

The \$100,000 American Peace Award of 1924

IN THE 1920s, Americans took advantage of booming industrial productivity and an expanding system of communications to do what traditionally they have most enjoyed doing: making money and playing games. Seldom did they do both so successfully. While the fabled Bull Market stampeded its way into the story books of national legend, the attractions of organized gamesmanship gripped the national consciousness. Professional football became organized on a country-wide scale. Professional baseball became a national fetish. And professional prizefighting became respectable. The intricacies of mah-jong distracted George Babbitt's sober neighbors in Zenith, while bolder sorts competed for beauty contest prizes and flagpole-sitting records. Whether racing up the stairs of the Woolworth Building or sitting in tubs of water, Americans challenged time, personal health, and each other in an impassioned quest of the fame and fortune that came with competitive victory.

By 1923, the spreading national obsession with gamesmanship captured the interest of American peace workers. Frustrated by Washington's failure to lead in the supervision of world peace, activists under the direction of the Philadelphia publisher Edward W. Bok established the \$100,000 American Peace Award in an unabashed attempt to catalyze the presumed popular will for peace into "the best practicable plan" by which the United States might support the co-operative drive toward world order. Bok's beneficence electrified the country. Within one year, the lure of his cash attracted tens of thousands of peace plans, precipitated a rash of resentment, and provoked a Senate investigation. In the process, the Bok contest generated the most comprehensive single expression of popular thinking on questions of war and peace in American history. It bared the wide range of attitudes—from militant nationalism to generous idealism—that permeated popular American feelings toward the preservation of world peace. And it demonstrated firmly

in the end the truly peripheral importance of the popular will upon foreign policymaking in twentieth-century America.

On July 1, 1923, the Dutch-born millionaire Edward W. Bok, publisher of *The Ladies' Home Journal* and national household sage, announced the establishment of the American Peace Award, a \$100,000 prize for the "best practicable" plan for American co-operation in the organization of world peace. While reporters crowded him anxiously for details, Bok was able to make only two matters clear. The winning plan was to be selected by a Jury of Award that was yet to be named; and the prize was divided into two parts—\$50,000 to be awarded upon acceptance of the plan, and \$50,000 to be awarded when the plan was either accepted by the United States Senate or ratified by the will of the American people. Otherwise, Bok declared, the detailed operation of the award and the clarification of contest rules were the responsibility of an already-established Policy Committee. With some pride, the publisher disclosed that the Committee consisted of a number of noted national figures, including American Bar Association president (and soon to be Democratic presidential candidate) John W. Davis, the estimable Judge Learned Hand, and Henry L. Stimson. On the surface, the group seemed admirably bipartisan and staunchly male. It was, in fact, the first but not the last. Real power in the Committee was centered in the group's female contingent. It was there that Eleanor Roosevelt, Narcissa Cox Vanderlip, and, most of all, the indefatigable Esther Everett Lape, the group's "member-in-charge," maintained daily supervision of the contest and did so much to determine its influence. "The great Bok peace prize contest," the *New York Herald* observed with some surprise, "was managed by two matrons of social distinction and a highly educated and most efficient young unmarried woman."¹ While the *Herald* was con-

¹ Quoted in Joseph P. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin: The Story of Their Relationship, Based on Eleanor Roosevelt's Private Papers* (New York, 1971), 283. Wife of the former Assistant Secretary of the Navy and Democratic vice-presidential candidate in 1920, the 39-year-old Mrs. Roosevelt was a prominent New York reformer and Democratic Party leader. Mrs. Vanderlip (age 44) was a well-known League of Nations sympathizer and fashionable wife of the New York banker Frank Vanderlip, while Esther Lape had served as an English instructor at Swarthmore and Barnard before she undertook an interest in the judicial settlement of international disputes during the World War. Also, Elizabeth Read, a lawyer friend of Lape's, played an instrumental role in the functioning of the Award. Eleanor Roosevelt, *This I Remember* (New York, 1949), 24.

founded, Edward Bok was well pleased. The distribution of power within the Policy Committee wholly coincided with his belief that "peace is primarily a woman's problem: she takes it as her own more than does a man, and the American Peace Award stands to her as spelling Opportunity in very large letters."²

Bok operated from other assumptions as well. A popular businessman who had catalogued his personal realization of the American Dream in his best-selling *The Americanization of Edward Bok*, the Philadelphia publisher had retired from his official duties with *The Ladies' Home Journal* in 1920 with the express intention of devoting the rest of his life and most of his fortune to social service. For the next three years, he traveled and corresponded with acquaintances throughout the country, preaching upon the need for businessmen to serve human needs and observing the popular pulse beat on issues of the moment. By the beginning of 1923, he had concluded that the most unsettling thought among the American people was the thought that they had carried the world within sight of permanent peace and then retreated into confused isolationism. Bok claimed that there was an ill-formed sense abroad in the land that the United States was not doing its share for world peace. Even worse, he maintained, there was a general conviction among the American people that the need for more active American leadership toward peace was being thwarted by political partisanship and by the petty obstinacy of the nation's political leaders. Plainly, the democratic process was failing to function in an area of critical importance. Democracy was not being allowed to work.

Anxious to give voice to the popular will, Bok reverted to the contest technique that he had perfected during years of promoting reader interest in the *Journal*. A long-time admirer of the Nobel Peace Prize competition, the Philadelphia publisher had already helped the infant Woodrow Wilson Foundation in dispensing large cash awards to prominent internationalists like Lord Robert Cecil and Elihu Root. Now, through an open contest divorced from political pressure, he intended to condense the popular will for more active American peace leadership into definite recipe for national action. "Wars are not voted upon," he insisted, "but peace can be,

² Edward W. Bok "What I Expect," *The Atlantic Monthly*, CXXXIII (January, 1924), 59.

and perhaps the next war will go to a vote. For the moment we are supplying the Government and the world with an incontrovertible decision as to what the American people want. Next we will crystalize world opinion in one moving effort to establish peace."³ Ideally, the American Peace Award presented the people with a "direct opportunity" to contribute to a consensual plan which would stimulate the United States Government into co-operating with other nations against war and in behalf of peace. Somewhere in the nation was a healing formula that would unite squabbling peace activists and an uncertain citizenry in common action toward peace service.⁴ The \$100,000 prize money was not intended to buy peace. No sensible person, Mrs. Roosevelt wrote, believed that any amount of cash could purchase "a chemical formula that, rightly used, would immediately produce peace."⁵ The money was rather offered in order to dramatize the gravity of the search for the people's plan. It was "an assurance of the earnestness of the committee to find a practicable, statesmanlike plan capable of adoption and of obtaining results when adopted." At the same time, Bok coyly conceded, he would be surprised if the money did not help to prompt "idealism by the golden spur of self-interest."⁶

Operationally, the Award functioned upon three levels. The

³ Quoted in *New York Times*, II, Jan. 7, 1924, 1.

