QUAKER STUDIES 6/1 (2001) [59-79]

QUAKERS, PEACE AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS: THE ROLE OF BERTRAM PICKARD

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ABSTRACT

Bertram Pickard belonged to a generation of Friends who helped to redefine the nature of Quaker international work between 1920 and 1940. In the aftermath of the First World War he played a major role in broadening the Quaker approach to peacemaking, encompassing not only conflict resolution through the peaceful settlement of disputes but also conflict prevention through institution-building at the international level. His support, however, for collective security and a peace enforcement role for the newly created League of Nations provoked strong opposition from those in London Yearly Meeting who viewed any support for the use of force as incompatible with Quaker beliefs. This paper attempts to highlight the dilemmas Pickard faced in trying to reconcile his profound pacifist convictions with his perceived responsibilities as a 'Quaker citizen', having to engage with the emergent realities of political power and the use of force at the inter-state level.

KEYWORDS

Peace, League of Nations, collective security, international system, sanctions, disarmament

Quakers and the First World War

In response to the escalating arms race between the European Powers in the years prior to 1914, the Society of Friends as a corporate body supported proposals for the limitation of armaments and the adoption of compulsory arbitration as a means of resolving disputes between nations.[1] Individual

1. S. Bailey, *Peace is a Process* (London: Swarthmore Lecture, 1993), pp. 79-84; and

Quakers played a leading role in the Peace movement both at home and on the continent; they regularly attended Peace congresses in various European capitals and used their access to the continental ruling elite to spread the Quaker message of the immorality of war. The most famous example of what Brian Phillips refers to as 'a strategy of pursuing "peace through princes"',[2] was the visit made by the Birmingham businessman, Joseph Sturge and two other Friends, to Tsar Nicholas I of Russia in 1854 in an effort to prevent the Crimean War. Although Sturge's efforts at peace-making ended in failure, British Friends did provide funds to assist the victims of that war and others that followed—the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, the Boer War and the Balkan Wars in 1912.[3]

The Society of Friends responded to the outbreak of war in 1914 by re-affirming its anti-war traditions as set out in the declaration of the Peace Testimony, 1660: 'We do utterly deny, with all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatever; This is our testimony to the whole world...' and in the writings of early Friends such as Robert Barclay, William Penn and John Bellers.[4] Although the Society of Friends was corporately opposed to the war, a third of eligible Quaker men joined the armed forces. The Society actively supported the 45 per cent of its young men of military age who refused military

L. Lloyd, 'Philip Noel-Baker and Peace Through Law', in D. Long and P. Wilson (eds.), *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis: Interwar Idealism Reassessed* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 29-31.

2. B. Phillips, *Widening the Skirts of Light: Renewing the Quaker Internationalist Tradition*, a paper prepared for the World Regional Programme Committee, Quaker Peace and Service, 14 June 1997. Sturge accompanied by two American Quakers had earlier tried to mediate in the dispute between Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein while in this century the Quaker M.P. J. Allen Baker paid four visits to Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany between 1909 and 1914 in an attempt to further Anglo-German understanding. See C.H. Yarrow, *Quaker Experiences in International Conciliation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 16-19; and E.B. Baker and P. Noel Baker, *J. Allen Baker, M.P., A Memoir* (London: Swarthmore Press, 1927), pp. 183-89.

3. S. Bailey, *Peace is a Process*, pp. 37-43. Also J.O. Greenwood, *Quaker Encounters. I. Friends and Relief* (York: William Sessions, 1975), pp. 47-79, 89-90.

4. 'A Declaration from the Harmless and Innocent People of God, called Quakers, presented to Charles II, 1660', in *Peace Among the Nations, Being the Testimony of the Society of Friends on War* (London: Peace Committee, n.d.), pp. 3-19 (3). See also R. Barclay, *An Epistle of Love and Friendly Advice, to the Ambassadors of the Several Princes of Europe, Met at Nimeguen, to Consult the Peace of Christendom* (London: Benjamin Clark, 1679); W. Penn, *An Essay Toward the Present and Future Peace of Europe* (London: Randal Taylor, 1693); and J. Bellers, *Some Reasons for an European State* (London: Anon, 1710).

Figure 1. *Bertram Pickard in retirement circa 1968.*

service when conscription was introduced in 1916, 279 of whom were subsequently imprisoned as 'conscientious objectors'.[5] Many of them had been active in the Young Friends' Movement within the Society, which drew its inspiration from the Quaker Revival in the late 1890s, and which had placed particular emphasis on the centrality of the Peace Testimony to Quaker faith and practice.[6]

Bertram Pickard, born into a Quaker business family in Nottinghamshire in 1892 and educated at Ackworth and Bootham, shared their pacifist convictions. He had not gone on to university after leaving school but instead

5. *Minutes & Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting of Friends* (London: Office of the Society of Friends, 1923), pp. 231-32; *The Friend* 15 (9 January 1920), p. 60 (15).

6. T. Kennedy, 'The Quaker Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern British Peace Movement, 1895–1920', *Albion* 16/3 (Fall 1984), pp. 243-72; and B. Pickard, 'English Young Friends' Movement', *Young Quaker* (February 1922).

worked for a time in the family's jam-making firm in Mansfield. He enrolled at Woodbrooke in the autumn of 1914 to study Quaker history but was forced to drop out because of a serious eye complaint which left him partially sighted. Despite his eye illness and a near fatal bout of typhoid he attended a tribunal in 1917 to declare his opposition to the war although ill health prevented him from playing any further role during this period.

