OPPOSITION AND REACTION: THE UNION OF DEMOCRATIC CONTROL, THE PRESS, AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S SUPPRESSION OF DISSENT DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

by

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ABSTRACT

ALISON REBECCA STEIGERWALD. Opposition and reaction: the union of democratic control, the press, and the British government's suppression of dissent during the First World War. (Under the direction of DR. PETER THORSHEIM)

The Union of Democratic Control (UDC) formed after Britain entered the First World War against the Central Powers on August 4, 1914. The British government argued that it joined the war to uphold international laws and prevent Germany from taking over Belgium and France. The founders of the UDC believed, however, that Britain entered the war because of secret agreements between Britain, Russia, and France that Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey arranged, without any form of oversight or Parliamentary control. The UDC quickly published its four cardinal points within months of the first shots of the war. Its founders, however, faced backlash from the British public and press who viewed the group as pro-German and traitorous. The UDC fought throughout the war to convince the public and press that it was a loyal group dedicated to preserving peace once the war ended. Though the press stopped attacking the group as severely in 1916, the British government stepped in to prevent the group from eroding Britain's morale. As the war progressed, the British government became more obsessed with silencing the UDC and its members, working to imprison the leaders of the group. Though the group never gained acceptance from the press, government, or public, it did succeed in exposing the problems with secret diplomacy and successfully petitioned the government to change the personal wealth requirements for British diplomats. Overall, the group gained limited reforms but remains known for its rhetoric during the war.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On August 4, 1914, Britain declared war on Germany, bringing it into a European conflict. The assassination of the Austro-Hungarian Archduke Francis Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, broke diplomatic relations between the two sets of alliances in Europe and most of Europe was already at war. The Central Powers, consisting of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire faced off against the Entente Powers, France, Britain, and Russia. Britain's declaration of war turned the European war into a World War, and all countries involved prepared for what they believed would be a short conflict.[1]

Britain, like most belligerent countries in 1914, believed that the war would end by Christmas, and millions of young men flocked to recruitment stations to enlist. The British government declared war on Germany after it invaded Belgium, violating Belgium's sovereignty and neutral status. The German invasion of Belgium justified the British declaration of war to most of the British population and representatives in its government. Some people, though, believed that there was a more sinister and secret reason behind the declaration of war. Dissent groups began forming against the war for different reasons. Some groups protested wars in general; others believed that socialism forbid wars between members of the labor class. One group, known as the Union of Democratic Control (UDC), formed around the idea that the government entered into the

[1] Marvin Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics During the First World War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 1-10.

war because of secret foreign policy decisions that bound Britain to its allies, and promised territory, to Britain as reward for entering the conflict.[2]

The UDC's founders and members wanted to democratize British foreign policy and open all declarations of war and peace to debate in Parliament. Though all dissent groups became targets of the British public, press, and government, the UDC faced some of the harshest scrutiny. The UDC focused on foreign policy, and its members and sympathizers served in Parliament and other high-ranking political positions. By 1917, it had over 10,000 members across the United Kingdom and published dozens of pamphlets, books, and leaflets.[3] The notoriety of its members and the prolific amount of published literature, helps explain the public's, press, and later into the war the government's concentration on the members of the UDC. The five founders published the most for the organization and bore the most scrutiny from the government and the press. These following five men became the focus for the press and government during the First World War and serve as one of the focuses for this thesis.

C. P. Trevelyan won a seat in the House of Commons in 1899. After several years of faithful service to the Liberal Party, Prime Minister Henry Herbert Asquith rewarded Trevelyan with a cabinet post in 1908. He served as the Parliamentary Secretary for the Board of Education until August 3, 1914. When Trevelyan found out that Britain would not remain neutral in the European conflict he resigned from the Liberal government, but retained his seat in the House of Commons. After multiple meetings with E. D. Morel, he decided to form a dissent group and in September 1914 officially founded the UDC. For

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[2] Sally Harris, *Out of Control: British Foreign Policy and the Union of Democratic Control, 1914-1918,* (London: University of Hull Press, 1996) 1-39.
[3] Ibid.

the first several months, the UDC operated out of Trevelyan's home in central London, until the group rented offices about three miles away. [4]

E. D. Morel successfully led reform movements in the Congo in 1904 and grew suspicious of the British Foreign Office during his work against colonialism. In 1911, Morel finished his work in the Congo and turned to other colonial crises. Over the next several years, he investigated the two Moroccan crises and published numerous articles and a book on them. When the British Government declared war on Germany in August 1914, Morel joined Trevelyan in organizing the UDC and became the group's secretary. Morel was the most prolific writer for the UDC and the only executive member of the group whom the British government successfully prosecuted during the war.[5]

Arthur Ponsonby joined in founding the UDC because of his frustration with the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Corps. Ponsonby served in the Diplomatic Corps and Foreign Office from 1894 to 1902, when he resigned his position and entered politics to help groups who opposed the Boer War. He became a Member of Parliament in 1908 and one of the harshest critics of the offices he formally served in. Through July and into the first days of August 1914, Ponsonby worked to encourage Liberal members of Parliament to oppose British intervention. His work ultimately failed, however, when he underestimated the outrage over the German invasion of Belgium. Trevelyan and Morel welcomed Ponsonby and thought his support in the organization of their group helpful because of his expertise in foreign affairs. With so much Liberal Party support for the

[4] A. J. A. Morris, *C. P. Trevelyan, 1870-1958: Portrait of a Radical* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977) 13.
[5] Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics During the First World War*, 13-14.

war, all three men recognized the need to expand their group's base appeal to reach other political parties such as Labour.[6]

Ramsay MacDonald entered politics as a member of the Labour Party in 1906. He served as secretary of the Labour Party until 1910, when his party elected him chairman. He also served as the chair of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), a socialist organization separate from the Labour Party in Parliament. MacDonald fought the British declaration of war, and attempted to pass a resolution through the Labour Party calling for peace the day after the government declared war. Members of his party, however, blocked the resolution and declared their support for the war. MacDonald decided to resign as chair of the Labour Party instead of supporting the war; but retained his seat in Parliament. The decision to resign caused MacDonald to become a national pariah for the remainder of the war. Trevelyan contacted MacDonald after his own resignation in the hope that MacDonald's help in the creation of the UDC would expand support for the group by appealing to Labour. MacDonald worked with the UDC and the Independent Labour Party throughout the war even while retaining his Parliament seat. In 1918 after the war ended, MacDonald lost his seat in Parliament, but became Prime Minister in 1924 after public opinion changed.[7]

One of the leading members of the peace movement before World War One was Norman Angell. Angell first worked as a reporter for the *Ipswich Times* in 1890 before he became an editor of the *Daily Messenger* and *Continental Daily Mail*.[8] In 1912, he left the *Continental Daily Mail* to become a peace advocate in Europe. Near the end of July

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[6] Ibid, 15-16.
[7] Austen Morgan, *Lives of the Left: J. Ramsay MacDonald* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 15-17.
[8] Angell worked for the *Daily Messenger* from 1898 to 1904 and the *Continental Daily Mail* from 1905 to 1912.

1914, Angell founded the Neutrality League to keep Britain from entering the European war. Unfortunately, other Neutrality Leagues formed in Britain around the same time and none agreed to support the same principles, ending the chance for a cohesive British neutrality movement.[9] After he failed to convince British politicians to remain neutral in the European conflict, Angell joined with C. P. Trevelyan, Ramsey MacDonald, and E. D. Morel to form the UDC in September 1914.[10] With the UDC officially formed, members published pamphlets and leaflets to inform the British public of their point of view concerning the ongoing conflict.

The UDC, in 1914 and 1915, concentrated on selling itself to the British public and press, and published the most literature during these two years. The founders of the group willingly changed their arguments from 1914 to 1915 to attract more public support, unlike later years. The British public though, did not flock to the UDC as the founders thought they would. When the group formed, the five founders believed that the public did not support the war and therefore a dissent group such as theirs would find support among the public, if not with politicians. After the first several months of the war, however, the group realized the public had resoundingly rejected its message and adjusted its argument. In 1914, the UDC tried to humanize the Central Powers and called for people to understand that Britain were not at war with the people of Germany, but rather the German High Command who orchestrated the war. By 1915, writers for the UDC argued that German militarism caused the war, but the British needed to deal with Germany carefully after the war ended to ensure lasting peace in Europe. Neither the

[9] The different Neutrality Leagues all jockeyed for power because they all wanted Britain to remain out of the war for different reasons. Some were socialist groups and wanted worker solidarity and others thought that Britain needed to remain neutral for economic and political reasons.
[10] Albert Marrin, *Sir Norman Angell* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979) 12-13.

public nor the press bought into any of the UDC's arguments and all mainstream newspapers vilified the group. The press and public considered members of the UDC traitors and wrote articles and letters to the editor calling for the break-up of UDC meetings and the arrest of its founding members. The government monitored the group during this time, but did not interfere with meetings or the public attacks. As the war moved into 1916, however, this changed.

1916 saw the public growing weary as more and more men died at the front. High casualties and dwindling enlistment numbers forced the British government to instigate conscription in January 1916, which created new problems for the government and dissent organizations. The government now had to deal with conscientious objectors, who refused to fight or enter into any kind of service that aided the war. Dissent groups found themselves under a new level of scrutiny as the government paid more attention to morale and the impact dissent groups had on enlistment and draft dodging. Though the UDC did not directly object to conscription or aid conscientious objectors, they found themselves under new scrutiny as well. The British government worried that dissent groups, such as the UDC, would influence diplomatic relations with the United States. A UDC founder moved to the United States in 1915, and many members travelled there during the war to promote the group's ideas about a negotiated peace. The government investigated members of the UDC and examined many of them for sending dissent material to neutral countries, which remained illegal throughout the war. Though many investigations turned up limited evidence that illegal activity took place, the government chose not to prosecute. At the same time, UDC members became fixated on the idea of a negotiated peace. This peace allowed Britain to end the war between itself and the Central Powers

and supposedly let both countries save face and manpower. Though this idea only had limited popularity for a couple of months in 1918, the UDC founders stuck with it and refused to accept that the public did not believe in it.

As the UDC pushed for a negotiated peace the British government faced a growing internal conflict. Herbert Henry Asquith who had served as Prime Minister since 1908 and now encountered resistance to his policies and wartime leadership. The resistance came from members of Asquith's own party, the Liberal Party, along with members of the Conservative Party and Labour. These people believed that Asquith's mismanagement led Britain into several crises including an arms manufacturing crisis. All of this political turmoil allowed David Lloyd George, a Liberal MP and cabinet member, to create a Coalition government supported by Liberals, Conservatives, and Labour, which took power from Asquith. Lloyd George became Prime Minster in December 1916 and quickly turned his attention to dissent and morale in Britain.

1917 marked a year of false hope for the UDC. Lloyd George's rise to power angered many Liberal ministers still loyal to Asquith. They refused to support Lloyd George's Coalition government and began supporting the UDC against him. This boost in support coupled with the initial Russian Revolution in February allowed the UDC to believe the government would enter into peace negotiations that year. The UDC pushed harder to obtain this negotiated peace and frequently tried to force Lloyd George's government to begin negotiations of at least reach out to Germany. Lloyd George, however, refused to publically declare British war aims or negotiate peace and instead worked to silence the UDC and other dissent groups. Lloyd George created the National War Aims Committee (NWAC) in 1917 to serve as the government's mouthpiece and

boost morale in Britain. The creation of the NWAC hurt the UDC because it gave the public an alternative argument, which the public believed more. The UDC also suffered a setback in 1917 when police arrested the secretary of the group E. D. Morel. Morel's arrest and subsequent imprisonment caused the UDC's publications to lag and temporarily destroyed the spirit of the group.

1918 began with the UDC in dire need of a morale booster. The group's best writer was in jail and new laws passed in 1917 made it harder to publish dissent literature. Documents released by the new Bolshevik government, which took power in Russia in October 1917, and American President Woodrow Wilson's fourteen-points speech helped boost the group's confidence and gave it more public support. Just as the public began supporting the group, however, Russia signed a peace treaty with the Central Powers and Germany began a new offensive in the west. Public opinion quickly turned against the group and the press and government both began to ridicule and harass UDC members. This harassment lasted until the fighting ended November 11, 1918. After the belligerents signed an armistice, Lloyd George called for new elections in December 1918. Members of the UDC who served in Parliament during the war lost their seats and it was finally clear that the public truly supported the war and the government that won it. Though in the 1920s and 1930s UDC members regained their seats and eventually headed their own government, the UDC never was as important as during World War One.

The historiography for this thesis is divided between, historians who study dissent and radicalism, historians who study World War One, and historians who study dissent and radicalism during World War One. Those who study dissent and radicalism often

focus on the different campaigns against wars over a long period, but some also examine all types of dissent within one country. These historians spend only a chapter or two on World War One and instead try to study different types of dissent across a longer span of time. The study of World War One is varied, but historians generally take either a very specific look at one aspect of the war such as the propaganda ministry in Britain, or examine more general topics such as women's roles during the war. These historians spend little time on dissent because the real focus is the war and its impact on society and/or politics. Historians who concentrate on both dissent and World War One, usually study one type of dissent, one particular dissent group, or examine dissent as a whole in one country. Authors spilt dissent groups based on what they protested during the war. Some focused on pacifism and those who protested the military aspect of the war, and some examine the groups who protested the politics behind the war. Those that do study political dissent typically concentrate just on the group and its actions during the war, not on the group's relationship with the press and government.

Historians who study dissent in general examine either a certain country's history of dissent and radicalism, or a distinct group of radicals over a larger geographical region though both study a large time span. William Pelz's book, *Against Capitalism* examines socialist radical movements in Europe from 1871 to 1921. Pelz's asserted that socialist movements began in 1871 and called for change in society and economic structure. He stops his work in 1921 because after that date the rise of fascism changed the perception and arguments association with socialism, which required more research. Pelz's work is unique in that it uses an unconventional period. Most books on radicalism and socialism in Europe usually stop at 1914 or go all the way to the 1930s. Pelz argues that the

socialist movement that began in 1871 ultimately failed by 1921. He cites the rise of fascism and Stalinism as two main ideologies that prevented socialists from achieving their utopia.[11] Nigel Young takes a more focused approach in a chapter entitled "War resistance and the British Peace Movement since 1914." This chapter, contained in an anthology called *Campaigns for Peace,* examined British resistance to war starting in 1914 with the advent of World War One and ending in 1969 during the Cold War. Young argued that pacifists in Britain, though only a minority, created the most trouble for the British government during its wars. Young asserted that there were multiple categories of radicals in Britain, but only those associated with labor and religion had any impact on the government. Young's chapter actually begins in 1916, despite his title, and examines peace movements during World War One, World War Two, and in the nuclear age. He claims that peace movements during all three were always the minority in Britain, and suffered greatly for their beliefs, though true pacifists never succumbed to public pressure to change. Young's book defends pacifism and seeks to prove that pacifists understood something others did not.[12] These two books best demonstrate the historiography of dissent in Europe. Pelz's book concentrated on socialism while Young's chapter examined Britain. Neither author picked a particular dissent group to study and neither examined what efforts the government put in to prevent the group from meeting or organizing. Though Young takes a more judgmental tone than Pelz, both authors trace dissent over a long time span in an effort to understand the different movements and arguments of the dissenters.

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[11] William Pelz, *Against Capitalism: The European Left on the March* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 1-4, 135-145.
[12] Nigel Young, *War resistance and the British Peace Movement since 1914*, in *Campaigns for Peace,* ed. by Richard Taylor and Nigel Young (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 23-44.

Historians who examine the history of World War One are forced to limit themselves because of the vast amount of subjects contained in the topic. Some historians choose to concentrate on one country, but most limit themselves further and exam very specific aspects of the war and its effects on one or two countries. Though historians can cover a myriad of topics in their books, those who cover World War One spend only a chapter or two on dissent. Historians' focus on the war and its effects on politics, social dynamics, or the military, not dissent. Many focus instead on morale and the efforts to control it, but not on those who tried to destroy it.

Susan Grayzel's book *Women's Identities at War* examines British and French women during World War One and how and why their roles changed over the course of the war. Grayzel also briefly examines, what happened to these women after the war ended. She argues that while women in Britain and France entered the work force and gained more freedom these roles did not last, especially in France. Grayzel asserts that after the war ended, governments did little to help women achieve equality and with the decline in birth rates, they typically blamed women for shirking their duties to the nation and forced them back in the home. Grayzel's book spends a chapter on women's dissent during the war and argues that governments took female dissent very seriously in both countries because of the impact women had on their sons and husbands. Governments also saw women as a source of civilian labor and worried that female dissent could more easily spread given the weaker nature of the female sex. Because of this, both the British and French governments monitored women and the French government in particular,

took female dissenters to trial for treason. Though Grayzel spends one chapter on dissent her work overall does not examine dissent movements headed by women.[13]

David French's book *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition* examines British politics from 1916 to 1918. French concentrates on David Lloyd George who became Prime Minister in December 1916 and dramatically changed the domestic policies in Britain during his rule. He argues that Lloyd George's government fought World War One for two reasons, first the government wanted to ensure that no country or colony would be under the control of the Central Powers, and second to ensure Britain gained power from the eventual peace treaty. French assesses Lloyd George's government in detail from his ascension as Prime Minister to the armistice. Though he discusses morale in Britain, his book is more a political and military history and does not debate dissent movements' impact.[14]

Tania Rose's book, *Aspects of Political Censorship, 1914-1918,* looks at how and why British politicians viewed and manipulated the press throughout the war. She argues that politicians did this to enforce their domestic and foreign agendas while protecting military interests. Rose asserts that the British government viewed the press as a dangerous entity that needed to be controlled. Rose also examines the impact of the Russian Revolution on the British government and how the revolution affected British censorship laws.[15] David Monger takes the opposite approach than Rose in his book, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain: The National War Aims Committee and Civilian Morale.* Monger argues that during the last years of the war the

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[13] Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 1-10, 157-189.
[14] David French, *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 1-12.
[15] Tania Rose, *Aspects of Political Censorship, 1914-1918* (Britain: The University of Hull Press, 1995), 1-9.

British government flooded the public with propaganda in an effort to create a patriotic narrative that would convince a weary public to support the war. Monger takes a very detailed and scientific approach to the National War Aims Committee (NWAC) and examines its output of literature and the nature of its funding from 1917 to the end of the war.[16]

Historians who study dissent during World War One either examine dissent throughout the war in one country or pick one to two dissent groups to examine in depth. Earlier in the historiography, writers focused more on the political effect these groups had. Later historians have focused on stories that are more personal and in depth examinations of groups and their internal dynamics. Though these authors focus on different aspects of dissent they do not try and examine dissent groups in relation to the press and government.