⁴ Memorandum, attached to Lape to Mrs. Florence B. Boeckel, Oct. 15, 1923, Records of the National Council for the Prevention of War, Swarthmore College Peace Collection. Her emphasis.

According to Lape, the Award was intended to "provide an avenue of expression through which American thought on international matters will be clarified. And of course we do hope further that it may lead ultimately to a plan which will be acceptable to many groups, who, while now perhaps differing in their conception of the best method of international co-operation are agreed as to the need of our co-operation with other nations in some way for the prevention of war." Lape, *et al.*, to Anita McCormick Blaine, July 17, 1923, Box 16, series I-E, Anita McCormick Blaine Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society Library, Madison.

⁵ "Of course," Mrs. Roosevelt added, "we know that no formula, no plan, no one idea, no one mechanism of association among nations will immediately procure peace." Eleanor Roosevelt, "The American Peace Award," *The Ladies' Home Journal*, XL (October, 1923), 54.

⁶ Bok, "Why I Offered \$100,000 for a Workable Peace Plan," *Collier's*, LXXII (Aug. 11, 1923), 6; Bok, "What I Expect," 53; Bok's preface, in Esther Everett Lape, ed., *The Ways to Peace: Twenty Plans Selected from the Most Representative of Those Submitted to The American Peace Award for the Best Practicable Plan by which the United States May Co-operate with Other Nations to Achieve and Preserve the Peace of the World* (New York, 1924), xi-xii. Also, Bok, *Twice Thirty: Some Short and Simple Annals of the Road* (New York, 1925), 435-437, 449-452, 457-458.

Policy Committee theoretically exercised direct executive power, though in practice it was Esther Lape who made the vital daily decisions and churned out the waves of press releases that kept the Award far forward in the public consciousness. Then, in order to heighten public interest, Lape directed in the late summer of 1923 the formation of a Co-operating Council out of a number of national organizations that had expressed interest in ensuring the Award's success. The Council's membership was amazingly inclusive. It contained a full complement of established peace organizations, as well as professional groups like the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and trade unions like the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers. In addition, the Council claimed representatives from the socialist League for Industrial Democracy, United States Chamber of Commerce, the NAACP, the Lions International, and the American Legion. All told, ninety-seven national organizations authorized delegates to meet periodically with the Policy Committee and to submit nominations for the Jury of Award.⁷ More importantly, members of the Co-operating Council accepted the responsibility for publicizing the Award contest among their millions of constituents and, later, of assisting in the conduct of a popular referendum on the winning plan. Beyond this, however, the Co-operating Council had no influence over the operation of the Award. The Policy Committee retained the crucial prerogative of selecting the Jury of Award, the third agency of responsible action and the adjudicative front for the whole plan.

It was not an easy task. In the middle of September, 1923, after weeks of negotiating and maneuvering behind the scenes, the Policy Committee announced that it had selected a Jury of seven famous Americans. Headed by the respected G.O.P. elder Elihu Root, the group consisted of Colonel Edward M. House, the one-time confidante of Woodrow Wilson and still an influential figure within the Democratic Party; Major General James G. Harbord, a retired career officer who parlayed his position as General John J. Pershing's chief-of-staff into the presidency of the fledgling Radio Corporation of America; Ellen Fitz Pendleton, president of Wellesley College; William Allen White, the liberal Republican editor of *The Emporia Gazette* and a scarred bellwether of midwestern farm sentiment; and

⁷ *New York Times*, July 8, II, 5; July 16, p. 10; Aug. 20, p. 10; Sept. 23, 1923, p. 12.

the novelist Brand Whitlock, the former Progressive mayor of Toledo, and at one time Wilson's ambassador to Belgium.

As a collection of national notables, the make up of the Jury of Award strengthened Bok's hopes of demonstrating the earnestness of his desire for a "practicable" peace plan that would fire the popular imagination. But the very respectability of the jurors and their collective reputation for political caution disturbed more ambitious peace leaders. The prominent pro-League leader and former suffragist champion Carrie Chapman Catt declared privately that she "lost all interest in the plan when Elihu Root was made the Chairman. I think it was a great political stroke of genius to appoint him. He was the one man in all the country who would have the most influence with conservative Americans, but one may guess pretty well in advance just what sort of a plan he would pick out as best. He would not find anything very advanced as practicable."⁸ Yet, as a League advocate, Catt admitted, "I think the jury appointed is excellent from a political point of view. I think they are all, or nearly all, in favor of the League of Nations."⁹ But it was precisely that danger, of course, that aroused the suspicions of nationalistic elements who already feared that the Award was a dollar-draped Trojan horse assembled to conquer America for Geneva. Certainly, the *New York Times* reported, the question most frequently raised by editors and pundits who analyzed the Award involved the nature of the relationship between a "practicable" plan of international co-operation and the League Covenant.¹⁰

In response to this issue, the Policy Committee declared late in July that among the conditions of Award were the considerations that a "practicable" peace plan would neither hold the United States "responsible for the political questions of Europe" nor make "compulsory the participation of the United States in European wars, if any such are, in the future, found unpreventable."¹¹ Yet the Committee was equally insistent that plans for American accession

⁸ Carrie Chapman Catt to Lucia Ames Mead, Sept. 26, 1923, Box 6, Lucia Ames Mead Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *New York Times*, July 8, 1923, II, 5.

¹¹ Minutes of the Policy Committee, June 27, 1923, attached to Lape to Henry Stimson, June 29, 1923, Box 74, Henry L. Stimson Papers, Sterling Library, Yale University; leaflet, "The American Peace Award," n.d., Box 1, Records of the American Foundation, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

to the existing League or a modified League were workable within this context. At the same time, the Committee's conditions specified the contest's procedural rules. Only individual American citizens or independent American organizations could compete for the Award. The Jury of Award reserved the right to assemble a composite winning plan, in which case contributing plans would receive subsidiary awards. Each plan was to be limited to 5,000 words, including a summary of 500 words, and be deposited by November 15, 1923. While the first half of the \$100,000 prize would be awarded to the winning plan early in 1924, the second half of the prize would be conferred only if the plan received the approval of the Senate or of the American people by March 4, 1925. Moreover, in order to ensure anonymity, each plan was to be typed on plain paper with no indication of authorship, and attached to a sealed envelope which bore the name and address of the draftsman. Finally, the Committee declared that it would return to contestants the thousands of plans that had already arrived at the Award offices, so that they might be resubmitted in line with contest rules.¹²

Between September 1 and November 15, 1923, exactly 22,165 peace plans from Americans throughout the world poured into American Peace Award headquarters at 342 Madison Avenue in New York City. The floodtide of plans formed the fullest expression ever made of the country's popular attitude toward matters of war and peace. It was a poll that probed far beyond percentiles. It was a survey that elicited developed ideas, and not knee-jerk prejudices.