Planning for the Peace

For Quakers, public opposition to conscription and relief efforts at home and abroad during the war, were not enough. They were among those who looked beyond the war itself to the possibility of a new international order in which, it was hoped, war would be outlawed. Proposals for a league of nations were widely canvassed in England in 1915 and 1916 (*before* U.S. President Wilson incorporated the idea into his Fourteen Points which then formed the basis of Allied war aims), most notably by 'the Bryce Group'. Two of the Group's leading figures were Richard Cross, a Quaker lawyer, and Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, a Cambridge classics don with close links to the Society of Friends.[7]

The Society of Friends, however, had serious reservations about proposals to invest this new league with 'police powers'. The Peace Committee in particular insisted that notions of peace enforcement ran counter to Quaker principles of non-violence, and that it was both morally wrong and practically impossible to secure any lasting peace through the use of force.[8] Only a small group of Quakers in the Friends League of Nations Association (formed in the summer of 1918) were prepared to defend the sanctionist approach. This group which included Philip Noel-Baker, who later helped to draft the League Covenant at the Paris Peace Conference, and Joseph A.

7. See D. Proctor, *Autobiography of G. Lowes Dickinson* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1973), pp. 190-91; M. Dubin, 'Towards the Concept of Collective Security: the Bryce Group's Proposals for the Avoidance of War', *International Organization* 24 (1970), pp. 288-318. At King's College, Cambridge he had been tutor to both Philip Noel Baker, himself a Fellow of Kings and the guiding spirit behind the creation of the Friends Ambulance Unit in 1914 and to Horace Alexander, the Secretary of the Peace Committee at the beginning of the war.

8. *Minutes of Peace Committee*: 8 June, 2 November and 30 November 1916; see also *Looking Towards Peace* (London: Peace Committee of the Religious Society of Friends, 1915); J. Graham, *A Society of Nations: The One Hope for the Future* (London: Peace Committee of the Society of Friends, 1918), pp. 3-23.

Pease, a former Liberal MP, cited the writings of William Penn in support of their belief:

> that if the proposed League is to be an effective instrument for the immediate limitation of armaments and the ultimate abolition of war, one of its conditions must be a mutual obligation to take united action (even military action if necessary), to secure compliance with its decisions.[9]

Meanwhile there were other Friends with different ideas about how best to promote Quaker ideals on the international stage. Carl Heath, for example, had first proposed the establishment of Quaker Embassies across Europe in 1917. Although Heath used the language of secular international relations, what he had in mind was a peace work rooted in what could best be described as a 'spiritual internationalism'. His ideas were approved by London Yearly Meeting which set up a new body in 1919, the Council of International Service, (the C.I.S.), to take the Quaker message into Europe and overseas. Carl Heath became its first Secretary, and by 1923 Quaker Embassies, (now renamed Quaker International Centres) had been set up in Paris, Berlin, Frankfurt, Nurnberg, Geneva, Warsaw, Vienna and Moscow. Because of the links it eventually developed with the League of Nations, the Geneva Centre was to prove the most effective and important Quaker presence on the Continent (and the only one that continues to function).[10] These various developments formed the backcloth against which Bertram Pickard came to prominence within the Society of Friends.

Quakers, Peace and Security in the Post-War World

In 1920, with his health fully restored and with the financial backing of his family, Bertram Pickard began his Quaker work within London Yearly Meeting, first with the Young Friends Movement and then as the first full-time Secretary of the Peace Committee from 1921 to 1926. His writings in this period reflected his belief that the roots of war lay in a false concept of human nature, one which stressed man's competitive rather than co-operative qualities. 'What hope', he asked, 'is there of removing war from

9. Outlining these views in a letter sent to all Friends, the FLNA asked those contacted to return an accompanying postcard if they were in agreement—3000 out of 8000 adult Friends in Britain signed (*Minutes of Friends League of Nations Association*: 24 July and 26 August).

10. A number of these Centres were short-lived—by 1938 only the Berlin, Vienna, Paris and Geneva Centres were still in existence. See S. Bailey, *Peace is a Process*, pp. 85-90; C.H. Yarrow, *Quaker Experiences in International Conciliation*, pp. 26-31.

the world if we have to wait for this fundamental change?'.[11] Pickard had few illusions as to the difficulties that committed pacifists such as himself faced in the 1920s in 'a world that vaguely wants peace but has not learned how to secure it'.[12] He believed, however, that there were some hopeful signs. The international peace movement was more active and broadly based than before the war—there was a proliferation of new groups after 1914 including the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Britain, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Union Populaire pour la Paix Universelle in France, disarmament organizations were gaining popular support in a number of countries, and the League of Nations Organisation had been set up in Geneva in 1920.