Adam Hochschild's book *To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918* examines personal stories of those in Britain who opposed the war juxtaposed with those who supported it. Hochschild argues that dissent was most prevalent in Britain because many people did not think that Britain was fighting a just war. Hochschild claims dissenters in Britain understood the horrors of war and could not bring themselves to fight for it.[17] Brock Millman's book, *Managing Domestic Dissent in First World War Britain* examines the British governments response to dissent during the war in Britain. Millman uses the different Home Office directors, who typically handled dissent, to analyze the different policies in Britain throughout the war. He does focus, however, on

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[16] David Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain: The National War Aims Committee and Civilian Morale* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 1-13.
[17] Adam Hochschild, *To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918* (Boston: Mariner Books Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), 1-113.

the negative use of power by the British government. While works like the book by Monger examine the positive power of the British government or the policies put in place to encourage enlistment and loyalty, Millman concentrates his book on the policies put in place to discourage dissent and limit free speech. Millman argues that the British government established a covert system of dealing with dissent that allowed them the same amount of control, if not more, than autocratic countries like Germany. He asserts that by 1917 the British government infiltrated different dissent organizations and trade unions and secretly monitored many more to prevent the spread of dissent literature and ideas.[18] These works best represent the different views historians take when examining overall dissent in a country. Hochschild examines the war from the dissenters' point of view and Millman examines the government's effect on dissenters. Neither book, however, examines an individual group or the impact of the press.

Historical examinations of individual dissent movements separate pacifist groups from political ones. Two authors, Keith Robbins and Thomas Kennedy best illustrate the historiography that exists on pacifist dissent groups. Robbins's book *The Abolition of War*, examines the peace movement in Britain staring in 1914 until 1919. Robbins book studies the British Peace Society, one of the oldest peace societies in Britain, which dates back to 1816. Founded at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the British Peace Society worked to link public support across Europe to prevent militaristic governments from waging war. Robbins argues that until World War One began the British Peace Society assumed it had good relations with all other European countries. After the British government declared war, however, the peace movement found itself unprepared and

[18] Brock Millman, *Managing Domestic Dissent in First World War Britain, 1914-1918* (Kingston, Ontario, Royal Military College, 2000), 1-8.

never completely recovered. The surprise made it difficult to organize and conflicting interests between different peace movements meant that no one voice ever spoke for the British peace societies.[19] While Robbins examines one specific pacifist group, Kennedy's articles provide an excellent example to the more general research done on pacifism and pacifists in Britain during World War One. Three articles, "'They in the Lord Who Firmly Trust': A Friend at War with the Great War," "Public Opinion and the Conscientious Objector, 1915-1919," and "Fighting About Peace: The Non-conscription Fellowship and the British Friends' Service Committee, 1915-1919," all examine different aspects of the pacifism movement. Kennedy uses personal stories of imprisoned absolute pacifists, and instances even after the war, where conscientious objectors still suffered because of their choices during the war. Kennedy concludes that being a pacifist or conscientious objector in Britain caused ridicule and imprisonment during and after World War One. Kennedy also asserts that the pacifist movement never had a cohesive argument, which caused infighting between the different pacifist movements. [20]

Historians separate non-pacifist political dissent groups into two main groups, the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and the UDC. Early in the historiography, historians examined both groups political impact, not the groups themselves. More recently, however, studies examine social impacts from the groups and provide more details about their policies and members personal goals. Neither examines a political opposition group in comparison to the governments and press's actions.

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[19] Keith Robbins, *The Abolition of War: The Peace Movement in Britain, 1914-1919* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1976), 7-26.

[20] Thomas C. Kennedy, "'They in the Lord Who Firmly Trust': A Friend at War with the Great War," *Quaker History* 78, no. 2. (1989): 87-102, *JSTOR*. Thomas C. Kennedy, "'They in the Lord Who Firmly Trust': A Friend at War with the Great War," *Quaker History* 78, no. 2. (1989): 87-102, *JSTOR*. Thomas C. Kennedy, "Fighting About Peace: The Nonconscription Fellowship and the British Friends' Service Committee, 1915-1919," *Quaker History* 69, no. 1. (1980): 3-22. *JSTOR*.

Robert E. Dowse's book, *Left in the Centre: The Independent Labour Party 1893-1940,* examines the ILP and its interactions with other opposition groups during the war. Dowse argues that the ILP was the center organization for dissent during the war and offered a message of working class solidarity in all countries. Dowse asserts that the ILP was more concerned with ideology and allowed other opposition groups such as the UDC or No Conscription Fellowship (NCF) to address foreign policy and political issues.[21] Marvin Swartz's book, *The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics during the First World War,* argues that the UDC helped orchestrate the fall of the Liberal government and the rise of the Labour government after the war. Swartz contends that the UDC was an important political force in Britain during the First World War and remained so after the war ended.[22]

Sally Harris's book, *Out of Control: British Foreign Policy and the Union of Democratic Control, 1914-1918,* argues that the UDC fought against the Liberal government's foreign policy during the war. Harris examines the formation of the UDC and asserts that the organization fought against the government's "old world" diplomacy, in particular the policy of secret treaties, which they blamed for starting the war.[23] Harris examines the UDC differently than historians in previous decades. While she still analyzes the relationship between political representatives and the UDC, she also concentrates on the internal dynamics of the group and tries to understand what the members themselves wanted. Older works simply traced the actions of the UDC and the actions of political leaders and compared the two. Earlier works did not attempt to

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[21] Robert E. Dowse, *The Left in the Centre: the Independent Labour Party, 1893-1940* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1960), 1-6.
[22] Marvin Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics During the First World War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 1-10.
[23] Harris, *Out of Control,* 1-39.

separate different members of the UDC or examine the internal dynamics. Harris's book, however, still leaves out the press in her analysis of the UDC because of the amount of time it took to detail the main UDC members' actions.

My thesis examines the actions of the UDC, the press, and government from August 1914 to November 1918. Unlike previous works on the UDC who just concentrated on the political implications or the group's internal dynamics, this thesis analyses the interactions between UDC publications and actions with press publications and governmental debates and interference. It should be noted that for the purposes of this thesis the press refers to mainstream newspapers that were not run by dissent organizations during the war. The *Times* is the main source of information concerning the press, but other articles found in newspapers such as, the *Daily Mail,* and the *Manchester Guardian*, among others, are also used. Though each of these newspapers had different points of view and maintained slightly different narratives concerning the war, when examined together the same ideas concerning the nature of dissent appear, which I use as a collective narrative. The UDC was unique in that it concentrated on political issues and did not protest conscription or military actions. UDC members also served in Parliament during the war giving them a unique perspective and sense of authority in their arguments. Other dissent groups existed only on the fringes of politics and carried less authority than the UDC. Because many of the UDC's founders served in Parliament, the press and public were more aware of them, making them prime targets for harassment during the war. The notoriety of UDC members also made it harder for the government to prosecute them. During 1916 and 1917 especially, the government investigated almost every founding member of the UDC and tried to gather enough evidence to prosecute

them. Many times local police arrested UDC founders for the same crimes as other less notable dissent members, but the founders did not get prosecuted though others did. Public prosecutors refused to pursue flimsy cases against the UDC for fear of just giving members a platform to speak out against the war. Taking a Member of Parliament or other known figure to court always made headlines and the government was reluctant to give UDC members press without being sure of the case against them. Only one founder of the UDC went to prison and he was not a Member of Parliament.

The press and the government used different tactics when undermining the UDC. The press concentrated on the group in 1915 and then again in 1918. Attacks in 1915 and 1918 centered on particular members, though some articles just discussed the group in general terms. The press attacked the group for its anti-war beliefs and referred to it frequently as pro-German traitors. The press never talked about the UDC though as a British dissent group. The members never got the validation of being British. They were always pro-German or peace hacks or the German darlings, but never British anti-war protesters. This lack of British identity for the group in the press created the idea that true British citizens supported the war. When people wrote in to newspapers in letters to the editor they always called themselves a concerned British citizen before diving into their insults of the UDC's pro-German peace hacks. This terminology created a sense of unity in Britain and denied dissent groups any kind of public validation. As long as the public perceived dissent groups as traitorous and anti-British, police did not feel obligated to protect their rights, and the public refused to consider their arguments. The British government focused on dissent groups staring in 1916 and only relented after the war ended in 1918. The government used censorship, arrests, and Parliamentary debates to

harass and restrict the rights of the UDC and its members. Under Lloyd George's government in 1917 and 1918 the pressure on groups got more intense as the NWAC began publishing against them and Parliament passed new laws restricting their publishing rights. Though the press and government worked separately from each other, they both looked to restrict the public's access to the UDC's message and label dissent groups like the UDC as anti-British.

Using archival sources, newspapers, speeches, and pamphlets, this paper argues that while the UDC worked to spread its anti-war message it faced severe resistance from the press, public, and government. Though the UDC attempted to change, its message over the first two years of the war by 1916 members focused on the idea of a negotiated peace and refused to relent. Unlike the group, the government and press changed tactics when necessary and worked to prevent public access to dissent material and undermine the UDC's credibility. Though the UDC gained some support as the war dragged on, victory in 1918 spelled doom for the political power of the group and at the end of the war, it faced a hostile public who viewed its members as less than British.

CHAPTER 2: 1914 TO 1915: THE FORMATION OF THE UDC

During the First World War, multiple dissent groups operated throughout Great Britain. While many groups attempted to force the British government out of the war, the UDC pushed to prevent all wars through the democratization of foreign policy decisions. The Union of Democratic Control (UDC) was founded in September 1914 by Charles Philips Trevelyan, Norman Angell, Ramsay MacDonald, Arthur Ponsonby, and Edmund Dene Morel. By the end of 1917 this organization had over 10,000 members and coordinated the efforts of five different dissent groups. Ramsay MacDonald and Arthur Ponsonby served in the House of Commons before and during the war, C. P. Trevelyan served in Parliament before the war, but resigned in protest of Britain's declaration of war. E. D. Morel and Norman Angell both worked in different peace movements to end colonial conquest and conflicts. Although the public and press viewed the UDC as a pro-German organization, the government did not prosecute the UDC and its members until late into the war. Though the UDC began its work early in the war, the government considered it more important to monitor and prosecute enemy aliens and German spies during the war rather than domestic dissent movements.

This chapter examines the UDC's publications and actions and compares them to the press's publications and government reports concerning the UDC from

1914 through 1915. While the UDC worked to convince British citizens that its organization did not support Germany and actually agreed with many prominent politicians, the press reported the opposite and frequently compared UDC publications and speeches with those released by Germany. The UDC altered the tone of its published works from 1914 to 1915 to appeal to more people and attempt to convince British citizens of its loyalty. Though the UDC tried to convince the public of its loyalty to the British state, the press frequently compared its messages to those coming from German officials. The British government monitored members of the UDC during the early months of the war, but only started scrutinizing its actions in 1915.[24]

The Union of Democratic Control first introduced itself to the public in 1914 with a pamphlet entitled *The Morrow of War*. This first pamphlet, published in London by the UDC's own press, focused on the group's objectives and goals. The pamphlet began with two statements that the UDC reiterated throughout the first year of the war. First, the UDC stated that it understood that the country was at war, and believed that the war needed to conclude with victory for Britain. Second, it stressed that preparation for peace must begin immediately in order to create a lasting peace. The pamphlet's writers condensed the other main beliefs of the UDC's founders into four cardinal points and proceeded to explain each point in turn.[25] These four points remained the same throughout the entire war and formed the backbone of the UDC's argument. The second cardinal point is the most important of the four, because it contains the core of the UDC's argument throughout the war.

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[24] The British government watched the UDC and were aware of their actions in 1914 but did not consider them a threat to take any actions or discuss them in an meaningful way until 1915. The UDC was not seen as a threat by the British government until 1916 and into 1917 when they would begin arresting it's members.

[25] Union of Democratic Control, *The Morrow of War*, 1914, The National Archives of England, Wales, and the United Kingdom, Kew (hereafter TNA), PRO 30/69/1833.

The UDC's second cardinal point stated: "No Treaty, Arrangement, or Undertaking shall be entered upon in the name of Great Britain without the sanction of Parliament. Adequate machinery for ensuring democratic control of foreign policy shall be created."[26] This point became the main argument of the UDC as the war progressed, even though it was always stated second. Members of the UDC believed that Britain had entered World War One without the support of its citizens. The founders of the UDC thought that Foreign Secretary Edward Grey forced Britain into the war because of the secret treaties and other agreements he had signed with France and Russia in the preceding years. Several founding members of the UDC served in Parliament before the war began and argued that Grey never informed the House of Commons of these treaties or secret agreements until it was too late. The pamphlet stated, "During the past eight years particularly, the management of the Foreign Department has become avowedly and frankly autocratic. Parliamentary discussion of foreign policy has become so restricted as to be perfunctory."[27] While members of the UDC thought that different policies could have helped Britain to avoid the war, they looked now toward preventing future wars.

The UDC's other cardinal points examined the three best ways to create a lasting peace in Europe. The first stated: "No Province shall be transferred from one Government to another without the consent, by plebiscite or otherwise, of the population of such province."[28] The UDC believed that one of the main causes of World War One was the rising ethnic tensions in Eastern Europe, particularly in Austria-Hungary. By eliminating this struggle, the UDC held that tensions, which caused events such as the assassination

[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

of the Archduke of Austria-Hungary, would evaporate, thus creating a peaceful European continent.[29]

The third cardinal point focused on why Britain entered the European conflict:

> The Foreign Policy of Great Britain shall not be aimed at creating Alliances for the purpose of maintaining the Balance of Power, but shall be directed to concerted action between the Powers, and the setting up of an International Council, whose deliberations and decisions shall be public, with such machinery for securing International agreement as shall be the guarantee of an abiding peace.[30]

Here, the UDC tried again to ensure that the public remained informed of foreign policy, and that Britain worked to ensure peace in Europe. The UDC did not believe that the years leading up to World War One were peaceful. They pointed, instead, to the tensions that increased over the preceding years and culminated in war. The UDC argued that Britain's policy of maintaining a balance of power in Europe and using alliances to threaten rather than to create peace turned an ethnic conflict into a European war. These same alliances subsequently dragged Britain into the European conflict against the will of the British people.[31]

The final point of the UDC's first pamphlet proposed a reduction in armaments within all belligerent countries as another way to prevent future wars.[32] The UDC hoped to reduce the mechanisms of making war in Europe and blamed the arms race between Germany and Britain before the war as one of the main reasons for the entente agreement with France. By reducing the production of munitions, the UDC believed they could reduce the chances of another large scale European conflict. [33] The UDC published these

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[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] The UDC did not consider countries that were neutral in 1914, because they typically did not have a large standing army as the belligerent countries had built up over the preceding decades.
[33] Ibid.

four points in every official UDC publication, and members considered the points the doctrine of the organization.

One interesting aspect of *The Morrow of War* pamphlet is that it repeatedly asserted that the ideas of the UDC were not its alone. For three of the four descriptions of the cardinal points, the pamphlet's writers cited speeches by high-ranking popular government officials to prove that the leaders of the British government shared the UDC's beliefs. Writers used excerpts from speeches made by Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith and Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey to support their arguments.[34] The idea that prominent politicians supported the same ideas as the UDC carried over from *The Morrow of War* to the UDC's sixth pamphlet *The National Policy*, also published in 1914.[35] This pamphlet compared the UDC's four cardinal points to three main ideas concerning the effectiveness of the future peace treaty, which the British government's leading officials and newspaper writers. While both pamphlets demonstrated the similarity between the UDC's statements and those of leading politicians, *The National Policy* explicitly stated that "politicians, writers, and newspapers take up therefore the same position as the Union of Democratic Control."[36] While these two pamphlets seemed to plead for the public to understand them, another author who wrote for the UDC took the opposite approach.

Arthur Ponsonby wrote a pamphlet for the UDC entitled *Parliament and Foreign Policy*, which took a more aggressive tone than previous works. This pamphlet implied that the ignorance of the British people allowed their government to bring the country to

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Union of Democratic Control, *The National Policy: as set forth by Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Churchill, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Arthur Henderson, and others*, 1914, TNA, PRO 30/69/1833.
[36] Ibid.

war, and the same ignorance led the people to support the war after Britain joined the conflict. Ponsonby also claimed that the government purposefully kept its people in the dark on foreign policy issues:

> The exclusive management of international relations rests in the hands of a small number of men…whose perspective is restricted, whose vision is narrow, and whose sense of proportion is vitiated by the very fact that their work is screened from the public eye.[37]

Ponsonby argued that because foreign policy officials never informed the public of their decisions, the ministers never feared any public backlash, leading them to make questionable decisions. Ponsonby asserted that if the government forced the Foreign Office to report all actions to the people, not only would it make the world safer, but would make Britain truly democratic.[38]

Though Ponsonby took a more aggressive approach with his pamphlet by calling the British government and people ignorant, Angell and Morel appealed to the British public using ideas of world peace and economic inequality. Angell's 1914 pamphlet "Shall this War End German Militarism?" argued that war would not prevent the spread of militarism that the British people feared. He asserted that Germany and the German people posed no threat to Britain, and maintained that very few German officials wished to spread German ideas by force. Angell contended that the British people saw Germany as such a threat that they wanted to use the war to force their ideals on the German people. This forceful act, Angell argued, simply created the perfect conditions for yet another war. If, however, the British people accepted a negotiated peace, using the ideas

[37] Arthur Ponsonby, *Parliament and Foreign Policy*, 1914, TNA PRO 30/69/1833.
[38] Ibid.

of the UDC, then Germany would not feel conquered and the threat of another war would subside.[39]

Morel tried to appeal to workers and members of the Labour Party with his 1914 pamphlet entitled *The International Industry of War*. Morel argued that private armament firms pushed the British government into war and sustained it because of the profits the war brought them. The UDC published this pamphlet in an appeal to the British workers whom it wished to recruit. The UDC viewed the Labour Party and the workers as a rising power in politics and wanted to gain their support. Morel's pamphlet asserted that even though arms manufacturing provided employment, workers did not benefit from it in the long term: "Armament construction can inflate that number (of men employed) and appear to benefit these trades. But, in its very nature the work is precarious, and is, therefore, injurious to working-class interests"[40] Morel explained that though the dismantling of the arms industry would not be without consequence, it needed to be done quickly to ensure the national economy did not become permanently dependent on it.

In 1914, the UDC published multiple pamphlets that argued that the war did not serve the purpose the government said it did. Through most of its works, the UDC tried to convince the public that they were not pro-German and did support the independence of Belgium from German occupation. Though one founding member took a more aggressive stance in his pamphlet, most 1914 publications contained a plea for support and argued that their ideas would create a lasting peace that the war could not achieve.

Though the UDC and other anti-war groups published a great deal of material in 1914, the British government did not prosecute them even though legislation passed in

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[39] Norman Angell, *Shall This War End German Militarism?*, 1914, TNA, PRO 30/69/1833.
[40] *The International Industry of War*, 1914, TNA, PRO 30/69/1833.

1914 allowed it to. In 1914, the British government passed the Defence of the Realm Acts and Regulations (DORA). Although officials amended this act throughout the war, the basis of this document and the language used in provisions written for combatting dissent remained the same.