As expected, the plans varied enormously in the quality and sophistication of approach, analysis, and promise. Nearly 14,000 were quickly weeded out by Lape, Mrs. Roosevelt, and a screening staff of twenty-two college students as "generally ineligible" because of their vagueness or naivete.¹³ Some were inspirational poems or peace mottoes. Others were relations of divine revelations, or designs for international amity flags. Some called for the global invoca-

¹² *New York Times*, July 23, 1923, 1.

¹³ "Plans classified as inconsiderable," Lape advised Policy Committee members, "are those that are vague and general, religious, and sentimental, foolish, irrelevant, an undistinguished rehash or reflection of commonplaces of the subject, or contrary to the conditions in the matter of length, anonymity, etc." Lape to Stimson, Nov. 5, 1923, Box 74, Stimson Papers.

tion of the Golden Rule. Others urged the conjuring of friendly forces from the spirit world. One advised the formation of an international force of expert hypnotists who would be responsible for driving warlike thoughts from the minds of world statesmen.¹⁴ Another was less subtle: "Marriage entirely for companionship by castration of every male born."¹⁵ Many of the plans were ingenious. Others were fatuous. An Omaha attorney named Otto L. Bremers suggested that all nations post peace bonds as a guarantee of good behavior.¹⁶ P. R. Garrett of Harrisville, West Virginia, wanted a national referendum on questions of war and peace in which a record of each person's vote would be kept. Then, "In case war is declared, the armies shall be selected from those who vote for war," and the nay-sayers would be exempted from combat.¹⁷ Toledo's Charles R. Johnson was more solicitous of Europe's delicate state of mind. "The first thing to do," Johnson advised, "is to get all the people of Europe in real good humor. The best way to do this is to leave at each home there, a booklet 500 [sic] of the funniest clean pictures printed in the United States during the past 100 years."¹⁸

Johnson's preference for "clean pictures printed in the United States" highlighted the America-centric skein that streaked through the great majority of peace plans. When Chicago's Harry Atwood proposed the extension of the Constitution throughout the world, it was because

That more than any other one thing gave us leadership among the nations of the world. To help other nations to understand its meaning and utilize its value will not only tend to stabilize their chaotic conditions, but will enable them to co-operate more wisely toward the achievement and preservation of world peace. The people of this Republic must say, "Come, let us reason together," and then by example and precept point the way forward to world peace.¹⁹

¹⁴ Lape's foreword, *The Ways to Peace*, 4-5.

¹⁵ Attached to Frances J. Smiley to Women's Peace Union, n.d., Box 3, Records of the Women's Peace Union of the Western Hemisphere, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

¹⁶ Attached to Otto Bremers to Jane Addams, Dec. 28, 1923, Box 3, Records of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom-U.S. Section, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

¹⁷ Attached to P. R. Garrett to Women's Peace Union, n.d., Box 3, W.P.U. Records.

¹⁸ Attached to Charles R. Johnson to Women's Peace Union, Feb. 8, 1924, *ibid.*

¹⁹ Attached to Harry Atwood to Women's Peace Union, n.d., *ibid.*

Herman C. Patzwald felt the same way. World conditions demanded the internationalization of the Monroe Doctrine, Patzwald explained, "by the formation of a permanent Union of all the willing nations of the earth, with a powerful central government, but subject to the majority of those people who exercise Self-Government. Our national constitution is such an instrument of destiny."²⁰ Plainly, the largest number of peace plans assumed that American practices provided the paragon of right conduct among peoples. At the same time, authors of most plans shared other working assumptions: that political machinery alone could not prevent war; that nations did not drift into war as much as they were pushed by grasping politicians and greedy arms manufacturers; and that common men were inherently more pacific than their rulers. Out of these shared convictions came a cacophony of calls for popular referenda on issues of war and peace, universal conscription without exemption, and the elimination of private profit from war production. Unfortunately for them, the almost 14,000 "short-cut, or first principle plans" failed to infuse their assumptions with enough practicability to pass the first screening by Award officials. The dour General Harbord was less generous. "Perhaps fifty of all the plans," he estimated, "rose above the dead level of mediocrity."²¹ Yet in their very earnestness, the early losers powerfully demonstrated the undercurrent of popular feeling that war was a man-made anachronism due for displacement through the world leadership of the American democracy.

Lape and her staff sifted the remaining 7,903 contenders into three rough categories of emphasis: political, economic, and educational. No single category contained plans consistently more practicable or workable than the others. Each included proposals that ranged from the realizable to the ridiculous. The purported political plans, for example, encompassed a wide variety of approaches. Some called for the creation of a world superstate founded upon the American pattern. Some proposed the imposition of peace through the organization of international police forces. One suggested a

²⁰ Attached to Herman Patzwald to Women's Peace Union, n.d., *ibid.*

²¹ Esther E. Lape, "In the Bok Peace-Prize Office," *The Century*, V, no. 6 (April, 1924), 903; James G. Harbord, "The Penalties of Pacifism," address at Lowell, Mass., Jan. 24, 1924, in scrapbook, 1923-28, James G. Harbord Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

"World's Board of Trust with a world's militia." Another emphasized the need for compulsory military training for all Americans with an "increase in army and navy to keep Europe afraid of us."²² Many authors stressed the need for regional groupings of states, or pan-hemispheric unions of powers authorized to preserve local order. Several others called for a system of international conferences, including a Third Hague Conference and meetings devised to extend international arbitration. Former Democratic vice-presidential nominee Franklin D. Roosevelt, now a crippled victim of infantile paralysis at his Hyde Park home, wanted to dismantle the League of Nations and substitute in its place "a new permanent and continuing International Conference to be known as the 'Society of Nations'" which turned upon America's membership.²³ His scheme was one of many attempts to modify the League system in a manner conducive to American entrance. The Covenant was overhauled "from Alpha to Omega," Lape reported, but few plans proposed direct American entrance without reservations. Other authors suggested that Washington promulgate a unilateral declaration of peace policy in the fashion of the Monroe Doctrine or the Open Door notes. Former Bryn Mawr College president M. Carey Thomas, for instance, pleaded for an American "Declaration of Interdependence" that would outlaw war and erect a "Council of Vigilance and Inquiry" to resolve international tensions.

But Thomas' plan to outlaw war was exceptional. The numerous plans that called for the outlawing of war were emphatic in rhetoric but flaccid in implementation. The same problem afflicted the many authors who argued for the codification of international law and the creation of international courts. Though anxious to devise a "practicable" plan, nearly every author of a political solution for war failed to face the overriding problem of how to institutionalize orderly change in a world of highly competitive nation-states. As

²² Memorandum, attached to Lape to Stimson, Sept. 15, 1923, Box 74, Stimson Papers.