Although Pickard welcomed the creation of a League of Nations as a new approach to international relations, it fell short of what Friends had been expecting. Widespread opposition within the Society to the peace enforcement provisions of the Covenant had surfaced publicly at the first World Conference of Friends held in London in August 1920, leading some of the delegates present on that occasion to question whether or not Quakers could accept the League as it was presently constituted.[13] Pickard believed that despite its flaws, the League represented the best chance of achieving international peace and justice and urged Friends to approach it with an attitude 'of critical appreciation accompanied, where possible, by constructive suggestion...'.[14] As the decade progressed, Quaker reservations about the League were eased somewhat by certain structural changes in the new organization. The admission of Germany in 1926 satisfied Quaker demands that League membership be extended to include former enemy states and the efforts made by Britain, Canada and other member states to weaken the collective security clauses allayed fears about the imposition of automatic

11. B. Pickard, *The Roots of War* (London: Friends Peace Committee, n.d.), p. 13.

12. B. Pickard, 'The Peace Movement Today', *Friends Fellowship Papers* 1/5 (September 1923), pp. 163-66.

13. *Conference of All Friends Held in London on August 19 & 20, 1920* (London: Official Report, 1920), pp. 71-82. See also C. Heath, 'A League of Nations', in *National Life and International Relations, Report of Commission*, II (London: Committee of Peace Conference of all Friends, 1920), pp. 57-62; F.E. Pollard, 'A True League of Nations', *The Friend* 60 (26 November 1920), p. 751.

14. B. Pickard. 'What of the League of Nations?', *The Friend* 64 (16 May 1924), pp. 403-404. Also H.G. Alexander, 'What of the League of Nations?', *Friends' Fellowship Papers* 1/5 (September 1923), pp. 170-75.

League sanctions.[15] The Peace Committee sent delegates to attend meetings of the League Assembly who then reported back on the proceedings to various meetings of British Friends; they also made representations on arms reduction to the League Preparatory Commission on Disarmament.[16] At grassroots level the Friends League of Nations Association urged its members to seek to influence public opinion in their locality in a variety of ways: by joining their local branch of the League of Nations Union, through study circles in Quaker Adult Schools, public meetings, contacts with other peace groups and dissemination of pro-League material in Quaker periodicals.[17]

Disarmament and Security

The Society of Friends had regarded the arms race in Europe in the decade before 1914 as one of the principal causes of insecurity in inter-state relations on the continent , a view that had been reinforced by the outbreak of the First World War.[18] Given a post-War political climate in which that view had gained widespread acceptance both in Western Europe and the United States, they redoubled their efforts to promote disarmament by the Great Powers. In January 1921 the Peace Committee circulated letters to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Secretary General of the League, while, the following March, four of its members had a meeting with the

15. D. Armstrong, *The Rise of the International Organisation: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 25-26.

16. *Minutes of the Peace Committee:* 1 October 1925, 3 February 1926 and 1 December 1927.

17. At the request of Meeting for Sufferings the Friends League of Nations Committee had changed its name to the Friends League of Nations Association in June 1919. *See Minutes of the Friends League of Nations Association, 5 June 1919*. See also *Minutes of the Friends League of Nations Association*: 22 January, 19 February, 23 March, 21 April, 20 May and 23 June 1920. After the appointment of a Watching Committee by Meeting for Sufferings on 4 February 1921, the Friends League of Nations Committee was laid down on 8 June 1921. See *Minutes of Friends League of N Nations Association*, 10 May and 8 June 1921.

18. Anon., 'Foreign Policy and Armaments', *The Friend* 52 (25 October 1912), pp. 692-93; 'Friends and the Peace Question', *The Friend* 53 (14 February 1913), pp. 97-99; *Minutes and Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting of Friends* (London: 1913), p. 105; 'Armaments.Calling a Halt', *The Friend* 53 (5 December 1913), pp. 797-98; 'Reduction of Armaments', *The Friend* 54 (23 January 1914), pp. 51-52; 'The Business of Navy-Mongering', *The Friend 54* (27 March 1914), pp. 211-13.

British representative on the League Council to press for a limitation of armaments. In addition, it requested three of its members—Pickard, Frederick Pollard and John Graham—to write to all Preparative Meetings urging them to hold public meetings on this issue.[19]

Along with the League of Nations Union and the National Peace Council, the Society of Friends also began to mobilize opinion in advance of the Washington Conference held in 1921–1922. Letters were again dispatched to all Clerks and Peace Correspondents within Preparative Meetings accompanied by a resolution on disarmament and other literature including posters, leaflets and handbills. Friends also worked alongside other peace groups in the Joint Disarmament Committee set up at a conference called by the National Peace Council; it lobbied the Labour Party, the TUC and Chambers of Commerce throughout Britain. Bertram Pickard was asked to report back to Meeting for Sufferings on what the Peace Committee considered to be a very good response to its initiative.[20]

Both British and American Friends sent delegates to the Conference at which eight maritime nations including the United States, Britain and Japan sought to limit naval armaments. Quakers played an active role at Washington and they were much more enthusiastic about the resulting treaties than they had been about the Versailles Settlement. Writing in *The Friend's Fellowship Papers* in 1922 Pickard applauded the Washington Treaties for strengthening Anglo-American friendship as well as for giving the United States, despite her rejection of League membership, an important role to play in resolving issues that threatened international peace and security. He regarded Washington as representing a new kind of conference, one based on 'open diplomacy' and responsive to the clamour for peace of American public opinion; both were key tenets of Wilsonian internationalism and the very antithesis of what had happened at Versailles.[21]

Pickard, in common with others on the Peace Committee and indeed a wide body of Quaker opinion, regarded the limited measures of naval disarmament agreed upon at Washington as but the first step along the road to a general disarmament treaty.[22] To be effective, the treaties had to be

19. *Minutes of the Peace Committee*: 6 January, 3 February, 3 March, 30 June and 1 September 1921.