British officials used two specific provisions of DORA to ensure that dissidents could not publish their points of view if the government disagreed with their arguments. First, Provision 24 ensured that all publications and messages bound for foreign countries moved through the British postal system. This intended to guarantee that dissent groups sent all publications through the mail, to have them reach subscribers. The British post officials examined what was sent and reported anything suspicious or in violation of DORA. They looked for any violation of DORA Provision 27, which stated:

> No person shall by word of mouth or in writing or in any newspaper, periodical, book, circular, or other printed publication, spread false reports or make false statements or reports or statements likely to cause disaffection to His Majesty or to interfere with the success of His Majesty's forces by land or sea or to prejudice His Majesty's relations with foreign powers, or spread reports or make statements likely to prejudice the recruiting, training, discipline, or administration of any of His Majesty's forces[41]

The vague language of the above provision allowed law enforcement and postal workers wide latitude in interpreting what false reports or interference actually was. This created a large problem later in the war for dissent groups such as the UDC because many government officials deemed their publications "false reports" due to its anti-war arguments.[42]

Another DORA act used by the British government to enforce censorship among members of dissent groups was Provision 51. This provision spelled out the rules

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[41] Great Britain, and Alexander Pulling, *Defence of the Realm Acts and Regulations Passed and Made to July 31st, 1915*, London: HMSO, July 1915.
[42] Ibid.

regarding search and seizure by police and military officials during the war. Officials or citizens authorized by a local constable could enter any premises and search for materials that had or were going to be used to undermine the British war effort in any way. Provision 51 specifically referred to the rules laid out in Provision 27 regarding illegal publications. Under provision 51, these publications could be seized during a search and destroyed without permission from the owner. [43]

Though DORA contained these and other provisions that gave government officials sweeping powers to curb dissent during the war, its use in 1914 was limited and usually the government chose not to prosecute dissent organizations. Instead, they prosecuted suspected German spies and traitors, and monitored enemy aliens, which the government perceived as a bigger threat early on in the war. For example, in November 1914 Carl Hans Lody was court-martialed on the charges of war treason.[44] The German military sent Lody, a reserve officer in the German army, to Britain as a spy because of his skill with the English language. The British government charged Lody after officials found several letters in his possession, which relayed naval strength and troop movements to a contact in Germany. After a three-day trial, a military tribunal sentenced Lody to death and on November 6, 1914, he was shot at the Tower of London.[45] This trial was the only spy trial held in Britain during the war. The fact that the British government caught and convicted a Germany spy in Britain at the beginning of the war helps explain

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[43] Ibid.

[44] War treason is defined as acts committed within the lines of a belligerent as are harmful to him and are intended to favor the enemy. War treason is different than treason because treason is the act of betraying ones own country. As a German citizen Lody could not be charged with treason in Britain. "War Treason Legal Definition." Legal Dictionary: War Treason Legal Definition. Accessed November 4, 2014. http://www.duhaime.org/LegalDictionary/W/WarTreason.aspx.

[45] "Court-Martial On A German," *Times* (London, England) November 1, 1914: 3. And "End of Spy Trial." *Times* (London, England) November 3, 1914: 4.

why the government focused so much energy on enemy aliens within its borders and not on dissent groups during 1914.

Interoffice letters between local constables, prosecutors, and Home Office officials demonstrate the lack of concern for dissent members' actions in 1914. As dissent movements formed in the early months of the war, members began to interfere with the recruiting of troops and held public meetings that denounced the war. Local officials, particularly constables, wrote to the home secretary to determine how and if they should prosecute these anti-war actions. Answers from the home secretary confirmed that while he appreciated the report, he did not feel that prosecution was necessary or possible at the time.[46] Even when the home secretary believed charges possible, the director of the Public Prosecutions Department disagreed. In a letter to the Undersecretary of State, which concerned anti-recruitment actions in Lincoln and a speech made by Ramsay MacDonald in Birmingham in September 1914, the director of Public Prosecutions stated: "Without some evidence of concerted action…I am of the opinion that a prosecution would be impolitie [sic]."[47] On the other hand, though there was a lack of concern regarding dissent groups, the government allowed local constables to seize and destroy anti-war publications. The War Office[48] replied to questions concerning anti-war publications from local officials by telling them to destroy all publications designed to interfere with measures put into place for the defense of the realm, but stated that prosecution would not be necessary.[49] Even though government officials encouraged

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[46] Undersecretary of State for the Secretary of State to the Chief Constable of Lincolnshire, September 12, 1914, TNA, HO 45/10741/263275.
[47] Director of Public Prosecutions Department to the Undersecretary of State, November 9, 1914, TNA, HO 45/10741/263275.
[48] Multiple offices and departments in Britain handled dissent and prosecution questions. The War Office and the Home Office received the bulk of questions from local officials during the war.
[49] Letter from the War Office, November 6, 1914, TNA, HO 45/10741/263275.

local officials to report anti-war actions and destroy anti-war publications, they did not want to prosecute dissenters in 1914, even though they had the legal means to do so.

Like the government, the British press in 1914 also focused on spies and enemy aliens rather than dissenters. But unlike the government, the press decided that prominent individual dissenters also deserved their attention. Press reports from 1914 concerning dissent and anti-war actions focused on two themes. The press concentrated on German immigrants and spies in most of the press reports that were not directly reporting on the front-line. It also focused on Ramsay MacDonald during these early months of the war, and heavily criticized him for his resignation of the chairmanship of the Labour Party after its declaration in support of the war. Except for the announcement of the UDC's 1914 conception in the *Manchester Guardian*, the press typically commented on dissenters like Ramsay MacDonald and mainly ignored dissent groups like the UDC.

Newspapers mostly ignored dissent groups in Britain during the first three months of the war even though they were actively publishing anti-war materials. The letters to the editor that the London *Times* chose to print concerned the threat of German spies in Britain and the need to know the location and activities of enemy aliens. In a series of letters to the editor of the London *Times,* entitled "Highly-Placed Spies," writers asserted that the German government had spies throughout the United Kingdom and urged all loyal citizens to be wary and report all those acting suspiciously.[50] Moreover, the people's attention on enemy aliens and spies led the mainstream press to focus on the actions taken against German immigrants in government positions and the highly

[50] Multiple articles "Highly-Placed Spies" *Times* (London, England) August 22, 1914- August 27, 1914, *The Times Digital Archive.* Web, November 9, 2014.

publicized court martial and execution of the German naval officer Carl Hans Lody during these early months.

The press did focus on one particular dissenter in 1914: Ramsay MacDonald. As the former chair of the Labour Party and current Member of Parliament, MacDonald regularly showed up in printed letters to the editor in the *Times* and even published a few in reply to an article that referred to him. MacDonald's frequent mention in the press focused on his refusal to support the war, and his resignation of the Labour Party's chairmanship. On September 17, 1914, the *Times* published an article comparing MacDonald's writing about Sir Edward Grey in the newspaper *Labour Leader* to a communication made by the German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg to the Danish press. The article stated that the German Chancellor simply used MacDonald's writing in order to create his own statement.[51] The next day, MacDonald wrote his own letter to the editor and tried to explain his comments about Sir Edward Grey. He complained that the *Times* published a quote out of context and therefore made it look as though MacDonald and the German Chancellor wrote the same comments. The *Times* inserted a comment below MacDonald's letter that stated that it had not published the comments out of context and stated that the published comments reflected the attitude of the article as a whole.[52] The *Times* printed several public responses to the article MacDonald wrote in his own defense and two more letters from MacDonald himself in which he attempted to answer the public's questions.[53] One letter from a British citizen expressed disgust with MacDonald and stated, "We do not suppose that MR.

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[51] "The German Chancellor And Sir Edward Grey." *Times* (London, England) September 17, 1914: 6.
[52] J. Ramsay MacDonald. "Sir E. Grey And Mr. Ramsay Mac Donald." *Times* (London, England) September 28, 1914: 9.
[53] *Time articles* September 29, 1914-October 2, 1914,

MACDONALD wishes to help the enemy, but if he does not it must be painful to him to realize that no paid agent of Germany has served her better than himself."[54] This series of letters demonstrates the attitude of the public towards Ramsay MacDonald. The British public despised MacDonald as a traitor and portrayed him as an enemy of Britain. No matter MacDonald's argument, he could not appeal to those citizens who supported the war effort, especially early on in the war.

By 1915, dissent groups like the UDC took center stage thanks to its new publications and growing voice. The British government began to discuss the UDC's meetings and methods in House of Commons debates. The British press also focused more on the UDC than in 1914. The UDC itself attempted to change the public's perception of its group and its members by appealing to the hatred to Germany. The group also opened its membership to women in 1915 and tried to appeal more to workers and returning soldiers. 1915 marked a change in the UDC's message as well as the focus of both the press and British government.

In 1915, the UDC worked more than in the previous year to appeal to the masses and prove that it was not a pro-German organization. The group published pamphlets appealing to the working class and to women, and worked to show that it had the support of soldiers as well. Because of an increase in attacks by the press, the increasing need for funds, and the physical break-up of UDC meetings, the UDC published works to bring in more public support and prove to the public that it was loyal to Britain even though it did not support the war.

In 1915, some UDC writers tried to use the fear and hatred of Germany to spread their own message. Norman Angell's UDC pamphlet entitled *The Prussian in our midst*

[54] "Helping the Enemy." *Times* (London, England) October 1, 1914: 7.

called for the British people to denounce the Prussian militarism that built and sustained the German military. Angell argued that France, Russia, and Britain had entered the war to ensure a peaceful world. The only way to create that peaceful world, however, was to reduce arms and their manufacture so that countries would not be able to fight a world war again. Angell's pamphlet tried to convince its readers that the UDC's fourth cardinal point, which called for a reduction in arms and their manufacture, was based on British liberal ideology. By calling militarism Prussian or German, Angell tried to appeal to the majority of British citizens (who hated Germany) to convince them that the UDC's ideals matched those of the British people not those of the Germans.[55] This argument differed from Angell's 1914 pamphlet on German militarism, which argued that the German people and ideals did not threaten the British public. By 1915, Angell understood that the British people did not accept that Germany was not dangerous and he wanted his pamphlet to appeal to the masses more than the one published in 1914 had. The UDC needed more support to combat the growing number of press reports claiming the UDC supported Germany.

Two pamphlets published in 1915 attempted to appeal to the working class and women. *War and the Workers* written by Ramsay MacDonald argued that without workers countries could not go to war, because the working class carried the heaviest social and economic burden. MacDonald asserted that the working class in Britain suffered the most in wartime because it had to manufacture the weapons to fight the war, and the majority of frontline soldiers were from working-class families. Workers needed to understand what they were fighting for and demand that this war be the last one. MacDonald stated that in order to create a lasting peace, workers needed to demand that

[55] Norman Angell, *The Prussian in our midst*,1915, TNA, PRO 30/69/1833.

the British government follow the UDC guidelines for a negotiated peace that would create a tension-free international environment once the war ended.[56]

On February 9, 1915, the UDC adopted a resolution that allowed women to join the organization as full members. This resolution brought a new group of supporters into the UDC, one of the most prominent being Helena Maria Swanwick. Swanwick published many works for and about the UDC during the war. She also served as a member of the executive board of the organization. Her pamphlet *Women and the War* published in 1915 argued that the war also affected women, and that while British officials and the public spoke of the hatred of "Prussianism," people needed to understand that to women, anti-suffragists embodied "Prussianism." Swanwick asserted that while politicians argued about the evil actions taken by Germany, they forgot that actions taken before the war against women who wanted the vote were just as evil. Her pamphlet asked women to support the UDC against the government who ignored their plight before the war, and currently ignored the effects of the war on their gender.[57]

The UDC also attempted in 1915 to appeal to the British public by proving that soldiers supported their organization and its arguments. A leaflet published in 1915 concerned the thoughts and beliefs of soldiers either leaving for the front or currently stationed there. It attempted to prove to the British public that the UDC was not a pro-German organization and had the full support of men in uniform. The UDC published edited excerpts from soldiers' letters to the UDC that argued in favor of its policies and denounced those who called it pro-German.[58] This leaflet, like the other pamphlets and

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[56] Ramsay MacDonald, *War and the Workers: A Plea for Democratic Control*,1915, TNA, PRO 30/69/1833.
[57] H. M. Swanwick, *Women and the War*,1915, TNA, PRO 30/69/1833.
[58] *Our Soldiers and the Union of Democratic Control*, 1915, TNA, PRO 30/69/1833.

works published in 1915, demonstrated the UDC's need for support as the war progressed. The UDC appealed directly to the British public to counter the arguments made in the press about it.

In 1915, the British press finally began focusing on the UDC as an organization. In 1914, the press examined Ramsay MacDonald in detail and consistently published letters to the editor that insulted him. While the press remained focused on MacDonald in 1915, articles also appeared referring to other main members of the UDC executive board. The letters to the editor in 1915 usually referred to the group as a whole, and typically accused it of being pro-German. Most newspapers in this study published letters to the editor alongside articles especially when it came to the UDC and its leading members. Though letters to the editor are usually unedited by the newspaper editor the choice of what letters to publish and what to discard were made by it.

Ramsay MacDonald again appeared in the mainstream press in 1915, but unlike in 1914, the press connected him to the UDC and other dissent groups. The new articles also did not directly criticize MacDonald but reported about meetings that MacDonald held as a member of the UDC. These articles also reported about the hardship the UDC suffered trying to secure a meeting space in London, and the backlash that occurred against MacDonald and the other members at meetings when pro-war protesters on the street overheard MacDonald's speech in reference to British politicians' motives for entering the war.[59]

Three other UDC founding members appeared in the press in 1915. Multiple articles and letters to the editor defamed several executive members of the UDC and

[59] From Our Special Correspondent. "Motive In War." *Times* (London, England) April 5, 1915: 3. and "Militarism And Peace." *Times* (London, England) June 28, 1915: 10.

demonstrated the anger of the populace at dissidents. At a UDC meeting on July 21, 1915, a crowd formed and forced Ponsonby to flee the premises to avoid severe injury. An article in the *Times*, which length and placement demonstrated its lack of importance,[60] quickly summed up what happened to Ponsonby and demonstrated that pro-war citizens planned the attack on the meeting to show their anger at the UDC and those involved with it.[61] While Morel faced insult in a published resolution passed by the National Union of Railwaymen,[62] Trevelyan appeared in a letter to the editor that referred to his resignation from the Liberal Party. Both the article and the letter to the editor denounced the UDC and referred to Trevelyan and Morel as pro-German and anti-democratic, one going as far as to state that "in the outraged name of Democracy they (The UDC) are secretly organizing for personal and sectarian ends a tyranny ruinous to the nation."[63] Numerous articles and letters to the editor published in reference to the group in 1915 used these same insults when writing about the UDC as a group.

In 1915, letters to the editor and articles either stated outright or implied that the UDC and its members were pro-German and that the British people despised them. One article from the *Times* in particular reported that a professor in Munich, whom the writer referred to as a "special authority" on English affairs, had recently published an article in a German newspaper that provided biographies of all the leading members of the UDC and considered them helpful in the German war effort.[64] A letter to the editor referred to the UDC as "German Darlings" and implied that the leaders of the UDC received donated

[60] The *Times* printed it at the end of a long article concerning the Socialist Party during the war on page six.
[61] "Socialist War Meeting" *Times* (London, England) July 22, 1915: 6.
[62] "Mr. Morel's Agitations," *Times* (London, England) June 1, 1915: 5.
[63] F.J.C. Hearnshaw. "Mr. C.P. Trevelyan's Seat." *Times* (London, England) December 23, 1915: 9.
[64] "Through German Eyes." *Times* (London, England) July 24, 1915: 5.

money from the German government, whether they knew it or not.[65] When soldiers and supporters of the war broke up a UDC meeting in December 1915, a man wrote to the editor of the *Morning Post* newspaper that it was inaccurate to call Morel and other UDC members' peace hacks when they were fighting for Germany in England, not for peace.[66] Some articles also implied by association that the UDC or its members were pro-German. A series of articles published in the *Daily Express* concerned the so-called "peace hacks" who operated in London. These articles examined Rev. W. J. Piggott, a member of two separate peace organizations and an advocate for immediate peace.[67] One article called Piggott's work "one of the most flagrant of the pro-German campaigns now being carried on in London," and then stated, "Mr. Piggott is a supporter of the notorious E. D. Morel…the honorary secretary and treasurer of the Union of Democratic Control."[68] Even when the press focused on another organization besides the UDC or its members, it thus found ways to ensure the message concerning the group got through to its members.

What can be seen from 1914 to 1915 is a clear shift in the press's attention. As the war continued into 1915 and British citizens abandoned their belief of a short war, the press worked to keep the populace focused on the war effort and began to attack dissent groups as a whole. Letters to the editor concerning the UDC and other dissent groups appeared throughout 1915, while news articles implied the connection between the UDC and the German government. The argument in both the news articles and letters to the editor are the same. Reporters and the public asserted that the UDC was not loyal to

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[65] "More German Darlings." *Times* (London, England) July 23, 1915: 9.
[66] Richard H. Glover, "The Abortive U.D.C. Meeting," *Morning Post* (London, England) December 4, 1914, TNA, HO 45/10742/263275.
[67] The Stop the War Committee and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which frequently held meetings at the Blackfriars Mission Hall.
[68] "Peace Cranks at A Mission Hall". *Daily Express* (London, England) November 4, 1915, TNA, HO 45/10742/263275.

Britain because true British patriots supported their government and the war; therefore, Germany must fund the group. Spies and enemy aliens no longer seemed to attract readers or letters to the editor. Instead, readers and letter writers wanted to learn about the activities and motives of the UDC and other dissent groups, while also providing an answer to why British citizens would speak out against the war: German money and influence must be behind them.

Though the press in 1915 seemed convinced that Germany funded the UDC to undermine the British war effort, the government worried more about the group's impact on morale and social order. Members of Parliament frequently asked the prime minister and the attorney general if the UDC and its members were under investigation for prosecution purposes because of their anti-war or anti-recruiting literature. Both the prime minister and attorney general stated that they were aware of the UDC's actions and publications, but they did not think prosecution was possible at the time, though the group was under an undisclosed level of investigation.[69]

As the prime minister and attorney general stalled in Parliament, local police raided several offices of dissent organization or publication and confiscated UDC literature. On August 18, 1915, the London City Police raided the office of the *Labour Leader* newspaper, which served as an outlet for several dissent groups during the war, including the UDC. At the office, the police found many UDC publications and confiscated them for destruction. Though Morel attempted to retrieve his organization's publications, the police deemed them dangerous and destroyed them.[70] But, even though

[69] "Parliament" *Times* (London, England) July 6, 16, and 20, 1915: 9-10.
[70] "Raid On Offices of 'Labour Leader.'," *Time* (London, England) August 19, 1915: 6. and Letter from E.D. Morel to Sir John Simon Secretary of State for Home Affairs, August 19, 1915, TNA, HO 45/10741/263275.

Morel admitted to the documents belonging to the UDC, the government prosecuted no UDC members after the raid.

The British Government did not seek to prosecute UDC members, British citizens who supported the war, however, monitored and documented what they saw as traitorous acts by the UDC. A letter from the secretary of the Anti-German League to Sir Edward Grey described a speech given at a UDC meeting on July 4, 1915. The secretary of the Anti-German League felt that the speech was pro-German and unpatriotic and therefore reported it to the Foreign Office to facilitate in his hopeful arrest. Though the Secretary of State, to whom Sir Edward Grey forwarded the letter, agreed that the speech was inappropriate, he did not consider it illegal.[71] This one example sums up the interactions between members of the UDC and the British government in 1915. Overall, the British government wanted information about the UDC and kept monitoring the group throughout the second year of the war, but did not seek to prosecute even when local police successfully raided dissent offices. Though 1915 saw an increase in government interest in dissent groups like the UDC, government officials did not prosecute members even when local police officials requested they be arrested for violations under DORA. Though the government did not seek prosecution, it also did not seek to aid the movement. As a disrupted UDC meeting at the end of 1915 demonstrates, the government frequently looked the other way when patriotic British citizens decided to prevent the spread of UDC ideas.