²³ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "A Plan to Preserve World Peace," Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park. Though there is some confusion on this point, it seems that FDR did not submit his plan for Award consideration because of his wife's connection with the contest. But he did resurrect the plan's assumptions when he prepared to contribute to the organization of the UN. See F.D.R. Memorandum In re Attached Plan, January 19, 1944, p. 31, Roosevelt, *This I Remember*, 23-24, 253-266; and Robert Ferrell, *Peace in Their Time: The Origins of the Kellogg-Briand Pact* (New Haven, 1952), 25.

Lape wrote in surveying the contest, "The chief lack, discernible alike in brilliant, mediocre, and quite trivial papers, is a lack of understanding of practicability, and a marked tendency to assume that because ideas are simple, they can readily be put into effect."²⁴ Most draftsmen of political plans or supporters of international peacekeeping machinery de-emphasized the idea of an enforced peace and stressed instead the self-evident attractions of a warless world. Many were willing to accept the necessity of economic embargoes or the diplomatic ostracism of recalcitrant states. But few made plans for more wars to end wars.

Sensitive to the incongruity of fighting for peace, designers of political peace plans spoke rather of the need to cultivate a more coherent and sustained international peace opinion. "The will to peace," declared Episcopal Bishop Charles H. Brent, was fundamental to world harmony because "God wills intelligent and sympathetic fellowship among nations, and when man wills likewise the task will be concluded."²⁵ Unable to advance feasible alternatives to existing mechanisms of international order, most peace planners retreated into vague appeals for a popular consensus against war. Global goodwill and public intelligence were exalted as the simple prerequisites to the operation of any international peacekeeping machinery.

While political proposals were extensive, the number of economic peace plans was "disappointingly small." "But no more creative possibility was opened up by the competition," Lape added,

than the possibility of dealing intensively yet comprehensively with economic considerations, *and above all relating these economic factors to the political forms and conceptions which will make it possible to deal with them.* This is the imperative problem of international statesmanship, and it is along this line that the advances of the next few years will be gauged.²⁶

Hundreds of plans turned upon schemes to make for the more equitable distribution of raw materials, the fairer organization of

²⁴ Lape, "In the Bok Peace-Prize Office," 898.

²⁵ Lape, ed., *The Ways to Peace*, 384. In a similar spirit, a San Diego attorney named Marcus W. Robbins declared that "As he thinketh in his heart so is he. Nations being merely groups of men and if they think war they will have war; if they will think peace they will have peace." Robbins to Women's Peace Union, Jan. 22, 1924, Box 3, WPU Records.

²⁶ Lape's foreword, *The Ways to Peace*, 36. Her emphasis.

world markets, and the elimination of restrictive tariffs. Assuming the pacifying power of free trade, some authors recommended the creation of an international economic commission with full regulatory power over the maintenance of equal commercial opportunity for all. The famed sculptor Gutzon Borglum argued for the internationalization of "*the great water-gates of the world*" under the supervision of a new world court.²⁷ And one unidentified contestant urged that the United States and Britain form "a joint economic council" to prevent the use of raw materials under their control, principally oil, in wars in which neither country was involved.²⁸

A small number of writers sought to utilize the American position as international creditor as a lever toward permanent peace. Most popular was the idea that the United States pledge to cancel the Allied war debts in return for effective European disarmament. The first point of the comprehensive plan offered by the United States section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom called upon Washington to initiate an international conference for the reduction (and possibly the cancellation) of inter-Allied debts in exchange for general disarmament, the stabilization of various European currencies, and the evacuation of the Ruhr by the French.²⁹ Notre Dame's R. L. Greene thought that science and engineering could overcome the economic competition at the base of world tension. If the United States established "a scientific system of distribution," he believed, "the root cause of war would be eradicated from the field of commerce" and "Justice being established between nations in their economic relations with each other permanent peace would ensue."³⁰

A third category of Award plans were the educational formulas for teaching peace and publicizing its value. The urge to demythologize war and glorify peace acted as a powerful tonic for a generation that felt duped by its intervention in the World War. Many bared a general conviction that propaganda and government deceit were at the root of international violence. Chicago's Frank Morelli suggested "a standardized universal system of education" which empha-

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 121.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

²⁹ Peace Plan of the W.I.L., n.d., Box 1, WILPF-US Records.

³⁰ Attached to R. L. Greene to Jane Addams, Dec. 12, 1923, Box 3, *ibid.*

sized "Progress, success and respect for laws," while Dr. C. Bennett desired that the government establish

a School of Publicity and International Ethics for the purpose of informing the people of truthful conditions and tendencies, whereby not only may the masses know the good-wills of neighboring nationals but that any warlike or war-inspiring thoughts, or inclinations as manifested in rulers, teachers or leaders, may be known and met as such have their inception, at which times there can be found the means of their eradication.³¹

In addition, authors of plans that emphasized the educational approach to peacemaking favored the development of international interdependency through exchange scholarships and exchange professorships. "When youth lives together, plays together and thinks together," Lape said in quoting one plan, "it will not, to any unhealthy extent, tend to fight together."³² Moreover, a few plans commended the feasibility of building peace by cultivating interdependence among special interest groups in all countries. Artists were assumed to be exceptionally international-minded. And so were scientists. A research chemist named Samuel P. Wilson made an elaborate proposal for the organization of scientists on behalf of peace, hoping that the "Technocracy"—"this class of super-trained super-able men"—would harness the phenomenal advances of the physical sciences to the cause of peace.³³ The power of Wilson's presentation impressed Award jurors. More than any other plan, it ably reinforced their enduring conviction as liberals that science, commerce, and industrial capitalism represented the ultimate agencies of global integration and peaceable order.

In early December, 1923, the Jury of Award met to consider the 100 plans that had survived the scrutiny of Lape and her staff. According to Colonel House, who presided in the absence of ailing chairman Root, the jurors' chief problem was that all the final proposals were essentially alike and differed only in presentation. "None of the plans suited me altogether nor, indeed, the rest of the Jury," House confided to his diary, "and it is not strange this should

³¹ Attached to Frank Morelli to WILPF-US, n.d., *ibid.* Dr. C. Bennett to National Council for the Prevention of War, n.d., NCPW Records.

³² Lape's foreword, in *The Ways to Peace*, 43.

³³ *Ibid.*, 135.

be true. I had in mind from the beginning to select a plan which included associate membership in the League of Nations and Court. This I succeeded in doing but not without some diplomatic work."³⁴

Surmising that his fellow jurors were anxious "to harmonize views and to reach a unanimous conclusion,"³⁵ House proposed that there were two fixed factors which should determine the jury's decision: first, that the League of Nations was a functioning organization of fifty-seven satisfied states; and, secondly, that powerful sentiment existed in the United States against certain parts of the League Covenant. Therefore, the Colonel concluded, the most realistic way of resolving these contrary factors "was by associating ourselves in the League and Court in the same way we associated ourselves in the war," by remaining attached but aloof, involved but not entangled.³⁶ House's argument carried. The jury selected as winner a plan which emphasized American associate membership in the League and Court. But when attempts to modify other portions of it proved impossible without major surgery, the first plan was dropped, and another was substituted in its place.³⁷ On January 6,

³⁴ Entry for Dec. 14, 1923, diary of Colonel Edward M. House, House Papers, Sterling Library, Yale University.