20. *Minutes of the Peace Committee*: 1 September and 6 October 1921.

21. B. Pickard, 'The Washington Conference', *Friends Fellowship Papers* (March 1922), pp. 34-38.

22. Letters to Editor: W. Whiting, 'The Washington Conference', *The Friend* 61 (14 October 1921), p. 688; 'Disarmament Campaign', *The Friend* 56 (28 October 1921), p. 713; Mtg. for Sufferings Report, 'The Washington Conference', *The Friend* 61 (11 November 1921), p. 746; 'For the Service of Mankind: The Washington Conference', *The Friend* 61 (18 November 1921), pp. 759-60; Letters to Editor: J.H. Harris, 'Disarmament-Geneva & Washington', *The Friend* 61 (30 December 1921), p. 901; F.E. Pollard, 'Washington in Retrospect', *The Friend* 62 (27 January 1922), pp. 53-54; W. Hull, 'An American Friend on the Washington Conference', *The Friend* LXII (3 March 1922), pp. 149-50; *Minutes of the Peace Committee*: 2 February 1922.

followed up by further measures involving air, naval and land disarmament. Quaker peace campaigners drew particular attention to what they saw as the failure of the European Powers in the immediate aftermath of the First World War to comply with Article 8 of the League Covenant which required that:

> members of the League recognise that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations. [23]

Peace activists in the Society of Friends interpreted this as imposing an obligation on all European powers to disarm down to the levels imposed on Germany by the Peace Treaty. Pickard fully supported this view while at the same acknowledging the very real security fears that made states like France so reluctant to disarm and that had to be addressed if arms levels were to be reduced.[24]

The Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance and the Geneva Protocol

The Third League Assembly meeting in 1922 sought to reconcile the demands of member states for disarmament with their need for security by adopting Resolution XIV which made a general disarmament agreement contingent on the negotiation of security guarantees—or as Pickard so succinctly put it, 'No disarmament without guarantees; no guarantees without disarmament'.[25]

The following year a League Committee put forward a plan to strengthen the collective security provisions of the Covenant. The Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance combined measures of disarmament with a mutual guarantee obliging member states to assist one another in case of aggression. It allowed states to form regional military pacts such as already existed

23. B. Pickard, 'The Treaty of Mutual Assistance. An Examination of its Proposals', *The Friend* 64 (4 April 1924), p. 281.

24. B. Pickard, 'Disarmament by Inches', *The Friend* 66 (22 January 1926), p. 67.

25. B. Pickard, 'The Treaty of Mutual Assistance', p. 281.

between the Little Entente (Yugoslavia, Rumania and Czechoslovakia) and between France and Poland and France and Belgium; these pacts would be brought under League control with the states involved taking on special responsibilities for upholding the peace within their own areas. Pickard, along with other members on the Peace Committee who examined the Draft Treaty in some detail, found a number of its proposals unacceptable to Friends. Strengthening the League's war-making powers, he asserted, undermined the Quaker peace witness at home and abroad. It also ran counter to the intentions of the League's founders to create a new kind of international system, one dedicated to the peaceful settlement of disputes by judicial means backed up by the force of world opinion.[26] Pickard's reaction to the Treaty was not, however, entirely negative. He considered its disarmament proposals a step in the right direction and hoped that the British Government would try to secure the necessary changes to the Treaty to ensure its speedy implementation. But the MacDonald Government, under pressure from the Dominions, was not prepared to accept a system of compulsory (and unlimited) guarantee clauses and formally rejected the Draft Treaty in July of 1924.

Britain and France then tried to retrieve the situation by agreeing to a new plan, the 'Protocol for the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes', which the League Assembly then unanimously endorsed in October 1924. Writing in *The Friend* that same month Pickard declared the new plan to be an advance on what had gone before in a number of respects. Firstly, it established a comprehensive system of compulsory arbitration for all disputes. This enabled the League Council to clearly identify the aggressor as any state that refused to accept an arbitrated settlement and then to require member states to take the necessary action against them through the imposition of military or economic sanctions. Finally, it included a provision for the convening of a Disarmament Conference in June 1925 to agree a plan for arms reduction, a necessary precondition for bringing the Protocol into effect.

Even though the Geneva Protocol included a sanctions element, Pickard was now prepared to support it, albeit with reservations, because he felt that it offered the best prospects for peace.[27] Yet he remained acutely aware of the moral anomalies in his position as a Quaker who accepted the need for

26. B. Pickard, 'The Treaty of Mutual Assistance—A Symposium', *The Friend* 63 (16 November 1923), pp. 902-903.

27. B. Pickard, 'The Geneva Protocol', *The Friend* 64 (10 Oct 1924), pp. 864-65. Also B. Pickard, 'The Protocol', *The Young Quaker* (November 1924).

military sanctions in certain circumstances but refused to take any part in their actual implementation. Friends who struggled to fulfil their spiritual and political responsibilities, he wrote, 'had to negotiate the fine line between "idealism" and "realism"'; there were no obvious and easy solutions to the conflicts they faced. But he saw no reason why Quakers should not continue to uphold their anti-war position, 'provided we do nothing to impede those individuals and movements which are working for the same ends, but by different methods'.[28] In practical terms, this meant active co-operation with other groups who shared a similar interest in promoting international peace but who accepted the need to take up arms, if necessary, against an aggressor state.