The UDC began holding public meetings in March 1915 to allow less-educated supporters, who would not read the pamphlets of the UDC, to learn about the UDC's

[71] Letter from Sir Edward Grey to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, July 17, 1915, TNA, HO 45/10741/263275.

ideas. While these meetings went well generally, there were some minor disruptions causing members of the UDC to flee the stage, either before or after speaking. On November 29, 1915, the UDC held a public meeting for supporters and required tickets to enter the meeting hall. In late November, however, a large group of soldiers with forged tickets violently broke up a UDC meeting and took the stage singing patriotic songs.[72] This disrupted meeting appeared in the newspaper, UDC literature, and within Parliament debates. Although the press, the government, and the UDC published or discussed the event, their respective and who they blamed for its occurrence demonstrated their view of the UDC.

The break up of the meeting on November 29, 1915 caught the attention of several members of the House of Commons. In their daily debates, members addressed the break up of the meeting and asked for the reasons and the people responsible. Arthur Ponsonby, a Member of Parliament as well as the UDC, accused soldiers of forging tickets to the event and storming the stage in order to disrupt the meeting. Other MPs disagreed, and delayed the debate until further information could be attained.[73] Days later, the debate continued and another Member of Parliament named Tennent accused Ramsay MacDonald and other UDC members of insulting soldiers at the meeting, which caused them to disrupt the proceedings. Tennent also argued that the soldiers had not forged their tickets, and accused UDC ticket collectors of a shoddy job. Both MacDonald and Ponsonby questioned these accusations and blamed newspapers like the *Morning Post* and *Daily Mail* of publishing information concerning the meeting and encouraging

[72] Harris, *Out of Control,* 107.
[73] United Kingdom, *House of Commons Daily Debates,* December 2, 1915, TNA, HO 45/10742/263274.

readers to disrupt the UDC's meeting.[74] Parliament dismissed these accusations and declared the editor of the *Morning Post* loyal after a brief investigation.[75] The House discussed the event and investigated the editor of the *Morning Post* to ensure his loyalty to Britain. Otherwise, the government did not attempt to prosecute anyone who attacked UDC members on November 29, and accused the two UDC members in Parliament of misrepresenting themselves when they allegedly insulted the soldiers, which caused the soldiers to disrupt the speakers and break up the meeting.

The press covered the UDC's meeting with more dramatic imagery than the government reports. The newspaper *The Daily Express,* which published multiple articles before the meeting took place November 29, 1915, and called for the meeting to be disrupted,[76] published an article that described the attack on the UDC members in detail. The *Daily News, Times, Daily Chronicle, Manchester Guardian,* and the *Daily Mail* all published similar reports. All described the attack on the UDC speakers by soldiers, students, and the public.[77] Though all described the event, only the *Morning Post* newspaper published a letter to the editor concerning the reason why the UDC's meeting was disrupted. The writer asserted that the soldiers at the meeting behaved very well, and that the meeting would have proceeded normally if the UDC members had not insulted the soldiers.[78] Though no two descriptions are alike, they all depict the event as an attack by the justice-seeking masses against the traitorous few.

While Arthur Ponsonby and Ramsay MacDonald attempted to find justice for their disrupted meeting in Parliament, the UDC also published a pamphlet that discussed

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[74] Ibid, December 6, 1915, TNA, HO 45/10742/263274.
[75] Ibid, December 2, 1915, TNA, HO 45/10742/263274.
[76] "Gathering of the Peace Cranks," *The Daily Express,* November 27, 1915, TNA, HO 45/10742/263274.
[77] *The Attack upon Freedom of Speech* 1915, TNA, PRO 39/69/1833.
[78] Richard H. Glover, "The Abortive UDC Meeting," *Morning Post*, December 4, 1915, TNA, HO 45/10742/263275.

the broken up meeting and the response from the government and press. The pamphlet argued that despite clear evidence that the attack on the UDC speakers was a planned effort by soldiers and other war supporters, the government believed the lies published in the press about the UDC and therefore did nothing. Writers asserted that the government denied that the soldiers in attendance forged their tickets to get into the meeting, and falsely accused the UDC speakers of causing the riot by insulting the soldiers and attempting to have them removed from the meeting hall. Overall, the pamphlet tried to prove that the government ignored the attack on the UDC and instead claimed the press reports defamed the UDC and prevented them from seeking justice for the disrupted meeting.[79] This one event at the end of 1915 demonstrates the difference in the press, UDC, and government's attitudes concerning the UDC's beliefs and members in 1915. Though it is likely that the British government would have responded to the event the same in 1914, the fact that the government even publically debated the break up of the UDC meeting shows a change in response from 1914 to 1915. While the UDC argued that its meeting was unfairly and unlawfully broken up, the press and government blamed the group's speakers and refused to acknowledge the guilt of the attackers themselves.

From 1914 to 1915, the UDC changed the delivery of its message to the British public. In 1914, members took a more combative approach and attempted to rile up the public by demonstrating the ineptitude of the Foreign Office, which led Britain into the war. In 1915, however, with funds depleted and attacks increasing UDC publications appealed to anti-German sentiments as well as workers and women. Though the UDC's overall message did not change, the delivery method and tone of its works did. In 1914,

[79] *The Attack upon Freedom of Speech* 1915, TNA, PRO 39/69/1833.

the British press and government seemed more concerned with enemy aliens and spies than dissent. Nevertheless, by 1915 they turned attention to anti-war groups like the UDC. The press took a more aggressive approach, appealed to the public fear of Germany and argued that if dissidents did not support the war, then obviously they were pro-German and probably funded by the enemy. While the government monitored anti-war groups in Britain, it did not seek to prosecute even when local officials wanted to, though it also did not go so far as to prosecute or investigate those who attacked dissenters.

CHAPTER 3: 1916: FROM ORGANIZATION TO INDIVIDUAL

On January 5, 1916, Prime Minister Asquith introduced the Military Service Act to address the need for manpower at the front. The Act, passed by Parliament on Jan 27, 1916, enlisted all men between the ages of 18 and 41, not previous exempted from service, into the army starting March 2, 1916.[80] The British government viewed this Act as the best solution to enable Britain to defeat Germany. When Asquith introduced this Act to Parliament, several prominent Labour ministers resigned. Its passage by Parliament soon after created a new fissure in British society as well as new dissent groups. The Military Service Act and the subsequent protests, however, made the British government focus on individual activists and less on dissent groups as a whole. The government's focus shifted because it saw individual dissenters as a greater threat to the war effort than organized groups. The British government also could not prosecute groups, but it could detain individuals. The Military Service Act taught the British government how to divide and conquer dissent groups because the act itself divided pacifists, which aided the government in pursing conscientious objectors.

In 1914 and 1915, the British government began investigating the different dissent groups that formed in response to Britain's entry into the First World War. The UDC, worked to make the public and press understand its point of view by making its

[80] Military Service Act poster, January 27, 1916: TNA, HO 45/10804/308532.

message fit the public's feelings toward Germany, while also fending off attacks about its loyalty to Britain. After the passage of the Military Service Act in 1916, however, both the UDC and the British government changed tactics to deal with the ever-lengthening war. The UDC's leaders thought that with the passage of the Military Service Act and the rising death toll on the battlefield that the British public was now ready for peace. This encouraged them to begin calling for a negotiated peace settlement between Britain and Germany. They hoped that if the Americans instigated peace proceedings between the two countries, British politicians might be inclined to participate. The British government, however, did not wish to start peace negotiations and worried that peace activists made Americans believe Britain grew tired of the war. Multiple domestic and foreign policy related fears made the British government change tactics in dealing with dissenters. Instead of investigating and attempting to charge groups of dissenters, the government focused on individuals and looked to prosecute under DORA. This tactic worked very well when dealing with conscientious objectors because it allowed the government to divide and conquer the different anti-conscription groups. When dealing with political protesters the tactic was less successful in 1916, especially when it investigated high-ranking dissent leaders. Overall, the British government was unsuccessful in prosecuting leading members of the UDC in 1916, but learned techniques that aided it in 1917.

When the Prime Minister introduced the Military Service Act to Parliament on January 5, 1916, it caused a split in the Labour Party. While most ministers in Parliament viewed the Act as unavoidable, a minority saw the bill as a governmental overreach and contrary to Britain's liberal democratic history. The *Times* recorded the division in the

House of Commons and reported that only 105 out of 507 members argued against passage of the Military Service Act. Thirteen out of twenty-one Labour MPs voted against the bill, much to the disapproval of their constituents.[81] Even though Labour and the Nationalist party attempted to stop the Military Service Act, the government announced its passage on January 27, 1916 and put it into effect March 2, 1916.

As a response to the growing call for conscription, several new dissent groups formed in 1915, the most prominent being the No Conscription Fellowship (NCF). This group attempted to prevent the Military Service Act's passage through Parliament, but once that effort failed, they turned to aid those who chose resistance rather than enlistment. The NCF attempted to help conscientious objectors who did not wish to enter into non-combatant service that aided the war effort in any way. The NCF group faced arrest and imprisonment for helping people avoid the draft, and many leading members ended up either drafted or in prison. Those who remained free tried to help support the dependents of those imprisoned and to convince the rest of Britain that the war needed to end.[82]

The British government, however, knew that pacifists and dissenter groups objected to any form of conscription. It attempted to undermine groups like the NCF's arguments against conscription. The Military Service Act listed exemptions that allowed those who conscientiously objected to military service to work in non-combatant service.[83] This exception allowed most men who objected to fighting a way out of going to the front. It also aided the war effort by providing needed services, and freeing other

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[81] "Labour and the Bill," *Times* (London, England) January 8, 1916: 7.
[82] Gerard J. DeGroot, *Blighty: British Society in the Era of the Great War* (London: Longman, 1996) 153-156.
[83] Military Service Act poster, January 27, 1916: TNA, HO 45/10804/308532.

men to fight. Some conscientious objectors, however, known as absolutists, refused non-combatant service because they did not wish to support the war at all. Though the absolutists were a minority in Britain, they caused a problem for the British government, which wished to maintain a unified front against the enemy. Because of this, absolutists faced horrible punishments and long imprisonment, during which some gave in and served in non-combatant roles.[84] On November 21, 1916, twelve objectors faced a court-martial for refusing to obey orders and were imprisoned for six months hard labor. Going to prison, however, did not end these men's military obligation. They would have the choice after leaving prison to return or serve in some form of work helpful to the war effort. Most of these men returned to prison multiple times over the course of the war.[85] Those who did not faced stigmas that lasted even after the conclusion of the war.

Unlike the NCF and other dissent groups, the UDC did not offer direct aid to conscientious objectors or their families, but did state that conscription went against the liberal values that British politicians claimed to uphold. Though the UDC attempted to stop the passage of the Military Service Act, once Parliament voted for it, the group turned toward other arguments concerning the war and attempted to avoid the conscription controversy.

Instead of conscription, the UDC focused on the British government's proposed economic war. As the war progressed and British debts grew, politicians began calling for the imposition of harsh reparations and trade restrictions on Germany after the war ended. Although reparations allowed for direct payment to Britain, other treaty terms, such as the ban on a Germany navy, permitted Britain to dominate international trade

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[84] DeGroot, *Blighty,* 153-156.
[85] "Hard Labour For A Hobhouse," *Daily Express*, November 21, 1916: TNA HO 144/22259.

after the war. Leaders of the UDC believed that these economic restrictions limited the chance for a permanent peace after the war concluded. In order to clearly state their opposition to the notions of economic warfare, members of the UDC's General Council held an emergency meeting in May 1916. During this meeting, the General Council voted to adopt a fifth cardinal point. It stated that, "The European conflict shall not be continued by economic war after the military operations have ceased, but that British policy shall be directed towards securing the fullest intercourse between nations and the preservation and extension of the principle of the open door."[86] The UDC wanted the British government to ensure that an "open door policy" towards trade existed after the war ended. The General Council thought that if Germany's economic punishment continued after the war, then Germany, or other countries affected by this same policy, might begin another conflict over these long-term punishments. The UDC maintained that the German government and military, not the people, were to blame for the current conflict and that a lasting peace required concessions by both governments.[87] The fifth cardinal point allowed the UDC to express its outrage over economic warfare to the public, though the populace did not share the group's enthusiasm for peace with Germany.

In the spring of 1916, members of the UDC thought that the British public supported the idea of a negotiated peace with Germany. The group believed that the British public had become disillusioned with the war effort and the British government. It assumed that the lengthy conflict, combined with the new conscription policy, would open the public's mind to a quick and permanent end to the war. This idea encouraged

[86] Harris, *Out of Control*, 132-133.
[87] Ibid, 131-134.

the leading members of the UDC to argue for an honorable negotiated peace between Britain and Germany. The UDC called for a peace with four separate parts that it thought allowed both the British and German governments to gain the support of their people while also preserving peace:

> (1) Germany must agree to restore the sovereignty and independence of Belgium; (2) Northern France must be evacuated; (3) Germany's entitlement to colonies must be recognised by the allies; and (4) Alsace Lorraine should not be restored to France without the consent of the population, and no action should be taken as a preliminary to peace negotiations.[88]

These four points matched the public's call for Germany to pull out of occupied areas in Belgium and France, and they limited the punishment of Germany that certain members of the British government called for. While members of the UDC did not expect support from the French government, they hoped to convince the British government through the British public's support and help from the American government.

The UDC looked to America in 1916 to facilitate a peace agreement between Britain and Germany. Because America had not entered the war, many dissent organizations thought the American government was in the best position to open peace proceedings. American President Woodrow Wilson and other government officials seemed unwilling to join the conflict on the side of Britain and even speculated about the negotiation of a peace settlement between the belligerents led by the Americans. In the UDC's October 1916 edition of its newspaper, an article entitled "What America Thinks" argued that Americans were not worried about the war. They were absorbed in their daily

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[88] 'Notes on terms of peace taken at the conference held on February 29th & March 7th (1916)'. *U. D. C. Papers*. See Harris, *Out of Control,* 134.

lives, which made the war seem far away. "The country is immensely prosperous and home problems are engrossing. So they go about their business and pleasures in the sunshine, and the sorrows and agonies of Europe seem very far away!"[89] Americans who paid attention to the war and the policies of the Allies hated the economic warfare and other policies of the British and Allied governments. The author asserted that soon the American public, tired of the death in Europe, would force the President to call the heads of all belligerent countries together at a peace conference to negotiate a peace settlement.[90] The UDC thought that if the Americans pushed their politicians to facilitate a negotiated peace between the European belligerents, the war would end. It did not believe American entry into the war imminent.

British politicians and the mainstream press, however, viewed the American perspective differently. America supplied aid and weapons to the British, and some American politicians and citizens wished to enter the war because of the sinking of the RMS Lusitania by the Germans. The *Times* sought to assure the public in 1916 that the Americans did not believed in dissent groups' arguments and supported Britain in its war against Germany. After an American official visited England an article about American attitude printed in the *Times,* , argued that the Americas knew the anti-war material published by dissent groups claiming the Germans wanted peace were false. The author assured the public that when the American official returned to the United States and made his report to the President, he would report that the British people were ready to fight to the end and that a majority of the British public wanted the war to continue until the Germans were completely defeated. The article stated that:

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[89] American Correspondent, "What America Thinks," *The U. D. C.* October 1916: 129, TNA, PRO 30/69/1041.
[90] Ibid.

> Colonel House, on his recent return from Europe, must have told the President that the Allies are more than ever determined to see the war through. There is reason to believe that this is precisely what Colonel House did tell the President…that in England the conscription controversy, the labour difficulties, and the activities of people like the Union of Democratic Control meant very little when compared with the resolution of all classes to beat the enemy at all costs.[91]

To the government and press America's attitude was with them and against the dissenters. Even with this noticeable difference in attitude, UDC leaders pushed for a negotiated peace.

C. P. Trevelyan, about of the founders of the UDC and sitting MP, published a pamphlet in May 1916 entitled *The Case For Negotiation.* It expressed to the public the idea of an honorable negotiated peace. Trevelyan argued that speeches and publications made by British Prime Minister Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, and the German Government showed that the two governments desired an end to the war and had similar views on the future peace. Trevelyan used these speeches to show that peace was possible between Germany and Britain and that those who refused to accept it were needlessly sending British men to their death. Trevelyan wrote this pamphlet in May 1916 and frequently referenced the casualties occurring at Verdun.[92] The high casualties of French and German troops at Verdun generated headlines in England and provided an example of the price of the ever-lengthening war. Trevelyan attempted to use these ever-growing casualties to convince the public that the time had come for peace because no one wanted Verdun repeated with British troops. He stated, "Does Verdun teach the Allies no lesson? When people cheerfully talk of the new Summer offensive, how many expect seriously to

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[91] "Something in the Story," *Times* (London, England) March 23, 1916: 7.

[92] The battle of Verdun lasted from February 21, 1916 to December 18, 1916. Germany initiated the attack and gained territory slowly until June when French troops began to push back. At the end of the 302 day conflict both sides held the territory they had when the battle commenced. The French lost around 550,000 men and the Germans lost around 434,000 men over the course of the battle making it one of the most costly and the longest battles in World War One history. See Stephen Pope and Elizabeth-Anne Wheal, *Dictionary of the First World War,* (England: Pen & Sword Military Classics, 1995) 494-496.

break the German lines? The certainty is losses on the scale of Verdun. The success is a gamble."[93] Trevelyan used the imagery and horror of Verdun to enforce his argument that peace was not something the public could wait for. He insisted that the government save British young men conscripted into war by opening talks with the German government and negotiating a peace that ended Britain's role in the war.

Unfortunately for UDC members who also served in Parliament, the British government was not willing to negotiate a peace with Germany in May 1916. The *Times* reported about three speeches made to the House of Commons on May 25, 1916. Sir Edward Grey, Ramsay MacDonald, and Arthur Ponsonby debated over whether Britain and Germany should negotiate a peace. MacDonald and Ponsonby criticized Grey for allowing young men to die by not opening up diplomatic relations with Germany. Grey argued that "the first duty of diplomacy now was to maintain the solidarity of the Allies and to give the utmost support it could to the military and naval measures which they were taking in common."[94] The House responded to Grey's remarks with applause, but remained completely silent as Ponsonby and MacDonald attempted to argue for a negotiated peace. After their remarks, Grey again restated his point that the allies needed to stick together in this conflict and made the point that the German government persisted in blaming all others for not accepting German peace terms and therefore continuing the war.[95] Grey's, MacDonald's, and Ponsonby's speeches and Parliament's reaction to them demonstrated the lack of governmental support for a negotiated peace with Germany. The British government looked for a peace on its terms and knew the only way to guarantee those terms was through victory over Germany.

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[93] Charles Trevelyan, *The Case for Negotiation*, May 1916, TNA, H0 144/1459/316786.
[94] "The Only Way to Peace," *Times* (London, England) May 25, 1916: 7.
[95] Ibid.