³⁵ *Ibid.* House had good reason to feel this way. Four weeks earlier, fellow juror Brand Whitlock had told him: "I do not know how seriously you are taking it all, but if paper writings are going to procure peace and save the world I have received enough from the office on this subject to bring about the millenium. I do not know, of course, what plans have been proposed or whether any of them are serious or not; most of those mentioned, in this voluminous printed matter seem to me too silly for words, but if there is any plan there that you and Senator Root agree on, I vote for that, and if you and the Senator disagree I cast my vote with you. The only thing that tempted me to accept a place on the Jury at all was that you and he were on it, and I felt a snobbish pride in being in your company. . . . You know that whatever you say is final with me." Whitlock to House, Nov. 17, 1923, House Papers.

³⁶ House diary, Dec. 14, 1923.

³⁷ According to Arthur M. Sweetser, Jr. (a former Boston journalist and then League of Nations official who claimed intimacy with the situation through discussions with House and Lape), the original winning plan was one that he had devised and handed to Raymond B. Fosdick, an assistant secretary of war in the Wilson Administration, New York attorney for the Rockefeller family, and leading pro-League activist. Fosdick reworked the scheme with the help of Walter Lippman and Whitney Shepardson, an official of the Council on Foreign Relations, and then submitted it to the Award competition under his name. Jury members were reputedly "really swept away" by the power of the Sweetser-Fosdick plan and declared it the winner, but asked Lape "to add to it a part of another plan to strengthen the Court side of it. She reported the next morning to the last meeting of the Committee that it was impossible to make the changes and Colonel house [*sic*], fearing that the Committee in its

1924, Plan #1469—entitled “Progressive Co-Operation with the Organized World Sustained by the Moral Force of Public Opinion and by Developing Law”—was declared by the Jury to be the grand winner of the American Peace Award.

In the eyes of the Jury, the winning plan constituted the finest composite formulation of the peace ambitions of the American people. It seemed the best-organized expression of the popular will for peace. The plan first advocated immediate American co-operation with the social welfare agencies and technical commissions of the League of Nations, as well as accession to the World Court on the basis of the four reservations proposed by former President Harding and Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes. More importantly, the winning plan proposed that the United States accept the League “as an instrument of mutual counsel, but it will assume no obligation to interfere with political questions of policy or internal administration of any foreign State.”³⁸ Specifically, the anonymous author suggested that America enter into “mutual counsel” with the League with the stipulations that the country would assume no obligations under the collective security provisions of the Covenant (Articles 10 and 16) nor any responsibility for the maintenance of the Versailles Treaty. “The only kind of compulsion which nations can freely engage to apply to each other in the name of Peace,” the writer declared, “is that which arises from conference, from moral judgment, from full publicity, and from the power of public opinion.”³⁹ Moreover, American consultantship with the League must in no way impede the sanctity of the Monroe Doctrine or affect the Pan American Union, “already a potential regional League.”⁴⁰ Then, in polite deference to the wishes of pre-war peace leaders, the plan spoke of the League and its agencies as the natural extension of the Hague Conference system and emphasized the need

haste to catch a train, might strike on some entirely different plan, rushed forward the Levermore plan in order to save the principle of Associate membership.” Memorandum “The American Peace Award,” Box 14, Arthur M. Sweetser, Jr., Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

³⁸ Lape, ed., *The Ways to Peace*, 457; “The Winning Plan,” *International Conciliation*, no. 195 (Feb., 1924), 69.

³⁹ Lape, ed., *The Ways to Peace*, 454; “The Winning Plan,” 66–67.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

for the progressive development of international law through the Geneva system.⁴¹

Tactfully presented and comprehensive in scope, the winning plan seemed to touch all the bases toward "practicable" American co-operation on behalf of world peace. Award officials were pleased with its positive eclecticism, and sanguine as to its future. Undoubtedly, declared Edward Bok, the plan encapsulated "the best thought of the whole nation—which is the mind of its commonality—on this one vital subject of how we should go about ending war for all time."⁴² Confident that they were expressing the public will, Award leaders set in motion over the turn of 1923–1924 the workings of a national referendum that was intended to build overwhelming popular pressure upon the Senate to adopt the winning plan as the new basis of American foreign policy. Aiming for a referendum deadline of March 15, Bok's associates refused to divulge the name of the author of the winning plan and insisted upon their determination to focus the national judgment of the plan upon its merits. A mere paper proposal would not end war, they conceded. But a specific formula could act as an agency toward that end by precipitating through the referendum process a "direct personal contact between the American people's views on peace and the National Government."⁴³ The referendum would once more get the American democracy moving. Surely, the American people would be as resolute in making peace as they had been irresistible in making war.

Behind the expert direction of Esther Lape, the American Peace Award referendum took on extraordinary scope in the first months of 1924. The Policy Committee sent out 9,000,000 individual ballots, with a brief summary of the winning plan attached to each. In addition, more than 700 daily newspapers, 7,000 weeklies, and 400 magazines—with a collective estimated readership of 33,000,000—agreed to publish the official Award ballot. Mayors of 110 cities and governors of at least eleven states promised to encourage the

⁴¹ In deference to chairman Root, the Jury appended to its announcement of the Award its "unanimous hope" that "the first fruit of the mutual counsel and co-operation among the nations which will result from the adoption of the plan selected will be a general prohibition of the manufacture and sale of all materials of war." "The Winning Plan," 57; *New York Times*, Jan. 6, 1924, VIII, 1; Jan. 8, 1924, 1.

⁴² Quoted in *New York Times*, Jan. 7, 1924, 1.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Bok plebiscite, while dozens of organizations such as the National Silver Fox Breeders' Association and the International Acetylene Association volunteered to poll their members.⁴⁴ Sympathetic newsmen reported that "there has been no parallel to it in the history of popular appeals." The vote promised "to be the broadest referendum ever held on a public question" in human history.⁴⁵

As the referendum progressed, the winning plan drew praise and criticism from every part of public life. Established pro-League agencies like the League of Nations Non-Partisan Association and the Foreign Policy Association cheered the Jury's selection and urged support of the plan. Democratic pro-League leader (and former Supreme Court justice) John Hessin Clarke, expressed satisfaction with the proposal, while his Republican counterpart, Hamilton Holt, called it "an honorable step forward" for American foreign policy.⁴⁶ Even before the winning plan was made public, LNNPA official William Short privately expressed his confidence that the Jury's choice "is one of which we will approve and which should be made to assist powerfully in the furthering of our work."⁴⁷ From Geneva, League of Nations officials expressed pleasure with the Jury's selection. In Washington, William G. McAdoo, the son-in-law of former President Wilson and the leading contender for the Democratic presidential nomination, urged support for the plan, while former Governor William E. Sweet of Colorado urged that the winning plan be incorporated into the Democrats' upcoming campaign platform.⁴⁸ Bok's award-winner had many strong friends.