Pickard's change of position over the sanctions issue evoked little adverse comment from his fellow Quakers. With no major threats to the peace on the horizon in the mid-twenties, the possibility of the League having to take collective action against an aggressor seemed a remote prospect. It is also important to note that while the Society of Friends as a corporate body did not feel able to accept the ratification of the Protocol as a whole, it actively campaigned with other groups like the National Council for the Prevention of War, the Women's International League and the Fellowship of Reconciliation to rally public support for its arbitration and disarmament provisions.[29]

All these hopes were dashed when the newly-elected Conservative Government in Britain abandoned the Protocol in March 1925, preferring instead to negotiate a Western European security pact with France and Germany later that year at Locarno. Pickard did not believe that a limited regional agreement with no provision for arms control could compensate for the loss of the Protocol which linked arbitration, security and disarmament together in one comprehensive package. He continued to regard its rejection as a missed opportunity, arguing that the guarantees it gave against aggression through the imposition of sanctions would have made progress towards disarmament and treaty revision easier.[30]

28. B. Pickard, 'A Plea for the Protocol', part of an article entitled 'Two Views of the Geneva Protocol', *No More War* (February 1925), p. 3.

29. *Minutes of the Peace Committee*: 6 November 1924, 5 February 1925, 5 March 1925, 2 April 1925, 30 April 1925, 4 June 1925 and 2 July 1925.

30. B. Pickard, 'The Geneva Telescope', *The Friend* 66 (16 June 1926), pp. 545-46. Also B. Pickard, 'The Sixth Assembly of the League', *The Friend* 65 (18 September 1925), pp. 814-17.

The Quaker Centre at Geneva between the Wars

In 1926 Bertram Pickard accepted Carl Heath's invitation to become Head of the Quaker International Centre at Geneva. As Friends' representative, Pickard not only put the Quaker point of view on peace issues to League officials but he also played a major role in the development of what are now called nongovernmental organizations or NGOS. Together with official bodies they formed what Pickard termed 'The Greater League of Nations'. In 1925 the Quaker Centre began to organize regular meetings of the 50-odd international societies located in Geneva and when, in 1929, they set up a Federation of Private and Semi-Official International Organisations (F.I.I.G.), they elected Bertram Pickard, by then a well-known and popular figure in international circles in Geneva, to serve as its Honorary Secretary.[31] In that capacity he negotiated on behalf of F.I.I.G. with the League Secretariat and with the Swiss Government. Pickard also used his skills as a journalist to keep Quakers world-wide in touch with events in Geneva. He wrote numerous articles on all aspects of League activity for British and American newspapers and periodicals as well as for *The Friend* where his 'Letter from Geneva' column appeared regularly.

Reviewing the League's achievements during its first decade in an article in *The Friend* in January 1930, he highlighted its success in establishing a framework for inter-state cooperation by the creation of international regulatory administrations like the Health Organization (forerunner of the WHO) and the International Labour Organization (the ILO); Pickard identified these functional bodies or regimes, as they are now called, as key agents in transforming international relations in the cause of peace by facilitating greater interdependence among states in the system. The League had also made progress in getting states to agree to the pacific settlement of disputes through compulsory arbitration, a process which he hoped would be accelerated by the successful negotiation of the Briand–Kellogg Pact for the Renunciation of War in 1928. But as he freely acknowledged in all his writings from the early 1930s on, it had failed to make much headway on the vital issues of disarmament and security, largely as a result of the rejection of the Geneva Protocol. It was this failure to achieve any significant measure of arms limitation which contributed to its inability to enforce the peace.[32]

31. 'Les Hommes du Moment—Bertram Pickard ou L'Ami Des Peuples', *Le Moment* (9 October 1933).

32. B. Pickard, *The League's Tenth Anniversary or Ten Years and the League of Nations* (Pickard Archive in Friends House Library: Unpublished article, 1 January 1930). Also B. Pickard, 'The League's First Decade', The World Outlook Section of *The Friend* 70 (10 January 1930), pp. 6-7.

Pickard was a 'gradualist' on the question of disarmament and how best to achieve it. Getting states to agree on arms reduction would take a long time, given the complex inter-relationship between disarmament and security in an international order organized around the principle of national sovereignty. He believed that the League's disarmament committee should concentrate its efforts on bringing national forces under effective international control before tackling the whole question of weapons reduction: '... an unpleasing conclusion for pacifists to be driven to but it is just as well to face awkward facts...'[33] This proposal held little attraction for British Friends who in the run-up to the Disarmament Conference in 1932 supported a policy of unilateral British disarmament as a prelude to world disarmament although they were always willing to support campaigns for more limited measures of arms reduction, including cuts in military expenditures, by other peace groups.[34]

Quakers and the League 1931–1935

The first challenge to the League system came with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in November 1931. London Yearly Meeting responded to the attack on China by urging both Powers to abide by the terms of the League Covenant which required member states to respect each other's independence and territorial integrity and to submit any disputes to arbitration. It also pressed for Japanese withdrawal from the territory it presently occupied as a necessary precondition for a resolution of the conflict.[35] From the vantage point of Geneva Bertram Pickard felt that the Quaker response did not go far enough. How, he asked could the Society of Friends urge member states to uphold the principles set out in the League Covenant, unless

> ...We would at the same time support the British and other governments in faithfully carrying out those other pledges of the Covenant by which members of the League have undertaken not only to respect territorial integrity and political independence, but also to defend them, at least up to

33. B. Pickard, 'How to Disarm', *The Friend* 69 (24 May 1929), pp. 440-41.

34. *Minutes of Peace Committee*: 5 December 1929, 2 January 1930, 4 December 1930, 5 March 1931, 30 April 1931, 4 June 1931, 2 July 1931.

