviate, if not eradicate, the worldwide economic slump. “The Senate,” said Nicholas Murray Butler in 1931 in one instructive example, “is in a position to play or refuse to play a commanding part in leading the world out of the slough of despond into which it has been plunged.”³⁴

Courting Senators and State Department officials and presidents as allies, however, would be different than what it had been in the past. As the United States entered the Depression, Wilsonians were on record as advocates for widely popular measures such as disarmament proposals and the Kellogg-Briand Pact, but they also had a history of promulgating the League of Nations and the World Court. These latter two issues inflamed such passions upon a mere mention in Congress that it became clear to Wilsonians that whatever they attempted to sell lawmakers as potential solutions to the Depression had to exist outside these venues as much as possible. Furthermore, the effort would have to stay bipartisan. Although the internationalists generally backed the Democrats in the presidential election of 1932, for example, this did not

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ “Senate Can Relieve Slump,” *New York Times*, 28 May 1931.

mean that they felt confident that the Democratic Party was a monolithic bastion of cooperation. Economic nationalism was widespread on both sides of the aisle, as Henry Wallace explained.³⁵

Movement leaders despaired over their inability to get very far with Hoover administration. They were pleased with the debt moratorium, but the good feelings gave way to dismay when Secretary of State Henry Stimson announced during the Lausanne Conference of 1932 that the United States would not alter its position on the intergovernmental war debts.³⁶ William T. Stone of the Foreign Policy Association complained bitterly that up until 1932, Hoover had been able to blame Congress for dragging its feet on international issues, but now when Congress was perhaps being more pliable the administration was holding back because it was an election year. In fact, Stone had it on very good authority that Hoover was trying to get the war debts question completely moved off the Republican platform, and that the administration would reject any downward revision of the tariff suggested at the World Economic Conference that was to take place the next year, even if Congress authorized it.³⁷

Faced with this sort of behavior from the incumbent administration, Wilsonians pegged their hopes to electing one of their own in 1932. The potential candidacy of Newton Diehl Baker of Ohio for the Democratic Party offered them the opportunity to elect someone who not only spoke their language, but was a full-fledged leader in the movement. Baker had been Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of War, despite his self-proclaimed pacifist leanings, and he emerged from the war with some political credit for having handled the job as well as might have been expected considering the enormity and unusual nature of the task.³⁸ He had avoided public office in the 1920s, but continued to advocate the United States' entry into both the League of Nations and the World Court. At least part of his fervor for the fundamental Wilsonian program seems to have stemmed from his personal sense of commitment to Wilson, whose idealism and vigor he admired. He was believed to have made a promise to Wilson as the former President lay dying that he would never again make a public speech without adding in a plug for the League.³⁹ Baker expressed frustration with the Democrats of the late 1920s and early 1930s for

³⁵ Wallace, *America Must Choose*, 10.

³⁶ The United States was not an official participant of the conference.

³⁷ William T. Stone headed the Washington Bureau for the Foreign Policy Association, and often was able to offer insight such as this on the modes of thinking in the government. See Stone to Raymond Buell, 10 Jun 1932 in Box 41, Buell Papers.

³⁸ Steve Neal, *Happy Days Are Here Again: The 1932 Democratic Convention, the Emergence of FDR, and How America Was Changed Forever* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 65-79.

³⁹ Cramer, *Newton D. Baker*, 209-210.

abandoning the vision of their former leader, and continued to fight for international cooperation, including on economic issues.⁴⁰ These Wilsonian credentials made Baker appealing to movement leaders of the late Hoover period, who were excitedly looking forward to the 1932 election, when they believed the Democrats had an excellent shot at winning the presidency. A number of these internationalists also favored Franklin Roosevelt of New York, although his attitude toward international cooperation seemed markedly cooler as the campaign approached.⁴¹

As the Democrats geared up for their convention in Chicago in 1932, three candidates stood out as the most likely potential nominees, provided they could take control of the majority quickly. These were John Nance Garner of Texas, Speaker of the House at that time and supported by William Randolph Hearst, Al Smith of New York, who had been the unsuccessful Democratic nominee in 1928, and Roosevelt. Complex considerations surrounding the Depression, Prohibition, labor, and other crucial domestic questions militated against an easy victory for anyone, even Roosevelt, and after three ballots the convention appeared to be in a deadlock.

A number of Democrats had seen this coming, and in hopes of avoiding the debacle the party experienced at its Madison Square Gardens convention in 1924, they had already thought about what “dark horse” candidates might be available to avert disaster. Newton Baker was at the top of the list for many party officials and observers, especially internationalists.⁴² His supporters argued that the Democratic Party needed a leader who could command bipartisan support in the next administration, and Baker had all the right qualifications. Having not been in office since the Wilson administration and having been constructively critical of both parties at different times distanced Baker from the bitter politics over the Depression and Prohibition that had been swirling for the past few years. Even Nicholas Murray Butler, a Republican, endorsed Baker as much as he could by approving of his statements on questions concerning the League and other international matters. “Mr. Baker is right,” he said in response to one such

⁴⁰ “Baker Urges Allies and United States to Erase War Debts,” *New York Times*, 30 Aug 1926.

⁴¹ Whereas during the 1920s, Roosevelt had been a staunch advocate of United States cooperation and membership in the League, he began to back off from this position in the late 1920s, and he went very silent on the issue after the League failed to act effectively against the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. See Dallek, *Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 18-20; Josephson, *James T. Shotwell*, 202-203, and Divine, *Second Chance*, 25.