The UDC did not give up on the idea of a negotiated peace and hoped the public's eventual acceptance of its arguments would force the British government to negotiate peace. In the October 1916 edition of the UDC's newspaper, multiple articles asserted that a negotiated peace was the only way out of an overly destructive and pointless conflict. An article written by MacDonald entitled "The Great Push" argued that "At this rate every British soldier will be required to settle the conflict…they [the British people] have made up their minds to wait for it [military victory] in the belief that it would settle something It will settle nothing."[96] MacDonald claimed that even though the newspapers and public seemed determined to wait for a resounding military victory, this victory required the sacrifice of every soldier in Britain. The article also emphasized that the German government was ready for peace and only the minority of the German pubic and government officials still wished to continue the conflict to hold onto the occupied territory in France and Belgium. In another article, E. D. Morel stated, "the enemy is not Germany. THE ENEMY IS WAR."[97] He argued that the British public blamed the destruction caused by the German air force on Germany when they needed to blame it on war. Germany was not the only country using airplanes to destroy civilian areas; Britain too used these destructive devices in the same manner, though the British government condemned the attacks by German airplanes. Morel concluded his article on the destructive power of the weapons of war by arguing that the only way to end murder from the air was for the people of both Germany and Britain to force their governments to negotiate a peace.[98] The group's leaders believed that if the public understood that both the German and British people wanted and feared the same destructive war then the

[96] Ramsay MacDonald, "The Great Push," *The U. D. C.* October 1916: 129, TNA, PRO 30/69/1041.
[97] E. D. Morel, "Murder from the Air," *The U. D. C.* October 1916: 135, TNA, PRO 30/69/1041.
[98] Ibid.

public could force the British government to open diplomatic relations with the German government and end the war.

Unfortunately, for the UDC, the public and the press viewed the war as the only thing that kept the Germans from destroying Britain. Because the public viewed the war as the only hope for British society, they considered supporters of the UDC and similar groups to be traitors. This belief led to the prevention or break up of public meetings of the UDC and other dissent groups.

Many groups, including the UDC, found themselves unable to book venues for their meetings in 1916. Even if the owners agreed to allow a meeting to occur, the citizens of the town often forced them to cancel the venue reservation.[99] When dissent groups held a meeting, they did not go unnoticed. The Anti-German Union members made it their mission to prevent dissent groups from speaking undisturbed and used the UDC's name and policies to derogate other groups. From January to February 1916, the Anti-German Union's members harassed the speakers at a series of Friends meetings held to discuss the war.[100] The hecklers accused the speakers of being members of the UDC. When one speaker dared to admit he was a UDC member, the hecklers told him that he should be hanged for this offense.[101] After the Anti-German Union broke up five consecutive meetings of the Friends, they extended an invitation to the Anti-German Union to meet and discuss their differences. The Anti-German Union declined the meeting because they refused to meet with any group associated with the UDC and its ideals. The Friends attempted to deny its connection and publically stated the they "did

[99] "News in Brief," *The Daily Express,* July 12, 1916: TNA, HO 144/1459/316786. "News in Brief," *Times* (London, England) April 1, 1916: 7. and, "News in Brief," *Times* (London, England) June 14, 1916: 7.
[100] The Friends were a Quaker group that pushed for immediate peace during the war. While the UDC was not directly associated with the Friends they were allies during the war.
[101] "Uproar at Friends Meeting," *Times* (London, England) January 11, 1916: 7.

not advocate the conclusion of a premature peace or peace at any price."[102] This statement did not help the Friends, and the Anti-German Union continued to harass this group along with others they considered traitors to Britain.

The breakup of these meetings caused dissent groups and their speakers to try to prevent disruptions. When the Anti-Conscription Council asked Ramsay MacDonald to speak at a meeting, they called in the police to protect those inside the meeting hall. A crowd outside, however, still gathered to protest the meeting. Even with the police protecting them, the meeting's organizers asked the attendees not to applaud or cheer to avoid irritating the crowd and police outside.[103] When police protection was not available, the crowds took matters into their own hands. At a peace meeting in Cardiff on November 11, 1916, attended by members of the UDC, NCF, and the Independent Labour Party (ILP), along with others, crowds rushed the meeting hall and forced the delegates to flee. The crowds chased away the peace advocates calling them pro-German and traitors, while calling for the British government to stop showing them leniency in the courts.[104]

The government, however, did not look to prosecute the UDC as a whole. Instead, it seemed more concerned with the actions of individuals. In May 1916, Ronald M'Neill, MP, asked the Prime Minister to take action against the UDC, NCF, or "any other association the effect of whose operation is to weaken the national effort and determination to win the war."[105] Two day later the Prime Minister answered M'Neill's question and stated, "I have no power to suppress either of the organizations referred to in

[102] "The Friends' Disturbed Meetings," *Times* (London, England) February 11, 1916: 7.
[103] "Service Bill Protest," *Times* (London, England) May 15, 1916: 7.
[104] "Peace Conference Broken Up," *Times* (London, England) November 13, 1916: 7.
[105] "Political Notes," *Times* (London, England) May 9, 1916: 7.

the question, but any illegal action on their part can, and will be made the subject of a criminal prosecution."[106] The British government decided that its best course of action was not to suppress dissent groups as a whole, but instead to investigate and suppress the individuals within these groups, which weakened the organization. The government therefore looked to DORA and its rules regarding the spread of information hazardous to the war effort or to foreign relations to attempt to weaken dissent organizations. The government used this method successfully early in 1916 to dismember anti-conscription groups and hoped that it would be successful against political dissenters.

The British government investigated two books, believed to be violating DORA, from January to October 1916 in an effort to find out the authors and their country of origin. Starting on January 1, 1916 a series of letters between American investigators and British Foreign Office officials begin. In the letters the British officials tried to determine whether a book published in the United States entitled *How Diplomatists Make War* had been written by a British Member of Parliament, as the editor of the *New York Evening Post* had claimed. The British government's desperation to prove that the author of this book was American prompted a large number of letters and cablegrams between the two countries. At one point, an American investigator highlighted certain phrases from the book to find out if they are prominent in British society. In September 1916 the officials discovered that the author was Francis Neilson, a former Member of Parliament who was living in America. With Neilson identified, the Foreign Office turned his book and E. D. Morel's recently published book *Truth and the War* to the Director of Public Prosecutions to see if prosecution for either author was an available option. The Director of Public Prosecutions Charles W. Matthews wrote to say that there were several phrases

[106] "Parliament," *Times* (London, England) May 11, 1916: 7.

that allowed for prosecution under DORA regulation 27.[107] Matthews, however, warned that prosecuting Morel might simply give him a platform to speak, and recommended further investigation into the book by the Attorney and Solicitor General before they took action. These two men wrote to the Foreign Office seven days later repeating Matthews' warning concerning Morel. They advised not to prosecute Morel under DORA, and found that because Neilson published his work in America, prosecution was not possible. They recommended preventing both books from leaving or entering the country.[108] This investigation lasted ten months and only resulted in the stopping of the importing and exporting of these two books. Another investigation of a leading UDC member in 1916 led to similar results.

The British government led an investigation into intercepted messages in December 1916. Two Home Office officials wrote letters back and forth concerning the possible prosecution of C. P. Trevelyan, whom they suspected of writing these intercepted messages. The British government suspected Trevelyan because of a recent trip he took to America to promote UDC ideas concerning peace. Trevelyan's messages, parts of which were published by the *Washington Post*, told the American public that the British and Germans were tired of war and simply needed someone, such as the American President, to bring them together for the war to end. While both officials agree that these messages themselves contained information prosecutable under DORA, there was not enough evidence to prove that Trevelyan sent the messages himself. Therefore the Home Office recommended that Trevelyan not be prosecuted unless further

[107] DORA Regulation 27 prohibits and punishes the making of statements likely to prejudice His Majesty's relations with Foreign Powers.

[108] Letters between Harvey Bathurst, G. H. Lockock Esq. Foreign Office, Herbert Montgomery, Sir Gilbert, Kenneth Durant, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Viscount Grey of Fallodon, and the UnderSecretary of State Foreign Office, January 1, 1916- October 17, 1916: TNA, FO 371/2828.

information was found.[109]

These two cases demonstrated that although the government wished to prosecute leaders of the UDC and other dissent groups, finding the evidence that directly tied them to illegal activities remained difficult. Other lesser members of dissent organizations though were prosecuted under DORA regulations in 1916. Many of them were arrested for making statements illegal under DORA or for distributing literature that undermined the war effort. These people faced similar charges to Trevelyan when local officials arrested him in December 1916 for making statements at a dissent meeting, but were usually fined between three to twenty pounds or sentenced to three to twelve months in prison. According to arrest records, put together by a local official who wanted more dissenters prosecuted and not just arrested, the police sent Trevelyan's arrest information to the Competent Military Authority, who stated that they "did not think a prosecution to be desirable."[110] In comparison, local officials arrested both Myer Fishout and Thomas Henry Newman for making statements that the government considered illegal, and sentenced each to prison terms.[111] This evidence demonstrated that the government was unwilling to prosecute well-known dissent figures without evidence that allowed the government an assured victory in court. If the British government gave dissent figures a platform to speak, they wanted to be sure that it would lead to a long prison sentence, hopefully for the duration of the war.

In 1916, the British government began to crack down on individual dissenters who violated DORA in some way. It, however, hesitated to prosecute high-ranking

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[109] Letters between Mr. Secretary Balfour and Secretary Sir George Cave of the Home Office, December 22, 1916 – December 26, 1916: TNA, HO 144/1459/316786.
[110] Arrest records: TNA, HO 45/10742/263275.
[111] Ibid.

individuals and groups as a whole because of a limit on the government's power. The rights of groups and individuals to free speech in Britain created controversy for MPs when discussing limits on dissent groups. Though many MPs did not worry about the fate of individual dissenters, they hesitated to give local police or military officials too much power over censorship. MPs worried that after the war ended these restrictions would remain in place allowing the government to crush opposition in elections and debates. Though this struggle existed, it did not stop government officials from reading letters to and from known dissenters and preventing the export of pamphlets and books that contained undesirable information. New restrictions on free speech passed Parliament; they just contained provisions that limited censorship during the war. The fear of Germany and need to win the war overpowered the fear of censorship and allowed the British government to limit free speech and imprison those who tried to use it.

The introduction of the Military Service Act and the prosecution of individual absolute conscientious objectors, along with the renewed effort by dissent groups to bring about an American negotiated peace in 1916, focused the British government on the actions of individual dissenters in the hope that investigations would lead to prosecutions and arrests. Though the government and local officials arrested and prosecuted many lower level dissent members for minor DORA offences, which largely resulted in fines, leading members of the UDC did not find themselves successfully prosecuted until late 1917. The government investigated and prevented the import or export of dissent literature, but did not have a concrete case to risk taking the high-level dissent leaders to court. Because the people the government investigated were often politicians or public figures, officials wanted to ensure that prosecution would lead to imprisonment and not just give these

arguments attention. Dissent organizations attempted to avoid prosecution and to push the British government to enter into a negotiated peace with Germany. The UDC wanted the British public to force their representatives into peace negotiations, and they looked to the Americans to end the war diplomatically, much to the dismay of the majority of Britons. Though dissent groups found themselves under heavy scrutiny and harassment by the public, the press and government focused on individual issues and people in order to prevent the spread of disloyal ideas both in Britain and abroad.

CHAPTER 4: 1917: THE YEAR OF FALSE HOPE

In December 1916, a massive political shift changed the way the British government handled dissent groups for the rest of the war. David Lloyd George, a Liberal MP since 1890, served as Minister of Munitions from May 1915 until he, took power from Prime Minister Henry Herbert Asquith in December 1916. The British government created his position after several crucial military and public relations mistakes proved the incompetence of Secretary of State for War, Field Marshal Lord Horatio Kitchener. Kitchener and Asquith faced the public's wrath for allowing these crises, especially the shell shortage crisis.[112] The crisis allowed Lloyd George to create a separate ministry not affiliated with the War Office. Lloyd George's new ministry produced all weapons and ammunition that went to the front. He managed the office well and quickly gained a reputation, among fellow MPs as well as with the British people, for making decisions quickly and governed well. As 1916 dragged on Asquith faced more criticism, but by the end of the Somme Campaign many MPs wanted him removed from leadership.[113]

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[112] The Shell shortage crisis, also called the "shell scandal," was caused by a news report in May of 1915, which blamed the failure of a recent campaign on a lack of artillery shells. Newspapers wanted Kitchener blamed for the crisis, but the public focused on Asquith forcing him to form a new coalition government in 1915, which allowed Lloyd George to create the new Ministry of Munitions. It, however, did not get Kitchener taken out of command. See Pope and Wheal, *Dictionary of the First World War*, 434.

[113] The Battle of the Somme lasted from July 1, 1916 to November 18, 1916. Planned as a joint British-French operation the French troops were supposed to bare the brunt of the attack, but a diversion campaign by the British did instead. The Entente failed to take any significant territory, and the offensive ended in November because of heavy snowfall. The campaign, a failure, resulted in 420,000 British, 200,000 French, and 500,000 German casualties. The commanders refused to change tactics and this is seen as one of the main causes to the beginnings of war weariness in Britain. See Pope and Wheal, *Dictionary of the First World War*, 440-441.

Lloyd George and another cabinet member turned in their resignations, which forced the Prime Minister to do the same. Lloyd George became Prime Minister with the backing of over a 100 MPs and created a coalition government between the Liberal, Conservative, and Labour Parties.[114] This new government, which took power on December 7, 1916, affected society differently than its predecessor and looked to raise morale in Britain.

1917 started well for the UDC and its members. President Woodrow Wilson reaffirmed that he wished for peace and in a speech to the Senate called for belligerent nations to submit their war aims in preparation for a future peace conference. Also in early 1917, the initial phase the Russian Revolution took place, which replaced the autocratic Russian tsar with a socialist Provisional government. This new Russian government quickly announced its war aims and asked its allies to do the same. At the same time in Britain, however, a new coalition government headed by David Lloyd George took power that began to assert more authority over the free press and dissent organizations. Soon the UDC found the tables turned against it. America entered the war in April 1917 and began to call for the total defeat of Germany, the British government arrested E. D. Morel, the secretary of the UDC, and a document inspired by the Russian Revolution that listed the UDC's peace aims faced severe criticism and censorship by the British people and government. This chapter argues that 1917 was a year of false hope for the UDC. Just as it seemed that it had gained international and national acceptance, international events and new domestic polices changed the nature of the war.

On January 22, 1917, Wilson addressed the Senate and called for the European conflict to end with peace without victory. In his speech, Wilson called for the

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[114] Hugh Purcell, *Lloyd George: the 20 British Prime Ministers of the 20th Century* (London: Haus Publishing, 2006) 39-49.

belligerents to openly declare the terms for peace that their people demanded. He thought that both sides needed to understand the conditions that their enemies wanted before a peace conference could begin. Wilson also wanted the peace written by equals. He did not want a harsh peace imposed on the losing side by the victors. He stated:

> first of all, that it must be a peace without victory…. Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but on quicksand. Only a peace between equals can last.[115]

The UDC rejoiced in Wilson's speech. The group's message throughout the war maintained that to achieve a permanent peace, Britain had to compromise with Germany and not expect to gain the upper hand through a military "knock out." Now Wilson confirmed these same ideas as his own, which allowed the UDC to feel validated. In his speech, Wilson noted that he had already received notice from both sides of the conflict on the terms they required in order to end the war. He stated, "The Central Powers united in a reply which state merely that they were ready to meet their antagonists in conference to discuss terms of peace. The Entente powers have replied much more definitely.…We are that much nearer a definite discussion of the peace which shall end the present war."[116] The UDC's leadership decided to take Wilson's call for war aims and expand upon it. They called for the publication of the British government's official war aims so the British people could understand what they were fighting for. Wilson's speech provided an opportunity for UDC members to force the British government to publish its war aims in accordance with Wilson's request. Not wanting to waste the opportunity the UDC began a more aggressive campaign against the British government.

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[115] Woodrow Wilson, "Peace Without Victory" Speech to Senate January 22, 1917, The Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and Museum, Web, February 6, 2015.
[116] Ibid.

In 1917, the UDC called for the publication of Britain's true war aims. The UDC's leaders believed that Britain continued the war because the government wanted to ensure British control over the seas and over Germany's captured colonies. The group's leadership hoped that if the British government admitted this then the British people finally would understand that the war needed to end. Dissent groups sensed that the British public had grown weary of the war and its destruction, and therefore would call for peace when they understood the true reasons their fathers, sons, and brothers had laid down their lives.

In 1917, Britain only had two official war aims. First, it wanted to liberate Belgium and second, Britain planned for the utter defeat of Germany. These two claims, however, contained no specifics and the British government was wary to lock itself into any other aims, because the British government wanted spoils of war that American politicians did not approve of. Until America entered the war in April 1917, the British Government avoided publishing anything that encouraged iy to remain neutral. The British government first released an attempt at concrete war aims in January 1917, after Wilson demanded them from all belligerents. These aims called for the dismemberment of the Habsburg Empire along with a total German defeat. These aims, including comments made by the Colonial Secretary that Britain planned to keep captured German colonies, angered the UDC. UDC members believed that if the British government implemented its war aims the balance of power in Europe would shift in favor of the allies. They also believed that it was unfair to remove all of Germany's colonies just to add them to Britain's already vast holdings. In the February edition of the UDC's newspaper, Morel wrote in an editorial, "a nation of 56 millions [Britain], already in

possession of one-fifth of the habitable globe, is to add still further to its Imperial domains."[117] Though the UDC did not support the newly published war aims, the public did and the British government did not change them until forced to in 1918.

The British public and MPs maintained their support of the war, even though the public had begun to grow weary. Despite a small increase of public support for the UDC when Lloyd George took power, it still faced the wrath of the public during its meetings and in the House of Commons. The public broke up several meetings violently in the early part of 1917. A meeting held on January 9, 1917 ended after a large number of soldiers entered the meeting hall and began heckling the speakers. One yelled to Ramsay MacDonald, "There are older men than you in the Army; go and do your duty."[118] The meeting ended quickly after that with the soldiers rushing the stage and singing "Rule Britannia" and "God Save the King" after they hustled MacDonald and the other speakers from the building.[119] In April a recruitment meeting held by MacDonald for trade union delegates broke up after 2,000 men stormed the hall. The police had to stop the men from doing any physical damage and arrested two people. The press, however, only reported the names of the speakers, such as MacDonald, not those arrested.[120] The break up of these meetings demonstrated that a majority of the people did not support the UDC and instead supported the war, despite what the UDC's leaders thought. People believed in the new Prime Minister David Lloyd George and his promise to end the war by defeating Germany militarily. The sacrifice made by the British people created a sense of unity and allowed the British government to call for war aims that only benefitted Britain. The

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[117] E. D. Morel, "Editorial," *The U. D. C.* February 1917. found in Harris, *Out of Control*, 169.
[118] "A Peace Meeting Broken Up," *Times* (London, England) January 10, 1917: 5.
[119] Ibid.
[120] "Arrests at Glasgow Meeting," *Times* (London, England) April 16, 1917: 10.

citizens who supported the war did not think that these war aims were unreasonable because victory and the punishment of Germany were the only outcomes that justified such an immense personal loss.

Once Lloyd George became Prime Minister at the end of 1916, he first focused on the issue of morale in Britain. Lloyd George's government decided to affect morale in two ways. First he created the National War Aims Committee (NWAC) to help spread the government's message concerning the war throughout the United Kingdom, and second he cracked down on individual members of dissent groups such as the UDC to prevent them spreading demoralizing material in Britain or among its allies. As in 1916, Lloyd George's government had to deal with the conflicting ideas of wartime censorship and the liberal view of free speech. Lloyd George and many MPs justified censorship by clearly stating that they only censored illegal documents, such as published material calling for German victory, which damaged public morale or aided the enemy. The idea of public security though allowed the British government to pass new provisions within DORA's guidelines because the British people believed it necessary to win the war. New DORA provisions passed by Parliament called for the names of publishers and authors to appear on all published works in Britain. The government wanted this so if material was illegal the persons or groups responsible could be punished. Because the British government could not simply prevent all publication of dissent literature it created its own publishing organization and made sure dissenters could be prosecuted.