35. *Minutes of The Peace Committee*: 3 December 1931 and 7 January 1932.

the point of applying, if need be, collective diplomatic and economic pressure.[36]

He urged Quakers to put aside their differences over collective action and to support the imposition of League sanctions against Japan as a means of bringing the conflict in the Far East to an end. Enforcing an economic embargo against Japan ran the risk of further escalating the conflict, yet Pickard was in no doubt that if the League did nothing to assist China, its authority would be seriously undermined and the whole notion of collective security discredited. He saw a fateful connection between the failure to uphold the League Covenant in Manchuria and the fortunes of the Disarmament Conference which was convened in February 1932, declaring that arms reduction would not be successful... 'unless accompanied by a strengthening rather than a weakening of the obligation of mutual assistance'.[37]

Pickard was critical of those 'absolute' pacifists in the Society of Friends who opposed collective action of any kind against an aggressor in political conflicts like Manchuria, relying instead on the power of love to overcome evil. Theirs was primarily a spiritual approach to peace which the overwhelming majority of their fellow citizens did not share and which could not provide a basis for peacemaking in an international order dominated by principles of *realpolitik*. The dilemma for Quaker 'internationalists', like Pickard himself, was how to reconcile their personal commitment to the Peace Testimony with their obligations as citizens to support measures to stop aggression and uphold the peace. He wanted Quakers to recognise that in politics theirs was a minority voice and that they needed to work with the non-pacifist majority to ensure support for the collective security system. A refusal to do so would only strengthen those forces on the right opposed to the League with potentially disastrous consequences for peace.[38]

Pickard's attempts in a series of articles [39] to distinguish between Friends' individual convictions and the political judgments they had to make as citizens provoked a critical response in the letter columns of *The Friend*.

36. B. Pickard, 'The Far Eastern Crisis—Friends and Sanctions', *The Friend 90* (26 February 1932), pp. 169-70).

37. B. Pickard, 'The Far Eastern Crisis'.

38. B. Pickard, 'Pacifism and the Manchurian Situation', *The Friend* 72 (20 November 1931), pp. 1051-52.

39. B. Pickard, 'Friends and Politics—II', *The Friend* 90 (23 December 1932), pp. 1128-29 and B. Pickard, 'Quaker Pacifism and Politics', *The Friend* 92 (30 March 1934), pp. 270-71.

One of the correspondents, Richenda Payne, declared that Quakerism rejected any notion of a dichotomy between personal and public morality 'the faith of a Quaker, if it is worth anything at all, must affect his life as a citizen...' and accused him of 'faith-trimming', a charge he rejected in a follow-up letter.[40] Carl Heath's letter branded as authoritarian Pickard's statement that those conscientious objectors who refused to obey laws should expect to be penalized. Any state, Heath argued, that claimed to respect individual freedom, had to be prepared to accept the higher claims of conscience.[41]

In the end the League, after receiving the report of the Commission of Inquiry that it had sent to China, condemned Japanese aggression but took no further action beyond its refusal to recognize the newly-created state of Manchukuo. The failure of member states to uphold collective security in Manchuria was followed, as Pickard had so accurately predicted, by the collapse of the Disarmament Conference and German withdrawal from the League in the autumn of 1933.

Although the failure to achieve a Disarmament Treaty was a blow to all those Friends who had campaigned tirelessly for such an agreement for a decade, Pickard in 'A Letter from Geneva' in *The Friend* in November 1933 encouraged them to consider what had been achieved during two years of negotiations in Geneva; Quakers and their fellow campaigners, he maintained, had pushed the idea of disarmament on to the political agenda by successfully appealing to public opinion over the heads of politicians and by 'making the public aware of the part played by disarmament in what he termed the "organisation of peace".'[42]

The response of the Peace Committee to the breakdown of the Disarmament Conference was to press the British Government to begin to disarm down to German levels through an immediate ban on all military and naval aircraft. They followed this up with a leaflet to all Meetings advising Friends how to respond to the questions on the Peace Ballot which the League of Nations Union planned to circulate over the winter of 1934/35 in order to gauge the extent of British support for the League, disarmament and collective security. The Peace Committee recommended that Friends assent to

40. Letters to the Editor: R. Payne, 'Friends and Compromise', *The Friend* 90 (30 December 1932), pp. 1155-56; See also Pickard's reply, *The Friend* 91 (3 January 1933), p. 39.