⁴² Walter Lippmann, James T. Shotwell, Adolph Berle, and Norman Davis were among Baker’s biggest supporters, and they were all major leaders in the internationalist movement. See Cramer, *Newton D. Baker*, 238.

pronouncement, “Keep these matters out of politics. Educate public opinion and hope for the best.”⁴³

The problem was that Newton Baker would not lift a finger to take control of his own candidacy for the nomination. He does seem to have taken a few steps toward forming a personal platform and keeping an eye on the activities of the other potential nominees, but for the most part he held aloof from the fray.⁴⁴ Norman Davis was speaking for many internationalists when he wrote Baker as the convention approached, hoping to stiffen his backbone: “I cannot abandon the conviction that our only hope is through you ... I somehow have the feeling that it is your duty to take the lead yourself.”⁴⁵

As late as the convention itself, internationalists urged Baker to be ready to fight for and accept the nomination if something like the 1924 fiasco happened again, but it was not to be. Thanks to some horse-trading between the Garner and Roosevelt camps following the third ballot, the nomination went to Roosevelt.⁴⁶ This would be the last time that the activist internationalist wing of the Democratic Party made such a pronounced appearance in a nomination convention, although the movement’s leaders would continue to work with nominees and incumbents.⁴⁷

In the months after the 1932 Democratic convention, that meant supporting Franklin Roosevelt. While many internationalists were still disappointed that FDR had become much quieter on international topics, they widely clung to the idea that this silence was an act of political expediency that would pass once he was elected. Roosevelt and his entourage also seemed to have a great deal of trust in the internationalist heavyweights, as he occasionally called on them for their advice, and listened patiently when various leaders approached him with

⁴³ “Baker League View Wins Wide Acclaim,” *New York Times*, 28 Jan 1932.

⁴⁴ Examples of this behavior include Baker asking Norman Davis to draw up a foreign policy plank for his personal platform, as well as commenting in letters to Davis about the division between the Smith and Roosevelt camps. He also seemed amused or relieved that Governor Harry Byrd – another potential dark horse – lost some of his support as a result of an impolitic speech that made him sound amenable to revising Prohibition. See Newton Baker to Norman Davis, 18 Apr 1932 and Norman Davis to Newton Baker, 16 Jun 1932, Box 3, Davis Papers. Baker also announced in 1932 that he did not believe the United States should enter the League of Nations without the unquestionable approval of public opinion. Detractors howled that this was an act of political expediency, but Baker’s supporters saw it as a necessary sacrifice for making his candidacy legitimate and realistic. See “Mr. Baker’s League Views,” *New York Times*, 27 Jan 1932, and “Tumulty Assails League Deserters,” *New York Times*, 18 Feb 1932.

⁴⁵ Norman Davis to Newton Baker, 7 Apr 1932 in Box 3, Davis Papers.

⁴⁶ Steve Neal’s outstanding account of the convention traces these developments fully. See Neal, *Happy Days Are Here Again*, passim. Some additional details may be found in William E. Dodd to Newton Baker, 24 Jun 1932, Box 39, Dodd Papers.

⁴⁷ Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism*, 118-121.

ideas about how to reshape American foreign policy. It is tempting to remember in these cases what a number of historians have said about Roosevelt during this time – that he often told each of his advisers and visitors what they wanted to hear in order to avoid committing himself to a single position – but it remains true that during the campaign the Roosevelt camp received assistance from the internationalist movement.

Most of the organizations themselves were prohibited by their nonpartisan character from officially endorsing either Roosevelt or Hoover, but key leaders were better able to choose favorites when acting as individuals. Upon the request of Professor Raymond Moley, a member of Roosevelt’s so-called “Brain Trust,” Raymond Buell corresponded with the Governor about the League of Nations question.⁴⁸ He also prepared a memorandum on the relationship between the Depression and international affairs. Straining to cram as much of the pure internationalist viewpoint into the document as possible, Buell expounded on every aspect of this connection, including the specter of Communism or Fascism if the system could not be repaired.⁴⁹ William T. Stone reviewed foreign policy literature for Democrats who planned to use them in conjunction with speeches during the campaign.⁵⁰ Newton D. Baker, who in his aloof approach to the nomination process had expressed contentment at not being in the race, made a number of speeches for Roosevelt and also communicated with Raymond Moley on international matters.⁵¹ Nicholas Murray Butler was caught in an odd position as a Republican who abhorred Hoover’s foreign policy but could not openly favor Roosevelt, but he offered weak praise for the Governor wherever possible, and took several opportunities to draw attention to Hoover’s shortcomings.⁵² Altogether, the internationalists formed an important part of the support network that would assist Roosevelt to victory in November.

Once Roosevelt won the election and the Democrats began to prepare to take office in Washington the following March, Wilsonian leaders continued to advise the forming administration on how it might address the international aspects of the Depression in order to bring about its conclusion. They believed that having a Democrat in the White House was a sure sign of a new direction in American foreign policy. William H. Castle, an internationalist and

⁴⁸ Esther Ogden to Raymond Buell, 4 Aug 1932 in Box 41, Buell Papers, and Raymond Moley to Raymond Buell, 2 Aug 1932 in Box 43, Buell Papers.

⁴⁹ Buell memorandum, Sept 1932 in Box 42, Buell Papers.

⁵⁰ William Stone to Raymond Buell, 2 Sept 1932 in Box 41, Buell Papers.

⁵¹ Cramer, *Newton D. Baker*, 256-257.

⁵² Rosenthal, *Nicholas Miraculous*, 417-419. See also “Butler Says Parties Evade Vital Issues,” *New York Times*, 29 Sept 1932.

career State Department official, wrote that Roosevelt's election had been a revolution against the Depression carried out at the ballot box.⁵³ In congratulating the president-elect on his victory, Raymond Buell declared that the Democrats now had an opportunity to "reconstruct this country," and given Buell's previous advice to the Roosevelt campaign it is fairly easy to guess what vision he had for this renewed strategy.⁵⁴

Internationalists had some reason to grumble about the new President's domestically-oriented New Deal program, but they remained pleased that he exercised some level of restraint in pressing his national recovery agenda. Given the conditions in other countries where nationally-based solutions to the Depression were being tried, Roosevelt's New Deal was hardly as "bad" as it might have been from the Wilsonian perspective.⁵⁵ They continued to submit ideas and memoranda on various aspects of the administration's foreign policy, especially the World Economic Conference that took place just a few months after Roosevelt moved into the White House. The Social Science Research Council's Commission of Inquiry on International Economic Relations was undertaken with the President's personal approval, and its members' suggestions included steps the executive branch could take to alleviate financial distress along internationalist lines.⁵⁶