Ominously, however, signs of opposition to the plan and the referendum appeared in unexpected quarters. The dying Woodrow Wilson reiterated his insistence upon unqualified American acceptance of the League Covenant.⁴⁹ Leading congressional Democrats

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Dec. 16, 1923, II, 14; Dec. 21, 1923, 17; Jan. 13, 1924, II, 7; Lape to Stimson, Nov. 5, 1923, Box 74, Stimson Papers.

⁴⁵ *New York Times*, Jan. 7, 1924, 1.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Jan. 8, 1924, 1; also James G. McDonald, "A Promising Compromise," *News Bulletin* of the Foreign Policy Association, III, no. 9 (Jan. 11, 1924), 1-2.

⁴⁷ William Short to Anita McCormick Blaine, Jan. 4, 1924, Box 636, Series I-E, Blaine Papers.

⁴⁸ *New York Times*, Jan. 18, 1924, 1; Jan. 21, 1924, 2.

⁴⁹ Raymond B. Fosdick to L. C. Probert, Feb. 26, 1924, Raymond Fosdick Papers, Firestone Library, Princeton University.

were noticeably cool in their response toward the Bok contest because of its unknown implications for internal party politics and the impending national elections. And labor leaders advised their constituents to review the plan "with all circumspection." The plan might do some good in reviving "the really vital matter—America's position towards the League," said one A. F. of L. official. But it might as easily "give new opportunity for secret diplomacy and the international financiers to operate behind a facade" in making new wars and destroying more workingmen.⁵⁰

At the same time, attacks upon the plan grew steadily harsher in progressive and reform circles. Albert Jay Nock of *The Freeman* blasted the award-winner as a "vicious fraud" that ignored the economic sources of war in favor of the pretense that "the politicians and journalists who were so successful in 'selling' them the war" could sell the people peace.⁵¹ *The New Republic*, which had originally praised the plan as "an ingenious, statesmanlike and progressive document," soon attacked the Bok contest for its one-sided, undemocratic referendum.⁵² Unless it offered feasible alternatives, the referendum was little more than "a vehicle of propaganda in favor of the plan" and did nothing to educate the American people to the complexities of world politics.⁵³ In the same way, Idaho's influential Senator William E. Borah, who had initially welcomed the Award as "a splendid thing," denounced the winning plan as one of the "sinister and unannounced ways" of drawing America into the clutches of the League.⁵⁴ Borah's friend and fellow anti-League progressive, Oswald Garrison Villard, was even less charitable. "The Great Bok Humbug," Villard proclaimed, was "one of the most skillful advertising dodges since the days of Barnum, and one of the

⁵⁰ "Bok's League of Nations," *American Federationist*, XXXI (Feb. 1924), 154; "The War Over the Peace Plan," *The Literary Digest*, LXXX (Jan. 19, 1924), 12-14.

⁵¹ "Mr. Bok's Dove," *The Freeman*, VIII, no. 201 (Jan. 16, 1924), 438; "Sand in Aetna's Crater," *ibid.*, VII, no. 178 (Aug. 8, 1923), 510; "Synthetic Peace," *ibid.*, VII, no. 175 (July 18, 1923), 436.

⁵² "Mr. Bok's Prize Plan," *The New Republic*, XXXVII, no. 476 (Jan. 16, 1924), 189.

⁵³ "The Bok Plan—Education or Propaganda?," *ibid.*, XXXVII, no. 477 (Jan. 24, 1924), 218; "Peace by Education," *ibid.*, XXXVIII, no. 484 (Mar. 12, 1924), 58-59. Also, "When A Vote Is Not a Vote," *The Outlook*, CXXXVI, no. 4 (Jan. 23, 1924), 130.

⁵⁴ *New York Times*, Aug. 9, 1923, 30; Borah to Warren Truitt, Jan. 28, 1924; Borah to Edward Bok, Dec. 17, 1923, Box 236, William E. Borah Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

cleverest pieces of political propaganda in the history of the United States." Dominated by pro-League sympathizers, the Award was "a dishonest trick," and "a deliberate attempt to induce an enormous body of Americans to vote in favor of the League without knowing it."⁵⁵

The hostile editorial comments that appeared during the late winter of 1924 mirrored a growing public suspicion of the Bok contest. While the nature of House's activities within the Jury of Award was not openly known, there was a good deal of public skepticism regarding the fairness of the Award process. On January 14, hardly one week after the announcement of the winning plan, the radical pacifist Women's Peace Union of the Western Hemisphere invited all contestants dissatisfied with the Bok competition to submit their plans to Union headquarters in New York. The WPU alternative contest offered no prize money. But it did promise "to give wide circulation to all the original and valuable ideas which the Bok prize has drawn forth from the public."⁵⁶ The implication was clear that more inventive and radical proposals would receive fairer consideration than they had in the Bok competition. Hundreds of plans arrived at WPU offices before the contest deadline of February 15, while countless other authors held back from what they suspected was another rigged affair.⁵⁷ Was this really "an honest' award," a Detroit newspaperman asked WPU officers. "There are a number of 'sore' applicants hereabout, who somehow believe they were invited into a game in which the cards were 'marked' and they do not care to be caught again."⁵⁸ On February 23, popular disaffection with the Bok Award took an unpleasant personal twist when an attorney named Frank Hendrick brought

⁵⁵ "The Great Bok Humbug," *The Nation*, CXVIII, no. 3054 (Jan. 16, 1924), 50; "The Bok Prize Plan," *The Outlook*, CXXXVI, no. 3 (Jan. 16, 1924), 91-93; "The Peaceful Plan," *The Arbitrator*, VI, no. 2 (Feb., 1924), 1; "Did Mr. Bok Pay Too Much," *The Christian Century*, CXLI, no. 3 (Jan. 17, 1924), 67.

⁵⁶ Press release for Jan. 14, 1924, Box 3, WPU Records; *New York Times*, Jan. 15, 1924, 9.

⁵⁷ The WPU Jury—consisting of Louise Grant, Elizabeth Irwin, Mrs. Edgerton Parsons, Paul Brissenden, Horace Kallen, and Douglas Haskell—certainly represented a greater cross-section of thinking than did the Bok Jury. But they concluded that, while some of the plans submitted were "as meritorious as others submitted in the Bok competition which have received public attention," none deserved distinction as an award winner. Press release, n.d., Box 3, WPU Records.