The NWAC met for the first time in July 1917 and worked to maintain civilian morale throughout the rest of the war. It replaced the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (PRC) created in 1914 when the war began. The PRC worked to ensure a

steady stream of volunteers for the war effort and, before the government resorted to conscription, helped enlist eligible men. Though the PRC produced some pamphlets and held various door-to-door campaigns in order to enlist all eligible men, it did not focus on civilian morale because of the strong support for the war.[121] Lloyd George replaced the PRC with the NWAC because he noticed morale falling after the losses during the Somme campaign in 1916. The NWAC worked to refute dissent groups' aim, and maintain civilian morale through published literature and public speeches that justified the long war in the light of German atrocities and lies concerning peace. The British government argued that though German officials claimed they wanted peace, their actions and war aims demonstrated that they actually meant to continue the war. Though Lloyd George's government created the NWAC in July 1917, the organization used most of that year securing the necessary funds to operate and dealing with the changing political climate. By 1918, however, the NWAC began a publishing campaign that rivaled the best dissent groups, publishing speeches and leaflets, which confirmed official arguments about the war and the Germans. Until 1918, Lloyd George looked to other methods to control dissent within Britain and received help in April 1917 when America entered the war.[122]

On April 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany and the other Central Powers.[123] While the British government and dissent organizations had anticipated this declaration since February, when the German government declared its intentions to return to unrestricted submarine warfare, it still

[121] PRC reports and campaign documents October 1915-March 1916: TNA WO 106/367.
[122] For more information on the formation and structure of the NWAC, its politics, and its finances, see David Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain: The National War Aims Committee and Civilian Morale* (Britain: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 1-84.
[123] Woodrow Wilson, Joint Address to Congress Leading to a Declaration of War Against Germany, April 2, 1917, The Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and Museum, Web, February 6, 2015.

caused excitement among the British government and disappointment among dissent organizations like the UDC.[124] For the British government, American intervention gave it new hope and supplies. It also allowed the British government to focus on internal dissent instead of on dissent literature sent to neutral powers. In 1916 especially, the British government worried that works published by dissent organizations in neutral countries like America convinced the American government that the British populace did not support the war. The British government thought that the only way to get American aid or an American alliance was to convince American leaders that Britain stood behind its war effort, and would not waver in its commitment. Now that America was part of the war, Britain did not need to worry about dissent influence there as much. The UDC and dissent organizations saw American entry into the war as the end of its hope for an outside-negotiated peace. They wanted America to force the belligerent powers into a peace conference and negotiate a peace treaty as a neutral power. Now that America entered the war, the UDC looked for hope elsewhere.

Early in 1917 the Russian Revolution brought new hope to the UDC, when on March 15, 1917 a new provisional government replaced the tsar and published its own peace terms that called for an immediate peace conference between all belligerents. The provisional government acted quickly and by April 10, 1917, published new aims for a lasting peace in Europe. These aims called for self-determination for all people, no annexations or reparations, and an end to imperialistic rule. Later that month Russia

[124] Unrestricted submarine warfare was used by the Germany government starting in 1915 and allowed the Germans to sink British ships carrying supplies and goods. This type of warfare, however, led to the sinking of the Lusitania and the Sussex killing Americas. These two events led to warnings by President Woodrow Wilson, which led to the German government stopping or limiting unrestricted submarine warfare in 1916. By the end of 1916, however, the German Kaiser Wilhelm II and his high command believed Britain to be close to defeat. This thinking and a harsh British blockade led the Kaiser to issue a command calling for unrestricted submarine warfare to resume on February 1, 1917. Pope and Wheal, *Dictionary of the First World War*, 219-222.

called for all countries to publish their aims so that a peace conference could begin. The UDC saw the provisional government's publications as a sign of hope for peace. UDC leaders believed that because the Russian government had adjusted its war aims, other Allied governments would do the same. The Allies needed Russia in the war against Germany, so their respective governments usually heeded Russian demands. The UDC's leadership pointed to the Russian call for peace and remarked that its plans for peace were honorable because it looked for a general not separate peace. Russia, however, needed other governments to respond to its requests positively, in order for the war to end and the revolution to survive. In an issue of the UDC's newspaper, Ramsay MacDonald made this argument. "Peace Russia must have, or the Revolution's cause is compromised, perhaps beyond redemption. She is striving honourable and gallantly that it shall be a *general* peace. Will our Government respond?"[125] The UDC wanted to use the Russian provisional government's war aims as pressure against the British government's January 1917 published war aims. While the British government tried to agree that annexations were not desirable, it never renounced colonial annexations and attempted to avoid the conversation.

On May 16, 1917, Philip Snowdon, a UDC supporter in the House of Commons, introduced an amendment concerning Russia and British war aims. It stated:

> This House welcomes the declaration of the new democratic Government of Russia, repudiating all proposals for imperialistic conquest and aggrandizement, and calls on His Majesty's Government to issue a similar declaration on behalf of the British democracy, and join with the Allies in restating the Allied terms in conformity with the Russian declaration.[126]

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[125] Ramsay MacDonald, "The 'No –Annexations' Debate," *The U. D. C.* (London, England) June 1917: 88: TNA, 30/69/1041.
[126] *H.C. Deb.,* 5th Series, vol. 93, May 16, 1917, cols. 1625, 1631, 1633, 1635. Found in Harris, *Out of Control*, 174.

Snowdon and Ramsay MacDonald both supported this amendment and argued that if Britain modified its war aims then other countries would follow suit, which would create the right atmosphere for a peace conference. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Robert Cecil, replied for the government and wanted the amendment rejected. While Cecil did not reject the idea of no annexations outright, he argued over the definition of annexation. Cecil wanted the word annexation replaced with liberation in the discussion of British war aims. The House of Commons did not pass the amendment, much to the dismay of the UDC's leadership.[127] Although the British government did not want to lose Russian support for the war, it also needed the support of its colonies, such as Australia, which wanted to keep the territory it claimed in battle against Germany. Though the UDC tried to force the British government to change its war aims to match Russian requests, the government focused instead on curbing the members of this seemingly dangerous dissent group.

In August 1917, the War Cabinet, now under Lloyd George's leadership, focused more on morale and dissent than before. With the United States allied with the British in the war against Germany the government turned from the international effect of dissent and focused on domestic issues. The Cabinet believed that advocates for peace and added to the burden that the British people already carried. The Cabinet Committee on War Policy warned the Cabinet:

> the maintenance of a healthy public opinion is a factor of great importance in the consideration of our war policy, … the imposition of any intolerable strain on a people, who are already making great sacrifices and sustaining the cause of the Allies to a very large extent, must be avoided.[128]

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[127] Ibid.
[128] W. P. 46 (Secret), Cabinet Committee on War Policy, "Interim Report," August 10, 1917. Found in Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics During the First World War,* 176.

Lloyd George's government believed that allowing dissent organizations to publish anti-war materials weakened morale and unnecessarily burdened the British people with the ideas of a few "peace hacks" who did not understand the true nature of the war or even worked for the enemy. The War Cabinet moved to prevent anti-war literature from entering neutral countries and worked to remove the authors from British society through imprisonment. Dissent organizations, protected by the liberal rights of free speech, published anti-war literature in Britain, but the government prevented the dissent publications from leaving Britain, so that neutral countries could not be affected by their arguments. Often dissent group members travelled abroad bringing their literature with them to get around the censors. Throughout 1917, the British government attempted to prevent the spread of dissent literature from leaving the country. The government worried about dissent literature influencing the governments of neutral countries, and made it illegal under DORA to send any anti-war literature to neutral countries without permission of the military.[129] The government investigated many dissent leaders in 1916 and early 1917, but never found enough evidence to ensure successful prosecution under DORA. At the end of 1917, however, the British government found evidence that allowed it to arrest and prosecute Edmund Dene Morel, the Secretary of the UDC.

The British government had monitored E. D. Morel since the start of the war because of his antiwar views. In 1916, it hoped to prosecute him on the publication of his book *Truth and the War*, but the Director of Public Prosecutions suggested that the trial would simply allow Morel a platform to speak without sufficient evidence for a guilty verdict. In 1917, however, the government obtained evidence that Morel had attempted to

[129] Great Britain, and Alexander Pulling, *Defence of the Realm Acts and Regulations Passed and Made to July 31st, 1915*, London: HMSO, July 1915.

send dissent literature to neutral Switzerland. On August 24, 1917, Scotland Yard sent a report on Morel to Lord Robert Cecil because of an inquiry Cecil made earlier that year.[130] The report concluded that the German government had an agreement with Morel and the fact that the German newspapers limited their discussion of Morel proved the conspiracy. "It is fair to conclude that there is a complete understanding between the two [Morel and Germany] and that the German authorities have decided not to compromise MOREL abroad."[131] The report on Morel by Scotland Yard demonstrated law enforcement's intense dislike of Morel along with the kind of surveillance he was under. The report cataloged his entire life from birth to the current investigation conducted in August 1917. The letter that accompanied the report also informed Cecil that Scotland Yard planned to search Morel's home the next day and he was to be summoned "for a breach of the Defence of the Realm Regulations in having solicited Miss Sidgwick to carry correspondence out of the country to evade censorship."[132] The search of his home and his subsequent arrest allowed for the recovery of evidence that the government used to imprison Morel.

In August 1917, the British government confiscated, photographed, and resent three letters from E. D. Morel to Ethel Sidgwick that the prosecution used to indict Morel. During the war, post office officials read through and censored the mail to ensure no one attempted to communicate with saboteurs in England. In the later years of the war this same system helped the British government monitor dissent groups. The letters

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[130] Lord Robert Cecil investigated Morel because of a book of Morel's entitled *Truth and the War.* Some passages in this book had been discovered in newspapers from the Netherlands and in Germany. Cecil wanted a report on Morel to help in his investigation of these works. He had already been informed that prosecution of Morel for these passages showing up in foreign newspapers was impossible, but hoped he could indict Morel for sending the book abroad illegally.

[131] Precis on Morel August 24, 1917: TNA FO 395/140.

[132] Letter from Special Branch New Scotland Yard S. W. 1. to Lord Montgomery for Lord Robert Cecil, August 24, 1917: TNA FO 395/140.

between Morel and Sidgwick discussed Romain Rolland, a French intellectual and novelist who was living in Switzerland. Sidgwick wrote to Morel informing him of Rolland's interest in his work. The *Times* printed all three letters in its report on Morel's arrest. The British government focused on a few lines in each of the letters when it took Morel to court. In the first letter, dated August 13, 1917, Morel asked Sidgwick, "Do you know of any other means of getting things through to him [Romain Rolland]? In case you do, I send to you under separate cover a copy of my latest book. I should be grateful if you would forward it to him."[133] The prosecutor interpreted these lines as Morel asking Sidgwick to evade the censor and get Morel's book to Rolland who, according to the prosecution, Morel knew lived in neutral Switzerland.[134] Sidgwick replied to Morel on August 17, 1917 and stated:

> Alas, it is only too probable that none of your books of U. D. C. pamphlets have reached Rolland in Switzerland. … The only safe method is to carry these books with you. … In October I will carry your books or anything else likely to interest the French fraternity, and the U. D. C. papers and pamphlets I shall attempt to convey to Switzerland by concealing them on the journey.[135]

This letter made it obvious that both Sidgwick and Morel understood that sending the literature by normal methods would result in it not getting to Rolland. They also seemed to understand that Rolland was in Switzerland and therefore the literature needed to be smuggled to him. Morel's reply to Sidgwick dated August 21, 1917 simply stated, "Many thanks for yours. Perhaps you can smuggle some of these pamphlets away. I shall be only too grateful to make use of you in October. –E. D. Morel."[136] This letter sealed Morel's

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[133] "The Charge Against Mr. Morel," *Times* (London, England) September 3, 1917: 3.
[134] The British government could not prevent the publication of dissent literature in Britain as long as it was not calling for Germany to win the war. Liberal laws protected free speech and even pro-war MPs did not want to act against them. Lloyd George's government chipped away at some free speech rights, but Parliament restricted him from simply forbidding all anti-war literature.
[135] "The Charge Against Mr. Morel," *Times* (London, England) September 3, 1917: 3.
[136] Ibid.

fate. It proved that he tried to evade the British censor and clearly violated DORA's provision on sending certain printed matter from Britain to a neutral country.[137]

Scotland Yard arrested E. D. Morel and charged him with "having solicited an incited Ethel Sidgwick to convey or transmit certain printed matter from the UK to a neutral country in contravention of Regulations 24 and 48 of the Defence of the Realm Regulations."[138] After his arrest, the government also charged him with having "done an act preparatory to the transmission, exportation, or conveyance otherwise than through the post of printed matter to a neutral country without a permit issued by or under the authority of the Admiralty of Army Council."[139] These two charges, backed up by the three letters between Morel and Sidgwick, allowed the government to finally bring a leader of the UDC to court. After Scotland Yard arrested Morel, the judge refused him bail because of the short time between the presentation of charges and the actual court date. Morel went to Brixton Prison to await his trial. On September 5, 1917, the *Times* reported that Morel "was sentenced to six months imprisonment in the second [criminal] division on each of two charges, the sentences to run concurrently."[140] Morel's sentence forced him to serve his time in the second or criminal division of the British prison system. Morel and his followers saw this as an insult and petitioned the government to move Morel to the first or non-criminal division where he could serve his six months in

[137] It should be noted that the Foreign Office itself sent a copy of Morel's book, which was prohibited from being exported, to a neutral power in August 1917. The office sent a copy to a Dutchman who wanted to examine the book and compare it to another version he had found within his own country. Letter from Montgomery to Walter Townley, August 29, 1917: TNA FO 395/14025424/163345.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.
[140] "News in Brief," *Times* (London, England) September 5, 1917: 6.

comfort. The government denied this petition and Morel stayed in the second-division Pentonville Prison for five months, being released one month early for good behavior.[141]

Morel and his supporters viewed the government's prosecution of him as a personal attack and upon his release in 1918 Morel gave a speech concerning what happened, which was quickly printed and distributed among dissent groups. Several of Morel's supporters wrote introductions to the pamphlet entitled *The Persecution of E. D. Morel*. In these they called the sentence vindictive and thought that the British government unfairly target Morel. One stated:

> I did not think that in all the annals of our criminal jurisprudence there was any record of such a mean thing as the condemning of Mr. Morel to six months' imprisonment as a common felon for sending pamphlets to a distinguished Frenchman in Switzerland who could have got these without any danger to Mr. Morel by making a journey of ten miles to the French Frontier [it was not illegal to send dissent literature to belligerent countries only neutral ones].[142]

Another supporter thought that the government vilified Morel because of his exposures of the "evils of Secret Diplomacy." This supporter stated:

> They could not dispute his contentions; they could not disprove his allegations; they could not challenge his facts. But they could cast mud, and when they had the public sufficiently impressed with an uneasy feeling of his general wickedness, they haled him before the Courts and had him clapped into gaol.[143]

The views of these men represented the opinion of the dissent community when the British government arrested Morel. They thought that Morel's arrest was unfounded and based on a hatred of him and his exposure of information that defamed the British government.

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[141] Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics During the First World War,* 178-179.
[142] E. D. Morel, *The Persecution of E. D. Morel: The Story of His Trial and Imprisonment* (Glasgow: Reformers' Bookstall Limited, 1918), 3.
[143] Ibid.

Morel himself viewed his arrest and trial very differently than the British government and press. Morel claimed that the prosecutor initially misinterpreted Morel's letters to Ethel Sidgwick and made a case where there was none. Morel argued that he did not know that Sidgwick had offered to smuggle items to Switzerland and did not know that Rolland was even in Switzerland because he was a French citizen. He claimed that he did not pay attention to the letters because of the large amount of correspondence at the time and promptly forgot about them. He wrote, "I paid very little attention to the letter. I was very busy, and my correspondence was very large. Switzerland was not in my mind at all."[144] Morel tried to prove that he did not intend to break the law and the government arrested him unfairly. Morel also declared his trial and guilty plea a sham. Someone threatened his original attorney, which prevented him from having legal council during one of his bail hearings. At the final court hearing, his new lawyer apparently entered a plea of guilty in Morel's name without first talking to him. Morel claimed that he had not sanctioned the guilty plea and never intended to plead guilty to crimes he felt he did not commit. He stated, "I gave no authority to anyone to plead guilty on my behalf. I was astounded, but perfectly helpless, when I heard my counsel open his defence with a plea of guilty."[145] Though Morel did not think his guilty plea was the result of a conspiracy between his lawyer and the government, he wanted to ensure his supporters understood that he never intended to plead guilty, and did not think of himself as a criminal.

Morel's punishment also angered him. When the government sent him to prison in the second division it labeled him a common criminal, which Morel found insulting. He wrote, "For this crime I was sent to prison for six months as a common felon in the

[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid.

company of house-breakers, receivers of stolen goods, forgers, and so on."[146] Morel felt that the actions of those imprisoned around him were much worse than his accused actions; therefore, the punishment did not fit the crime. Morel, however, did not believe the government imprisoned him based on the three letters they used in court. He thought that his exposure of classified documents and arguments about secret democracy and the war forced the government to take drastic action and remove him from society rather than publically debate him. The act of publishing dissent material in Britain was not illegal under DORA. Parliament limited the rights of censors because many MPs feared giving police and local officials too much power over the freedom of speech. Because of this the government could only prosecute dissenters for sending pamphlets to neutral countries or other more minor infractions. The pamphlet about his arrest finished with a quote from one of Morel's supporters that he felt summed up the entire affair. "The motive of the trial was the suppression of opinion, and it became evident that the prosecution not only wanted to suppress opinion, but to lock up in silence anyone who could form an opinion they would like to suppress."[147] To Morel and his supporters, his arrest and imprisonment seemed unfair and vindictive. They thought that the government decided to imprison Morel instead of debate him because it could not refute his arguments. Morel's imprisonment hurt the UDC and it would not be until his release in January 1918 that it functioned properly again.

Emboldened by Morel's arrest, the British government worked to ensure dissent leaflets and other literature published by anti-war groups complied with government regulations. In November 1917, the House of Commons debated and passed a new

[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.

provision of DORA that forced all published leaflets to bear the names and addresses of the author and publisher. The documents also needed approval from the Press Bureau to guarantee their compliance with the new law. The *Times* covered the passage of this law and printed most of the debate over it. While C. P. Trevelyan and Arthur Ponsonby, UDC members and MPs, fought against the new provision, the other MPs in the House praised it and only raised questions on the limits of an individual's power over freedom of speech. Sir George Cave of the Home Office asked for the new provision because of the difficulty in prosecuting individuals based on their published works. Because organizations published most pamphlets and leaflets, the individual authors' names were not always printed. The government could not indict an organization easily and therefore wanted to strengthen cases against dissent group members. Though the government already required certain information to appear on published literature, it was not part of DORA and therefore not easily enforced. Cave stated:

> Most of the leaflets do not come to the notice of the authorities until after they have been partly distributed, and there is often a difficulty in ascertaining the authorship. Further, the penalty imposed by the statute upon the printing of these leaflets without disclosing the printer's name is inadequate in time of war.[148]

Though some MPs raised questions regarding the suggested provision, the majority supported the idea and asked if Cave planned to impose harsher penalties against pacifists. One MP even asked if Cave intended to punish the MPs who claimed to be pacifists. "Has the right hon. gentleman [Cave] taken note of the very pernicious action in regard to peace taken by hon. gentlemen here calling themselves pacifists, and will he deal as severely with them?"[149] With very little debate the House passed the provision that required authors' and publishers' names to appear on all literature,. Those who

[148] "House of Commons," *Times* (London, England) November 16, 1917: 10.
[149] Ibid.

opposed the measure worried more about giving the government and police too much power over free speech rather than how it affected dissent groups.