Wilsonians also found willing listeners in the new Cabinet. Henry A. Wallace, Roosevelt's Secretary of Agriculture, proved to be one of the most mutually beneficial contacts the internationalist movement had in the administration. Wallace was strongly in favor of tariff revision and reaching some form of agreement with European countries on the war debts question, and these attitudes figured prominently in literature that he produced and permitted the internationalist movement to propagate. His crowning achievement in this vein was *America Must Choose*, the brief but well-argued pamphlet in which he discussed America's several options for the future of its economic policy. The Foreign Policy Association and World Peace Foundation jointly published the pamphlet and distributed thousands of copies around the globe. With this publicity, Wallace's ideas became the subject of debates worldwide and served as a principal textbook for groups interested in trade policy.⁵⁷

⁵³ William Castle to Norman Davis, 16 Nov 1932 in Box 8, Davis Papers.

⁵⁴ Raymond Buell to Franklin Roosevelt, 11 Nov 1932 in Box 42, Buell Papers.

⁵⁵ Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism*, 120-122.

⁵⁶ Commission of Inquiry into National Policy in International Economic Relations, "Report," passim.

⁵⁷ Wallace, *America Must Choose*, passim.

By necessity, as well as intellectual sympathy, the internationalists remained even closer to Cordell Hull, Roosevelt's Secretary of State. Hull was widely recognized as a champion of free trade by internationalists and eminent foreign officials alike, and they often consulted him on the subject.⁵⁸ He believed that reducing international trade barriers was the key to peaceful international relations, and promoted policies that furthered this cause. He had lauded the Hoover moratorium of 1931, but insisted that it was only a first step, best followed up by a "broad and constructive program of national and international policies dealing with the causes of the depression."⁵⁹ Once in office, he used his influence to guide the Democratic Party in this direction, even though his attitudes occasionally clashed with Roosevelt's more domestically-based objectives in the New Deal.⁶⁰

Internationalists took full advantage of Hull's presence in the State Department by directing many of their suggestions to his attention. On the way home from the World Economic Conference in 1933, for example, James T. Shotwell and Hull traveled on the same ship and had the opportunity to discuss a proposal Shotwell had been devising to revise the tariff based on labor standards in industry. By tying the eligibility of a given industry for tariff protection to the way in which it treated its workers, Shotwell believed the government could eradicate unnecessarily high tariffs and encourage more efficiency in manufacturing in the same stroke. Hull had Shotwell formally draw up the plan and submit it to the State Department for review. The Roosevelt administration did not adopt the specific plan Shotwell proposed, but he continued to work with members of the administration and eventually played a role in getting the United States into the International Labor Organization in 1934, a move which would put the country into a position to achieve some of the same objectives through an international venue.⁶¹

Raymond Buell and Francis Miller of the Foreign Policy Association used the same approach to proffer ideas about an overhaul of American trade policy in November 1934. They

⁵⁸ Hull received scores of letters from a variety of people on international trade topics. The letters that best demonstrate the similarity of principle that internationalists saw between Hull and themselves include several from members of foreign trade organizations and local internationalist groups. See G. Facci to Cordell Hull, 11 Dec 1931 in Box 8, Hull Papers and Frank Mohler to Cordell Hull in Box 8, Hull Papers.

⁵⁹ Hull Press Statement, 23 Jul 1931 in Box 8, Hull Papers.

⁶⁰ Elliot Rosen has recently written a comprehensive narrative on President Roosevelt and the political debates surrounding the New Deal, including during the campaign of 1932. This is when the difference of opinion between Roosevelt and Hull on the permissibility of higher tariffs comes through the strongest, as Rosen indicates. See Rosen, *Roosevelt, the Great Depression, and the Economics of Recovery* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 23-25.

⁶¹ Josephson, *James T. Shotwell*, 205-207.

secured a meeting with Assistant Secretary of State John Bassett Moore to discuss their plan, which involved a sort of “World New Deal” in which the United States would reduce tariffs, assist other countries in stabilizing the values of their currencies, cancel the intergovernmental war debts, and participate in a worldwide consultative body that could monitor economic relations and oversee an international public works program that would jumpstart global spending. Moore liked the idea enough to bring Hull in on the discussion, whereupon the Secretary asked Buell and Miller to draw up a “real program” for international trade relations and submit it for review. As with Shotwell’s idea, the “World New Deal” did not come off, but Hull’s interest in the matter reveals that he was willing to accept input from internationalists outside the government.⁶² Moreover, accepting memoranda from internationalists like Harvard professor William Y. Elliott, who had numerous international contacts, carried the added bonus of providing an additional dimension of opinion about America’s options regarding foreign trade policy.⁶³ The spirit of these ideas showed up in some of Hull’s own programs, namely the Reciprocal Trade Agreements program he fought for in Roosevelt’s first term. Wilsonians reserved their most emphatic commendation for this policy, which they saw as an undeniable triumph of their work.⁶⁴

While private internationalists had been the ones to initiate these exchanges of ideas, Hull and his State Department associates sometimes were the ones to call on the outside experts for information and assistance. In November 1934, for example, officials from the State and Agriculture departments and the Tariff Commission considered the idea of launching a radio campaign to educate the American people about the question of trade policy. They chose not to go through with the plan because State Department leaders recognized that an election year was not the opportune moment for making strong gestures in any particular direction while war debts

⁶² Several versions of the final memorandum to Hull are included in the Raymond Buell Papers at the Library of Congress Manuscript Division. In 1962, a researcher or perhaps a State Department official identifying himself only as “FDB” reviewed the series of memoranda and generated a summary of the transactions between Buell and the State Department entitled “Biography of an Idea.” Both the memorandum, dated 20 Nov 1934, and a copy of “Biography of an Idea,” dated March 1962, are located in Box 42, Buell Papers.