⁵⁸ Editorial department, *Detroit Free Press*, to WPU, Jan. 18, 1924, *ibid.*

suit for \$1,000,000 against Bok for the loss of publicity that Hendrick suffered because his plan failed to win top prize. According to Hendrick, his plan to merge six continental conferences into an inter-continental conference of the world would have become known as the "Hendrick Doctrine" and immortalized its author. Bok responded to the news of Hendrick's suit by winning a Florida golf tournament. He reported that his game was never better.⁵⁹

The most serious challenge to the integrity of the Bok Award began on January 17, 1924, when the veteran Democratic Irreconcilable James Reed moved the Senate Special Committee on Propaganda to investigate charges that the American Peace Award had tried improperly to influence congressional action. The membership of the Special Committee was weighted heavily against the Award idea.⁶⁰ And it was armed with the sweeping power to determine "whether there is any organized effort being made to control public opinion and the action of Congress upon legislative matters through propaganda or by the use of money, by advertising, or by the control of publicity, and especially to inquire what . . . if any, such influences are being employed either by American citizens or the representatives of foreign governments or foreign institutions to control or affect the foreign or domestic policies of the United States."⁶¹

On January 21, Bok appeared before the Committee in a hearing room packed with over 700 people, who alternately hissed the senators' hostile questions and applauded Bok's refusal to divulge the amount of money that he had spent in promoting the Award. The ill-educated immigrant more than held his own before Moses and Reed, two of the Senate's most relentless interrogators. He politely squeezed Reed into a refusal to define his understanding of "propaganda"; and he quieted Moses by offering to provide another \$100,000 prize for a more "practicable" peace plan that the senator

⁵⁹ *New York Times*, Feb. 24, 1924, 16.

⁶⁰ Besides Reed, the Committee included its chairman George Moses (R-N.H.), a proud Irreconcilable; the Farmer Laborite isolationist Henrik Shipstead from Minnesota; Frank Greene, an Administration stalwart from Vermont; and Democrat Thaddeus Caraway of Arkansas, the only pro-League sympathizer in the group. *New York Times*, Jan. 18, 1924, 1.

⁶¹ At its inception, the Committee was most interested in determining whether organized business groups were propagandizing against the Soldiers' Bonus Bill and for special tax relief. *Congressional Record*, 68th Cong., 1 sess., Dec. 20, 1923, 456; *New York Times*, Jan. 18, 1924, 1.

and his staff might uncover among the 22,164 contest losers. "I earnestly urge upon you the most favorable consideration of this proposal," Bok told the New Hampshire Irreconcilable, "to the end that we may unite in an endeavor to give the American people the uppermost desire in their hearts, an end to bloodshed and an era of world peace." Moses declined the offer without thanks.⁶²

After Bok's testimony, Lape appeared and adroitly parried the Committee's inquiry into the operation of the Award. Refusing to detail the procedure of eliminating plans, Lape offered the kind of selective information that won her plaudits as "one of the most marvelously acute witnesses" to appear before a recent Senate committee.⁶³ She also caused a "flurry" in Washington and throughout the country by revealing that she, Mrs. Roosevelt, and Mrs. Vanderlip had selected the Policy Committee and virtually engineered the operation of the entire contest.⁶⁴ The great American Peace Award had been a women's job. Sensing little political gain in attacks upon Lape and her associates, Reed departed for a speaking trip through the West, where he hoped to build support for his presidential ambitions. The Committee itself took advantage of the official activities surrounding the death of Woodrow Wilson in early February and quietly adjourned its proceedings.

The investigation of the Special Committee on Propaganda generated valuable publicity for the Bok referendum. But it did nothing to stimulate the sluggish pace of returns. Anxious to increase popular interest in the vote, Award officials announced in early February that the author of the winning plan was Charles H. Levermore, a sixty-nine-year-old New Yorker, retired president of Adelphi College, and a veteran peace agitator. A college acquaintance of Woodrow Wilson and a one-time history professor at California and MIT, Levermore was a founder of the short-lived League of Nations Union and a long-time secretary of the New York Peace Society. An internationalist of the pre-war variety, he still called himself a pacifist, even though he felt that "The name got a

⁶² *New York Times*, Jan. 23, 1924, 21; "'Five Solemn Senators' Versus Mr. Bok," *The Literary Digest*, LXXX (Feb. 16, 1924), 46.

⁶³ "'Five Solemn Senators' Versus Mr. Bok," 46; *New York Times*, Jan. 24, 1924, 1, 4.

⁶⁴ "'Five Solemn Senators' Versus Mr. Bok," 48.

bad odor during the war, and I am not speaking in the sense in which the word was then used." Real peace seekers had definitely succeeded in knocking "the tar out of Militarism," he avowed, "and now we want to put the fist in pacifist."⁶⁵

Levermore made no secret of the compromising intent of his winning plan. The formula was meant, he said, to rescue American foreign policy from partisan politics and to forge a consensus in support of qualified American membership in the League system. He also placed special emphasis upon the plan's reliance on moral force, a phenomenon which Levermore considered to be the transfiguring element in future world politics. The old professor was articulate and earnest. But his background and demeanor did nothing to inspire popular enthusiasm for the referendum. A "scandal-proof old gentleman," wrote one journalist bluntly, was simply "not good newspaper 'copy.'"⁶⁶

With public interest sagging, the national referendum plodded uneventfully toward its termination of March 15. Two weeks later, award headquarters announced that 610,558 ballots had been received, of which 534,177 (or 87.5%) favored the winning plan and 76,381 (or 12.5%) opposed it.⁶⁷ Though an impressive show, the referendum fell far below Bok's initial expectations, and appeared definitely minor as an issue in national politics. In June, the retired publisher sailed for Europe, comforting himself with the claim that the award had driven Americans to rethink the range of their international responsibilities. He was also flattered by the appearance of two similar peace contests, one a \$25,000 global prize offered by the World Federation of Education Associations and the other a series of European national contests subsidized by the Boston merchant Edward Filene. The American Peace Award itself was reorganized in November, 1924. The Policy Committee was enlarged to include a number of new figures; and it toyed temporarily with the idea of backing an "impartial inquiry" of the League of

⁶⁵ Quoted in "Detonations of the Bok Peace Plan," *Current Opinion*, LXXVI (March, 1924), 272.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Unfortunately for him, Levermore never did receive the second half of the \$100,000 Award.

⁶⁷ *New York Times*, Mar. 30, 1924, II, 7.