The UDC suffered another setback in the summer of 1917. Peace terms published by the provisional Russian government encouraged the UDC's Executive Council to publish its own set of peace terms in July 1917. These terms called for: no annexations of any kind, including colonial annexations, no compensation from Germany to Belgium, the creation of a League of Nations, a plebiscite to be held in Alsace-Lorraine, no reparations, and the return of all sovereign territory such as northern France.[150] Furthermore, the UDC did not call for the break up of Austria-Hungary because it believed that the war would last longer if the Allied powers demanded this. The British government and people heavily censored and criticized these peace terms. The UDC faced insults from other dissent organizations because they did not call for plebiscites in Austria-Hungary, and the from British populace for not punishing Germany for all the loss and destruction they blamed it for. The *Manchester Guardian* editor Charles Scott was sympathetic to the UDC's ideology and first published the UDC's manifesto in 1914, but he thought the peace terms were impractical and wrote that the Union leaders had a "extraordinary way of assuming that whatever they think reasonable and right can be got without fighting."[151] By August 1917, the British public resoundingly rejected the UDC's peace plan and the group found itself more despondent.

By the end of 1917, the government had successfully prosecuted a leading member of the UDC, considered one of the more dangerous dissent groups, and passed new laws that allowed the Home Office and police more power to prevent and punish the

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[150] "English Internationalists on Terms," Survey 38 (August 4, 1917): 406-408. See Harris, *Out of Control*, 176-177.
[151] "The U.D.C. and Peace," *Manchester Guardian,* July 2, 1917. See Harris, *Out of Control*, 180.

spread of anti-war literature. For dissent groups 1917 was a year of false hope. President Woodrow Wilson, the champion of peace, brought America into the war, while the initial Russian Revolution led the UDC to publish its own poorly received peace plan. At the beginning of 1917, the fall of the Liberal party and the ascension of Lloyd George brought new support to the UDC as Liberals turned against the new Prime Minister's coalition government. But by the end of the year, no major government support existed and the UDC's most radical and outspoken member was behind bars. As the war moved into its final year the UDC faced new laws restricting its speech and a government that began to refocus its attention on dissent groups as a whole in order to maintain a faltering national morale.

CHAPTER 5: 1918: THE END OF THE WAR

At the end of 1917, the UDC seemed broken. The government had prosecuted and imprisoned the most outspoken member of the group, E. D. Morel, and passed new laws to make future arrests easier. 1918 brought new hope and new failures for the UDC. Early successes in the year allowed for the UDC's leadership to envision itself as the rising political party in Britain. This hope, however, quickly faded as a new German campaign began in the spring of 1918. The German campaign coupled with the loss of Russia as an ally created a new sense of panic in Britain. The British public turned against the UDC one final time and looked to the press and government in order to keep this dangerous dissent group in line.

1918 saw a brief period of hope for the UDC but ended in failure. Both the press and public turned against the UDC in March 1918 and began referring to them as traitorous and pro-German. These same attacks, however, had appeared when the war began. In 1918, the press began to insult the UDC in its articles again with the same wording as in 1914 and 1915. The difference between the first and last years of the war, however, is the view of the British government. In 1914 and 1915, the British government viewed the UDC as insignificant, but by 1918 the group was one of the largest dissent groups in the country, with a membership of around 10,000 men and women. Once the British government deemed the UDC pro-German, the members of this dissent group faced attacks on all fronts. These attacks, along with military victories for

Britain and the other Allied powers, lost the UDC its chance to become a full-fledged political party and cost most of its members their political careers.

In October 1917, a second Russian Revolution took place, which removed Russia from the war. In this October Revolution the Bolsheviks, a radical socialist group led by Vladimir Lenin, forced the Provisional Russian government out of power. Lenin and the Bolsheviks quickly sued Germany for peace and ended the conflict on the eastern front. On December 16, 1917, the Central Powers and the Bolshevik government signed a ceasefire, and they began formal peace negotiations quickly afterward.[152] While Russia negotiated with the Central Powers, the Bolshevik government released secret communications between the leaders of the Allied powers concerning war aims.

The communications released by the Bolsheviks in 1917 contained treaties and war aims signed or negotiated by the Allied powers during the war. Included in the release was the April 26, 1915 Treaty of London signed between Italy, Britain, Russia, and France that gave Italy territory, from parts of Austria-Hungary and Turkey if Italy entered the war.[153] Other agreements included the partitioning of Germany between France and Russia and the break up of Turkey between Britain, France, and Russia. The release of these documents provided the UDC proof that the British government negotiated secret agreements that could only come to fruition if the Allied powers declared total victory. The Central Power firmly rejected all war aims contained within

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[152] Pope and Wheal, *Dictionary of the First World War*, 82-83.
[153] The agreement discussed areas of Turkey not the Ottoman Empire as a whole. *Agreement between France, Russia, Great Britain, and Italy signed at London, April 26, 1915*, Web, https://archive.org/details/agreementbetween00franrich.

these documents, and the UDC lamented that these secret negotiations had lengthened the war.[154]

The UDC attempted to use these recently published secret agreements to prove that the British government kept fighting Germany for selfish reasons. UDC members and supporters in the House of Commons wanted to force the government to admit that these documents represented the war aims of Britain. In a speech to the House of Commons the UDC founders, Arthur Ponsonby and Charles Trevelyan, described the different agreements in detail and argued that these agreements proved the British government was fighting a war of conquest not liberation. Ponsonby stated,

> You [The British Government] have prostituted the original disinterested motives for which this country entered the war, and you have substituted for them a mean craving for vengeance and punishment, a sordid desire for gain, an arrogant demand for imperial aggrandizement and domination, and this without consent of the people and behind the backs of the people, secretly, surreptitiously, making declarations all the while deceitful and false.[155]

The government's reply came from Arthur Balfour, the Foreign Secretary since December 1916.[156] He refused to discuss the documents published by the Bolshevik government and instead criticized Ponsonby for making his speech at all. He stated:

> I came to the conclusion that he [Ponsonby] was not concerned with the legitimate party task of throwing stones at his opponent, but that he really did desire to injure the Government of his country because it was the Government, and because it was his country. And he gladly used every phrase, and he, correctly or incorrectly, dragged up what he conceived to be every fact which could be turned to propaganda account for the enemy.[157]

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[154] Harris, *Out of Control,* 207-210.
[155] House of Commons," *Times* (London, England), December 20, 1917: 8.
[156] Balfour served as a Conservative Party Prime Minister from 1902 to 1906 and led the Conservative Party until 1911. He joined the coalition cabinet under Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith in May 1915 as First Lord of the Admiralty until Lloyd George took power and he switch to Foreign Secretary. Found in Pope and Wheal, *Dictionary of the First World War,* 54.
[157] House of Commons," *Times* (London, England), December 20, 1917: 8.

Instead of openly debating the documents as Ponsonby, Trevelyan, and other UDC members wanted, Balfour appealed to the "patriotic" MPs and citizens, knowing that the *Times* published House of Commons speeches and debates, and accused Ponsonby of aiding the enemy by insulting the British government. Balfour went on and assured the MPs that Britain desired no large annexations, and did not continue the war in order to gain more territory. Balfour argued that Germany and the Central Powers fought for territorial gain and pointed to the invasion of Belgium and France as his evidence. Citing a letter from the Pope to the German government, Balfour described the German government's reply to the Pope:

> There is nothing about terms; there is nothing about peace. The Pope asked explicit questions about Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium, and Poland. All of them might surely have provoked a reply from the Powers which have taken Alsace-Lorraine, which have invaded Belgium, and which have divided Poland.[158]

Balfour argued that if the Germans truly wanted peace then the government needed to address what Germany planned to do with its conquered territory. Balfour used the absence of a German plan on what it intended to do with the above territory as proof that Germany was not sincere about peace. In his whole speech to the House of Commons Balfour avoided directly discussing the content of the published agreements that Ponsonby referred to. Instead, he worked to show that Ponsonby had aided the enemy in his speech, and was simply wrong about Germany and Britain's war aims. By doing this, Balfour also discouraged any other members of Parliament or the public from bringing this topic up in formal discussion. The fact that Balfour labeled Ponsonby as a traitor in his speech possibly discouraged others from referring to this potentially humiliating

[158] Ibid.

subject for the British government. Balfour's speech received so much applause in agreement from the other MPs that Ponsonby did not get a chance to respond.

On January 5, 1918, Lloyd George gave a speech at a meeting of the Trades Union Congress that outlined Britain's current war aims. His speech responded to the allegations put forth by dissent groups about secret agreements between Britain and the other Allied powers during the first years of the war. These documents made Britain look vindictive and power hungry, which created distrust between the Labour Party and the Coalition government that Lloyd George headed. Hoping to smooth over relations with Labour, the Prime Minister spoke at the conference, which the *Times* printed. The Prime Minister started his speech by explaining what Britain was not fighting for. He made it clear that Britain never wanted the destruction of Germany and only declared war in self-defense after Germany violated international law. Though Lloyd George considered the autocratic military system of government in Germany dangerous in the modern world, he claimed that it was up to the German people to replace it, not Britain. He stated:

> The destruction or disruption of Germany or the German people has never been a war aim with us from the first day of this war to this day. Most reluctantly and, indeed, quite unprepared for the dreadful ordeal we were forced to join in this war in self-defence, in defence of the violated public law of Europe…. Nor did we enter this war merely to alter or destroy the Imperial constitution of Germany, much as we consider that military autocratic constitution a dangerous anachronism in the 20th century…. But after all, that is a question for the German people to decide.[159]

Lloyd George continued his speech by explaining what Britain intended after the war ended. He called for the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France, the creation of an international body to preserve European peace, the fair settlement of all colonial holdings, and the fair resolution to territorial disputes around Italy and in Austria-

[159] "British War Aims," *Times* (London, England), January 7, 1918: 7.

Hungary. Lloyd George demanded that the Central Powers and especially Germany pay reparations for the destruction of property in light of Germany's violation of international law. Though Lloyd George called for a just peace that prevented another war, he also made it clear that he expected disagreement between the Allied and Central powers. He stated:

> Finally, there must be reparation for injuries done in violation of international law…. It is desirable, and indeed essential, that the settlement after this war shall be one which does not in itself bear the seed of future war. But that is not enough. However wisely and well we may make territorial and other arrangements, there will still be many subjects of international controversy. Some, indeed, are inevitable.[160]

The Prime Minister understood that the British people did not want another war, but were not willing to give up reparations and other penalties against Germany. The Labour Party, however, while still not ready to part with all reparations remained wary of forcing the Central Powers to prolong the war in hopes of avoiding military defeat and the Allied war aims. Lloyd George hoped to please both groups with this new set of British war aims. He formally asked for reparations from Germany for Britain and its allies, and demanded that Germany return territory to Belgium and France. He also asserted that Britain did not want Germany destroyed and only wanted its fair share of reparations because of the amount of damage done to the British Navy. Lloyd George's speech occurred right before President Woodrow Wilson outlined the American war aims, which allowed for the UDC and other dissent groups to comment on the two together.

On January 8, 1918, Wilson laid out American war aims in his fourteen points. In his speech Wilson called for open democracy, the freedom of the seas, and territory

[160] Ibid.

divided based on the concept of popular sovereignty. The UDC praised Wilson's speech for its fourth and fourteenth points. They stated:

> [Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety]…. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.[161]

The UDC praised these two points because they closely resembled two of the UDC's five cardinal points, which demanded that Britain enter into an international council to help sustain peace, and that countries reduce the sale and production of arms.[162] The UDC saw most of Wilson's war aims as similar to their own goals for a peace treaty. They, however, worried that Wilson still needed the complete surrender of the Central Powers before accomplishing certain points.

Wilson's tenth point stated that "The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development."[163] When the UDC published its own peace terms in 1917, the British populace criticized it for not calling for the break-up of Austria-Hungary. UDC leadership reasoned that calling for the separation of Austria-Hungary showed that the Allied powers were not interested in what Austria-Hungary wanted, because the country would never separate voluntarily.

Though the UDC approached Wilson's speech with reserved optimism, it thought the David Lloyd George's speech simply pandered to the Labour Party to keep its political support. Letters between Ponsonby and Trevelyan demonstrated the lack of trust

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[161] Woodrow Wilson, "Fourteen Points" Speech to Congress January 8, 1918, The Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and Museum, Web, February 6, 2015.
[162] Union of Democratic Control, *The Morrow of War*, 1914, TNA: PRO 30/69/1833.
[163] Woodrow Wilson, "Fourteen Points" Speech to Congress January 8, 1918, The Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and Museum, Web, February 6, 2015.

that the two leading members of the UDC placed in Lloyd George. Ponsonby wrote to Trevelyan and stated, "There are bad points in the speech… the terms as such are not those the Germans will accept."[164] Ponsonby worried that certain points, particularly the ones concerning reparations, showed the British Prime Minister still wanted Germany defeated and did not see negotiation as the best path to end the war. By threatening Germany's economic recovery after the war, Britain assured the failure of peace by negotiation, which meant a longer war. Trevelyan, like Ponsonby, worried about reparations and other clauses within Lloyd George speech, but he also concerned himself with what Lloyd George did not say. Trevelyan thought that Lloyd George's speech made it clear that Britain still wanted territorial gains and he did not trust Lloyd George to make good on his assertions to the country. The UDC's suspicions proved correct when only a month later Lloyd George changed his war aims.[165]

Historians who study dissent and politics during World War One argue that Lloyd George's speech in January 1918 was not a change in policy for the British government. Most of what Lloyd George said was not the British government's policy on war aims. Instead, the war aims presented by Lloyd George represented his view of the Labour Party's requests. In late 1917, Lloyd George faced a backlash from the Labour Party after he allowed changes to DORA limiting free speech and trade unions began protested the conscription of workers in what they considered vital fields. Labour also protested against the secret agreements and threatened to pull its support from the Coalition government unless Lloyd George guaranteed that Britain was not fighting a war of conquest. Lloyd George complied with his January 1918 speech. Historians note though

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[164] Arthur Ponsonby to C. P. Trevelyan, January 11, 1918, quoted in Harris, *Out of Control*, 200.
[165] Harris, *Out of Control,* 198-202.

that only a month later, when speaking to constituents, Lloyd George outlined different war aims. Lloyd George seemed to change his war aims based on who he spoke to during the war and only finalized them after Germany sued for peace in October 1918.[166]

In spring 1918, two major events changed the British perspective on the war and refocused the British public and government on defeating the Central Powers. First, the Bolshevik government and Central powers signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918, which ended the war between Russia and Germany. This allowed Germany to move troops from the eastern front to the west. Russia gave up thirty percent of its imperial population to the Central Powers, though most went to Germany.[167] For Britain, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk demonstrated the type of peace Germany forced on those it defeated. The British government quickly began a new propaganda campaign, which used the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in speeches and pamphlets to help with morale. In March the Germans also began a new offensive on the Western front, helped by troops released from fighting in Russia. For several months after the start of the offensive, it seemed that the Central powers might actually win, which created panic among Allied governments and populations.[168] With the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in mind, the British government set out to remind the public of the dangers of Germany and the peace they harshly imposed on Britain's former ally using the new propaganda ministry that Lloyd George had established in 1917.

David Lloyd George began to use the National War Aims Committee (NWAC) to publish British war aims and other pro-war speeches that showed the public that the British government remained committed to avoiding an unfair peace with Germany,

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[166] See Harris, *Out of Control*, 190-211.
[167] Pope and Wheal, *Dictionary of the First World War*, 82-83.
[168] Harris, *Out of Control*, 198.

despite Germany's recent military gains. Lloyd George and other speakers used the treaty of Brest-Litovsk as proof that if the Central Powers won the war then the peace it would impose would be impossible to accept. The NWAC hoped this message created a sense of loyalty and fear in the British public, which allowed the government to continue the war despite the destruction and loss of life. The NWAC also published speeches to justify British war aims, particularly reparations, and tried to inspire the British public with messages of cautious hope.

The NWAC published a speech on July 29, 1918 delivered by Earl George Nathaniel Curzon, a member of the War Cabinet. Curzon's speech tried to inspire the British people with hope as well as remind them that the war was not over yet. He stated, "I speak at a moment of great significance in the history of the War…. It is too early to talk of victory, too early to imagine that the enemy is beaten; but it is true that the situation has changed. There is a break in the clouds and the sun is riding high in the heavens."[169] Curzon's speech also justified the British call for reparations, which the UDC criticized. Curzon pointed to all of the money, supplies, and other materials of war that Britain provided to its Allies. "I would point out that this country is the feeder, the clothier, the carrier, the banker, the armourer, the Universal Provider of all our Allies."[170] The British government wanted the public and its allies to appreciate all that Britain had done during the war to understand why Britain deserved reparations. This statement pushed back against members of the UDC and other Allied countries like America who believed that Germany should not have to pay reparations especially to Britain who experienced no invasion by the German military. Curzon argued that Britain had carried

[169] George Nathaniel Curzon, *Great Britain's Share*, NWAC pamphlet, July 29, 1918.
[170] Ibid.

supplies, loaned money, and shipped soldiers for its Allies and deserved compensation for the lives lost during these transactions as well as for its trouble. While Curzon's speech argued for a cautious sense of hope and pushed for British compensation, a speech by Lloyd George published by the NWAC called for peace on British terms and explained how Britain expected to enforce peace.

Lloyd George spoke in Manchester on September 12, 1918, and the NWAC published his speech as a pamphlet entitled *Looking Forward*. This speech spoke of a Germany close to defeat and a Britain determined to finish the war. Lloyd George understood that the public was tired of the bloodshed and wanted an end to the war, but he also warned that without the utter defeat of Germany, no peace would ever last.

> Victory is essential to sound peace. Unless you have the image of victory stamped on the surface the peace will depreciate in value. As time goes on the Prussian military power must not only be beaten, but Germany itself must know it. The German people must know that if their rulers outrage the law of nations that Prussian military strength cannot protect them from punishment.[171]

Lloyd George wanted Germany so utterly defeated that no military or political leader would ever attempt to violate international norms and laws again. Lloyd George also referred to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in his speech. The Prime Minister recognized that the British public viewed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty as humiliating and cruel. He vowed, "We shall neither accept ourselves nor impose upon our enemies a Brest-Litovsk Treaty."[172] The British government knew that the British public found the treaty imposed on Russia by Germany unacceptable and did not want it repeated. Though Lloyd George's speech made it sound like the war was near the end, he also assured the public needed patience so the war could end successfully. The Prime Minister's call for victory

[171] David Lloyd George, *Looking Forward*, NWAC pamphlet, September 12, 1918.
[172] Ibid.

over negotiations caused dissent groups to turn away from the Liberal and Conservative Coalition Party he headed and look toward the rising power of the Labour Party.