⁶³ Elliott, a Professor of Government at Harvard, focused on the war debts in his memorandum, taking great pains to explain why they must be reduced or canceled. He submitted his ideas to Hull in a package with reactions to the document from several Canadian and British officials, who added their comments. See Elliott to Hull, 25 Feb 1933, Box 8, Hull Papers, along with enclosures.

⁶⁴ Warren Kuehl and Lynn Dunn have pointed out that internationalists would ultimately be disheartened by the Reciprocal Trade Agreements program because it was unevenly administered and did not bring down the mutual distrust that was governing worldwide trade policies. See Kuehl and Dunn, *Seeking World Order*, 160-161. See Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism*, 122-124 for more on their initial satisfaction with the program.

and tariffs were still such inflammatory subjects. These same officials, however, approached William Stone of the Foreign Policy Association about carrying out the program, since the FPA was an independent organization and its pronouncements would not be so closely linked with the government.⁶⁵

By serving as unofficial advisers to the Roosevelt administration on concrete economic matters, internationalists provided leadership in a way they had not widely done before. The connections they enjoyed with personnel in the State Department and other sections of the government ensured that they would remain close to the heartbeat of foreign policy, and they stood ready to apply their data and ideas whenever they were asked. Combined with the new focus on geographic diversity and tactics for reaching a wider swath of the population in their public education efforts, these changes marked an important watershed in the conduct of the movement. Wilsonianism was still based on ideals, but because of the circumstances of the Depression, its practitioners learned to focus their energies on practical methods for working with government and citizens on practical solutions to real problems.

Although these new trends definitely were improvements over the more aloof policies of the 1920s, expansion and change required money, something that the internationalists found in short supply during the Depression. Reorganizing the movement to better serve the requirements of the situation while attracting a wider base for support would not come cheaply, and finding the means to continue the work became one of the movement's greatest challenges as the crisis wore on.

⁶⁵ William Stone discussed this proposal and shared a related memorandum with his colleague Raymond L. Buell in Stone to Buell, 1 Nov 1934 in Box 42, Buell Papers.

CHAPTER 6

MONEY, MEMBERS, AND MERGERS: SURVIVING THE DEPRESSION

This study has focused thus far on the positive changes that took place in the internationalist movement as a result of the Great Depression and the opportunities it provided for publicists to connect with the American people in a new, more practical way. No discussion of this process would be complete, however, without admitting that the economic crisis also hit the internationalists themselves, so that at the very moment they were attempting to expand their work they also had to find ways to cut expenses and reorganize or scrap new projects. As the movement was made up of non-profit organizations and private individuals who often did not depend on their involvement for their livelihood, its income depended on the continued generosity of donors and the ingenuity of its leaders to seek out new sources of funding. Aside from a few publications and speaking engagements, the internationalists did not make any products they could sell, and their organizations' charters often governed what they could do with their assets.

In an America where surplus income was increasingly becoming a rare luxury, Wilsonians had to put serious thought into how they could best organize their meager resources to achieve their goals. While it is entirely true that part of their solution was to curtail or cancel various public education programs in order to conserve money, it is also important to recognize that this process did not happen haphazardly. Over the course of the 1930s, internationalists reorganized their movement *logistically* in order to concentrate their funds on the most promising avenues of action. The results of this effort are a useful revelation for this study, since the program that emerged reflected the lessons Wilsonians had learned from the Depression.

The money shortage took on a different form for every organization depending on its traditional sources of funding and its typical modes of spending. Endowments, for example, had to curtail their disbursements to smaller organizations because their investments were not yielding the high dividends they had in the past. The Carnegie Endowment reported in 1932 that bank defaults prevented it from receiving some of the income it was due on its investments, as well as its cash deposits. Its sister charity, the Carnegie Corporation, was also tightening its belt owing to similar circumstances, and in doing so it reduced its annual appropriation to the Endowment by \$25,000. Between the trouble with its own funds and the shrinking grant from

the Carnegie Corporation, Nicholas Murray Butler and the Executive Committee felt they had no choice but to excise all new projects from the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Even with the savings from this maneuver, the three divisions of the Endowment were still faced with significantly less operating money than they had had in previous years.¹

Other organizations that operated mostly from individual donations were hit especially hard, as even the upper crust of American society who normally filled their needs were forced to cut back on discretionary expenses. The Council on Foreign Relations' bank account dropped from about \$10,000 in 1931 to about \$5,000 in 1933 as money coming in from members and patrons dried up.² The annual budget of the League of Nations Association dropped from \$112,000 in 1929 to \$84,000 in 1932 to \$53,000 in 1933, in what became one of the direst pecuniary disasters the movement faced during this period.³ This pattern became all too common.

As if the loss of one-time grants and donations was not enough, these internationalist groups also suffered from a drastic drop in the number of members attending their conferences and paying their dues. Despite serious recruiting efforts the Council on Foreign Relations, for example, kept its membership at a relatively low 550 members for much of the Depression. To be fair, its program was targeted at a limited class of participants, but in the years preceding the Crash the Council had had little trouble finding new members each year to replace those lost to age and normal attrition. In the early 1930s the organization could barely maintain its 500-person membership.⁴ The Foreign Policy Association also had trouble in this respect. Its members totaled over 12,000 in 1930, but that number quickly declined as the economic crisis took hold. The organization lost 800 members in 1932 alone, and did not regain its 12,000-person level until 1936.⁵ Leaders of these organizations determined that their members simply could not afford to keep their dues current. This was unfortunate from both a revenue standpoint and in that it threatened to compromise the new effort to enlist everyday Americans in the internationalist movement.