Nations in an attempt to raise public interest in the United States beyond the bounds of political partisanship.⁶⁸ But the League project was not considered long. By the start of 1925, Committee members resolved that the cause of American membership in the World Court formed the first objective of the reorganized Award. In September, the American Peace Award was incorporated in Delaware as the American Foundation, chartered "to engage exclusively in charitable, scientific, literary and educational activities."⁶⁹ It fought for the next decade under Lape's dogged leadership to involve the United States in fuller international co-operation, until the defeat of the World Court proposal in 1935 utterly demoralized the organization and turned it toward the support of medical research. It has continued in this endeavor from its Philadelphia headquarters till the present.

Between July, 1923, and March, 1924, the popular power of the American Peace Award shrank in effectiveness from the force of a bombshell into that of a firecracker. The Award was not exactly a "dud" *The New Republic* observed. "It did after a fashion explode. But it exploded in the air like a skyrocket, and it is now perpetuated by a shower of rapidly disappearing sparks."⁷⁰ Partly, the sparks faded with little notice as public attention turned toward the unfolding story of the sordid Teapot Dome scandal and related revelations of malfeasance in Republican Washington. But mostly the Award failed to translate popular interest into political effectiveness because it overestimated the public interest in peace panaceas and underestimated the policymakers' resistance to democratic diplomacy.

As an amalgam of old ideas, the winning plan did not possess enough ingenuity to excite new public interest. It succeeded only in reviving isolationist fears whose durability far exceeded popular interest in new diplomatic departures. Similarly, the popular referendum that Bok had hoped would create a national consensus behind a plan of international co-operation never gained momentum. On the contrary, it constantly bucked a powerful public indifference

⁶⁸ Esther E. Lape, "Prospectus for Joint Commission to the League of Nations at Geneva," Nov. 8, 1924, Box 9, Manley O. Hudson Papers, Harvard Law Library, Harvard University.

⁶⁹ *New York Times*, Sept. 28, 1925, 10.

⁷⁰ "Peace by Education," 59.

that had been bred by the lingering suspicion that the Award was a pro-League sham which had been affixed to a ballot that offered no real choice. Inevitably, declining public interest in the Award and referendum reinforced the timidity that national political figures felt toward the question of America's relationship toward the organization of peace. When Mrs. Roosevelt and Lape tried to advance the plan in March among friendly Democrats in Washington, they merely received bland praise and excuses for inaction. "They have so little courage!" Eleanor exclaimed to her husband. "They agree that their private views are met but the party isn't for it!"⁷¹ Politicians were willing to propose any number of peace schemes (in the summer of 1924, the *Congressional Digest* listed thirty-three peace plans as being in various legislative stages in the Congress).⁷² But they refused to challenge the unspoken bipartisan decision to exclude from electoral politics the question of America's place in an organized world order. One League fight had been enough. Among national political leaders, the popular will as expressed in the Bok Award never became more than a "trifling" matter.⁷³

Yet Bok's faith in the pacific world-mindedness of the American people and the workability of the American democratic process was unshaken. The ever optimistic editor acclaimed the Award for inducing his countrymen to think more carefully than ever of their world responsibilities. Certain that the people's wisdom was moving inexorably toward real peace, he lauded the contest for uncovering the tenacity of the grass-roots desire to outlaw war. The Award produced "an index of the true feeling and judgment of hundreds of thousands of American citizens," Bok declared. And

they almost all expressed or imply the same conviction: that it is the time for the nations of the earth to admit frankly that war is a crime and thus withdraw the legal and moral sanction too long permitted to it as a method of settling disputes. Thousands of plans show a deep aspiration to

⁷¹ Quoted in Lash, 284.

⁷² *Congressional Digest* (June, 1924), 303-304.

⁷³ Sen. James Reed, in *Congressional Record*, 68th Cong., 1, Sess., Jan. 21, 1924, 1186. President Calvin Coolidge expressed support of the Award soon after Bok announced the peace contest. But he refused to comment upon it after the winning plan was selected. *New York Times*, Aug. 29, 1923, 19; Jan. 9, 1924, 3.

have the United States take the lead in a common agreement to brand war in very truth an "outlaw."⁷⁴

The hope of outlawing war, which culminated in the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, has come to symbolize the fatuity of peace activism in interwar America. Like the concurrent experiment in Prohibition, the idea of branding "war in very truth an 'outlaw'" seems to have expressed an ingrained popular naivete which inhibited the pursuit of more "realistic" diplomacy. Certainly, strains of popular naivete extended prominently through the American Peace Award. Yet so did strains of popular realism. Contestants not only hoped to outlaw war, they also aimed with striking shrewdness to tame the phenomenal power of nationalism, perhaps the most formative force of our time. "Touched upon blindly in thousands of the plans," Lape reported, "and dealt with finely and clearly in a very few, is one of the most significant ideas turned up in the whole discussion—the need of a finer and truer conception of nationalism." Few plans analyzed this problem with care or insight. But a great many "constantly reveal a sense that a mistaken ideal of nationalism is at the root of war and of the tolerance of war that marks our present civilization, a sense that a perverted nationalism *permits* wars when indeed it does not initiate them."⁷⁵ As William B. Turner of Idaho Falls, Idaho, put it in his plan: "The real problem of international peace is to link up nationalism with world co-operation, to find a mode of agreement between the nationalistic Spirit and the growing demands for peace. This may be a stupendous task but it surely is not an impossible one."⁷⁶ From Esther Everett Lape to Hans Morgenthau, searchers for organized peace in our time have essentially concurred in William Turner's analysis. The work of meshing the unmatched emotional power of egoistic nationalism with the real interdependence of global industrial life remains at the heart of this century's attempt to overcome the menace of war.⁷⁷

Few government experts in the 1920s could phrase "the real problem of international peace" as cogently as did Idaho's William

⁷⁴ Bok's preface, "The Winning Plan," 55; *Twice Thirty*, 470-473.

⁷⁵ Lape's foreword, *The Ways to Peace*, 44-45. Her emphasis.

⁷⁶ William B. Turner to WPU, n.d., Box 3, WPU Records.

⁷⁷ Lape's foreword, *The Ways to Peace*, 46; Hans Morgenthau's introduction, in David Mitrany, *A Working Peace System* (Chicago, 1966 edition), 7-11.

Turner. Yet William Turner was far from the levers of national power. With thousands of other common men peace planners, William Turner articulated the voice of grass-roots Americans in ways that were shallow and profound, foolish and wise, dull and exciting. They together raised ideas which, in their fullest range, were neither less nor more sophisticated than the ideas afloat in national policymaking circles. But they were the ideas of the multitude. And as this they were only tangentially related to the felt interests of a national ruling elite bent upon a world policy of commercial expansion and political unilateralism. Interwar American diplomacy was not defined or implemented by the masses. But it was not because of their ignorance.⁷⁸

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⁷⁸ For a fine critique of Realism and its antidemocratic biases (which have done much to distort our understanding of the American peace movement and U.S. diplomacy in the 1920s), see Robert Rothstein, "On the Costs of Realism," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXXXVII, no. 93 (Sept., 1972), 347-362.