41. Letters to the Editor: C. Heath, 'Quaker Pacifism and Politics', *The Friend* 92 (13 April 1934), p. 326.

42. B. Pickard, 'A Letter From Geneva', *The Friend* 91 (24 November 1933), p. 1045.

the questions relating to an international convention on arms reduction, total air disarmament and a ban on the private manufacture of weapons. However their preferred option was for Britain to take immediate steps to disarm completely rather than wait for a multilateral agreement on arms limitation. The Committee had already prepared a pamphlet entitled *The Call to Complete Disarmament* and now in the leaflet they advised Friends who agreed with this position to include a statement to this effect on the ballot form. As regards the questions on collective security members of the Peace Committee ruled out military measures and gave only lukewarm support to proposals for economic sanctions, by suggesting that individual Friends reply: 'Yes...but not including starvation methods'.[43] The latter was a reference to the Allied blockade of Germany during the First World War which Quakers condemned because of the suffering it caused to innocent civilians and which helps to explain the Society's reluctance to support economic sanctions throughout the inter-war period.[44]

The League, the Abyssinian Crisis and the Sanctions Debate

The most crucial test of the League's effectiveness came with Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia in October 1935. The attempt by the League of Nations to impose limited sanctions against Italy exposed the long-standing divisions within British Quakerism over the concept of collective security and how states should respond to the use of force by an aggressor. In a letter to all Quaker Meetings that same month the Peace Committee indicated their total opposition to a sanctions policy *of any kind* as a way of bringing about a change in Italian policy. Economic, no less than military sanctions, involved the use of coercion and would inflict unacceptable suffering on innocent civilians and intensify hostilities on both sides. Only 'the restoring power of moral and creative influences will defeat aggression and save Abyssinia and the world from its consequences'.[45]

Bertram Pickard strongly disagreed with their stand. The League system was under threat from a fascist regime prepared to use force to achieve its objectives. In such circumstances moral pressure would achieve nothing. Member states had to be prepared to enforce a policy of economic

43. *Minutes of the Peace Committee*: 1 March, 3 May and 2 August 1934. See also 'Friends and the Armaments Questionnaire', *The Friend* 92 (17 August 1934), p. 748.

44. 'The Treaty Accepted, but...', *The Friend* 69 (27 June 1919), pp. 404-405 and *Minutes of the Peace Committee*: 6 March 1919 and 3 April 1919.

45. *Minutes of the Peace Committee*: Special Meeting held on 18 October 1935.

sanctions, including oil and other materials, to force an Italian military withdrawal. If Italian aggression went unchecked, he warned that it would mean the destruction of the League and would eventually lead to war.[46]

As Convenor of the International Consultative Group for Peace and Disarmament (the ICG) in Geneva and editor of their series of Special Reports and Surveys of International Affairs, he helped to produce a document in May 1936 which put the case for sanctions in greater detail:

> In principle, they (sanctions) differ from war in that they constitute police action by the community for social order, as against anarchical action by the individual state for selfish aggression. They constitute public war for defence of the community against private war for advantage of one state at another's expense. Even if, at the very worst, this involved some form of military or naval action, that would be preferable in a world where armed force rules, to allowing the aggressor to work his will freely; for this would mean repeated warfare of the old anarchic type, and total disruption of the League...[47]

The ICG paper provoked an immediate and critical response from Carl Heath in the Quaker press. Despite their long-standing association in the international work of the Society, a gulf had opened up between the two men over the League and the attitude of pacifists towards the organization of peace. For Heath and the majority of British Friends, all war, no matter whether it was public or private, whether it was a war between nation states or an international police action by the League to enforce international law and agreements, was wrong and totally incompatible with Quaker beliefs. A true international society with shared assumptions about peace and security had yet to emerge and until it did, any attempt to give the League a policing role would only lead to a series of wars as individual states resisted the growing centralization of power at Geneva. Heath himself was worried about the threat posed by a world state with no effective controls on its power... 'I would rather have wars continue than find myself settled into Huxley's Brave New World with no possibility of resistance... I don't want peace that is order without freedom'.[48] Peace could not be created by threatening or actually resorting to war; that was the lesson of the 1914–1918 conflict. The

46. B. Pickard, 'The League's Eleventh Hour', *The Friend* 93 (30 August 1935), pp. 785-86; 'A Letter from Geneva', *The Friend* 93 (4 October 1935), p. 890.

47. 'A Note on the Basis and Nature of Sanctions', *Special Surveys and Reports of the International Consultative Group*. No. 5. Geneva: 15 January 1936. Box 7/1. League of Nations Archive, Geneva.

48. Letter from C. Heath to A.C. Wilson: 7 March 1934. *Alexander Wilson Papers. Temporary MSS* 1/92/Box J/10, Friends House Library.

answer, Heath contended, lay not in economic and military coercion but in addressing the causes of the conflict between states, in this case the Italian belief that the international order created by the Versailles Settlement was unjust.[49]

Carl Heath's distrust of the League reflected the views of those absolute pacifists in London Yearly Meeting like Ruth Fry who appeared willing to see the organization fail rather than compromise their principles. Bertram Pickard, in their eyes, was too closely identified with the League and its institutions and too outspoken in his support of Arthur Henderson and the other advocates of collective security at Geneva.[50] On the issue of peace enforcement Pickard had moved closer to the pro-sanctions position of continental pacifists with whom he came in contact at the Geneva Centre and at various International Peace Conferences in the 1920s and 1930s.[51]