With bills constantly coming up due, however, the revenue question was the most pressing. Organizations that did not have savings to fall back on were forced to reduce their

¹ James Brown Scott, "Annual Report of the Secretary," 5 Apr 1932 in *CEIP Year Book*, 1932 ed., 26-27.

² Schulzinger, *Wise Men*, 31.

³ Divine, *Second Chance*, 24.

⁴ Schulzinger, *Wise Men of Foreign Affairs*, 31.

⁵ Abbott, "From Versailles to Munich," 76-86.

expenses wherever possible to make up the shortfalls they were experiencing. Harry A. Garfield, President of Williamstown College and spokesman for the Williamstown Institute of Politics⁶ announced at the end of its 1932 session that if a permanent endowment could not be raised among the members to support the annual meeting, it would have to be discontinued. He suggested that the organization could be restricted to only the most qualified experts on foreign affairs in order to save on expenses, but in the end the Institute could not be saved on either this or the traditional model. The Williamstown Institute did not meet after 1932.⁷

In that same year, Chairman James G. McDonald of the Foreign Policy Association sent a letter to each of his organization's members, explaining that it desperately needed \$25,000 to meet expenses for the year, despite reductions in employee salaries totaling \$35,000 in savings.⁸ The Association also began requiring that the members of its Speakers' Bureau remit ten percent of the honoraria they received for their services to the national headquarters rather than pocketing the entire sum according to long-standing tradition.⁹ Key staff members continually debated over whether and how to require unpaid holidays and other measures to keep the organization moving.

One of the unfortunate side effects of this squeeze on the smaller organizations' resources was an increasingly competitive jockeying between groups for funding from the larger foundations. The traditional structure of the movement involved several tiers, each containing internationalist entities with a different amount of money to give away or use. At the top were the major foundations and endowments, such as the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and the Twentieth Century Fund. These were primarily money-granting bodies that did not have an extensive slate of programs on their own. Their boards of directors considered proposals for funding and chose the ones that best matched what their charters said they were intended to support.¹⁰

⁶ The Williamstown Institute of Politics was an annual event that consisted of roundtable discussions between experts on various matters of public policy, including issues of international relations. The organization mainly catered to the "initiated," as Edith Ware put it, and non-experts who attended did so for entertainment or enlightenment rather than full participation. See Ware, *Study of International Relations*, 119-120.

⁷ Ibid.; "Williams Institute May Not Continue," *New York Times*, 27 Aug 1932.

⁸ "Asks Aid in Study of Foreign Policy," *New York Times*, 1 May 1932.

⁹ Abbott, "From Versailles to Munich," 86-88.

¹⁰ These three foundations were not necessarily dedicated to funding research and education in foreign affairs. The Twentieth Century Fund, for example, was dedicated broadly to "American affairs," and could direct its resources toward a number of different social problems. The Carnegie Corporation was only guided in its mission by Andrew Carnegie's stipulation that it should fund "individuals who are capable of making an outstanding contribution to the

Underneath these giants were the significant but smaller endowments that served a dual function in the movement as grantors of money and activists for the cause. The best example of this type of organization is the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which sustained a number of smaller internationalist projects while maintaining an extensive public education program of its own, as described in Chapter 4. “Workhorse” organizations such as the Foreign Policy Association, League of Nations Association, Council on Foreign Relations and others formed the base of the structure. These entities were closest to both the people and the action in Washington and abroad, making policy suggestions and participating directly in the effort to win individual voters and government leaders over to the internationalist point of view. They received funding from their large membership bases and private donations, but they also depended to a great extent on patronage from the upper tiers of the movement.

As funding became tighter in the 1930s, getting money from the large foundations began to involve a serious haggling process. Even the Carnegie Endowment participated in the squabble, hoping to make up for its sickly investment situation with additional grants from the Carnegie Corporation. Throughout his term as president of the Endowment, and certainly much more as the Depression set in, Nicholas Murray Butler continually pestered the trustees of the Carnegie Corporation about appropriating more money to the other Carnegie funds, especially the one he administrated. He claimed that this had been Andrew Carnegie’s intention for the Corporation all along, an assertion he backed up by reminding the board of his personal friendship with Carnegie – indeed, Butler was one of the original trustees of the Endowment and was a trustee of the Corporation even as he made his complaints. The other Corporation trustees did not share Butler’s philosophy regarding its work, but they often gave in to his incessant nagging, especially after 1937, when he became the only original trustee left on the board of the Endowment.¹¹

Even when funding was forthcoming, its distribution sometimes caused squabbling among the beneficiaries, who often compared one another in terms of their levels of utility to the movement. Leaders of the Council on Foreign Relations, for example, expressed displeasure in the 1930s at receiving smaller grants from the Rockefeller Foundation than the Foreign Policy Association and the Institute of Pacific Relations. The Council’s directors regarded these

sum total of human betterment.” The Rockefeller Foundation was intended to fund three major categories of social policy research, of which foreign policy was only one. See Ware, *Study of International Relations*, 24-37.

¹¹ Rosenthal, *Nicholas Miraculous*, 353-358.

organizations as inferior, since they were engaged in “unseemly public activities” that did not ostensibly contribute to the body of knowledge on foreign affairs.¹² Normally the leaders of these programs supported one another as colleagues in the same business, but the pressure of surviving the financial crunch of the Depression eroded some of this camaraderie.

When budget cuts and layoffs were not enough, some organizations tried searching for non-traditional sources of funding to continue their operations. The experience of the Foreign Policy Association is a particularly telling example of how this was done. During the 1930s Raymond Buell and his staff explored a variety of options for underwriting their projects. In 1932, Buell suggested that the Association approach a foundation to fund half of his salary while he finished up a book on Latin America. It would free up some of the Association’s resources and give one of the foundations a concrete project to which it could affix its name.¹³ Later that same year, Buell became aware of a dormant appropriation under the Carnegie Corporation for projects promoting good relations between the United States and the British Empire. He suggested to James McDonald that the FPA look into finding a project that the Corporation could fund using that money.¹⁴ When the Rockefeller Foundation began renting out space in its downtown New York properties, Buell checked into whether it would cut the FPA a good deal on office space in one of the buildings.¹⁵ These leads and many more like it offered small opportunities to increase the funding of the organization and keep its programs moving. Each group in the movement had the task of seeking these prospects wherever they could.