Starting late February 1918, some members of the UDC, like Ramsay MacDonald and the recently released E. D. Morel, wanted to create a new party with members of the UDC or ILP at its head. These members thought that there was enough radical support for peace in Britain. They planned to use public support to replace Lloyd George's coalition government with an interim government that would sue for peace with the Central Powers and end the war. Unfortunately for the UDC's supporters, the little public support for peace vanished in March 1918. From March to July 1918, Germany pushed back Allied troops and made headway in Europe. This Allied military setback caused panic in Britain and turned the British government and public against the UDC once again.[173]

Though in the earlier years of the war the public did not love the UDC, the beginning of 1918 saw a slight surge of support after Wilson published his fourteen points and the Prime Minster seemed to support UDC principles with his January 1918 speech. Many Labour Party members as well began pulling support from the coalition government because they disliked Lloyd George's rise to power and the new policies against free speech passed in late 1917. This surge of support bolstered the UDC to begin creating its own political party, which members thought would pull support from the more radical members of the Labour Party. The revival of hatred against the UDC, however, changed its plans. Public officials and the British populace began speaking out against the group again as a response to the German spring offensive. In the House of Lords one official called E. D. Morel "A very dubious Frenchman, who dearly loves the

[173] Harris, *Out of Control,* 204-205.

Hun, and who I suggest ought to be denaturalized without any delay."[174] Other members of the House of Lords also denounced the UDC as a pacifist and traitorous group that only wanted to help the enemy during Britain's time of crisis. Newspapers also began denouncing the UDC in articles again. The *Morning Post* accused the UDC of attempting to start a strike and called the group pro-German. The respected journal *Nineteenth Century and After* referred to the leaders of the UDC as "dupes and tools of the Kaiser"[175] These accusations resembled those published during 1914 and 1915 against the UDC, and encouraged the UDC's leadership to look elsewhere for political power.

With the extreme lack of popular support UDC leaders decided that forming their own political party would not work and began working on another idea that allowed them to gain political power in order to end the war. By May 1918, leading members of the UDC, such as Morel and Trevelyan, decided that the best way to politically advance was through the rising power of the Labour Party. Many members of the Labour Party defecting to the more radical ILP in 1918 and began working for a negotiated peace. The ILP represented the only option available for UDC members who wanted to remain in politics without sacrificing their beliefs concerning the war. Though many members of the Labour Party disliked Lloyd George's government, they remained loyal to the coalition government. Because of this UDC members could not turn to the Labour Party for support. The ILP, however, remained separate from the Labour Party, but had some political support. UDC members slowly joined the ILP as the war neared its conclusion. Some UDC members, like Ponsonby, did not want to abandon their liberal politics for socialist ones and remained independent of the ILP. After losing elections in 1918,

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[174] Quoted in Harris, *Out of Control*, 204.
[175] "Bolshevism in Great Britain Infecting the Trade Unions," *Morning Post,* October 29, 1918. Quoted in Harris, *Out of Control,* 205.

however, all politically active UDC members who had not joined the ILP quickly joined. For politically active members of the UDC, however, the shift occurred too late.[176]

After July 1918, the public, seeing an end to the war as imminent, turned completely against a negotiated peace and a radical government solution lost all support. American aid helped turn the tide of the war against Germany, and one by one the Central Powers sued for peace and signed armistices with the Allies. On November 11, 1918, the armistice between Germany and the Allied powers took effect, which ended the fighting in Europe and forced the UDC to recognize its failure to achieve a negotiated peace without victory.

When Germany signed the armistice on the UDC founders faced an uncertain future. Lloyd George's Coalition government won the war for Britain, and the British public needed no reminder of who had not supported the British cause throughout the war. With elections looming, members of the UDC tried to campaign to keep their seats in Parliament. 1918 ended with the political defeat of the UDC, this starkly contrasted with how the year began. In December 1917 and January 1918, the UDC gained valuable information and political support as the Bolsheviks published secret agreements made by the Allies during the war. These agreements convinced many Labour Party members and even some members of the public that the UDC correctly critiqued the government for having secret treaties that kept Britain in the war. This victory for the UDC, however, was short lived. By March 1918, Russian and Germany signed a peace treaty that removed Russia from the war. German troops from the east began their march west and the British public and government turned against the UDC one final time. By July 1918, when Allied troops finally pushed the German military back, the UDC faced a hostile

[176] Harris, *Out of Control,* 202-204.

population and a government that saw victory ahead. All attempts to end the war through negotiation and not victory failed and the UDC understood its own failure by November 11, 1918.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In September 1918, the Central Powers began to sue the Allied Powers for peace. Bulgaria signed an armistice on September 30, 1918 followed by Turkey on October 30, and Austria-Hungary on November 3, 1918. Germany finally signed an armistice on November 11, 1918, which ended all military campaigns between the belligerents. The armistice called for punitive penalties against Germany to prevent American President Woodrow Wilson from requiring that his fourteen points be the basis of the peace treaty. British and French government officials believed that the armistice set the tone for the peace negotiations, which prompted them to avoid any of Wilson's fourteen points to ensure he could not demand them put into the treaty itself. The armistice required the evacuation of all Germany troops from occupied lands within fourteen days of signing, and allowed for the occupation of the left bank of the Rhine by Allied troops to ensure Germany did not resume military operations during peace negotiations. Britain and France also retained the blockade of Germany to guarantee Germany's compliance with Allied peace terms.[177]

The UDC thought that the armistice the Allies signed with Germany proved that Britain never planned to give Germany a fair peace. Members spoke out against the armistice agreement and predicted that the harsh terms in it demonstrated the terms of

[177] Pope and Wheal, *Dictionary of the First World War*, 35.

peace that the British government intended for the peace treaty. The UDC also complained that Wilson's fourteen points, which Germany sued for peace under originally, were not being upheld. Members of the UDC in Parliament tried to get the British government to officially declare their intentions to support Wilson's fourteen points, but were not successful in their efforts. Very soon after the Allies and Germany signed the armistice David Lloyd George called for elections in Britain, which had a detrimental effect on the UDC's power in Parliament.[178]

The December 1918 British elections removed all UDC members from their positions of power within the British government. Ramsay MacDonald, C. P. Trevelyan, and Arthur Ponsonby lost their seats in Parliament to pro-war candidates. Trevelyan and Ponsonby remained reluctant to join the Labour Party and ran in 1918 as either Liberals or Independent Democrats. Those who ran as independents did not have the political support to muster votes and the dying Liberal Party did not do well against Lloyd George's Coalition backed candidates. Ramsay MacDonald faced harsh criticism from the public for not supporting the war even though he had Labour's support in the election. In the 1918 elections, the British people demonstrated their support for the war by voting against any candidate who did not support it. After the election UDC members who had not declared themselves part of the Labour Party did so to gain a political advantage in preparation for future elections. Trevelyan and Ponsonby both joined the Labour Party after the election and remained with it the rest of their political careers. As part of the Labour Party, former members of the UDC remained dedicated to international affairs and worked against the Coalition government that remained in power after the 1918

[178] Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control*, 214-215.

elections. The UDC continued its business of dissent and spoke out against the Treaty of Versailles when the Allies published it in 1919.[179]

On June 28, 1919, the Allied and Central Powers signed the Treaty of Versailles, which officially ended the war. This treaty called for harsh punishments for Germany and favored France and Britain. Britain gained control of most of Germany's former colonies and won reparations from Germany as well. France negotiated and gained control of the Saar Valley, which contained most of Germany's coalmines, along with the return of Alsace-Lorraine. The Treaty of Versailles did put in place an international body called the League of Nations, but the Central Powers were not allowed to join. Germany faced a reduction of its military and territory, alliance restrictions, and article 231. This article, now known as the "war guilt clause," affirmed that Germany accepted its role in starting the war and agreed that it must pay the Allied nations for all damage caused by its aggression.[180] The Treaty of Versailles hurt Germany's economy and its people's morale while providing Britain, France and the other Allies some level of relief and political boost. The UDC hated the Treaty of Versailles and argued that the very fact that the Allied powers benefitted while the Central powers suffered proved that Britain fought the war for selfish reasons and the UDC insisted the peace would not last.[181]

The UDC protested all parts of the treaty including those that did not even affect Germany. UDC members thought that the arrangement of countries in Eastern Europe violated national sovereignty and created a system that caused financial instability. The UDC also wanted Britain to end the blockade on Germany and pull troops out of Russia.

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[179] Ibid.
[180] "The Versailles Treaty" Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy, Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/partviii.asp.
[181] Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control,* 219-220.

The UDC published pamphlets and held meetings, along with members of the Labour Party, which protested the Treaty and attempted to convince the public that it would not bring long lasting peace. Despite the UDC's best efforts to prevent the treaty's popularity though, when the British government signed the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 it considered it a success.[182]

In the 1920s the Treaty of Versailles lost support as the war's impact faded, and Germany seemed less of a threat. The harsh terms in the treaty started to seem unfair and the British people turned against the Prime Minister who negotiated it, David Lloyd George. Lloyd George lost power in Britain's 1922 elections and never held political office again. The 1920s represented a shift for the UDC. In 1921, the UDC and organizations affiliated with it contained more than one million members. In the 1922 elections, the British public elected thirty UDC members, who ran as Labour candidates, to Parliament with E. D. Morel beating Winston Churchill in a race. The UDC remained committed to foreign policy at this time and made most of the foreign policy platform decisions for the Labour Party as a whole. All of this changed, however, when the UDC founders finally got their chance to run Britain in 1924.[183]

In 1924, three of the UDC's founding members came to power and headed the newly elected Labour government. Ramsay MacDonald became the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, Arthur Ponsonby served as the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and C. P. Trevelyan worked as President of the Board of Education. Six other UDC members served in the cabinet, along with another fifteen members who became

[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid.

MPs.[184] Ramsay MacDonald as Prime Minster now presided over a UDC dominated cabinet and finally had the chance to implement UDC supported procedures that he fought for during the war. MacDonald, however, accomplished little while in office. His government's one foreign policy accomplishment was that it worked and succeeded in getting British recognition of the Soviet Union. Once in power MacDonald found it much harder to implement UDC ideas of a democratic and reformed Foreign Office as well as a reduction in British armaments. Now that MacDonald and the others were in power, they found it much harder to support dissent. E. D. Morel expected a foreign policy position when his fellow UDC founders took their places in the government in 1924. He was disappointed, however, when MacDonald did not appoint him. Morel continued as the secretary for the UDC and pushed MacDonald to implement reforms in politics. His pushing alienated him from his former friends and he never got his political appointment.[185]

E. D. Morel died at the age of 51 on November 12, 1924. Doctors attributed his death to health problems associated with his time in prison and exhaustion. After Morel's death the UDC continued its activities, but the dissent spirit of the group never reached the level it had under Morel.[186] Through the 1920s and 1930s, the group associated more and more with Labour and contained its work with foreign policy and anti-colonial issues. During World War Two the UDC became resoundingly anti-fascist, but concentrated more on colonial issues in Africa and Asia.

Ramsay MacDonald's government did not last long and he left office in October 1924 only nine months after he became Prime Minister. He led the opposition party in

[184] Ibid, 221.
[185] Ibid, 221-222.
[186] Ibid.

Parliament until 1929 when he took over as the Prime Minister of a Labour government again. MacDonald took office a second time right before Wall Street crashed in 1929. By 1931, MacDonald faced mutiny within his own party. To save the pound MacDonald forced through Parliament a set of reforms that cut unemployment benefits and raised taxes. With his cabinet spilt on these reforms, it seemed that MacDonald would once again lose his position leading the government. Instead, MacDonald instituted a plan with the king that allowed him to pull support from the three different parties in power and form a temporary National Government. Though this cost MacDonald the support of the Labour Party, he remained in power supported mostly by the Conservative Party until 1935.[187]

Though MacDonald remained in power, the UDC never realized its goal of a democratically controlled foreign policy system. Instead, MacDonald governed and ran the foreign office in the standard way using secret agreements when necessary. The only change made to the foreign policy office under MacDonald's first Labour government was the creation of the so-called "Ponsonby Rule." This rule, put in place by UDC founder Arthur Ponsonby, delayed the ratification of a treaty twenty-one days, which allowed Parliament time to debate the document. Though the Conservative government that took power after 1924 deposed of the rule, MacDonald reinstated it when he took power in 1929 and it remains in place today. The UDC separated from MacDonald when he took office and remained a dissent organization until 1966.

Leading up to World War Two the UDC took an anti-fascist stand, but did not protest the war in the same manner as World War One. The Second World War did not have the same secrets and obscure entry that the First had, which made it harder for

[187] Morgan, *J. Ramsay MacDonald*, 2-3.

groups to argue against it. After the war, the UDC became an anti-colonial group and pushed for African and other colonial independence. This fight lasted until the 1960s when most colonies finally achieved independence from Britain. The UDC disbanded in 1966, 52 years after it formed. Though the group remained intact until 1966, the UDC never lived up to its first four years. Once the original leaders of the group took power in 1924 and E. D. Morel died, the spirit of the UDC changed. It no longer took stands the pubic and press found repulsive. Instead, its founders tried to govern, and found that changing the system of the British government was much harder than they originally thought. The UDC absorption into Labour marked the end of the radical UDC of World War One. The group simply did not push for reforms the way it had during the Great War and with the death of its main firebrand it simply faded in all but name.

The UDC formed during the First World War with the ideals that British foreign policy needed to be changed for there to be lasting peace in Europe. Its founders wrote four and later five cardinal points that called for changes that allowed peace to prosper in Europe and avoided international conflicts. These men called for a reduction of armaments, the democratization of foreign policy decisions, an end to economic warfare, the creation of an international body, and the distribution of disputed territory through plebiscites. By protesting the war, members of the UDC faced attacks from the press, public, and the government.

At first the press did not pay attention to the UDC, instead they focused on one of its founders, Ramsay MacDonald. MacDonald openly declared himself against the war by resigning from the chairmanship of the Labour Party when the other members

declared their support for the war. The press and public attacked him through articles comparing him to the German High Command, which created the idea that only traitors opposed the war. In 1915, however, the press linked MacDonald to the UDC. 1915 marked a hard year for the UDC in the press as the group was repeatedly insulted. The press even helped the public organize the break-up of UDC meetings by publishing the place and time of the gatherings along with editorials calling the UDC and other dissent groups traitors. UDC members attempted to defend their loyalty, but the public only saw their anti-war status and labeled them traitors. In 1916 and 1917, however, the press stopped attacking the UDC so vehemently. Instead, newspapers selectively reported on the different public attacks on the UDC. An attack by two thousand men during a UDC meeting resulted in the arrest of several of the attackers. Newspapers did not report the names of the arrested men, but did mention Ramsey MacDonald by name several times in the same article. This is just one example of the press using public actions to show their disdain for the UDC. The German spring offensive in 1918 caused the press to return to its 1915 tactics and once again direct attacks against the UDC appeared in newspaper articles. Because the press needed public support, editors typically supported the war. The UDC and other dissent groups published their own newspapers because the information they wanted to read did not appear in any mainstream newspapers. The press stopped attacking the UDC directly in 1916 and 1917 because the British public slowly became tired of the war during these years.

The British government did not worry about the UDC and dissent groups as much as the press during the early years of the war. By 1916, however, conscription focused the government on dissent groups and that focus never relented. The government wanted to

prevent the publication of dissent literature in Britain. The UDC published pamphlets, books, and other documents during the war and were able to do so because of the policies of freedom of speech that existed in Britain. Henry Herbert Asquith, who served as Prime Minister until 1916 worried less about dissent groups than his successor. Though Asquith's government set up the tribunal system that dealt with pacifists, he never focused on dissent groups like the UDC the same as David Lloyd George.

Lloyd George succeeded Asquith in December 1916 and began to quickly move against dissent groups. His Coalition government used the War Cabinet to push new policies through Parliament and created the National War Aims Committee (NWAC), which became the government's mouthpiece for the remainder of the war. Though Lloyd George cracked down on dissent literature, he never banned it completely because many MPs in Parliament worried about giving police and other local officials too much power over the freedom of speech. Instead, Parliament forced dissent groups to label pamphlets with the author and groups name, and prevented the export of dissent literature from Britain. Under Lloyd George, the UDC faced one of its hardest years, when the British government arrested E. D. Morel, the secretary of the group in 1917. Morel's arrest heavily affected the group because he wrote and published the most literature for it. Even after the government released him in 1918 his failing health meant he never was as effective as before. The government did not relent against the UDC until the war ended in 1918. The last year of the war saw the government combine forces with the press in insulting members of the UDC. The government wanted to keep morale up and prevent the UDC from using recently released secret agreements from hurting its image. The government succeeded in tarnishing UDC members' images and in the 1918 elections,

after the war ended, the UDC faced a public that saw its members as traitors with no political support to help it.

The UDC formed in 1914 after Britain entered into a war against the Central Powers. The British government argued that it had entered the war to uphold international laws and prevent Germany from taking over Belgium and France. The founders of the UDC believed that Britain had entered the war because of secret agreements between Britain, Russia, and France that Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey arranged, without any form of oversight or Parliamentary control. The UDC formed quickly and published its four cardinal points within months of the first shots of the war. Its founders, however, faced backlash from the British public and press who viewed the group as pro-German and traitorous. In response to this public outcry the UDC changed its message in 1915 and attempted to appeal to a larger audience by holding public meetings instead of just publishing pamphlets. The public still overwhelmingly supported the war and the UDC faced riots and humiliating violent break-ups of its meetings. In 1916, many dissent groups began to protest conscription that the British government put in place in January. The UDC, however, did not protest conscription or aid conscientious objectors avoiding imprisonment. Instead, UDC members focused on their cardinal points and the ongoing war, which they wanted to end with a negotiated peace settlement between Britain and the Central Powers. When the press backed down during 1916 and 1917 the British government stepped up harassment of the group. The UDC stayed true to its principles and tried to convince the public that a negotiated peace allowed for Britain to end the war honorably while also bringing its young men home. Though this idea appealed to more people as the war went on it never appealed to a majority of British citizens so the

government forged ahead. In 1917 the Russian Revolution inspired the UDC and provided them with an ally in calling for a negotiated peace. Unfortunately, the Bolsheviks took over in late 1917, turning the public against the revolution and those who supported them. The Bolsheviks also published secret documents at the end of 1917 in an attempt to humiliate the Allied governments. While the UDC tried to use these documents against the British government the Russians negotiated with the Germans and agreed to a cease fire and eventual peace treaty that allowed Germany to bring fresh troops to the western front lines. Germany's March 1918 offensive ended the UDC's rise in popularity quickly and the group ended the war hated and politically alone. Once the belligerents signed an armistice on November 11, 1918 Lloyd George called for new elections in Britain. These elections threw the few UDC MPs out of Parliament and demonstrated the public support for politicians who supported and won the war. Having been forced out of office many UDC members turned to the rising power of the Labour Party, which allowed them a chance to run the country in the 1920s and 1930s. Though the UDC tried to change tactics in 1915 in order to appeal to more British citizens, the idea of a negotiated peace stuck with the group starting in 1916 and members refused to deviate from it. Though this tactic did not allow the UDC to change the government's policy concerning the war, it did make them notorious as a dissent group in the eyes of the public. In the decades after the war, the UDC scored several victories as Parliament put in place its ideas concerning the foreign office and treaty ratification. While the UDC did not change the course of the First World War, its members stayed true to their principles, which allowed them to change foreign policy after the war ended.

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