Pickard considered such blanket opposition to the use of force not only wrong but also dangerous at a time when the League's authority was being undermined by fascist aggression, first in Manchuria and then in Abyssinia. In their concern to uphold their pacifist principles by opposing collective action, many Quakers had not given sufficient thought to the consequences of failing to support the League. He supported a sanctions policy, as William Penn had done in his peace plan for Europe in 1693, because an element of compulsion was necessary to enforce the peace in the transition from an international system based on force to one based on law. Non-violence was not an option: if fascist/Nazi aggression continued unchecked, the only alternative to a limited police action was all-out general war. He warned his fellow Quakers that at a time of maximum danger in the international system, they had to work together with their fellow citizens to build a new internationalism combining peace and justice. '...In politics, pacifism, like patriotism, is not yet enough'.[52]

49. C. Heath, 'Sanctions and the Most Excellent Way', *The Wayfarer* 15 (March 1936), pp. 56-57.

50. Letters to the Editor: J. Southall, 'Disarmament', *The Friend* 91 (1 December 1933), p. 1076; J. Southall, 'Mr. Henderson & Disarmament. A Criticism & A Reply', *The Friend* 92 (19 January 1934), p. 53; 'An Impenitent Pacifist', *The Friend* 92 (13 April 1934), p. 326; R. Fry, 'Sanctions and the League', *The Wayfarer* 14 (November 1935), pp. 252-53.

51. B. Pickard, *The Peacemakers Dilemma* (Pendle Hill: Pamphlet Number 16, 1942), pp. 41-46.

52. B. Pickard, 'Sanctions—A Political Way to Peace', *The Wayfarer* 15 (April 1936), pp. 86-87.

He believed that effective League action, including the extension of sanctions to cover oil and other vital commodities, could have forced Italy to back down. But it would have meant war which Pickard presumably would have supported whilst preserving a personal pacifism. Neither the British nor the French, however, who were the key players on the League Council, were willing to risk a military conflict. Instead the failure of sanctions to prevent Mussolini's conquest of Abyssinia in 1936 destroyed the League's role in the maintenance of international peace and security and relegated it to the margins of international life until it was finally disbanded in 1946. At the Quaker Centre where he remained until 1940 Pickard continued to support the League's social and economic activities and to liaise with the Secretariat on issues of concern to the Society of Friends and the other private international organizations with whom they were associated.

Conclusion

What these inter-war debates in the Society of Friends reveal is a multi-faceted approach to peace-making. In pursuit of Carl Heath's vision, the Quaker Centres in the various capitals of Europe played an active, if relatively minor role, in conflict resolution on a number of occasions in the 1920s and 1930s—they carried out relief work in Berlin, Vienna and the Czech Sudetenland and they sent representatives to act as mediators during the Ruhr crisis and the Saar plebiscite and in disputes involving the rights of German minorities in Poland and Lithuania.[53]

The Society, however, went beyond these traditions of Quaker diplomacy to enthusiastically embrace the concept of internationalism as embodied in the League system. As one of the earliest private international organizations, Quakers under the guidance of Bertram Pickard, were 'a high visibility' group at Geneva in the inter-war years. They linked up with other NGOS and with various League agencies to extend international co-operation on issues of common concern—these included disarmament, refugees, mandates, and the anti-slavery and anti-opium campaigns. Quakers fully supported this functionalist approach as a contribution to the process of international integration through the creation of a body of universally applied rules and regulations.

53. B. Pickard, *Pacifist Diplomacy in Conflict Situations Illustrated by the Quaker International Centres* (Philadelphia: Pacifist Research Bureau, 1943), pp. 7-25.

They regarded the Geneva Experiment as but a first stage on the road towards a supranational world order based on law; where they differed was on the place of coercion as a restraint against aggression. Divisions within Quaker circles opened up over the League's collective security role, focusing in particular on the contentious issue of sanctions.

Majority opinion within the Society remained committed to the peaceful settlement of international disputes through arbitration and mediation and strongly opposed to the idea of peace enforcement through the imposition of sanctions of any kind. But a sizable minority, led by Pickard, believed that the League had to be prepared to take collective action, if necessary, to uphold the principles of the Covenant. It was left up to individual Quakers to decide whether or not they themselves could personally participate in any such international police action.

With the coming of the Second World War the Society of Friends left these old arguments behind as they sought a replacement for the moribund League system. Bertrand Pickard's subsequent career after his departure from the Quaker Centre in Geneva in 1940 illustrates their continuing commitment to international institution building. He spent the war years first in Britain and then in the United States where he wrote and lectured on international affairs, placing particular emphasis on the conditions necessary to create a lasting peace and the role that pacifism could play in this process. He also took an active part in the post-War planning for a new United Nations organisation and in 1945 joined its Secretariat. Returning to Geneva, he utilized his extensive pre-War experience and his wide network of contacts in his new role as a UN Liaison Officer with the NGOS located there. After his retirement in 1955 he returned to England where he died in 1973.

As this paper has sought to show, Pickard did much to advance the cause of international co-operation through his tenure at the Quaker Centre in Geneva. Perhaps Horace Alexander most accurately summed up the life and work of his long-time friend and associate in peace work in an obituary in *The Friend*:

> Bertram Pickard probably did as much as any man of his generation to educate Friends throughout the world to think internationally and to understand both the value and the limitations of the League of Nations.[54]

54. *The Friend* 131 (29 June 1973), pp. 773-74.

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