Such piecemeal sources of revenue were only palliatives, however, for a systemic problem. The Depression showed no signs of letting up in the early 1930s, and internationalists responded by coupling their stop-gap funding solutions with ideas about long-term plans that would ensure their survival. Some of the smaller organizations with specific functions contemplated mergers in order to pool resources and increase the chances of getting grants from the larger foundations. Ostensibly this was meant to make the movement more efficient and prevent duplication of effort, but in reality it was vitally necessary if the workhorse groups were to continue their work at the pace they were setting for themselves. Cooperation between organizations was nothing new; it had been the principal idea behind such cohorts as Mrs. Carrie

¹² Schulzinger, *Wise Men*, 31.

¹³ Raymond Buell to Esther Ogden and James McDonald, 31 Mar 1932, Box 41, Buell Papers.

¹⁴ Raymond Buell to James McDonald, 29 Oct 1932 in Box 41, Buell Papers.

¹⁵ Raymond Buell to Easter Ogden and James McDonald, 15 Sept 1932 in Box 41, Buell Papers.

Chapman Catt's National Committee on the Cause and Cure of War and the League of Nations Non-Partisan Association. What made the plans for combination in the 1930s different was their emphasis on logistical combination rather than ideological similarity. Other collaborating organizations joined forces because they wanted to present a united front. Depression-era groups would combine to survive.¹⁶

Perhaps the largest and most contentious of these marriages of convenience was hatched in 1933, when an entire network of internationalists attempted to draw several of the largest workhorse organizations together under one roof. The Carnegie Endowment, Foreign Policy Association, Woodrow Wilson Foundation, League of Nations Association, and World Peace Foundation all played important roles in the discussions over how such a super-group would work, making its story particularly illustrative.

The first official moves toward this merger probably took place at a meeting of the executive committee of the Carnegie Endowment in February 1933, while the members were considering a request from the Foreign Policy Association for a \$10,000 grant. Several attendees voiced their approval of the Association's work, and asked whether it would be possible for some of the other organizations working in the foreign policy field in New York to combine under its leadership. Not only would this eliminate much duplication of effort, it would also make the Endowment's task of funding the movement much easier. As we have already seen, the Endowment's financial resources had not completely shielded it from hardship during the Depression. Several trustees, Butler among them, believed that it was time to either jettison the smaller organizations they were funding or assume greater control over their work.¹⁷ With this in mind, the executive committee authorized several members to contact the heads of the groups that would form such a conglomerate to get their thoughts. If the proposal was acceptable to the workhorse entities, the Carnegie Endowment's executive committee might then be able to present the plan to the full board of trustees as a viable way to streamline its system of funding.

¹⁶ The main purpose of the National Committee on the Cause and Cure of War was inter-organizational communication between different women's groups. The member groups did not pool their fiscal resources. See Ware, *Study of International Relations*, 354-356. The League of Nations Non-Partisan Association was a different sort of merger in that it combined *individuals* rather than organizations in order to pool ideas and influence. See Kuehl and Dunn, *Keeping the Covenant*, 39-47.

¹⁷ This sentiment is well represented in James Brown Scott's annual Secretary's Report in *CEIP Year Book*, 1932 ed., 24-25.

The scheme might also act as a justification for getting additional money from the Carnegie Corporation.¹⁸

Given the dire circumstances already alluded to in this chapter, it should be no surprise that the organizations approached by the Carnegie leaders were highly receptive to the idea. Representatives from all bodies concerned formed a “Temporary General Committee on Cooperation” that would study the pros and cons of a merger, and discuss what form it might take.¹⁹ Individual leaders within the committee also moved within their own organizations to secure the best possible terms for their work.

Raymond Buell, who had been elected to the presidency of the Foreign Policy Association by this time, quickly began seeking a closer relationship with like-minded groups in the internationalist cohort.²⁰ He started off by opening discussions with his predecessor as Research Director of the FPA, Raymond T. Rich, who had gone on to become the director of the World Peace Foundation in 1927. He envisioned a combination of their organizations, along with the League of Nations Association, which had just recently come under the direction of Raymond Fosdick, a Rockefeller trustee and one of the founding members of the LNA in the 1920s. Rich believed Buell’s idea would greatly benefit the World Peace Foundation, as a merger would enable his staff to accomplish more than they were currently doing as a separate entity. He was willing to move his entire operation up to New York City to be closer to the Foreign Policy Association. Buell believed this would allow the Foreign Policy Association to shift the burden of its publication expenses to the World Peace Foundation, which already spent most of its budget on similar concerns, and thereby eliminate the problem of both groups attempting to publish pamphlets and other materials on the same subjects. By June, the proposal was ready to go to the Foreign Policy Association’s board of directors.²¹

¹⁸ Minutes of the 23 Feb 1933 meeting of the Carnegie Endowment’s Executive Committee, quoted in James B. Scott to Norman Davis, 13 Dec 1933 in Box 7, Davis Papers.

¹⁹ The Temporary General Committee consisted of President Raymond Buell, Chairman of the Board Joseph P. Chamberlain, Honorary Chairman James G. McDonald, H. Alexander Smith, and Ralph S. Rounds from the Foreign Policy Association; President Raymond Fosdick of the League of Nations Association; and President George H. Blakeslee, Director Raymond T. Rich, Newton Baker, and Harry Garfield of the World Peace Foundation. Baker served as the contact for the Woodrow Wilson Foundation since he had connections with its trustees, as later paragraphs will reveal.

²⁰ Abbott, “From Versailles to Munich,” 93.

²¹ Raymond Buell to William Stone, 1 May 1933 and 12 July 1933 and James McDonald to Raymond Buell, 8 Jun 1933 in Box 42, Buell Papers.

Buell had more in mind than a simple combination, however. He also confidentially believed that this merger was a good opportunity to do some weeding in the internationalist garden. In July of 1933 he wrote to William Stone that he was interested in having the League of Nations Association on board for this conglomeration, but it needed to happen on the Foreign Policy Association's terms and soon. As he put it to Rich, who was a trustee of the League of Nations Association in addition to his responsibilities at the World Peace Foundation, if the United States was really going to fall into a nationalist rut, the Foreign Policy Association would be needed more than ever, but the League of Nations Association would become hopelessly irrelevant. While it would be easy to have the LNA join in the combination they were planning now while the League issue was still debatable, it would be much more difficult to do this later, when nationalist sentiments would make it embarrassing for the Foreign Policy Association to absorb an entity so closely linked to the League. In closing his letter to Stone, Buell cited a recent speech given by one of the LNA's chief operatives about the impending entry of the United States into the League as "another example of how ridiculous their propaganda can be."²²

Buell's letter suggests two important motivations for wanting to bring the League of Nations Association into the orbit of this new cooperative union. First, having the Association on board as soon as possible would keep its leaders closer to the new ideological thrust of the internationalist movement that was afoot in the 1930s – a program of action that had progressively less space for American entry into the League of Nations. Second, if the League of Nations Association joined forces with the Foreign Policy Association and the World Peace Foundation, it would bring its own monetary resources, donors, and contacts to the table for sharing. The idea sounded excellent in theory, but it remained to be seen whether it could be achieved in practice.

As it turned out, events played into Buell's hands. Owing to its critical financial situation and sagging membership, the League of Nations Association announced that it was considering dropping all of its branches across the country and reverting back to a single national organization. Buell suggested to Raymond Fosdick that if the Association were to join up with the new union, the members of the old LNA branches could simply become members of FPA branches that already existed in the same cities. If an FPA branch was not available, one could be formed, or in the case of smaller communities the FPA could set up some smaller public

²² Raymond Buell to William Stone, 12 Jul 1933 in Box 42, Buell Papers.

affairs discussion group as an “affiliate” and provide it with all the necessary literature and other materials to keep up to date.²³ Either way, Buell was prepared to simultaneously save the LNA and absorb its outlying branches in order to increase the outreach capacity of the new internationalist union.

As these developments were brewing, other members of the Temporary General Committee were courting other potential additions to the new super-organization, especially the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. The Foundation, formed in 1922 in honor of Woodrow Wilson as a money-granting organization interested in promoting world peace, held an extensive library that leaders of the Foreign Policy Association and World Peace Foundation believed would be immensely useful to their work.²⁴ The WPF already had a library of its own, but it was attached to the newly formed Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy shared between Tufts and Harvard universities, and could not be easily moved to New York. Newton Baker, who was associated with the World Peace Foundation, wrote to Bernard Baruch, who was at that time an influential trustee for the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, and asked for his cooperation in getting the other Wilson trustees on board with the idea of moving their library to New York where it could combine resources with the WPF and FPA. Baker pointed out that when he had been a trustee of the Wilson group, the board had often struggled with articulating a specific program and purpose for its work, and this merger might be exactly the answer it needed, since in joining it the Wilson library would become the main reference repository for the other organizations.²⁵

By December, Buell, Baker, and the other leaders associated with this effort had worked out a concrete proposal for a combined internationalist organization that meted out responsibilities fairly equally among its several components. The Foreign Policy Association, Woodrow Wilson Foundation, World Peace Foundation, and League of Nations Association would become a cooperative federation with common administrative services and a central vision for policy. Public education efforts would be entrusted to the World Peace Foundation, while research activities would be the domain of the Foreign Policy Association. The Woodrow Wilson Foundation would continue its activities while providing the use of its library to the other components of the group. The League of Nations Association would contribute its policy-

²³ Raymond Buell to Esther Ogden, 20 Aug 1933 in Box 42, Buell Papers.

²⁴ The library of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation contained thousands of volumes on international relations, especially relating to the League. For a full description of the organization, see Ware, *Study of International Relations*, 34.

²⁵ Newton Baker to Bernard Baruch, 18 Nov 1933 in Box 3, Davis Papers.

making staff, although the proposal was somewhat vague as to what sort of policy it would be expected to formulate. Outside these functions the constituent organizations would continue to use the balance of their resources to pursue their work as usual. The plan was written up in great detail and submitted to the Carnegie Endowment as a memorandum on 6 December 1933.²⁶

The Carnegie trustees were still very interested in funding this proposal, but their ability to do so was contingent on whether they could convince the Carnegie Corporation to supplement its annual appropriation to the Endowment. On 13 December, Endowment leaders submitted a formal request to the Corporation for additional money to bankroll this new streamlined union, and it was approved.²⁷ By March of 1934, all remaining details were solved and all four organizations moved into their respective offices at No. 8 West 40th Street in New York City.²⁸

This merger was undeniably motivated to a great extent by the need to survive the Depression. By joining forces under one roof with one set of common logistical services, the four component groups could relieve themselves of the burden of going it alone as far as many routine but considerably taxing expenses were concerned. The vision of the Temporary Committee on Cooperation went farther, however, to imagine a coordinated campaign with which internationalists might effectively combat the so-called “American chauvinists” who were using every means at their disposal to recruit everyday citizens into an attitude of economic nationalism. “We believe the time is particularly right,” the members wrote, “to launch a new movement for international education aimed at every city and at as much of the countryside as can be touched.”²⁹ By overcoming the logistical challenges of the Depression through this conglomeration of resources, the principal internationalist organizations – and by extension those who cooperated with them – were in a much better position to make this new movement come alive.

²⁶ Memorandum: “Cooperative Program for International Education,” 6 Dec 1933 in Box 7, Davis Papers.

²⁷ See the annual report of the Executive Committee of the Carnegie Endowment in *CEIP Year Book*, 1934 ed., 17-19.

²⁸ “4 Peace Groups Lease Midtown Headquarters,” *New York Times*, 5 Apr 1934; Esther Ogden to Raymond Buell, 24 Mar 1934 in Box 42, Buell Papers.

²⁹ Memorandum: “Cooperative Program for International Education,” 6 Dec 1933 in Box 7, Davis Papers.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Historians who write about the 1930s and characterize the decade as primarily isolationist are not too far off the mark in some ways. Despite the United States' ongoing negotiations with its debtors, Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy in Latin America, Hull's Reciprocal Trade Agreement program, and a variety of other measures that represent American official internationalism in practice, Congress and the public continued to consistently favor a course that kept America's energies trained on Americans. The upper hand internationalists believed they had gained with the trade concessions of the early and middle years of the period evaporated with the explosion of new debates over American neutrality in 1935.¹

Although they never quite seemed able to get ahead of public opinion, at least not until Pearl Harbor in 1941, the internationalist movement still managed to advocate the United States' participation in schemes of global cooperation without resorting to the high-minded, idealistic lexicon that had bogged down their success in the 1920s. It is entirely true that Wilsonians operated from a conviction about certain ideals and that they were truly convinced that the world could not do anything in the long term except become more liberal and more amenable to international cooperation. "Pessimism is no cure for anything," Nicholas Murray Butler said in a speech in 1931. "The way out is the way of that confident hope that changes in the temper of the mind that follows and the mind that leads. I am an incorrigible optimist."² This certainly shows that Wilsonians were still capable of relating the conditions of international affairs to the willpower and reason of individuals.

This is not what defined their movement as it was meant to guide the public, however. Books and meetings and campaigns and radio addresses and classes and commencement speeches expounding the idea that economic nationalism threatened to destroy American prosperity and align the entire world against the United States were the operative features of their work. Those tools were fashioned from different materials than the Wilsonians had been

¹ Worried that the United States might become involved in Mussolini's land grab in Ethiopia because of its munitions industry, Congress passed the Neutrality Act of 1935, which prohibited the sale of arms to any belligerent. Internationalists believed this act deprived their country of the opportunity to aid victims of aggression through "benevolent neutrality" that would favor the victim and punish the aggressor. See Ferrell, *American Diplomacy*, 189.

² "Senate Can Relieve Slump," *New York Times*, 28 May 1931.

accustomed to using. Moral responsibility was part of their conviction, as it had been from the beginning of the movement as Chapter 2 explained, but in the 1930s it was not nearly so large a part of their rhetoric.

What mattered was that the American people recognized a connection between the peaceful conduct of international affairs and their continued prosperity at home. The Depression was an opportunity to demonstrate how a nation could suffer when its citizens and leaders failed to recognize this relationship. As much as internationalists may have wanted their fellow Americans to understand the value of a cooperative global community, they came to realize that putting the facts out there and rehashing the same moralistic arguments about how they ought to be interpreted would not work, and in the 1930s they switched to a mode of doing the interpretation themselves. This is how Wilsonians went from asking the American government to take up its responsibility to lead the world in disarmament or outlawing war to demanding that it release American prosperity from the strangle-hold of unwise tariffs and debt policies, as Chapters 3 and 4 elaborated.

The internationalist movement further evolved as its leaders found new ways to involve everyday Americans in their organizations by setting up public relations campaigns, using the radio, channeling their efforts to new untapped regions of the United States, and forming new organizations to pursue unique methods of education and research. This marks an important departure from the 1920s, when so many internationalists were skeptical as to whether there was even any point in educating everyday Americans about a subject they probably could not even comprehend. In the 1930s, they made it their business to ensure everyday Americans could understand their message.

If idealism remained a part of this effort, it was a driving force for the internationalists, not necessarily something they wished to peddle to their followers for its own sake. “Idealism is not vacant gazing at inaccessible stars,” Norman Baker once said. “The idealist spirit is the spirit which sees beyond the immediate and momentary and perhaps petty advantage, to the advantage in the long run.”³ The long-term goal in this case was the involvement of the United States in the international community commensurate with its power and resources. The short-term work had to consist of practical measures that would ultimately lead in this direction. This was true for the American government, and it was true for internationalists as well.

³ Baker, “Outlook for World Peace,” 147.

Because the American internationalist movement continued to improve itself in the 1930s even in the face of difficult circumstances and unfavorable public opinion, it was poised to take meaningful action when the unfortunate recurrence of world war ripped away America's innocence and its ability to remain isolated from the world by practically any degree. Its members cultivated a group of people, however limited, who were properly equipped ideologically and logistically to argue in favor of international cooperation when the opportunity presented itself.⁴

Perhaps most importantly, while the internationalists of the Depression era faced incredible opposition to their ideas, they were willing to break the mold from which they were made in order to effectively continue educating Americans about questions of war, peace, and the role of the global community in addressing both. As Elihu Root put it, "There must be a long process of instruction, of information, and of gradual effect of example bringing about better conditions. That will not be accomplished in my lifetime, or in yours, and it will never be accomplished unless people get busy about it."⁵ For better or for worse, for nothing or for something, even if something small, America's advocates for international cooperation took this mantra straight to heart, as they continue to do even now.

⁴ Divine, *Second Chance*, 22.

⁵ Elihu Root, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 2 (1931).

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Joshua Goodman is a Florida native. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Florida State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History in 2008. His undergraduate honors thesis was entitled “A Cry for Justice: Public Opinion, U.S. Foreign Policy, and the Treaty of Locarno, 1925-26.” As a graduate assistant in the Department of History, he has served in both academic and technical support capacities. Upon completing his Master of Arts degree in 2010, he will proceed to doctoral work at Florida State University. He aspires to teach history at the college level and continue researching topics in the history of public intellectualism and American foreign relations. When not studying history, Josh enjoys fresh-water fishing, traveling, and shooting a terrible game of pool.